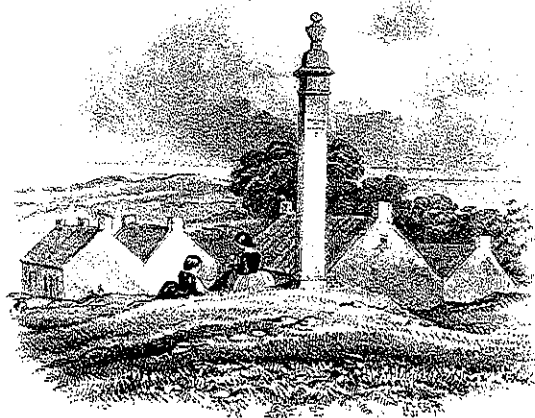


WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH WALLACESTONE.

THE
WALLACESTONE REFORMER.
OR
A SKETCH OF
THE LIFE & LABOURS
OF
MR. ALEXANDER PATRICK.
BY THE
Rev. John Drake.



WALLACESTONE.

Kirkintilloch. W. Mc Millan.
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THE
WALLACESTONE REFORMER;

OR,

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND LABOURS

OF

MR. ALEXANDER PATRICK,

WESLEYAN LOCAL PREACHER.

CONTAINING

NOTICES OF THE REVIVALS OF RELIGION AT KILSYTH,
WALLACESTONE, AND OTHER PARTS OF SCOTLAND.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SERMON PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF HIS DEATH
IN KIRKINTILLOCH, 30th APRIL, 1848.

BY THE REV. JOHN DEAKE.

KIRKINTILLOCH: WILLIAM M'MILLAN.

GLASGOW: WILLIAM COLLINS.

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PREFACE.

THE following narrative will probably be found to possess but few attractions for those readers whose vitiated taste leads them to seek a constant supply of the extraordinary and the romantic to gratify the cravings of a pampered imagination. Here is presented a simple account of the doings of an obscure Christian man, in common life, detailed without art, and in a manner whose chief recommendation is truth. But it should be remembered that what astonishes or delights most, is not always the most beneficial. The legitimate end of reading is profit rather than amusement, and we profit most when we are led not merely to admire the great or the good, but also to imitate and to strive, if possible, to equal them. In the best works of fiction, as well as in those of history, which portray excellence, it is too generally represented as existing in such extraordinary circumstances, in so high a grade of society, or in such a marvellous and unattainable degree that the idea of imitation scarcely enters our thought; the only effect ever expected to be produced on the mind of the generality, being a

pleasing and vacant wonder. But whoever peruses the subsequent pages will perceive that there are other walks of excellence beside those in the "high places of the earth," and other kinds of heroism besides those of the politician and the warrior; and it is hoped that if the reader meet with nothing to dazzle or intoxicate his fancy, he will frequently have the practical suggestion conveyed to his conscience, "Go thou and do likewise."

Two circumstances have led to the existence of the present little volume. Many of the spiritual children of the departed have expressed a strong desire to have a short written memorial of their benefactor in their possession; that, in after days, they may be quickened by its perusal to thank God for the grace that was in him, and also to follow him more cheerfully as he followed Christ, and that their children, too, might be made acquainted with the honoured instrument who brought their parents to God. It was also at first intended to afford some pecuniary solace to the afflicted widow should any profit arise; but this purpose was soon superseded by her sudden decease. She was a worthy person, of mild and inoffensive manners, devotedly attached to her pious partner, having her very life bound up in his. A long affliction had, for some time, been weakening her nerves, and confined her much at home. On the morning of the day on which he had to encounter the stroke of death, her husband engaged by her side in earnest and melting prayer on her behalf, and he left the cottage in apparent health, with affectionate looks, and his usual blessing. But, alas! he returned no more, till a few hours after, a posse of weeping friends brought back

his lifeless remains, wrapt in the winding sheet and prepared for the grave. She never saw him more. His image, as he left the door blessing her, seemed to be engraven on her heart, and she could speak little afterwards of any thing else. It was fondly expected that time, the great soother of griefs, would at length mitigate her sorrow. But no; it was too much for her enfeebled system to sustain. She retired to her bed, and after languishing a few weeks of grief, rejoined her beloved companion in the realms of light. In her life she had long unostentatiously served the Lord in faith and love, and her death, as might be expected, was tranquil; chiefly marked by Christian confidence and peace. It was not thought necessary, however, to abandon the promised publication on account of her death; for, although one of the original reasons was no more, yet the others remained in full force, and it was said, under the Divine blessing, the narrative might be made a means of good to other Christians in encouraging their hopes, and perhaps guiding their zeal. And if the children of this world are at great pains to preserve the names of those they esteem, there is no reason why the memory of an humble but remarkable and successful Christian Reformer should be allowed to pass away.

It is a cause of much regret to the Compiler of these pages, that no written account has been kept by the deceased, either of his private religious experience or of his public labours. This omission is referrible to the defect in his eye-sight, which was so great as even at his best times to disqualify him for the use of the pen. There were therefore neither journals nor letters to which reference could

be made. And although in numerous class meetings, and love-feasts, and still more frequently to private persons, he has described his varied mental exercises, and the steps of his progress in piety; yet many of the parties who were favoured with these statements have been scattered over a wide country, and those who remain, retain an impression of his meaning, rather than the very words which he uttered. It has therefore been judged the safer way to omit any detail of his current religious experience, which could not be described in his own words, and direct the chief attention to those outward qualities and labours, which were as obvious to the minds of others, as they were to himself. This is the more to be regretted as it is very generally believed, and with very good reason, that such a detail, could it be given, would be a rich history of Divine Grace, and Christian virtue. Yet it should be said that the particulars of his conversion here recorded, are authenticated by his most intimate Christian companion of that period, and the subsequent events here detailed, were not done in a corner. But from an active life of painful persevering diligence in the work of conversion, unsustained by any apparent worldly motives, we may strongly infer the power of his religious principle, and his high sense of the value of Gospel blessings.

Such an example should not be lost. The necessities of the world call for many such labourers. Careless in open sin, dozing in mere formality, or dangerously confident in imaginary orthodoxy, without a living faith or a renewed heart, the multitude require the zeal, the simplicity, the directness, the

urgency of such as Alexander Patrick to be brought into operation daily. But too many Christians are content with a solitary and an uninfluential piety. If it be true that men must be born again, or they cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven; if the servants of God may ever be truly said by their faithful efforts to beget spiritual children, (1 Cor. iv. 15; Philem. x,) or to travail with them in birth again till Christ be formed in them, (Gal. iv. 19;) then an awful but honourable duty in this matter must have been devolved upon real Christians. The following memorial of humble fidelity attended with cheering success, may prove an encouragement to attempt its discharge.

In endeavouring to advance the cause of God, it is not necessary to labour to effect a change of *creed*, so much as a change of *heart*, to bring the unconverted off from a presumptuous dependence on any mere creed, and to fix his whole heart on the Saviour, and to turn him from self and sin to God. In making proselytes to mere opinions, we are not serving Christ, or doing his work, but building up party. We take the low character of controversialists, and labour for time, rather than for eternity. Controversy may require learning and talent beyond the scope of ordinary Christians, but it is not the high walk of usefulness. Its effect is often seen to be hostile to spiritual religion and its exercise is often only a pitiful trial of skill; a laborious but trifling exercise about solemn things. A great part of the philosophy put into requisition on such occasions, and which is so much vaunted, will probably be discovered at the last day to have been an entire misdirection of the mental powers,

an elegant elaboration of reason unsuspectedly starting from false first principles, and issuing consequently in nothing practically valuable; a mere idling away of the precious time of probation which had been allotted us for the purpose of actively working out the will of the God of holiness. "One thing is needful," and that is, that sinners should be persuaded to "repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." Acts, xxvi, 20. Without the learned lore, or scientific attainments of the schools, every Christian experienced in the way of Salvation may hopefully apply himself to this simple but all-important duty, and by way of encouragement it may be said, that whoever zealously deals out even the first principles of religious truth, and strives to lodge them in the heart of his fellow-sinners, is using the sharp sword of God which pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The plain and imperative themes of sin, righteousness, and the judgment to come, in the hand of an earnest faithful exhorter, are mighty on all consciences. They are recognized and felt by the most ignorant, and their application cannot be completely warded off from the intelligent by their utmost dexterity. The arrow wounded although it glanced. The avenue to the conscience is often much wider than that to the understanding, and a "Thus saith the Lord," has more might, as well as authority, than any elaborate argumentation. We know also who has declared, "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." There-

fore it may be said, Be not weary in this work, for in due season you shall reap, if you faint not, and like the esteemed subject of the following pages, become an honour to the practical Gospel, and a blessing to your generation.

Already by his, and the labours of other humble men similarly minded, the attention of a considerable portion of our countrymen has been directed to the reality of vital personal religion, and many, very many, are enquiring, "What must I do to be saved?" or are seeking the full development of the life of God in their souls. But the field is extensive, and the labourers comparatively few. Large towns as well as rural villages, crowded society as well as the barren moor, are still to an incredible extent destitute of the saving appliances of the life-giving Gospel. Tens of thousands around us have never been *made sensible* that "to them is the word of salvation sent." Yet the majority of professing Christians hold their peace; seeming to take it for granted that every thing aggressive in the Gospel is lodged with ministers and official characters in the Church, and that the work of rousing and persuading sinners is exclusively the charge of such persons. They forget that every man is expected to teach his neighbour and brother, saying, "Know ye the Lord." If ever the great masses of society be thoroughly pervaded with Gospel influences, there must be a universal effort on the part of the living Church. All the Lord's people must be prophets; every Christian, without exception, must put forth his energies, and every unconverted sinner must individually receive attention, affectionate, earnest, persevering. The heaven by no means has yet

leavened the whole lump, and there is therefore both room and reason for the devoted diligence of every present believer. But if the following pages, through the Divine blessing, be made instrumental in provoking one of the true children of God to greater zeal in the diffusion of the Gospel in his own neighbourhood, or if they effectually point out to one sincere inquirer the way to the enjoyment of a present salvation, the labour of compiling them will be abundantly overpaid.

J. D.

MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I.

HIS CONVERSION.

An Orphan—The Farmer's Family—Prayers—Joins the Church and Marries—Mental exercises—Wesleyans in Kirkintilloch—Convinced of Sin—Penitence—He finds Peace—Inclines to preach—Visits the Sick—Campsie—Cameron—Sabbath School—Removes to Airdrie.

MR. ALEXANDER PATRICK was born in the year 1792, in Kirkintilloch, Dumbartonshire. Before he was four years of age, he had the misfortune to lose both his parents by death, and the other orphan branches of the family being young, the care of his maintenance and education chiefly devolved upon benevolent strangers. A farmer in the neighbourhood undertook the charge; and reared him as an inmate of his household. Here he spent the earliest years of his life, employed as a herdboys, and in other menial offices.

This family was governed with strictness and regularity, and under the wise disci-

pline there established, the mind and manners of young Patrick began to be formed for steady decorum. Stated times for domestic worship were rigidly observed in this house, and every member of the establishment was required to be present at the "exercises." It soon appeared that Alexander had formed an unusual attachment to these duties, and therefore, at a very early age, was sometimes permitted to take part in the more subordinate parts of family worship. The predilection he generally manifested for such employment, and the great readiness and facility with which he executed his part, acquired for him the jocose title of "the byre preacher." Under the regular and unbending rule of the family, he was obliged constantly to attend public worship in the kirk, but this also soon ceased to be a restraint, the service was evidently highly interesting to him and eagerly longed for, so that he attended from choice and impulse, those ministrations, to which, unhappily, lads in his circumstances are too often brought only by authority and compulsion. Such was the strength of his inclination that way, that many times when he has lacked the means to appear decently appar-

alled in the public assembly, he has not hesitated to mingle with the worshippers in his "strae hose;" the pleasure he derived from the exercise being greater than the pain he felt from mortified pride.

There is nothing remembered of his youthful days which is remarkable; he is said to have maintained a tolerably steady character for morality and general sobriety. On some occasions, indeed, he is known to have fallen into intemperance, for he was an utter stranger to the transforming grace of God, but his ordinary reputation among his neighbours was respectable and good.

When about twenty years of age, he was admitted a communicant in the Secession Church of his native town, and continued for several years a respected member. Meantime he formed a matrimonial connection with a suitable female, a professor of religion, who, after living happily with him a few years, was removed by death. He subsequently married another amiable and worthy person, who has brought him a large family of children, and whom he has since left a mourning widow.¹ It is singular that a

¹ The bereaved widow could not surmount the grief of

person of his early predilections should delay, on becoming a householder, to institute worship in the family; yet such was for some time his case, but upon the faithful advice of his elder, he erected a family altar, and carefully and constantly maintained domestic worship ever after. His children, therefore, from the earliest development of their faculties, having observed a conscientious and devout acknowledgment of God in the family, now bear witness to the assiduity and strictness of their father's attention to the business of religion. Yet all this, in his case, was mere externalism. His heart remained unchanged. He was an unconverted man, knowing nothing of the real life of God.

In the course of the year 1821, his mind became much exercised on the subject of his true state before God, and on the foundation of his hope for eternal life. Sitting, as he had long done, under a ministry highly intelligent, he was well instructed in the fundamental principles of theology. But his

her loss; and, in about a month after her husband's decease, was called to rejoin him in a better world. Her end was peace. She left a pleasing testimony in her dying moments of her saving union with the great Redeemer.

acquaintance with Christianity was one rather of *science* than *experience*. He had argued much, but had felt and tasted little. He had contented himself with doctrines and mechanical duties, and had been stepping forward to eternity with a heart quite unconscious of the grace of God. Being naturally shrewd and observant, he could not but know that the great change spoken of in the Gospel as so necessary in order to an entrance into heaven, must be great and singular, and from its designation of a "new birth," it must also be very observable, if not in its causes and origin, at least in its immediate effects. The marks and proofs that such a change had occurred in him he sought in vain. He had no remembrance of any spiritual revolution in his soul, and no consciousness of any power in him above that of ordinary nature. He was well assured that a new creation was pre-eminently the work of God and, since it evidently appeared not to have taken place in him, he began to reason anew and be very unhappy. It is to be lamented that at this period he fell into vain speculations about predestination and divine foreknowledge. The result was, much mental anguish and

bewilderment. The suspicion was frequently present to him that he was destined to destruction; and hard thoughts of God and Christ arose, which, although he hated and strove to repress *them* in disgust and terror, continually recurred and racked his breast. He was unhappy, and knew not what to do. It occurred to him, that his destiny having been pre-arranged in the unalterable counsels of eternity, it was foolish and vain to agitate himself at all in the matter, and after many consultations on this subject with a friend similarly exercised at that time, and who still survives, he began to form a resolution to do nothing, but wait, without an effort, and if possible without a thought or care, until God himself should work irresistibly, or seal his doom in unavoidable woe.

About this time the Wesleyan Methodists revisited Kirkintilloch at the earnest request of a friend still living, and pledged themselves to labour there for one year. They had attempted to plant a church here sometime before and had failed, but now, when a room was furnished for them by the generous friend in question, and other conveniences for the preachers gratuitously furnished, it seemed

to be a call they were not at liberty to reject. The result of the effort was a society which has continued to the present day. A congregation was soon gathered, and rumours of the "strange" doctrine they preached were circulated through the town and neighbourhood. Many heard and approved, and found peace to their souls; and fresh comers, influenced by curiosity, flocked into their meetings daily. Mr. Patrick felt great repugnance at the name of Arminians, by which they were called, and participated fully in the sentiments that Methodists were both despicable and unsound people; yet he resolved he would hear for himself. A man of his standing had some character to lose in the religious world; and he felt he was putting it in jeopardy by attending so disreputable an assembly as was that of the Methodists at that time. He has often described the shame he felt, as he wended his way by bye-paths towards the meeting; but he uniformly gave thanks to Divine Providence who led him there, and caused him to hear words whereby he might be saved.

Here he was taught to dismiss from his mind those profitless and bewildering specu-

lations by which he had been paralysed, and to fix his regard upon the boundless love of God to a guilty world, as the fountain of salvation accessible to all, and to which all were welcome. He was instructed that on closing in with the overture of the Gospel a sinner would have the knowledge of salvation in the remission of his sins, and that many persons, then actually standing about him, were already happy partakers of this blessing, through faith in Christ Jesus, and he was pathetically invited to accept the same Saviour and enter by faith into the liberty of the children of God. The result was, a deep conviction of his present estrangement from God now rested upon him. He felt that he fell short of the glory of God, and his present sinful and lost estate was now manifested to him with a demonstration he had never perceived before. The distress of his soul on this discovery was very great, and he began in earnest to inquire "What must I do to be saved?"

It appears that for nine months he laboured under this sore mental burden. Redeeming mercy in its fulness and freeness was often set before him and held out as his privilege, yet he hesitated to believe, and found no per-

sonal comfort. Sometimes his distress amounted to agony, and the enemy suggested to him thoughts of self-destruction, and more than once he was in imminent danger of committing the incurable crime. But the Lord withheld him. He has stated that during this period his sleep often went from him, and his couch has been watered with tears. He sought comfort, but was unwilling to receive it, except from God. He was afraid to cry "peace, peace," to his own soul, and would not rest until he found the Lord, and received the blessing from Him whose prerogative alone it is to forgive sin. On one occasion, entering a prayer meeting, haggard and unhappy in his appearance, it was ascertained, on inquiry into the cause, that he had been during some hours kneeling in the snow and pleading for the forgiveness of God. These statements sufficiently show the earnestness and distress of his soul. He had on various occasions glimpses of hope, and something at times resembling emotions of love, but the general character of the period of his repentance was that of intense distress, the deepest sorrow.

'Tis not, however, to be supposed that

every true penitent must have the same weight of mental woe as Mr. Patrick. There are great diversities in the mode of divine operations in this, as well as in other parts of the work of grace. Repentance itself does not consist in the amount or duration of sorrow, but is such a sorrow arising from a sense of sin and danger as leads us really to turn to God and disposes us to embrace the Saviour, as he is offered to us in the Gospel. Such a result proves it to be the godly sorrow, in fact, while its poignancy, greater or less, is a mere circumstance not in the least affecting its genuineness. Yet it is often seen that the person whom God is about to employ for extensive good, is made in conversion to pass through the severest exercises; he is caused to descend, as it were, into the depths of the deep dungeon, and to feel most painfully the wretchedness and helplessness of sinful human nature in his own case. This may be regarded as an arrangement of divine goodness by which he prepares his instrument for future efficiency; inclining him thereby, in after days, more tenderly to pity the souls of men, and enabling him more wisely to direct those in distress. Many a successful

guide of souls has seen reason to adore the wisdom and goodness of God for the severity of his own early convictions, which gave such distinctness to the work of grace wrought in his heart.

At length the day of his deliverance arrived. Retiring into an unfrequented field he threw himself down upon the earth, and there poured out his petition before the sinner's Friend. How long his supplication was continued is not known, but such was his mental and bodily agitation on that occasion, that the ground was deeply indented with the violence of his motions during the agony of prayer. While in this exercise, it was sweetly suggested to his mind: Verily, I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme;" (Mark, iii. 28.) and supported by this truth, he was enabled to approach the Saviour and to venture by faith upon his merits and mercy, embracing him as a present portion.

The transition from exceeding sorrow to the highest joy, which he instantaneously experienced, was as remarkable and extraordinary as his former convictions had been.

The darkness had now become light, the mystery of indwelling God was now revealed to him; he felt that salvation was actually his. Astonishment, gratitude, and joy, overwhelmed him with a flood of happy emotions, and he returned home with the saint's blessed boon, the joy unspeakable and full of glory. This was not mere excitement of animal nature, but the effect of the agency of the Spirit of God, as has since been abundantly proved by the abounding and matured fruits of a holy life which was begun at that hour. Neither was this the result of a mere voluntary determination to procure present ease, which argued out comfort by an effort of reasoning: for he sought safety, not merely repose; his soul recoiled from the idea of admitting any comfort, except from the testimony of the Spirit of God itself. Much less did he dare to reason from a general declaration, down to his own private case; he needed an explicit assurance appropriated to himself, "thy sins are forgiven thee, go and sin no more." This was made his portion, and hence that overflowing joy admitting no present doubt, and that generous and entire self-dedication which followed

as its spontaneous and immediate fruit. The Spirit itself bore witness with his spirit that he was a child of God, and he sang the mystical song, "O Lord I will praise thee, for thou wast angry with me, but thine anger is turned away, and now thou comfortest me."

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for his child;
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father! Abba! Father! cry."

It appears, that immediately upon his finding the peace of God, Mr. Patrick felt an impulse to admonish and invite sinners to turn from their evil ways, to the Lord; but was restrained by an humble, abiding sense of his former alienation from God, which seemed then to have been so shameful, as to preclude him from the privilege and gratification of speaking in so holy a cause. However, he began publicly to exercise in prayer meetings held in private houses, and soon became remarkable for his extraordinary power in this duty. Various sick persons in the town desired his visits that he might pray

beside them, and soon these engagements became his peculiar work. Many who in health had been full of unreasonable prejudice, and had scorned his proceedings, desired his special advice and aid when the hand of death was laid on them. This led him often to observe that, "'twas wonderfu strange people who had been sa unco ill at him, should request him when they came to dee." In these labours he met with various success and many sharp exercises. On some occasions he witnessed what his heart eagerly desired, the clear conversion and triumphant departure of his charge; at others he had to contend with petulance and unreasonable cavilling; sometimes with insult even from those who invited him, and worse still with final obduracy; but it proved a school for his soul. Here God evidently was disciplining and training him for the peculiar walk of usefulness, that of conversational intercourse and private prayer, in which he was afterward so extensively employed.

About this period a small society was formed in the neighbouring village of Campsie, and as no person was found on the spot who could be wisely employed as the leader,

the two leaders then at Kirkintilloch undertook the charge of the class. This was soon found to be too burdensome, and consequently two assistant leaders were appointed to aid them in this work. One of these was Mr. Patrick, who took his part in regular course, and here commenced his first official labours among the Wesleyan Methodists.

It happened some time after this arrangement that the local preacher who was appointed to Campsie failed to come, and his companion, who came from Glasgow to preach in Kirkintilloch, informed the friends there that Campsie would suffer a disappointment that day unless they could send some one. Brothers Patrick and Chalmers, the two assistant leaders, agreed to try to supply the lack of service themselves. They both went, and both gave a word of public exhortation. Mr. Patrick, it seems, was much discouraged, and felt depressed in his mind under the consciousness of his own deficiency, and said, by way of apology, to a poor woman at the end of the service, "I am sorry ye hae been disappointed the day, but ye maun bear wi' us, for we dae our best." To his great surprise and comfort, the good woman replied, with

evident gratitude and satisfaction, "What for noo man, ne'er mind, I dinna think 'twas a disappointment ava." The spirit of this remark comforted his soul, and there is reason to think this little incident tended much to form and fix his future course. How small a matter sometimes leads to vast and permanent results! A single word of comfort given at the right moment, how good it is!

This was his first serious attempt at public speaking, and from that time he exhorted occasionally in prayer meetings, and began to be regarded as a public man in his own society. Soon after this a talented and zealous young man was raised up in Kirkintilloch, whose labours as a preacher absorbed all attention, and unintentionally threw all others into the shade. Mr. Patrick, more desirous to see the work of God extended, than to be himself an object of notice, cheerfully fell into the train of his young friend, and acted a subordinate but zealous part. Mr. James Cameron, the young man referred to, now a missionary in Southern Africa, and Chairman of the Bechuana District, was induced to attempt the introduction of Metho-

dism into the town of Kilsyth, and took his stand accordingly in the open air. He was heard with attention and respect, and conceived such hopes of success, that he visited it again in company with Mr. Patrick and others the next Sabbath. Such impressions were made then on several minds, that regular preaching was resolved on; a class was afterwards formed, and a church raised up, which continues and flourishes to this day. Over this young cause Mr. P. kept his eye, and occasionally laboured for its prosperity; but although his earnest good-will often drew him thither, 'tis not till after eight years from this time that we shall see him fully engaged on this spot, and successfully leading souls to the Saviour. In the meantime he devoted himself chiefly to the care of the Sabbath-school in his own town. Here he directed his efforts to what should ever be the great object of a Sabbath-school teacher, the real conversion of the scholars to God. In order to this he applied himself to acquire a style of address which should be both simple and attractive, and succeeded so far as to secure the universal admiration of his fellow-teachers. The children loved him as a fa-

ther, and some at the present day gratefully mention the impressions on their minds received from him when in school. In this honourable and useful labour he continued till he changed his residence, in 1828, from Kirkintilloch to Airdrie.

CHAPTER II.

AIRDRIE.

Distance from the Kirk—Methodism in Airdrie—Conversation—His Qualifications—Made Leader—Class-Meeting—Diligence in Prayer—Bonny Prayer—Family Exercises—Remarks.

THE employment on which Mr. Patrick now entered was that of a collector of dues upon the Monkland Railway. The office where he transacted business was situated near Coatbridge, about two miles from Airdrie, and it was necessary that he should reside on the spot. He therefore occupied a small cottage in the neighbourhood, and in the autumn of the year brought his family from Kirkintilloch, and settled them there. It was much regretted that his home was inconveniently distant from the Wesleyan place of worship in the town, but the two miles which he had to travel to every religious service, were no impediment to a Christian, so full of ardour and love as he was at that period. The very journeys to and from the public

worship often proved to him seasons of special divine communion, and extraordinary blessing.

Methodism was then at a very low ebb in Airdrie. There had been previously various scandals arising from the inconsistent walk of professors, and many offences both in and out of the society. The number of sound members was dwindled down to eight or nine, and they also were greatly discouraged, and resorted to the means of grace more from a sense of duty to God and fidelity to his cause, than from a cheering expectation of spiritual enjoyment. The entire aspect of the society was that of depression and approaching dissolution. Mr. P. soon found out the sincere and discouraged lovers of Zion, who were weeping in secret places, and he sympathised and wept with them. They poured out united prayers to the Strong for strength, and soon found an answer in the hope and ardour which were kindled in their own bosoms. Mere complaining and sentimentalism were, however, what our friend could never brook. His mind, keenly sensitive by nature, was also restless for action; and strong as he was in faith, he never looked for the

divine blessing, except in the diligent use of the appointed means. It occurred to him that it was his duty without delay, to labour to build up the walls of Zion by all means in his power. He therefore applied himself with much assiduity and perseverance to the work of direct exhortation and persuasion with individual persons, especially with backsliding members, or those feeble and discouraged souls who began to halt between two opinions; and success soon followed his labour.

For this kind of proceeding he was specially adapted both by nature and the providential training through which he had been led. His temper was naturally warm, and readily responsive to the friendly affections. A lover of society, and an adept in all those little amiabilities which make a man a "good companion," and which render an hour's intercourse an hour's pleasure, he was welcomed with cordiality into the friendly circle, and often parted from with regret. He had a natural relish for what was exciting and surprising in conversation, and frequently would enchain the attention of his auditors on some puzzling yet interesting theme, which,

by his manner of representing it, would appear perfectly impenetrable, until he himself chose to furnish the key, and then the ingenuity of his device, and the full satisfaction of his explanation, would excite such feelings of pleasure in all as gave him immense influence over their hearts. He had also from his youth indulged frequently in private debates with persons in his own walk of life, on any subject which occurred in their range of information, and had acquired such facility in those wordy wars that his antagonist would often finish with the controversy with the half unwilling concession, that "Sandy is an unco pawky chiel, and no to be lightly meddled with." Since he had been made partaker of the renewing grace of God, he had also watched closely the motions of his own mind, and observed the conflicts between nature and grace in his breast, with the special design of discovering how he might best combat the prejudices of habit and education, and infuse the truth of God into the understanding and hearts of his fellow-sinners. He had discovered the avenue to the soul of his companions, and now, in ardent zeal, and with much prayer, he devoted him-

self to the necessary work of private persuasion, with good hopes of success.

Prayer meetings were promptly established in several parts of the town. Worshippers were slowly gathered; but at length a regular and steady meeting was effected in two or three places, and the hopes of the society began to revive. A spirit of life was breathed into all their exercises, and the power of God was sometimes remarkably present to bless and strengthen his worshippers. He was now made the regular class-leader of the society here, and was acknowledged as the pillar of the little church. The state of his mind at the time, and the favour which was now shown him by his great Master, are touchingly shown in the following paper, found since his decease preserved in his "kist," and intended for the perusal of a beloved daughter, who, however, has been called away by death without seeing the document, as was designed by her parent:

"January 23, 1831.

"MY DAUGHTER MARGARET,—As you were present with me in the class to-day, if you read this after my decease, it may bring

to your mind the happy season, the precious outpouring of the Spirit we enjoyed on that occasion. No sooner did I enter into the house of God, and fell on my knees to pour out my soul to God in prayer for his blessing and influence to attend my class, than I felt the power of the Spirit filling and melting my soul, and giving me such liberty in prayer as made my eyes overflow with tears. Oh! what liberty, light, and power, I experienced in addressing each member of my class! The presence of God was felt by every individual! It was a Bethel indeed to all our souls. Many a tear was shed, and every heart warmed with the love of God. Two men were present whom I never saw in the class before. They listened with attention, and seemed much impressed. O God, help me to be faithful. May the influence never cease, but may thy work mightily increase. Amen."

"January 30, 1831.

"When the Lord opened my eyes this morning, fully refreshed with rest and sleep, and my strength renewed, I prepared to engage in the delightful exercises of the Sabbath. Taking a view of the important duties

that lay before me this day, such as class-leading and preaching the Word, I was led to inquire in my own mind, What shall I ask from God in prayer this morning? How shall I be able to lead and feed the flock of God? Without the gift of the Holy Spirit it is impossible. I entered my closet, shut the door, fell on my knees, and began to wrestle with God for the necessary aid; and in the struggle the Lord said, "Go, work to-day in my vineyard;" "Go, and my presence shall go with you;" "Fear not, for I am with you, I will help you, I will strengthen you." No sooner had I entered the courts of his house, and commenced his service, than my heart gave way under the presence and power of God. My heart was so filled with love, liberty, and power, that I watered the place where I kneeled with tears. The influence spread through the whole of the class; several members stated, that as soon as they entered the house, they felt the power and presence of God. Glory be to God for these two Sabbaths that are past, and for these two class meetings. May God continue his holy influence amongst us, and spread the flame of love divine. Amen.

"My daughter Janet, and my son James, were present at the class-meeting with me this day."

This last memorandum may serve to show the solicitude with which he watched the spiritual interests of his children. Doubtless, he fondly hoped this day would prove a happy era in their religious history; and he noted the date as a future occasion for praise and thanksgiving to Him who alone really effects all the good that is done on the earth. And we may also observe the high value he placed upon the class-meeting, a means of grace peculiar to the Methodist Church. He knew by personal experience that such meetings, when wisely conducted, and attended by persons sincerely desirous to find help for their souls, were among the most effective of prudential ordinances. A voluntary attendance upon such a service he regarded as in itself a symptom of an earnest desire to flee from the wrath to come; as a virtual crying out, "Men and brethren, what must I do to be saved?" The peculiar exercise of a Wesleyan "Class" is designed not so much to expound systematic divinity, or to clear up

difficulties in controversy, as to lead the *heart* to the Saviour. The inquiry here urged is not into opinions, but sentiments, the faith and love of the members. In a lively class-meeting, there is felt a common interest in the spiritual prosperity of each member, and an earnest desire to confirm and perfect his devotedness and love to God. Each is closely interrogated in turn, and receives sympathy, and advice, or admonition, as is deemed needful; mutual example and persuasions are given, and then the prayers and praises of all are blended before the throne of God. It is a school for grace more than for notions; it aims to occasion present acts of personal faith, and love, and dedication, and thus to lead each individual to seek and gain the assurance of divine love; that seed of God, which, whosoever hath, will not commit sin. To a person unwilling to yield a sincere attention to the things of God, so searching and urgent an exercise as that of a faithful class-meeting must prove very distasteful; when therefore it is sought for and prized, we may reasonably regard the fact as a promising indication of earnestness and sincerity.

He was now accredited as a Local Preacher.

and entered upon his duties with a zeal that astonished his friends, and which seemed to acknowledge no obstacles. The congregation increased, and tokens of divine approval followed his word. Extraordinary power and demonstration of the Spirit rendered his labours effectual to the conversion of several; so that, in February, 1831, the Society in Airdrie reached to twenty-four persons. Meantime, prayer-meetings and other similar means were opened in the surrounding villages, and the seed was sown for an extensive and copious harvest.

It must not be surmised that, amid these active efforts to extend religion in public, Mr. P. neglected his private and personal exercises. He was eminently a man of prayer. Few Christians can be found whose closets were more regularly visited than his, or whose solitary supplications were more energetic and importunate. It was his custom for several successive years to resort to one spot in his room as the place sacred to communion with God, and here the deep indentions in the boarded floor, worn by his feet solely while engaged in devotion, bear witness to the frequency and perseverance of his retire-

ment for this purpose. Indeed, there is reason to believe, that almost every act during the day, whether religious or secular, that was conceived to be of any moment, he endeavoured to precede by prayer for divine guidance and blessing; his prevailing sentiment being, "nothing can be expected really to prosper which does not bear God's favour." In his approaches to the throne of grace, he was very jealous lest his whole heart should not be engaged; and if he found himself distracted in his duty, it was to him matter of grief and diligent self-discipline.

A circumstance which occurred in Kirkintilloch, will show the views he entertained on the subject of sincerity in prayer, and also exhibits his peculiar manner of impressing the minds of others by mysterious words or actions. He had been summoned to visit a sick person, and after conversing with him and the attendants, he knelt down and engaged in prayer. There was considerable and apparent fluency in his supplication; but, to the surprise of all present, he stopped short in the very midst of his address, and, after a few moment's silence, arose from his knees, and abruptly left the house. On the

way home, he inquired of his companion whether he had observed any thing remarkable in his present conduct, or could conjecture the reason for it. The reply was, that he could not understand it, and wondered whether there could be a reason for it. "Ah! weel mon," said Mr. P., "I all at yanst found I was makin a fine bonny prayer to please the folk about me, and no looking to God ava, so I jist took a thought the shuner I stoppit the better, and no insult God wi' a bonny weel manufactured prayer no frae the heart." This proceeding bears in its first aspect an appearance of rugged eccentricity, a quality which our friend by no means sought habitually to avoid, but in this instance it was undoubtedly unintended. It was his conscientious disapprobation of heartlessness in holy exercises, and his terror at finding himself unwittingly "mocking God," that occasioned his unceremonious, and what many persons would consider indecent, departure. The strangeness of his conduct, which required apology, and his explanation afterwards given, were each intended as a humiliation, demanded by his fault, and submitted to as such.

It may also serve to describe his care of the spiritual interests of his family, to transcribe a short memorandum which he has left of the events of a particular Sabbath, and which we may imagine is only a specimen of his Sabbaths in general. He says, "Dec. 5th. Being the Sabbath of the Lord, after we, as a family, had breathed our souls out to God in prayer, one after another under the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit, I and three of the children went up to Airdrie to wait upon God in the appointed means of grace; as I was hoarse, and unable to speak, James Hunter gave a word of exhortation in the forenoon, and his brother John spoke in the afternoon on "Praise ye the Lord." And we returned home and took our seats around the family hearth, thankful to God for a good fire, a great comfort in a cold night, and for plenty of food to satisfy our hunger. Thus being seated, comforted, and refreshed, by the blessings of the Lord, we proceeded to the next part of our exercise, which was the instruction of our children. When all the questions contained in the Shorter Catechism were gone over with each child in turn, I fixed on 'effectual calling' for their

further instruction, and allowed them five minutes in silence and meditation for each to prepare a question on that subject, and then to ask it at me. When the time was expired, James asked 'What is the meaning of effectual calling?' Janet, 'What is the work of the Spirit?' Jean, 'What does he persuade and enable us to do?' These questions opened a field at once pleasant and delightful. We sat affected and attracted while the great Interpreter of the Church unfolded to our minds God's method of calling sinners, when he calls, where he calls, how he calls, and by what he calls; and what effect the calling of God produces on the mind and body of the sinner listening to his voice—namely, fearful apprehensions, awful forebodings, wishing, seeking, weeping, lamenting, mourning, groaning, crying, trembling, smiting the breast, three days without sight, three nights without sleep, and all that time without meat."

It is difficult to conceive the scene which the above paper describes without believing the special blessing of God must have rested on that circle. After spending the day in reverently and publicly honouring God, the entire family are here united grateful and

happy around the domestic altar to bless each other, and blend their thoughts and hearts in the worship of their Lord. Here would be no formality and no reserve. Doubtless the father in solving the difficulties of his children would take occasion to make the most direct and tender appeals to their young hearts, and affectionately urge them to be reconciled to God. How pathetically he would describe his own former exercises, and his present joyful assurance of salvation, while the tear-drops would course down his cheeks as he mingled petitions to God with fondest advices to his family. It was a scene of pity and love. After all this the big "ha' Bible" would be duly read, and the whole company, after a closing fervent prayer, would retire to a calm and peaceful repose. Often have the pious neighbours desired to be present on these occasions, to share the hallowing influence of the exercise, and often the hearts of all present have been melted, and their eyes bathed in happy tears. No wonder such a father should be loved intensely.

Pity the good old custom of their pious forefathers should be slighted by the sons of Scotia. Pity that the "Cotter's" Sabbath

evening should ever be without its ancient duties and delights. The sturdy adherence of the "Worthies" to the pure worship of God, which has rendered their memory so honourable, was no doubt based on deep and well understood principle, principle implanted and kept alive in their souls scarcely more by the instrumentality of a sound and energetic ministry, than by the constant observance of family catechetical exercises, especially on Sabbath evenings. It is reasonable to expect that so long as a people are thus carefully formed in youth, under domestic influences of so tender and impressive a nature, they will be intelligent and firm in virtuous deportment; but if these endearing and profitable engagements shall be generally neglected, or observed with indifference, the nation will be degenerated in its character, its piety at best but fluctuating, and ICHABOD may be written on its name.

CHAPTER III.

TEMPERANCE.

The evils of Intoxication—Begins a Society—Its Progress—The Gospel—Revival Prayer-meetings—Loses his Sight—Results of the Meetings—Objections—Noise—Excitement—Power of Prayer—Providence—Exchanged Bonnet—Answers to Prayer—Missions—The Missile—Progress of the work in Airdrie—The New Chapel.

AMONG the greatest of the impediments to the progress of the Gospel, especially in a population densely crowded, and principally composed of the more uneducated labouring class, is intemperance. The temptations to this sin are in such circumstances so numerous and constant, and the fascination which the habit, when once formed, casts over the soul is so strong, that intemperance may there be denominated the grand antagonist of Christianity. Amid the collieries and Iron works of the Monkland parish, the victims of this vice were alarmingly numerous, and the pub-

licity, and almost universality, with which it was continually indulged, seemed to intimate that it was not to be cured, and would prove an effectual barrier to the great spiritual reformation our friend had so much at heart. Many persons gave him afflicting proofs that their souls were rendered callous to all the representations of reason and religion, by the debasement into which this habit had brought them; and others, of whom for a time, he entertained hopes that they would give themselves permanently to God and his people, disappointed his expectations and grieved his soul by their frequent relapses into this sin, "returning as a dog to his vomit, and as the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." The hopes and anxieties of a spiritual father alternated in his breast, and the mischiefs of this "enemy" specially planted his pillow with thorns.

About midsummer of 1830, he was importunately invited to countenance a Temperance Society in a neighbouring town, and consented at once to enroll his name as a member; but on subsequent reflection, he altered his course in this respect, and commenced operations for the special benefit of

his own locality. "After a little consideration," said he, "I thought there was as much need of a Temperance Society in Airdrie as any where. So I drew up a few articles by way of pledge and rules, and prepared a paper for subscribers' names. In a short time I had thirty-four members who were determined to act upon the principle. And as I had heard that the Rev. John Carslaw, minister of the Gospel among the Covenanters here, was very friendly to this kind of movement, I called on him to see if he would take the lead, and form a Temperance Society in Airdrie. Mr. C. replied, 'As I am the youngest minister in the place, I am unwilling to take any lead without consulting the rest of my brethren to see whether they will co-operate with us, for should they oppose and use their influence against us, they will be a mighty barrier in our way!' But whether they helped or not, I was sure of him for one. He was willing to form such a society, though there might be no other minister but himself. Some time after, I called at his house to inquire if he had seen the rest of the ministers, and what was the result. He informed me he thought we must go on

without them, and that it lay on me to find a place, and call a public meeting; that I should send a letter to him and each of the other ministers, inviting attendance and assistance on the occasion, and that the meeting should also be intimated in every congregation in the town the Sabbath previous. All this I did.

"Five persons whose names were subscribed to my list met in Airdrie, and agreed that two of them should endeavour to obtain the use of the Well Wynd session-house, by applying to the authorities, and we would meet again to-morrow evening to hear their report. About twelve persons met at the Weigh-house next night. The report was favourable; the place was granted very freely. We drew up a circular letter to all the ministers, and an intimation to be read from the pulpits, to the effect that a public meeting would be held in the Well Wynd session-house on Monday evening, Oct. 19, 1830, at 6 o'clock, p.m., for the purpose of forming a Temperance Society, and all that were friendly to such an institution were desired to attend.

"Our first public meeting was held according to notice, when Mr. Carslaw was

called to the chair, and he opened the meeting with prayer, and delivered an excellent speech on the evils of intemperance. That night the number of members was 54. The second meeting was held in the North meeting house, Nov. 9, 1830, when Mr. William Collins, of Glasgow, addressed the assembly. The members that night were 104. The third meeting was held in the Well Wynd meeting-house, on Dec. 27, 1830. The speakers were Mr. Wallace of Glasgow, Mr. Wilson from the Shotts Iron works, Mr. Scott from Comelethan, Mr. Tannahill from Kirkintilloch, and Mr. Carslaw concluded with a very warm address. The members increased that night to about 270. Our fourth was held in Mr. Torrance's meeting-house, on Jan. 18, 1831, when Mr. Ferrier, from Newarthill, and a stranger from a distance, gave most convincing speeches, and the society counted that night 324 strong."

The extraordinary success which attended his attempts in this business it seems encouraged our friend to renewed exertions in the special work of the Gospel. Highly valuable as is a temperance reformation, and much as its universal spread is to be desired

for removing a most deadly evil, it does not become a true servant of God to allow his philanthropic aims to fall short of the real conversion of the souls of his fellow-men to God. Mr. P. desired temperance not simply for its own sake, but also, and chiefly, as a step towards piety.

About this time his attendance upon the numerous prayer-meetings, established in the surrounding villages, was incessant. A spirit of inquiry was diffused to a great extent, and in various places he was called to answer the anxious question, "What must I do to be saved?" At Coatbridge, Lee End, Calder, Carnbroe, Bell's Hill, and Holytown, the meetings for prayer were crowded, and the distress of many whose consciences were alarmed was often so great that they cried out by reason of their anguish. Mr. P. gratefully and enthusiastically thanked God for the outpouring of his Spirit, and plunged into the midst of the exciting scenes and labours these meetings afforded. Often he has been exhausted so completely in the violent and energetic exercise of these occasions, that for a time no strength was left him. Often he has been detained beside some timid penitent who hesi-

tated to believe, and yet was afraid to give over his supplications, till the morning light admonished him of his home and worldly duties, and generally he has returned back at this period so heated and exhausted, that he was peculiarly exposed to the injurious influence of the cold or damp midnight air. As might have been foreseen, he at last contracted a disease in his eyes which remained with him during life, and almost totally at times deprived him of sight.

On these occasions he was convinced that the Spirit of God himself was making sinners sensible of their sin and danger. He saw an anxiety and earnestness shown by his fellow-worshippers concerning their eternal interests which he had often attempted to produce in them before, but in vain. The most earnest and best sustained efforts had formerly failed, but now these results appeared to be realised almost spontaneously, and in so surprising a manner as compelled him to say, "The finger of God is here; this is a time of God's visitation, this is a day of salvation. If the Lord be here to smite, he is also here who can heal. If he is convincing you, he is ready to pardon you if you turn to him.

Then will I be found of you, saith the Lord, when ye seek me with all your heart. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." To stand by in these circumstances, and witness the distress of penitents without essaying to help, would have appeared to him criminal, disloyalty to God, and unkindness to his fellow-sinners. Nothing in his judgment was wanting in order to their reception of a present pardon but faith, the act of the heart by which Christ is accepted and embraced as a welcome Saviour; an act which it is imperative upon the sinner to perform. The work of the divine atonement, he knew, was finished and complete; but he saw the sinner faltering and diffident, and he hastened forward to encourage his sinking brother. Conceiving of himself then as in the presence of a God ready to pardon, he applied himself to persuade the prostrate penitent to look toward the brazen serpent, to cast himself into the arms of a ready Christ, to perform an act of surrender, and trust in a present Redeemer; and for this purpose he reasoned, exhorted, entreated, and prayed, for special divine help. He himself entered on acts of faith and praise and love, at once

urging to a cordial confidence in Christ, and showing an example.

"And as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

It pleased God to own his labours and those of his coadjutors in this work to a great extent. Several hundreds of persons were enabled to venture by faith on a crucified Saviour, and were made partakers of the peace and power of Gospel salvation. Considerable numbers attached themselves to other churches which have no connection with the Methodists, and not a few who were at the time members of other communions continued in their present connection, and strove to infuse into their own circle the animation and hope that had just been awaked in their own souls.

It is not to be supposed that these meetings were conducted without considerable commotion, and occasionally seeming disorder; or that they were allowed to pass by without the censure of many well-meaning persons whose education and habits led them highly to value conventional decorum. Various

events occurred in the progress of the movement which, perhaps justly, gave umbrage; while not a few persons objected to the principle itself on which the meetings were conducted. But however those censures might at times affect the feelings of the subject of this memoir, he never allowed them to damp his ardour in the actual work, nor did he turn aside from his labours to vindicate himself or his friends. Controversy and debate are for times of unproductive drought, and for speculators and theorists; but when souls are actually struggling in the birth, all trifles must be postponed by the earnest spiritual man. Mr. P. felt he was doing by the favour of God "A great work," and he could not descend to the low business of mere disputation, or consent to any voluntary conduct which might tend to lessen his real usefulness. When the question is one of life or death, it seems impertinent to insist on points of mere decency or etiquette. If a drowning mariner be rescued, and brought to shore safely, it is a matter of very minor consequence whether it was effected amid clamour, or in silence; whether he was seized by his garments, or by the hair of his head.

The bustle and sound attending these meetings so very offensive to several persons, were mere accidents of the occasion, not worth either apology or censure. And if there occurred cases of hypocrisy or deception, the guilt or folly of these lay at the door of the subjects of them alone; unless it can be shown that the instances of evil out-weighed the good, or that the proceedings of the active agents in the revival, were calculated to produce the deception complained of on honest and earnest minds. No one has attempted to allege this, much less to prove it; on the contrary that the real and sound conversion of many persons to God occurred at that time, and amid these means, is seen by the results we find at the present day. And it is the rule of the Lord himself, "by their fruits ye shall know them."

The ordinary means employed in the Church often appear to terminate their effects upon the worshippers at a point far below true conversion. A well instructed inquirer may yield a ready assent to the whole truth of the Christian scheme, and may also have a vivid apprehension of its applicability to himself, and yet realize nothing of the saving

power of the Gospel. He may be orthodox and reverent, he may abound in sentimentalism and strong desires, and yet fail to venture in trust upon Christ. He views the Saviour but does not embrace him; he perceives the nearness, the willingness, and power of the Redeemer, and yet omits to surrender his heart; he does not actually covenant with God, he does not accept and trust his Lord. And since the required act is not performed, the joy of salvation arising from the testimony of God's Spirit is not afforded. He is "not far from" the kingdom of Heaven, but he has not entered; the child has come to the birth, but there is not strength to bring forth. On such occasions as those in question, it was a first principle with our friend and his helpers, to lead the penitent direct to the Saviour, to persuade and encourage him to the performance of *the act* of personal trust for a present salvation. Although this act is what none can perform but the man himself, yet both God and man may concur to aid it. Were it an act of the understanding solely, then argument and intellectual representation alone would be adapted to aid it, but being a transaction of the heart, motives

and sympathy are the proper stimulants, and may be wisely applied. Nothing short of an actual closing in with Christ, on the part of the inquirer, could satisfy Mr. P. To use his simple language, he insisted on a "coming to the point," and to induce this result he used the best means that he could employ and which although they might not be adapted to every diversity of moral conformation, and might sometimes be highly objectionable in the view of an unaffected phlegmatic spectator, yet proved on a large scale to be the instruments in the hands of God of sound and permanent conversion.

Several striking facts are told of this period of Mr. P.'s career which illustrate the power of prayer, and clearly point out the fact of a special providence. From among others we may select the following. On a certain occasion he was requested to visit a sick person, the landlady of a public house, who was lying ill of a dropsy; this gave rise to some fears in his mind lest in the case of compliance, scandal should arise from a Revivalist and a Temperance Advocate entering such a place; and remembering "there seldom was room for Christ in an Inn," he

had little hopes of effecting any good with the mistress of a spirit shop. He however after much hesitation reluctantly went, but commended himself and his labour to the care of God. He found the woman dangerously ill, and somewhat concerned about her soul. After suitable advice and prayer he took his departure, but although he was pressingly invited to return, he could not bring himself to believe that his visit would be either useful to others or safe for his own reputation, he therefore refused to give a positive promise, and left with an obscure intention of never coming back. But, strange to say, on reaching his home he discovered he had brought away the bonnet belonging to the landlord of the public-house, by mistake, and was obliged to return to exchange it for his own. He again entered the room of the sick woman, and found himself now in the midst of a number of her relatives and friends, who hastily assembled there to listen to his instructions and prayers. It surprised him to find himself standing at the whisky table in the very room where the drunkard's song had so lately resounded, preaching the Gospel and entreating sinners to submit to Christ,

and more so still, when he observed the emotion of one of the company who cried out with a full heart, "I believe what you say! Let us pray." They went to prayer, and continued in pious exercises for some time, so that before Mr. P. left the house, that person professed to have found peace through faith in Christ Jesus. A special influence seemed to rest on all present, and all felt it good to be there. He now had no hesitation to repeat his visits to the house, and was made instrumental in the conversion of several members of the family. The sick woman herself was led to trust in the Saviour, and enabled to testify from her own experience that God hath power on earth to forgive sin. She died rejoicing in the Lord, leaving a cheering testimony that she was going to be with Jesus. The sign board was taken down, for the intoxicating liquor ceased to be sold there; most of the family having become renewed in heart as well as in life, and there is reason to believe this circumstance greatly conduced to the wider extension of the work of God in that neighbourhood.

Every one who sincerely uses prayer must be a believer in a particular and special pro-

vidence, for the duty itself is founded on that truth; and the diligent believing practice of prayer will introduce to the suppliant reiterated proofs of the fact in his own observations and experience. His young daughter laying ill and apparently dying, our friend in the deepest distress retired to intercede with God for the life of his child. While engaged in the exercise, he had such comfort infused into his bosom, and felt such a confidence that God was hearing and granting his prayer, that on rising from his knees he said "Mary," addressing his wife, "tak' courage, lass; the Master has just gied me the life o' the bairn." In a few days the malady was completely removed. Feeling himself one evening so ill that he could not travel to the meeting at Airdrie, and yet intensely desirous to be present, he, (to use his quaint expression,) retired and "cracked a we'e wi' his Father," then immediately set out, and had a happy season in the social worship. After his return it occurred to his notice, that he had not felt any weakness or pain during all the evening, and was now as well as he ever was during his life. It often appeared to him an instance of special providence, that although

he was permitted to be afflicted with comparative blindness, and thus deprived of the power to procure support for his large family from his former kind of labour, yet this trouble was not allowed to befall him, until one of his family had attained the age and qualifications which fitted him to enter upon his father's station, and in some measure to supply his lack of service to the family. And he rejoiced that this painful affliction did not in any degree interfere with his general health; and that although it prevented his perusal of the word of God, which he loved, and otherwise incommoded him, yet it was the means of affording him more leisure and opportunity for the delightful work of winning sinners to the Lord.

The first operations in behalf of the Wesleyan Mission in Airdrie, began with Mr. Patrick. For a long time he indulged in the practice of smoking tobacco, and would go weekly with the empty box to his wife, who was his cashier, for the stated sum, twopence or threepence, to procure a fresh supply, which of course was readily granted. This course was continued so regularly, that at length our friend Sandy had become a con-

firmed devotee to the practice, nor did he see or feel any thing wrong in the matter, until he attended a Missionary Meeting, held in Tradeston Chapel, in Glasgow. Dr. Beaumont on that occasion delivered a stirring speech in a style exactly suited to rouse the feelings of our warm hearted friend. He dwelt on the wickedness, and misery, and helplessness of the heathen left to themselves, and then proved the certainty that beneficial results would follow the introduction of the Gospel into their midst, and so excited the love and zeal of one at least of his auditors, that had the Dr. put the question, "Who will volunteer to go and preach to them this word?" assuredly he would have heard the response from Sandy Patrick, "I will; send me." The Dr. in recounting the sacrifices which a Christian public are bound to make to send out a life-giving Gospel, pointed out various unnecessary indulgences, and among other things mentioned tobacco, opening a dreadful attack on confirmed smokers. Poor Sandy was confounded, and instantly resolved he would never smoke again. On his way home that night he formed his plan, and began to carry it out immediately. He waited on his wife

for his money weekly as before, but he deposited the sum in a box procured for the purpose, and at the end of the year he presented his savings at the Missionary meeting. The succeeding year he improved upon his plan by persuading two or three persons to contribute to his box, and at the end of the second year he carried a respectable sum, to be added to the Glasgow Mission contributions, with a holy glee and triumph at the amount won for this noble purpose. The third year the same practice was continued on a small scale, but on opening the box at the proper time and counting the sum, it fell so far below that of the previous year, that it caused him unspeakable mortification, and actually brought tears into his eyes. His grief was known to others, but no help in the mean time appeared. The day before the meeting, while engaged at his work in a shed erected for him by the kindness of his employers, (for since the failure of his sight he had laboured at a pump connected with the steam engines) he paused for a while, and resting his head on his hand, brooded pensively over the thought of his small sum to be presented to the missions. While so

occupied he was startled by a heavy substance falling on his head, and descending to his feet with a jingling sound. This aroused him from his reverie, and he began to grope in the dark to find what the missile could be. At length he found a small pouch, and on opening it he counted out nineteen shillings and sixpence. Though this occurred at mid-day, he could not discover who it was that had intrusted him with this sum, his blindness preventing him; but he instinctively perceived it was sent to supplement his small missionary savings; and he applied it accordingly with promptitude and gladness. He delighted afterwards in telling the tale of the mysterious aspect he put on the affair, when venting the gladness of his heart to his beloved wife. "Mary," said he, "they winna let me be, some ane knockit me on the head the day, when I were at my wark in the shed." "What Sandy," quo she, "what di ye say? some yane knockit ye in the head?" "Aye lassie, that they did, wi' little ada." "But what did they knock you wi'?" They knocked me wi' some hard thing in my face," "And did ye fa' down, Sandy?" "Very near lass." "A' weel the warld ha' come to a pretty

pass when a decent, weel meaning, guid Christian as ye are Sandy, canna gang till ye'er wark wi'out bein knockit in the head in braid day licht." The mystery was carried far enough now, and the good wife on hearing her husband's explanation and witnessing his unusual joy, joined in the mirth, and wondered "wha the bonny chiel was, wha cou'd da sic an unco liberal deed?" This was never known. The morning of the resurrection alone will reveal and reward the generous person.

This little affair attracted the attention of the friends in Airdrie, towards the missionary cause, and led to the formation of a regular Auxiliary Society, which soon assumed importance, and annually increased its contributions to the parent society's funds for many years.

The congregation in Airdrie had become too large for the room there, and was removed to Lea End. Here the Divine Spirit wrought wonders of grace. Conversions were numerous. Fresh classes were formed from time to time, and the society increased to that extent, that it was deemed advisable and necessary to build a permanent Chapel. Almost every person in the young and lively

society laboured diligently to procure the needed supplies, and the result was the erection of the present commodious house, at the cost of something more than a thousand pounds. The foundation stone was laid in May, 1841, by the Rev. Dr. R. Newton, and the building was opened for public worship on October 31, 1841, by the Rev. D. M'Afee, and the Rev. Robert Heys.

CHAPTER IV.

CONVERSATIONS.

Variety in Preachers—Colloquy—Assurance—Saving Faith—Meat must be eaten—The Shilling—Who made the World?—Stool and the Fire—Makes Clay—The Queer Sinner—Wished out at the door—Perfection—Child in the Cradle.

IN few things is the fatherly kindness of the great Head of the Church more apparent than in the provision which he makes for the edification of his people in the varied qualifications and endowments of his messengers. Some are remarkable in intellect, and others in pathos. Some are specially adapted to edify the advanced; others, the new-born Christian: and others, again, the penitent seeker; while yet others seem adapted chiefly to warn and convince the reckless sinner. One man's talents render him most efficient when prophesying among the thick branches in the great congregation; while another shall excel in private colloquy, or household conversation. But all this variety is designed for the general good by the wise Master-

builder who divides, in this matter, in absolute sovereignty, to every man severally as he will.

It has already been stated that Mr P., although he regularly occupied the pulpit as a local preacher, devoted himself chiefly to private personal appeals. 'Twas in the classroom, or by the fire-side, he felt himself most in his place. "I'm no sa sure," he would say, "about the pulpit; but I keen weel enough the Lord wishes me to craek wi' the bodies." His great strength lay in the hold which he was able easily to take on the imagination of his auditors, and the readiness with which he could simplify and insinuate the truth. In addition to this, his power in prayer was extraordinary; and he seldom neglected to lead the subject of his solicitude to the throne of grace, and to pour out prayers on his behalf, as energetic as they were believing.

In his attempts to impress sinners, he would sometimes refer in strong language to the terrors of the Lord, and the penalties of eternity. But it was not his habit to dwell on such a theme, or attempt to present images of woe, painted with fanciful and horrid minuteness, as is sometimes done, but which,

alas! but too plainly indicate a morbid melancholy, or an unconscious malignity in the speaker. The love of God was his theme. He himself sat habitually at the foot of the cross, by faith viewing Him whose love for sinners was stronger than death, till his heart was filled with tenderness, and gratitude, and zeal. 'Twas by describing the love and sorrow of Calvary he taught sinners the evil of their sin, and the depth of perdition. He sought not to terrify so much as to soften and win, and it was made very apparent that 'twas "the love of Christ which constrained him;" that he regarded that wonderful love as the great reason why all the world should repent and be converted.

The privilege of an assurance of a present pardon is clearly pointed out in the sacred Scriptures, and in the standards of the Protestant churches; yet so few and obscure were the persons in avowed possession of it, that Mr. P. found almost every where a doubt whether that blessing could, by any possibility, be attained now, and an unavowed persuasion that it belonged only to apostolic days. This point, therefore, he laboured to prove. The statements and the illustrative

cases of Scripture; the doctrine and experience of the Scottish "Worthies" upon the point, together with the instruction of the Westminster Catechism, he frequently adduced, and would then subjoin the narrative of his own experience, and that of his believing companions, with humility and yet boldness, adding, "I *know* that I am passed from death unto life," and that "for me to die would be gain." This attainment he urged with affectionate vehemence upon his auditors, and offered the blessing to every one that would believe in the name of the Lord. Many a hard heart that would not be persuaded to consider his own particular sin was led to answer in silent conviction the oft-repeated questions, "Has God forgiven your sin? Do you even imagine you have peace with God? Do you say No? And why, when the blessing is even at the door? For believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and *thou* shalt be saved."

The great difficulty with a really penitent soul, is the appropriation of the love of Christ to himself. That he is the propitiation for the sins of the world is a clear truth, resting on evidence which requires only the easy ex-

ercise of our reason; but to apprehend and realize the equally certain truth, "He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*, is found to be a conclusion rendered practically difficult, not by intellectual considerations, but by the state of the conscience and heart. At this stage, the sympathy and aid of an experienced believer is very valuable to the anxious soul. And whoever encourages a penitent to view the Saviour as verily crucified for him, performs a similar office with that of the friends of the sick and crippled in former days, who brought their patients forth, and laid them down at the very feet of Jesus to be healed.

Yet even this view of the ability and willingness of Christ to save, is only precursive of an act of special application to him and personal surrender, which is properly "trust," the "faith of the heart," the condition of present salvation. This actual trust of the heart is often impeded by the dread of presumption by sinful unwillingness, and by other causes; but where it remains unperformed, the witnessing Spirit refuses His special assurance, and the joy unspeakable and full of glory remains untasted and unknown.

In all his religious intercourse, Mr. P. was anxious to bring his auditors to actual saving faith. He would dwell with delight on the universality, the fulness, the freeness, and the readiness of the mercy of Christ; but said he, "Suppose I be hungry, and there be ever so much food in the press, what am I the better of it if the door be locked? And if it even be brought out and dressed for me, is my hunger appeased by that circumstance? Nay, although 'tis served up on the table in braw dishes, with knives, and spoons, and every convenience, and I be actually sitting by, ready and hungry, it will still do me 'na guid.' 'Tis for me; I am welcome; all things are ready; yet still, unless I cut and eat, I may and will for all that perish with hunger." Just so it is with the Gospel. I must not only know about Christ, that He is able, and willing, and waiting to save me, but I must believe *on* him, trust *in* him, *take* him as my Saviour, and feed on him in my heart by faith. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. This little illustration was much used by our friend; and when given in his broad Scotch, with allusions to the customs which

he knew to obtain in the family where he employed it, has often been very effective in teaching the inmates the nature of simple faith, and persuading them to exert it.

Being one night at a private tea-party in Glasgow, where the guests were principally Wesleyans, Mr. P., whose habits of prayer were to him the chief source of enjoyment, contrived to turn the party into a social prayer-meeting. One of the company, a backslider from God, arose between the exercises and confessed his condition to be one of darkness and danger; that he was in fact at present an alien from God. The whole party immediately united in strong prayer to the Lord to restore his soul, and in a very short time they found an answer. The man was enabled to resume his former faith in a crucified Saviour; his joys were renewed, and his rejoicing diffused over the company the gladness of angels, who are represented as rejoicing over returning sinners.

"My Jesus to know, and feel his blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below!"

This exciting scene was made instrumental by the good Spirit in awakening another per-

son then present, who had attended the ministry of the Methodists fourteen years, and had, till this period, remained a stranger to the renewing grace of God. Unable to conceal the distress he felt, from a deep conviction of his unsafe state, he arose, and earnestly invited the company to meet at his house the following evening. This was readily agreed on, in hope that God would answer prayer in this case also. At the hour fixed, the friends assembled, and found that Mr. P. had not waited the appointed time, but had spent the whole afternoon labouring with him for his deliverance. God had already shed on the seeking sinner the light of his countenance, and made him glad in the enjoyment of salvation. This person had long rested in mere dogmas and theory, which had left his heart unchanged, and now the act of personal faith was to him unintelligible. To point out this duty, and encourage him to perform it, was the task of our friend P. Putting his hand into his pocket, and drawing out a shilling, he said, "Weel, noo, Brother C., were I to say I'll give ye this shilling, wad ye believe me?"

"Yes I would, for yere no trifier. Sandy."

"And what then wad ye da if ye thoct me in earnest?"

"Why, I'd reach out my hand and take it."

"Very well, God has in like manner gied his Son Jesus Christ for you and to you, and if ye would believe, ye maun just *tak* him, and *trust* in him."

"Oh! but I have been such a sinner."

"Ah weel, but God does na reject sinners because they ha' sinned, but because they winna believe on, and *lippen* to his Son."

"Well," said C. with animation, "d'ye say so, Sandy? If God will not send me to hell for my sin only, he shall not for unbelief. I will believe, I do believe, I believe just now; O Jesus, thou art my Lord, my God!"

At this moment he was accepting and trusting in the Saviour, the token of divine acceptance was instantly afforded;

"His chains fell off
His heart was free."

The Spirit witnessed to his spirit that he was now a child of God. The assembled friends who came to pray remained only to rejoice, because God had made known so fully

and clearly his readiness to pardon. This person after proving for some years the genuineness of his conversion, has lately been called home to God, dying in the faith.

As a specimen of his peculiar manner of leading a hesitating mind to venture on the Saviour, we may refer to a case in Glasgow, which occurred about this time. An intelligent female who was labouring under a deep sense of sin was visited by Mr. P., and notwithstanding all his encouragements and prayers, she seemed to be only increasingly distressed, and almost in despair. At length while on their knees, Mr. P. said to her, "Let us sit up a we'e;" and placing himself beside her, and looking steadily in her face, he said,

"Do ye believe the Bible?"

"I do," she replied.

"Can ye tell me wha made the world?" she smiled a little contemptuously, and after a pause said "It was God." To which he immediately replied "How d'ye ken? were ye there to see?" She seemed surprised perceiving that there was evidently more meant by the question than she had supposed and then remarked "no I was not there, but the word of God says that he made it."

"Ah well then ye believe a' that the Bible says, d'ye?" She said "Yes."

"Ah weel we'll see; 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.' Wha says that?"

"The Father."

"Weel, will ye da as the Father bids ye? He commands ye to hear the Son."

To this she assented.

"Weel then, what does the Son say? 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' 'Come unto me and I will give you rest.' To the woman in the Gospel he said, 'Daughter, thysins which are many are all forgiven thee,' and will he no say the same to you? Is he no saying it even the noo? ye dinna believe that, Ye dinna believe him? I telt ye, ye dinna believe a' the Bible."

She instantly saw the shame and sin of not trusting in a promising, present Redeemer, and as instantly ventured upon his mercy. Confiding in the love and power and truth of the world's Redeemer, she trusted herself in his hands, and found the peace she sought. The word of acquittal was applied to her conscience, not by her own will, which would have been presumption, but by the Spirit of God.

who attested his divine presence by the love, joy, and peace, which He then diffused through her humble soul. She continues to the present.

On various occasions Mr. P. gave considerable effect to his advices by simple actions which might have appeared ludicrous in any other but himself, but with him all was natural, and even pleasing. He was discoursing one day with a female who was declining in the divine life, and who made her dulness and low state of mind an excuse for not attending the means of grace. After hearing her statement, he looked her steadily in the face, and said with a freedom which every body readily forgave in him, "Lassie, ye're a droll yane, ye tak a wonderfu' way o' mendin yoursel." And rising from his seat he placed himself on another at a distance from the fire. "Lassie," said he, "if I were very cold and needed to get mysel warmed, is this the way to da?" pushing his seat farther from the fire than it was before. "Will this be better think ye?" going farther off still. "Will I be ony better here?" said he, by this time almost out at the door, "will I be warmer here?" Or should I sit close before the fire and wait till

I was warmed all over? He then easily showed this was just the same as her own foolish practice. "Na, na, my bairn," said he, "gin ye'd be gettin on in religion, keep at the means, and jist be like a hungerd wean; the mair it feels its wants, they only gar it ask its mither mair earnestly for a bit piece." This admonition broke the snare, and the good woman renewed her diligence and her strength at the same time.

Speaking to a large company of children, and desiring to attract their attention strongly to his subject, he described the miracle of Christ who opened the eyes of a blind man by moistened clay, our friend stooped down, spat upon the ground, and made clay of the spittle, while at the same time he was proceeding with his address, and then actually anointed his own eyes. This of course made him look ridiculous for the moment, but for that he did not care, the attention of the school was both aroused and secured, and he pleasantly poured into their young minds the word of life. The singularity of the scene served to render the instruction permanent; and the flow of twenty years have not obliterated from the minds of several of those

children either the lesson taught, or the manner in which it was conveyed.

On returning from preaching one night in Kilbride, a person followed him, and showed signs of a wish to enter into conversation. Our friend therefore inquired whether he had been to the meeting. The stranger replied that he had, and liked to hear the preaching, adding, "but man, *I* am a queer sinner." "Pray, what kind of sinner is that?" inquired Mr. P. But, as the man seemed willing to enter upon particulars immediately, and the labour of preaching had greatly heated him, Mr. P. declined pursuing the conversation further at present, but engaged to call on him next day. He did so, and was cordially welcomed. On the Bible being brought and laid before him, being unable to use it himself, on account of his blindness, he requested his host to read a portion, but this was resolutely refused, and with a manifestation of feeling that was very extraordinary. The following conversation brought out the facts, that this miserable man was in a state of habitual despair, persuading himself that he was one of those characters described in Heb. vi, 4, 5, 6, whom it is impossible to renew again

into repentance: that whenever he opened his Bible, this terrible passage seemed always to be ready to meet his eye; and it had often occasioned so much terror to him, that he frequently hurled the book from him as far as he could. Our friend, it seems, did not inquire into the nature of his imaginary sin, but applied himself to show that he misunderstood the passage, giving as his own view, that the persons referred to had had, in proof of the truth of Christianity, both the outward evidence of miracles, and the inward one of personal pardon, manifested to their own souls by the witness of the Holy Ghost, and that they had afterwards so fallen away as to renounce the Gospel from principle, and to treat the Lord Jesus as an impostor, and moreover, obstinately persisted in that rejection. "Is this like yoursell?" said he. "Why mon, ye ken weel enough ye're aye gay vext and awfu' fashed because of your fall. In a' this crack wi' me the noo, ye're no minded to mock the Lord, but to mourn your loss. Jist tak a wee thought of the blessed words of Christ, 'All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven the sons of men.' Why, mon, Christ says this till you: he says it

till you even the noo. Look up mon; be not faithless, but believing. This is the accepted time, and the day of salvation." The affectionate warmth and the fervent confidence with which these words were uttered, under the divine blessing, roused the hopes of the poor desponding soul. He was persuaded to pray, and directed to look to the Saviour as willing and waiting to save even him, and while he was yet speaking, the Lord heard and delivered him, filling his soul with confidence and peace. A complete change was made in his feelings and purposes at that hour. His conversion was sudden, but proved to be real by the blameless life he was enabled thenceforth to lead, and about two or three years afterwards, he died in the faith, triumphing in his last moments in the confident hope of eternal life.

It not unfrequently happens in a season when the soul is violently agitated with the fear of the wrath to come, that emotions of a contradictory character are strangely felt in the heart; hopes mingle with fear, recklessness with anxiety, and sometimes even transient antipathy or hatred may cross the breast. In such a case, great firmness and

wisdom are required in a spiritual guide whose duty it is to help and direct the penitent. Mr. P. on one occasion was conversing in her own house with a female who was in great distress of soul. The plan of salvation with the simple terms of the Gospel had been opened to her, and she was urged to the instant acceptance of the Saviour, and, indeed, she seemed fast approaching a true willingness to yield herself to God; but suddenly she drew back in her soul, and betrayed by her looks a strange alienation of heart. Looking her full in the face, and seeming to read her very thoughts, our friend said, "I'll tell ye what ye would rather ha the noo than salvation, ye're noo wishing that I were out at the door." In her simplicity the poor woman acknowledged that that was just what she was wishing. To many this would have been a sufficient discouragement to lead them to desist from their labour, but not so with Mr. P., he knew the wiles of Satan and the frailty of the human heart too well, and he saw in the inadvertency and sincerity of that very confession a strong reason for persisting in his endeavours to persuade the poor agitated sinner to advance without delay towards

the cross. He gave no place to the devil in this matter; and shortly after his labour was crowned with success, the poor woman found willingness and power to believe, and after an act of appropriating faith, she burst forth, singing in a rapture of joy,

My God is reconciled,
His pard'ning voice I hear;
He owns me for his child,
I can no longer fear;
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father, cry!

He joined with her a while in praise and thanksgiving to God for his rich mercy, and then rose to depart, remarking "it would no dae for him to bide oer lang for fear it might gar 'em wish him out at the door." The woman took the hint, caught him by the hand and declared he should not leave the family that night, and at last prevailed on him to remain. The entire evening was devoted to praise, and such conversation as tended to the confirming and establishing her in grace.

It is not always the wisest course to try to correct a mistake by argument; when it arises from a fault in practice it is often best

to cut up its roots by reproving the sin. A young man one day attempted to discredit the doctrine of Christian perfection, as taught by the Wesleyans, and rested his whole objection upon a fact in his own experience, declaring that he was daily tormented with bad thoughts, and could not be free from them. "My bairn," said Mr. P., "ye maunna judge o' others by yoursel'. And ye ken a bad neebour is no ane o' the family. If ye would just da wi' your ill thoughts as ye da to an ill neebour, that is dinna gie 'em a stool to sit down on, ye'll no be sae muckle troubled as ye hae been. It is no impossible, mon, to affront 'em all.

On the same subject he was rather briskly assailed by a young clergyman who endeavoured to discountenance as fanaticism, Mr. P.'s professions of assurance in a present and full salvation. "You speak," said he, "as it seems to me, with a great deal of presumption and too much boldness about your knowledge of salvation. The change from nature to grace is so gradual and gentle that it cannot be observed, and it is therefore essential to treat souls with tenderness. And as a child is rocked in the cradle, so we

should treat men in religious matters until they be able to serve God with vigour and steadiness, and even then there will be no perfection while in this world. The best of Christians are imperfect, and will continue such while here."

"Ye ken Sir," said Sandy, "that when the wind blows it is a mystery where it comes frae, and where it gangs ta; but there's no sa muckle mystery in its effects: the word of God says ye hear the sound thereof, (and we may add, feel the breeze tae) so is every one that is born of the Spirit. A birth, too, is na sic a wee change o' state as no to be observed. Before we can rock a *child* it maun be *born* ye ken; and what for do ye swither to say a regenerate Christian canna be perfect? The wean in the cradle need na be a cripple or a monster, it may be a perfect child, complete in a' its parts as a child, and may become a perfect man at maturity, and yet no be a perfect angel, nor perfect onything, which is of a different species o' being. A perfect Christian is only what the Saviour wishes a' his to be, serving him wi' a pure heart, and a love which casteth out a' fear."

The young minister remarked there had been lately a falling off among his people. "Frae what?" asked Sandy. "From duties and ordinances." "Is that a'?" said he, "then never mind; if your folk have na come to Christ by repentance and faith in his blood, their fall is no sa muckle to be lamented. My bairn, lead them to the Saviour, and no content yoursel' wi' hopes; travail wi' 'em in birth till Christ be formed in their hearts, and then labour to present them perfect before the Lord when he comes." The young minister felt the force and affection of the advice and retired, we have reason to believe, with feelings of respect and admiration for his humble and faithful friend.

CHAPTER V.

KILSYTH.

Introduction of Methodism—Formation of the Society—Sabbath School—A blessing—Convictions among the Children—Extend to the adults—Revival of 1835.—Objections—Attraction of the meetings—Forty converted—Private intercourse—Moral victories—The whinny park—Conversions in 1838—Another new class—Revival in 1837—Private labours—A new chapel—1845; More conversions.

THE extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit a century ago, during the ministry of the Rev. James Robe, with the extensive revival of spiritual religion in that place, and the surrounding parts, has long rendered Kilsyth a spot of great interest to all those who wish well to the Redeemer's kingdom. It seems, therefore, remarkable that the Wesleyans were so long without making any serious attempt to plant a church there. It is easy to account for this omission during their early efforts in Scotland, for then their

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zeal for simple spiritual godliness would itself prevent their entrance upon a field like that. They sought not proselytes, but converts; and it would have been far more likely to divert the attention of the young believers there from the great duty of simple faith in Christ, and to fix it on mere points of controversy, had they visited the place at that time, than to add to the number of those who were earnestly seeking a personal salvation. The work of God was then going on gloriously; and their interference would have been both unnecessary and injurious. It was right for them, then, to abstain. But surely when the revival had subsided, and the spirit of it had almost entirely passed away for years, those reasons no longer existed. Methodism was indeed planted in Glasgow; but there is reason to think that the number of agents there was small, and the resources generally too limited, for a considerable period, to allow them to undertake the task; and it is more pleasing to imagine that the means were wanting rather than the will. Whatever explanation may be given, it is the fact, that no attempt for this purpose is known to have been made before the year 1827; and this attempt was

totally unconnected with any preconceived plan, or any church authority, but originated in the private zeal and enterprise of a single individual, Rev. J. Cameron, as before related.

It appears that during the twelve months following the first visits to Kilsyth, the local preachers of the Glasgow circuit chiefly supplied sermon. A hall was hired for worship, and the attendance of hearers was very regular and large, many persons testifying their satisfaction and good-will. At the end of a year's labour the Rev. V. Ward endeavoured to form a regular society by instituting a Methodist class. It then appeared that of all the multitudes who attended and approved the preaching, only twelve persons could be found willing to become members on trial, and they were exclusively young women. All these professed a desire to flee from the wrath to come; yet most of them turned back to the world shortly after: and only three of them continued to follow after God in the use of all the means of grace, until they knew from experience the salvation of the Gospel. This year there was little or no increase to the society, and the hands of the preachers began to hang down; and with the unpro-

misg prospects before them, and the late discouragements, it was no wonder their hearts should faint. It was therefore considered in the Quarterly meeting whether or not the place should be abandoned, and their energies directed to some more hopeful quarter. Providentially this design was overruled, and they resolved for the present to labour on in faith. Shortly after this decision they began to see some fruit; one and another were added to the church from time to time, so that in the year 1833 they reckoned fifteen steady members.

About this time there was added to their company an energetic man, who had lately found the Lord, whose zeal and activity excited many. He soon was employed in various offices of usefulness, and has now long time filled the honourable situations of class-leader and local preacher. It was now resolved to have preaching twice on the Lord's Day, and to occupy the afternoon with the class-meeting. Previously to this there had been sermon but once; and the people attended during the other part of the day other places of worship. The number of members was soon increased to thirty-five, and they

were formed into two classes by the Rev. P. M'Owen, with leaders appointed in due form, who were selected from their own ranks. Thus the cause began to assume the aspect of a well organised and prospering community. That important appendage of a lively Christian church, a Sabbath school, was instituted, and a very encouraging measure of the blessing of Heaven was made visible upon the undertaking. A considerable number of the scholars were brought under serious impressions, and prayer-meetings were established among them. These meetings their zealous teacher, then in his first love, constantly attended, and laboured to render them seasons of special instruction in the simple plan of salvation, as well as times of devotion and prayer to God.

Mr. Patrick by this time was regarded in various places as a man highly honoured by his divine Master. His labours and successes were spoken of with respect and affection, and his help was earnestly desired by the well-wishers of Zion in Kilsyth. Coming there on a Saturday evening in order to officiate next day as a local preacher, he was introduced to the prayer-meeting of the

"serious boys," where he addressed them in his simple and persuasive style, and afterwards the exercises of the meeting proceeded. One of the lads became importunate with God for a present blessing, and shortly professed aloud that he had found the Lord to the joy of his soul, while attempting to approach him in his devotions. The other lads were astonished at this event, and the meeting broke up with a general feeling of awe.

It may serve to show the kind of feeling that was then common among the young people of the school, and the reverence in which Mr. P. was held among them, to mention that on the same evening two young women were brought before him, with the earnest request that he would lay his hands on their heads and bless them in the name of the Lord. He immediately complied, using the words of one of the patriarchs a little modified to suit the special occasion. An extraordinary influence, it is said, seemed to accompany the transaction, and specially to rest upon the parties chiefly concerned. One of these young women a few days after was made the happy possessor of the joy of present salvation, and holds fast her integrity.

to this hour. It is not, however, to be supposed that Mr. P. was a fanatic who imagined himself endowed with any extraordinary power to bless or to curse. He was far too humble and wise a Christian for that. His compliance with the request was quite unpremeditated, and totally unconnected with any idea of self-exaltation. His sole motive was a yearning love of souls, combined with a firm belief and hope that God would really pour out his blessing upon these people. In this he was soon confirmed.

The next day being the last Sabbath of February, 1835, during the prayer-meeting in the class, a young female was enabled to enter into a personal covenant with the Lord, receiving the knowledge of salvation in the remission of sin, and rejoiced aloud among her companions because of her strong consolation. During the same day the teacher, in addressing the Sabbath scholars in general, was led to dwell upon the great blessing which God had just vouchsafed to two of their companions who were then present, and he declared with affectionate earnestness that as there was no respect of persons with God, the same blessing would be bestowed upon all

without exception, who sought it in true faith. While he was speaking, it appeared as if an overpowering light broke in upon their minds; an unusual solemnity pervaded the school, and soon there were heard in all directions sighs and sobbings. Tears began copiously to flow, and unrestrainable cries burst out from all directions for the pardoning mercy of God. The violence of the feelings, and the great numbers of the young people so instantly affected, produced an apparent disorder which disconcerted and confounded even the person whose address had been so seconded by the Divine Spirit. The business of the school was stopped, and for a considerable time nothing could be heard but mingled lamentations and prayer for mercy. Meantime the hour arrived for the adult congregation to assemble for the public preaching; but the hall was pre-occupied by the young people, who could neither be removed nor restrained from crying aloud to God with groans and tears for the salvation of their souls. The congregation was therefore obliged to take their places in the midst of the agitated and agonizing youths. A messenger was sent to hasten the preacher and to inform

him of what was going on, and to say that "the friends could not well tell what all this scene might mean." When Mr. P. arrived and had cast his eyes over the meeting, he lifted up both his hands and shouted "Glory be to God; I understand it all," and at once abandoning the intention of holding a regular preaching-service, he invited all present to join in earnest prayer and faith for the healing blessings of mercy. The evening was accordingly spent in these exercises, and it was found at the close of the meeting that twelve persons professed to have found pardon from the Lord.

On all ordinary occasions Mr. P. was very strenuous in his exertions to secure attention to regularity and order in the appointed means of grace; but when he was convinced that the Lord of the means was working in an unusual way, he submitted to a suspension of rule for the time, and would bear reproach for it if necessary, rather than resist the Spirit. On this occasion nothing could have induced him to supersede the appointed service, but the deep and clear conviction that such was a course indicated by the Spirit of God himself, and it was therefore his duty.

The suddenness, the extent and the character of the excitement on the occasion, together with the consideration of the inadequacy of the human means which had been employed to produce such effects, led him confidently to conclude that the special prayers he had been offering were actually answered, that God was there, and there to bless and save. It seemed to him that the days of Mr. Robe were returned, and he fondly trusted that now the hallowing influence of the Gospel would be disseminated throughout the whole town.

The transactions of this evening gave rise to various opinions, some ascribing the whole affair to the energetic use of Scriptural means which so good a man as Mr. P. was supposed able at any time to employ, and others resolved the matter into an instance of mere animal sympathy, and altogether a mistake and delusion. But it should never be forgotten that the Spirit of God is a Divine *Person*, and that he worketh both in the Church and in the world, not as an unintelligent unconscious influence, but according to his own "*will*." Although his presence may be asked in prayer, and may be sought and

found in the use of ordained means, yet He is still a *person*, and exhibits, according to his will, a merciful and benevolent Sovereignty. He sheds his influence upon all, even without the use of the means; and by the provisions of the covenant of grace, he is present to all them that truly seek him; but the methods and measure of his aid are regulated by his own will, and as he may be grieved, and withdraw from the sinner, so, on the other hand, he often, according to the riches of his grace, imparts to the creatures abundantly more than we are able to ask or think. A true religious revival is, in fact, a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and should be regarded as a beneficent and voluntary visitation of the Divine Spirit, and the saving changes effected at such times as "his gracious work." If this be a true view, it must be very offensive to the Holy Spirit to be spoken of by Christians as a mere unintelligent law, managed by good men, and the practice of so treating Him cannot be favourable either to his long continuance, or the wider outpouring of his blessings.

Many of the emotions common at such a time may indeed be caused by the mere laws

of matter and mind, and others which are the direct result of Divine operation, may resemble them. This fact, however, should only teach us caution in our conclusions, and induce us to look for corroborating proof before we decide. There is danger, and more infidelity than is often supposed, when we ascribe all the effects we observe at such times to mere natural causes. It may accord with the theories of some modern philosophers to do so, and to trace every result up to the sympathy subsisting between human souls, or to the natural operation of truth or motives upon the intellects or heart; but these theories banish God out of his own world, like the Epicurean of old, and divest the Gospel of one of its most glorious truths.

The outpouring of the Spirit of God at any time is not less an awful fact because it may be derided by scoffers, or explained away by others; and it is difficult to imagine that there is no guilt when even serious professors of religion lightly contradict what is in reality His work. It appears to us an aggravated and horrible crime in the crowd, who, at the day of Pentecost, declared the very words which the apostles were then uttering by the

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inspiration of God—the babbling of drunkenness. And little less revolting is the narrative that the quickenings and conversions of sinners in the days of Mr. Robe were by even professors denounced as “the devil’s work,” and that a public fast was appointed on account of the “awful delusion.” It was not, therefore, a matter of surprise, but only of sorrow, that somewhat similar sentiments were entertained and expressed too by some persons on the present occasion. Mistakes in judgment are possible to the best of men; ignorance, prejudice, bodily constitution, and social connections, may easily lead us astray; but when the question is respecting a religious movement, whether it be of God or man, it behoves us to be modest and cautious, and to have undeniable evidence to determine our judgments, especially on the disapproving side, before we pronounce it, lest haply we be found even to fight against God.

A wise and considerate judgment is very proper on such occasions as that which was now opening in Kilsyth; which, while it refuses to admit the censures and contradictions of mere opposers, is also equally averse to the hasty conclusions of blind credulity,

and is conscientiously jealous for the honour and truth of God. And it seems a striking instance of Divine providence that generally in a revival of spiritual religion in any church, there are raised up at the same time persons whose peculiar habits and turns of feeling lead them to take the position of objectors and restraints. The just balance of the public mind is thus better maintained. Such was the fact at this time in Kilsyth. Several hesitating Christians hinted from time to time to the more active agents, “We wish you may not be deceiving yourselves.” The words, temper, and conduct of the young converts were incessantly watched; and the fruits which in Scripture are represented as following the new birth, were searched after as evidences of the genuineness of the work. And inasmuch as some of those fruits require time in order to be made manifest to other persons, the young converts were directed to give all diligence to make their profiting appear, and that others, seeing their good works, might glorify God on their behalf. Meantime, it was readily acknowledged that a power was present among the people, the like of which had not been witnessed in the place for many a day.

On Thursday following, being the fast-day, Mr. P. preached in the evening. In the midst of his prayer, a woman cried aloud for mercy. Immediately a prayer-meeting was begun on her behalf, and it pleased God so to pour out of his Spirit on all present, that at the conclusion of the meeting, thirty-two persons professed to have stepped into the liberty of the children of God.

From this period, religious services became general throughout the town. Some of them were protracted to a great length, and almost all of them proved seasons of Divine power and blessing. The concern about eternal things was diffused among all classes of the population, and in the course of a week about a hundred persons found peace with God. Such was the commencement of the revival in Kilsyth, in the year 1835. The labours of the regular circuit ministers were rendered very useful, especially the sermons of the Rev. J. Mitchell were accompanied with power, and the wise and laborious efforts of the Rev. P. M'Owan were invaluable. He spent three successive days in visiting at their own houses the persons who had lately obtained good, endeavouring to test and consolidate their

piety. The instructions and advices thus privately given were evidently instrumental, under the blessing of God, in rendering permanent the work wrought. As it is highly desirable at all times that ministerial influence should be brought into full play upon individuals as such, so it is even necessary at such seasons as this, and for want of it there is reason to fear that much incipient good in other places have proved abortive. The course of Mr. M'Owan was wise, and the fruits of it remain to this day.

In the midst of these scenes, our friend Mr. P. seemed almost to forget that he was still in the body. His own intercourse with God filled him with a joy and gladness unutterable, and he as often shouted "Hallelujah" because of his own assurance of salvation, as because he saw the work of the Lord extending around him. The influence of his enthusiasm was often overpowering; and the power of the Divine Spirit, which we believe accompanied it, dashed and confounded various scoffers and would-be persecutors. One man who came to hear on purpose to censure and deride, suddenly was struck with a panic, and fled from the window where he had placed himself, with

all the symptoms of a ludicrous terror. Many persons who could not enter the Lodge (the hired place of worship,) by reason of the press, so as to hear distinctly, have acknowledged that the force of their impressions of awe and reverence from a view of his manner and apart from all knowledge of his present discourse, was overpowering.

It may serve to convey an idea of the state of things in the town at this time to say that a person from the country, who had been spending the Sabbath with the mourners, and had been up nearly all the night, nevertheless felt it very difficult to leave the place on Monday and return home. He was admonished of his duties, and urged to leave. "I promise," said he, "that I'll stay in no one house unless it be for prayer." On his way out of the town he was beckoned into a cottage, where they began forthwith to call upon God, when a Divine unction rested upon all. One and another entered the room, and the "spirit of prophecy" seemed to invest every one that entered. Believers rejoiced, penitents lamented, and many seekers found the rest they sought. The entire day and the following night the meeting continued, without inter-

mission; until, utterly exhausted, he left the place and retired for repose. It seemed as if an invisible charm drew persons towards this spot, and prevented their leaving when once they entered the room. A young woman was there, agonizing for pardon; her sister came to seek her, and was soon reduced to the same distress. The mother, ignorant of what was going on, sent a third for her sisters, but she also was led to cry out aloud, "What must I do to be saved?" and, still delaying, a brother came to seek and bring home all three. But he also had hardly entered the room before he began to cry aloud, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" When the news of these facts was brought to the mother, a pious spiritual soul, she fell on her knees in her own house, and gave God thanks for his great work, intreating him to manifest his pardon to each and all of her children. That evening they all returned to their house together, praising God for pardoning mercy vouchsafed to them.

Mr. P. himself found this impulse. Being obliged to return to his worldly duties, he left at night and came home to Coatbridge, weary but happy. Yet he could find no rest to his spirit; and after waiting a day, he rose early

in the morning and walked back the ten miles to Kilsyth, arriving there before the inhabitants generally were awake. And, stepping to the door of the house where he had been holding meetings two days before, he commenced singing,

"Is there any body here like weeping Mary?
Turn to my Jesus, and he'll draw nigh!"

The surprised inmates joyfully recognized his voice, and welcomed him back. A meeting was immediately commenced, and the blessings of Heaven were copiously poured out. Many even of the most active of the prayer leaders were constrained to remark, they had seen strange things that day. About forty souls were converted to God before the closing of the evening exercises, so mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

In the intervals of the more public means, Mr. P. occupied himself in conversing at their own firesides with individuals, expounding the demands of the law and the simple terms of mercy in the Gospel, and bringing home the truth by the most direct and searching appeals. "My bairn," he would say, holding his hand directly over the head of the person

he addressed, "my bairn, God is there; his e'e is on ye. He wants you now; are ye willing? Will ye now give him your heart? let us try. Let us pray." And, kneeling down, he would pour out prayers of astonishing unction and power. His own faith rose to a pitch of confidence that one must have witnessed in order to conceive, and his pleadings on behalf of the sinner by his side were so tender and melting, as almost irresistibly to occasion the thought, This is the faithful fervent prayer that availeth much with God. And if his companion still hesitated to cast an entire confidence upon Christ, he would rise from his knees, and taking hold of his hand, would direct him to sing, in the exercise of faith,

Five bleeding wounds he bears,
Received on Calvary;
They prove effectual prayers,
They strongly speak for me:
Forgive him! O forgive! they cry,
Nor let that ransomed sinner die.

Numbers, while engaged in this effort, have been led to venture by faith upon the Atone-ment, and their melodious prayer has been turned into rapturous praise, in singing the