

"MADE STRONG."



MEMORIALS  
OF  
ALEXANDER M'NAB, M.A.

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J. AND R. PARLANE, PAISLEY.





## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE following MEMORIALS of one who "OUT OF WEAKNESS WAS MADE STRONG" were originally prepared for private circulation only, with the view of impressing the experiences they record upon certain young friends in a similar position to the one described. They are now, however, offered in the present form to the general public, in the belief that, with the divine blessing, which is humbly and earnestly asked for, they are calculated to be a stimulus and a help to many others.



## CONTENTS.

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	Page
I. Earlier Days, . . . . .	9
II. Preparing for Service, . . . . .	33
III. A Summer Holiday, . . . . .	44
IV. Beginning Work, . . . . .	68
V. Going Home, . . . . .	91
"This do in remembrance of Me," . . . . .	111



# “MADE STRONG.”

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MEMORIALS OF ALEXANDER M'NAB, M.A.

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## I.

### EARLIER DAYS.

THE subject of the following narrative was born in the Manse of Ardrossan, Ayrshire, on the 29th of August, 1860. When a few months old he was seized with one of those ailments which are not uncommon in the period of childhood, but of so severe a character, that though hitherto he had been an uncommonly strong and healthy child, his life was almost despaired of. The thought of

parting with their only child, as he then was, was to his parents a source of very great grief, and all the more that they had never yet heard him utter one articulate word; and it seemed to them as if the trial would not be nearly so severe if they had heard him pronounce the name of JESUS. In answer to prayer, as they believe, the desire was gratified. He was spared not only to pronounce the name, but to preach it with an earnest, believing heart. The malady at a critical moment, in the use of remedies of a somewhat severe character, was effectually checked. The parents' hearts were filled with thankfulness and joy, but that very cure laid, alas! the foundation of trouble in another form—a trouble which followed him like a dark shadow all through life, and ultimately became God's messenger to summon him home.

A godly minister, whose charming addresses are not yet forgotten by those who were children in the last generation, used to say that a

child might know the love of Jesus as soon as it knew its mother's love. And so, it is believed, it was with this dear boy. While yet a mere child, the bible was his constant companion; and it was his habit to kneel and pray in his own simple words, not only when alone, but when his father went forth to preach or engage in any effort that had soul-winning in view. He would invariably then come in beside him, and unite his own little voice with his in pleading at the throne of grace for an abundant blessing. Nothing could give him greater pleasure than to be permitted, as he often was, to accompany his father, when he was wont to sit in a corner of the platform—an interested and observant spectator of all that occurred. On one of these occasions, on the way home, he said,

“Do you know what you and the evangelists reminded me of to-night? In the first meeting you were, I thought, like men firing guns; and then in the second, as you moved

about among the people, I thought you were like men trying to find out the birds they had shot."

When not sufficiently well to do this, he was sure to be waiting for his father's return, eagerly enquiring,

"How did you get on? and had you a good after-meeting?"

If afterwards he met with any whom he had observed at the meetings, he was sure to put some pointed question to them; and it was often such as they had some difficulty in at once answering. If they said they had read the tract that was given them, he would ask,

"Did you understand it and believe it?"

Or if they said they liked the address they had heard, he would say,

"But are you going to do as you were bidden? Are you going to come to Jesus and be saved?"

There were times indeed when he was himself brought under deep conviction of sin;



and then it seemed as if he had never yet opened his heart to Christ. One day, when his father was at a distance from home, and he could not have been more than eight years of age, there was received from him the following letter. "I must tell you that last night, as Mary and I were talking about some of the things that Mr Miller (the evangelist) had been saying, the text came into my head, '*though you make your bed in HELL.*' Well, this frightened me, and I spoke to aunt Rosína, and she gave me a short prayer to say to Jesus; it was this, 'Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquity.' Well, as I was praying and beseeching Jesus to blot out all my sins (for now I think I have never opened the door of my heart to Him), I shut my eyes, and I saw an angel come to the side of my bed, and say, Allie, thy sins which are many are forgiven, and be of good comfort. And I am quite happy to-day, although I am wheezing."

On another occasion the late Rev. William Gebbie, of Dunlop, a man well known in his day as one who had a perfect passion for souls, and who was greatly beloved by all who knew him, was on a visit to his father's house. On going into the breakfast-room somewhat early one morning, he found the little boy sitting and reading there; at once he entered into conversation with him about his spiritual state, and to all his inquiries he responded with uncommon frankness. Mr Gebbie then, in the kindly and sympathetic way which always distinguished him, drew the little fellow to his side, and talked to him so simply and sweetly of the way of life, and expounded so clearly the texts that he thought would meet his difficulties, that the little fellow was never afterwards harassed with a single doubt or fear, and he ever afterwards cherished for that dear man of God the profoundest respect and reverence. One text was specially dwelt on, which the Holy Ghost seemed then to

burn with peculiar power on his heart and memory; and often afterwards he recalled and repeated it, as suggesting a foundation for his faith from which nothing would be able to move him—"the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7).

It is scarcely to be expected that a child born and nursed in an atmosphere permeated with active, earnest, Christian influences would pass in conversion through a crisis as marked as those who were brought up in circumstances the very reverse, although doubtless there would be a moment, discernable by the eye of the Omniscient One, when the new life begotten of the Holy Ghost would first enter the soul. Such experiences as these that have been mentioned, if they cannot in truth be recognised in this case at least as marking the beginning of the new life in the soul, may well be regarded, and such indeed they proved themselves to be,

the beginning of a new stage in the life that had already begun.

As the attacks of breathlessness, to which as a child he was subject, had now become very frequent (detaining him at home, and in bed at least every second day), Alexander was under the necessity of abandoning school altogether. He was accordingly left entirely to himself at a time when education usually begins in earnest. Though this arrangement had the effect of limiting his acquaintance with some subjects on which he would have liked to have been better grounded, it yet operated beneficially in another direction, as it brought under his notice a variety of other subjects which he examined with much care. He thus succeeded in gathering a great amount of information on many subjects with which boys at his age are not usually familiar. It was his habit to examine everything very thoroughly, and he never could rest unless he understood the

minutest detail. If a piece of peculiar mechanism, for instance, were given him for his amusement, his very first act when he got it, was usually to break it up that he might see the principles on which it was constructed. He read whatever came in his way, but novels and what he called "trashy love stories" were carefully eschewed. Though passionately fond of music, it was not until years afterwards, when he went to live in Glasgow, that he heard a secular song. Though a frequent sufferer, he was never heard to utter a single complaint; and the paroxysm was no sooner over than he was as bright and buoyant as ever. It often seemed as if, when he was well, he could never be ill; and when ill again as if he could never be well. He had a keen appreciation of anything ludicrous; and his sense of humour was never so active as when he was suffering from these attacks of breathlessness. He would give the point of some

anecdote he had heard, or utter some droll combination that occurred to himself, in a way which was often to those beside him extremely amusing. He was well schooled in those days to disappointment. If he looked forward with peculiar pleasure to anything, a school treat, a holiday, or a gathering of friends, he was sure on the eve of its occurrence to take ill, and not infrequently he was lying in bed when he knew that others were romping and making merry ; but he was never once known to utter a murmur. In fact, he came to expect it, so that it was a common remark of his, " I need not look forward to this, for I am sure to be ill." He took his disappointments quite cheerfully, as the expressed will of a loving Father ; and he often quoted with great delight the lines :—

" Ill that God blesses is our good,  
And unblest good is ill ;  
And all is right that seems most wrong,  
If it be His sweet will."

Alexander's great amusement in those days was music. He set himself without any help from others to make himself familiar with the notes, and for long hours he used to sit, when unable to do anything else, patiently drumming away at the piano. Before long he acquired considerable facility in the use of the instrument. His great ambition, however, was to play the organ, that he might lead the singing at some of the evangelistic meetings which were so common in the neighbourhood then. With the aid of a few lessons which he received by travelling occasionally to a neighbouring town, he was soon able to do this. He came by and bye to have a remarkable knowledge of the principles of musical science, and those on which the instruments he used were constructed, and was able to play with very great taste and skill. Occasionally even in these early days he would set a favourite hymn to music of his own composition. One particularly

is associated in the family with his name. It is No. 238 of "Hymns of Grace and Glory," and possesses a significance now which it scarcely had then, and begins :—

"Onward! upward! homeward!  
Joyfully I flee  
From this world of sorrow,  
With my Lord to be;  
Onward to the glory, upward to the prize,  
Homeward to the mansions far above the skies."

One day before he had ceased entirely to attend school, when Alexander was not more than ten years of age, he came home in a state of great excitement, and told his father he had met with a particularly nice boy, who had for some time been in the habit of going along the Stevenston shore in the evening when his lessons were over, to distribute tracts among the boys and girls who might be playing there, and gather as many of them as he could get together that he might pray with them and speak to them :



there was a large hollow, he was told, in the sand in a quiet place, which was very suitable for the purpose : would his father allow him to go along with that boy ? he would himself like so much to do it. This permission the father of course was only too glad to grant. So every other night, while the long summer evenings lasted, he might have been seen with his bible and the "Grace and Glory" hymn book strapped together under his arm, hastening with a bright countenance and a buoyant step down the avenue which led from the manse on the way to meet his companion. It was their habit to spend first a little time in earnest, united prayer, and then to sally forth with the utmost boldness on their little mission of love. There lies before me now a number of the little addresses he gave on these occasions, which he seems to have prepared with the greatest care. They are characterised, as befitted a mere child, with great simplicity ; but they breathe

the spirit of one who had a clear apprehension of the way of salvation through faith in the blood of the cross, and whose heart was burning with desire for the honour of Christ and the salvation of souls.

One of his favourite themes was Mark ii. 3, "Stand forth," in which he applied the story of the man with the withered hand, first to those who were seeking Jesus, that "they must let Jesus do all." "This man needed a living hand to help him in this world, and we need a living heart to fit us for the world to come. But just as this man had nothing to do but believe that Jesus was able and willing to give him that living hand, so we have nothing to do but just to believe that Jesus is able and willing to give us a new heart." And then he applies the words to those who have already received the blessing. "'Stand forth' in the world. Do not be ashamed of Jesus. God has said, 'If ye be ashamed of me before

men, I will be ashamed of you before my Father and before his angels.'” The youngest child is told that he can do something for Jesus. They are told the story of the Naismith hammer, that with a single blow can crush a bar of iron to powder, but is worked by a little handle with such ease that a mere child can turn it; and then he adds, “I have something better to tell you of the arm of God. It is still mightier than that mighty hammer, and it can be moved with equal ease. A very little child can move it. The small handle is prayer, and it can be grasped by a very little child.”

About this time Alexander was seized with a sharp attack of his old ailment, which was followed by a somewhat sharp attack also of pleurisy. For some days it seemed as if life was hanging in the balance. But much prayer was made on his behalf, and it pleased God in His great goodness to spare him a little longer, though he still continued very

fragile and subject to frequent attacks of breathlessness. A parent's cry for him was expressed in these lines :—

The hectic flush, the labouring breath,  
The piercing stings of pain :  
Will nought these messengers of death  
Their cruel hand restrain ?  
O Jesus, spare my child.

Within my heart of hearts encased  
That dear, dear boy has lain,  
Since first his infant lips I kiss'd,  
And called him proudly mine :  
O Jesus, spare my child.

Beside me through ten happy years,  
I watched him as he grew ;  
I shared his childish joys and fears,  
His inmost thoughts I knew :  
O Jesus, spare my child.

His little mind I saw unfold  
Like some sweet bud of spring,  
And to my heart what joys untold  
That opening flower did bring !  
O Jesus, spare my child.

It tears my heart to think that he  
Should go to fill a grave ;  
I cry to One, in agony,  
Whose hand is strong to save :  
O Jesus, spare my child.

Speak Thou the word, my dearest Lord,  
I know Thou hast the power,  
And death will sheath its dreaded sword,  
And leave my darling flower :  
O Jesus, spare my child.

Yet could I wish to have him live  
If not to honour Thee ?  
Ah, no ; but surely Thou wilt give  
Thy Spirit graciously :  
O Jesus, spare my child.

And should he live, I only ask  
That he may live to Thee—  
That all through life his only task  
To do Thy will may be :  
O Jesus, spare my child.

Perchance it cannot be ; if so,  
I bow : "Thy will be done ;"  
To better joys than here we know  
I yield my darling son :  
O Jesus, take my child.

I will not fret ! God's way is best ;  
Love beams on heaven's brow ;  
I lean my head on Jesus' breast,  
My heart is peaceful now :  
With Christ I leave my child.

The year 1873 was in the parish of Ardrossan a year of grace, the interest in spiritual things being almost as deep and widespread as in the memorable year '59, when the district participated so largely in the great awakening which was then almost universal. The interest originated in a little company who for some time previous to that year had met weekly in the manse around an open bible for fellowship and prayer; and receiving remarkable quickening themselves they began to pray for a like quickening to others, and a large outpouring of the Holy Ghost; and they began to hold special meetings for the purpose of prayer, especially one which was held regularly on the Saturday evenings. This had continued for more than twelve months;

and sometimes the spirit of prayer was so remarkably poured out that a spirit of expectation was awakened, and the Sabbath services were not infrequently begun with the wondering inquiry if this would not be the day when the answer to their prayers was at last to be vouchsafed. The first manifestation of special interest was apparent in connection with some children's services that were held by Mr Charles Daniels, an agent of the Scottish Evangelisation Society. From the children it spread rapidly to their parents, and before long was apparent among all classes of the community. The principal meeting place was a chapel of ease attached to the Parish Church. And there for several months, night after night, the meetings continued to be held; and there was never a night but large numbers remained for personal conversation in the deepest concern about their souls. A large proportion of these inquirers were young men. And their

subsequent lives, in very many cases at least, have given abundant evidence of the reality and depth of the blessing they received.

In all these meetings Alexander took the liveliest interest. He was at as many of them as the state of his health would permit; and in the after meetings he was frequently seen with his arm round the shoulders of some old school fellow, pointing out to him passages of scripture or explaining, as he had learned and experienced himself, the way of salvation. The meetings were frequently addressed by Mr Richard Hill, of Melrose, who had come to the help of his brother evangelist. These addresses produced on Alexander the profoundest impression. He used to sit and gaze, as if in rapture, at the speaker's face. The teaching he then received was very helpful to him, and never forgotten, and often afterwards he referred to it with the deepest gratitude.



One of the results of these meetings was the formation of a Y. M. C. A., of which, from the very first, Alexander was an active promoter. A little band of these young men, of whom he was one, not content with their weekly gatherings, were wont to meet every morning as early as nine o'clock, to have a little season of fellowship in prayer, before beginning the active duties of the day.

At the first communion which was held after the meetings were closed, an unusually large number presented themselves for church membership. Alexander also of his own accord did so. But he was only entering on his thirteenth year, and it was feared that some of the elders might object to him on that ground, so that his father tried to persuade him against it at that time. It was, however, apparently to be such a disappointment and grief to him, he was permitted to attend the communicants' class, and this he did most faithfully; and, then having pressed the matter,

he was permitted to attend at the private interview which was to be held with all the candidates before their names were submitted to the Session. When at this latter meeting it came to his turn to enter his father's private room in the Session-House, his father recalls with peculiar interest what then occurred.

He stepped in quite briskly and sat down, with an expression on his countenance which seemed to say that he was quite ready to be catechised.

"Well, Allie," was his father's first remark, "tell me the story of your conversion."

This he did at once without the slightest hesitancy or difficulty, recalling specially that interview already referred to with Mr Gebbie, when he pointed out the text, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and telling something of his subsequent experience. As his father listened he felt it was as satisfactory a

narrative as any he had received that night, and that he would be scarcely justified in refusing him admission to the Lord's Table, if he so desired it. However, he said,

"Allie, you are very young, and people knowing you to be my son would take more notice of you than of others; and I would not like you, after having been at the communion table, to be going and living inconsistently, and perhaps behaving in such a way as to bring discredit upon us."

He answered, "Father, I have thought of all that, but I do with all my heart wish to live a christian life, and I thought if I partook of the communion it would be the means of strengthening me." And so there the matter was allowed to rest. On the night when the tokens were given, each young communicant received a text, and a special word of encouragement and counsel. Alexander received Phil. i. 21, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," a text

which he seemed to have adopted at once as the motto of his future life, as it is found written in Greek or Latin or English in a prominent place on almost all his books that were shortly afterwards in daily use.

## II.

### PREPARING FOR SERVICE.

IN November 1876, Alexander matriculated as a student in the University of Glasgow. It was felt to be a step in the dark, as his health was still very uncertain; but as the doctors still held out the hope that he might yet outlive his delicate tendency, and the work was very congenial to him, he entered on it with great hopefulness and buoyancy of spirits. He was anything but well prepared, having resumed his studies, which for several years had been entirely laid aside, only at the beginning of the year, but he took the step after much prayer, and in the full consciousness that the Lord would be with him; and he was enabled to devote himself to the work of

his classes with such diligence and faithfulness, that though he had taken a medical certificate with him he was never absent during that first session a single hour, and at the end of the second year he passed with considerable credit the classical examinations for the degree of M.A. His constant companion during these two years was a young man who, with a reputation for learning, culture and piety far above the average, occupies now a position of much importance in the Church of Scotland. Alexander acknowledged with great thankfulness how much he was indebted to the example and stimulating conversation of that dear friend, for whom ever afterwards he cherished the most brotherly affection. He enjoyed also during these two sessions, and indeed all through his university course, the ministry of the Rev. Dr. J. Elder Cumming, of Sandyford, from whose earnest, spiritual teaching he derived not a little profit.

It was very distinctly recognised by Alexander as a principle that ought to regulate him in the whole of his college curriculum, that his work at that period was distinctively preparatory; that as such it was given him by the Lord, and that his duties therefore as a student were those that had the first claim upon his time and thought. He was deeply grieved when he found, as he sometimes did, young men in the same position as himself allowing themselves to be engrossed with all kinds of interesting christian work, and consequently neglecting their own proper duties to such an extent that they were the objects of constant ridicule, the cause of Christ with which they were so prominently identified receiving the credit of their ignorance and folly. He felt that they were not only injuring the cause they wished to promote, but they were crippling themselves for the special work for which they were now in preparation.

There were many gatherings in the city at that time, at which it would have been a joy to him to have been present, but he never for a moment would think of them until first his own proper work was done. The consequence was that he was able in all his classes to take a most respectable place beside the most distinguished of his classmates, and his influence accordingly, as one who was known to be interested in all that tended to advance the cause of the gospel, was recognised and felt by many: He lived long enough to see some of those with whom he had expostulated for the dishonour they were unwittingly bringing on the Master they professed to love and serve, lose their apparent zeal, sink at last into utter worldliness, and disappear altogether from the field of active service.

As soon as Alexander entered the university, he identified himself with the missionary association, and took an active interest in all that tended to promote its objects. For two



years he acted as one of its treasurers, and was most conscientious and painstaking in the discharge of its duties. He was all anxiety, when any responsible duty was devolved upon him, that everything should be fulfilled in its minutest details; and in a matter where money was involved he could not have rested unless he had been able to account for the minutest fraction, which on all occasions he was able to do.

While he threw himself heartily into the work of every class as it came, no subject perhaps interested him more than that of Philosophy as taught in the class of Logic by Professor Veitch, and in the class of Ethics as taught by Professor Edward Caird. Had health been granted him, he would gladly have gone much further into this subject than in the circumstances it was possible for him then to do. As it was, however, the two goodly volumes of essays and exercises which he wrote and preserved in connection

with these two classes are sufficient testimony to the deep interest which he took in the varied and subtle questions which occurred for discussion. He felt both these classes, and especially the latter, exercising a powerful influence upon his mind in stimulating thought, and widening the range of his mental vision. He was led to inquire with the utmost carefulness into the grounds on which some of the beliefs he had long cherished rested. The issue of the scrutiny was that he clung with more fondness and with more simplicity than ever to the living Personal Christ, as the mighty Saviour who had died to atone for his sins, and is now alive for evermore to perfect all that concerns the souls that put their trust in Him. He was amazed when he heard of any, through such teaching as he was familiar with, led to doubt or disbelieve any of the essential doctrines of the gospel or lose the warmth of their love and zeal for the cause of Christ; he felt that the gospel after

all must have had a slight hold on their understanding and affections, or that they but dimly apprehended the principles that were expounded to them. As for himself, in all matters of essential importance, his faith was never for a moment in the slightest degree shaken, and the intellectual stimulus he received was of the greatest value to him in dealing with other important and practical themes which soon afterwards engaged his thoughts.

Having passed at the close of this session the department of philosophy, he entered with great spirit on his final session in arts, in the hope of passing at its close the department of mathematics, and thus completing all the examinations necessary for the degree of M.A. He felt that it would entail upon him a very considerable amount of toil, as he had not been able to give sufficient attention to some of the earlier stages of this subject, and it had no special attraction for him. But he

was determined to do his best. And he did it. Not a moment was lost. He had his time rigidly apportioned, and no consideration could tempt him to neglect it. He did it conscientiously as a duty to God, so deeply did he feel that it was necessary for his mental discipline, and that it would enable him to occupy a more influential position in the future, should that be granted him, when the actual work of life was begun, than otherwise he would be able to do. He was determined at least that no one would be able to point to him as a proof that the profession of earnest faith in evangelical truth was synonymous with weakness of intellect or poverty of scholarship. A college friend with whom he was much associated has written: "How well I remember the Sunday evenings we used to have before the lamps were lighted, when he would sit down at the little harmonium and play the hymns he cared for with so much feeling. His conscientious-

ness in doing his class work night after night with untiring energy often put "Alick" (his brother) "and me to shame. And his quiet christian life left an impression on us which we can never forget. He is not dead. He still lives in the good he did, in the noble example he has left us. God grant that we may live as he did."

His health on the whole was satisfactory at this time, though his strength was somewhat limited; and the murky fogs which usually settle on the city in early winter were at times not a little irritating to his lungs, and provoked occasional coughing of a somewhat violent character. He cherished fondly the hope that he would be able to weather the winter, but in the beginning of February, when he went home for the usual Candlemas holidays, he threw down his books and said, "I must see the doctor." It was with difficulty he had walked from the station. His coughing was incessant and violent. His expecto-

ration began to be tinged with blood. And he had no appetite; nothing could tempt him to eat. The doctor's efforts to help him were quite ineffectual. But one day he brought to him a book, written by a London physician who had been much used in dealing with such complaints as his. He read it carefully, and as it seemed to him reasonable, he was inclined, especially as there did not appear to be any other hope or help, to consult him; and this with the full knowledge and approbation of the local physician he did. The result was, that all the more prominent symptoms soon disappeared. The spitting of blood ceased and the appetite returned. He long cherished the hope that he might return to College and complete his session, and several mornings he arranged his books and sat down, pale and sickly though he was, and made an attempt to resume his old work. But soon the head would fall down, and the hand drop the pen, and he felt it would be

impossible to continue. He learned too, that though his attendance had been most faithful up till that time, it was not sufficient to ensure its recognition as a full session. This undoubtedly was to him a severe disappointment, as it involved the going over again a kind of work from which he was anxious to escape as speedily as possible. Yet he bore it all with the greatest sweetness of temper and peace of spirit; he simply said,

“I have been well tutored in the school of disappointment, but God’s way is always best.”

### III.

#### A SUMMER HOLIDAY.

CONTINUING to improve as summer advanced, it was proposed that he should have a voyage to the Mediterranean, and this, through the kindness of Hugh Hogarth, Esq., and the other owners of the S.S. "Baron Ardrossan," was arranged for. Upon returning home he wrote a connected narrative of the voyage, which he entitled "A Summer Holiday," evidently intended for future service, though never used.

Describing his voyage to Cardiff, and a day or two spent in "the delightful task of taking coals on board," he finds himself steaming down the Bristol Channel, bound for Alexandria, and fairly put to sea. "And now I at



least felt that the last link which had bound us to the old world was broken, as we did not intend to touch land till we reached Alexandria. It was a moment of peculiar loneliness, and it would have been easy to indulge a little sentimentalism. But that was not to be tolerated; so scattering all thoughts that were making for that direction to the winds, I mounted the bridge of our good vessel and surveyed the scene. The morning looked fine, but as the day advanced the wind rose and with it the sea, and we were fairly into the channel. It was what I call very rough, although the captain would not give in to that way of putting it; all he would admit was that *a bit of a breeze* was blowing, accompanied with *a slight ground swell*. With all my resolutions to the contrary, thoughts of a somewhat eerie and depressing character would persist in asserting themselves, and every one, I am sure, who will recall his first day and night at sea will sympathise with

me. Were all these thoughts to be put on record, they would form a very strange catalogue indeed. You are glad and joyful on leaving port at the prospect of visiting a foreign country, or it may be, as in my case, of resuscitating health; but then the thought of the dangers and risks you may be exposed to weighs heavily on your mind, and in most cases has an effect the opposite of exhilarating. As night draws on, and you pace the deck in the darkness, this feeling increases. The sailing through the darkness has an awe-inspiring effect. What a feeling of mystery does the dark deep water stimulate in one's breast, as the powerful thud and splash of its waves reverberate in the still air of night! Not a ripple, not a splash, not even the creaking of a rope or the grating of a chain, but awakens some sort of corresponding response in your heart. With what emotions of wonder and awe one feels the great mass of iron gliding almost imperceptibly through

the water, that treacherous element you cannot reckon either friend or foe. And the water has the hardest look of all when one is viewing it as he leaves his home, and commits himself to the tender mercies of the deep for a time. How forcibly the idea of a divine Providence and an all-powerful God comes before the mind. We are not at the mercy of this treacherous element; it is in the power of Him who orders the winds of heaven and holds the waters in the hollow of His hand. As the water broadens between you and your native land it assumes a harsh and cruel look, and the phosphorescent glare it gives back seems to awaken nothing but hard, eerie, lonesome thoughts in your soul. It was with feelings kindred to these that I crawled into my bunk as we were approaching the Bay of Biscay. A good night's rest I thought would be the best possible means by which to get rid of them. But not one wink of sleep had I that night. The Bay of Biscay,

formerly to me a matter of proverb and imagination, was now indeed one of stern reality."

"To a seafaring man, of course what we endured from wind and sea as we were entering the Bay would be reckoned of no great import; but to me, whose experience of navigation has been confined chiefly to the Frith of Clyde or a sail to Belfast on a calm evening, matters appeared not a little serious. The words of the old ballad came forcibly to my recollection,

'They hadna' sail'd a league, a league,  
A league, but barely three,  
When the lift grew dark and the wind blew loud,  
And gurlly grew the sea.'

And yet this only conveys in the faintest possible manner an idea of what we endured that night and the day following."

"Unaccustomed as I was to the sea, every thing was left in my room pretty much in the

same way as it would have been in a bed-room on shore. I was, however, soon made aware of the fact that it ought not so to have been, by the tumbling about of almost every movable thing in the cabin. Candle, candlestick, hats, umbrellas, coats, bags, and many more such articles were precipitated on the floor, and were moving about there helplessly as the ship rolled. My impressions of the state of things outside were not at all clear, but it appeared to me that the ship was thoroughly at the mercy of wind and waves, (so much for my ignorance)—that it now went right up with a bang on the top of a wave, and then splash down, and that water was rushing all over the deck. My room was almost dark, and the grating noise of the rudder chain, together with the harsh *wheesh* of the waters, as they came rushing on deck, and the groan of the engines, as they seemed to strain themselves to do battle with the sea, all combined to make me utterly miserable. What

would I not have given to get even a few inches of solid land on which to place my feet and feel secure!

“Morning came, but no cessation of the gale, or ‘fresh breeze,’ as our captain called it. Getting up and dressing were two tasks of a most difficult character, and what I had learned at College at the feet of Sir William Thomson, of Statics and Dynamics, was of no avail in aiding me to maintain my equilibrium. But matters were even of a more perplexing character at breakfast. Small boards were fastened right round the table, and several, too, on the top of the table, for the purpose of preventing dishes and their contents landing on the floor. But I most sincerely wished that I myself had been fastened in some way or other either to the floor or to my seat; for not only did I feel myself in imminent danger of landing below the table, but at every alternate roll of the ship I experienced a kind of impetus given me

towards the top of the table. Then again, as the ship rolled, your cup was sure to show a decided inclination to follow its example, and pour its contents either into your lap or on the table-cover.

“ These are a few of the discomforts one had to endure ; but what perhaps was more annoying than any, was the fact that no sympathy was afforded you from any one. On asking the captain if the ship could not be steadied for five minutes, he took a right hearty laugh (as well he might), and then with a very grave look said, ‘ There’s only one way of doing it, get on deck, and drive two spikes into the lea scuppers, and hold the steamer up.’ That day was, I think, the most miserable I ever spent. Some mishap occurred to one of the boilers, and we proceeded dead slow for several hours, the gale still continuing. During all this the line of the old song was constantly coming to my recollection, and affording me no comfort—

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'Oh! why left I my hame?  
Why did I cross the deep?'

He then describes the sail down the coast of Portugal, and some of the objects of interest met with by the way, lingering specially on the associations suggested by Trafalgar and Gibraltar (though all he saw of the latter was "the dim outline of the rock and the lights of the town at its base"). And now he observes that the aspect of everything is changed. "The sky overhead was cloudless, and of a deep azure blue, a colour unknown to the sky in our northern latitudes. The water too had little resemblance to that of the Atlantic through which we had passed; the same sort of blue colour which the heavens reflected the water assumed, the shade only being somewhat darker. The air was buoyant, although the heat was very considerable. We were now right into the Mediterranean, a fact itself which I could not but feel fraught with peculiar interest, recalling, as

I could not help doing, the memorable associations with which the name of this great sea is connected."

He then describes the sail along the Spanish and African Coasts, the appearance of the white City of Algiers, and the fortifications of Tunis, till they came in sight of Malta. This island they were obliged to pass for want of time. And now they were altogether out of sight of land, and a marked change was visible on both sky and water. Both of these deepened in colour; the water grew dark as purple and the sky azure blue. The moon was almost full at this time, and sailing in the cool of the evening under her silvery light was most enjoyable."

On the fifteenth day of the passage from Cardiff, they sighted Alexandria. "A long but narrow golden stripe it appeared, with a peak here and there. As we drew nearer the stripe grew broader, and a long panorama met our gaze. From East to West a long

line of flat-roofed buildings with minarets, mounds, and other fortifications, windmills, and Pompey's Pillar surmounting all, occupied our whole line of vision. These were set as it were in a golden ground, and with an azure blue sky overhead, and a burning eastern sun glaring from the heavens. It presented quite a striking appearance, and one too I will not easily forget. Everything appeared utterly different from all I had ever seen. This I felt in regard to the appearance of the place; but when I got a glimpse of the natives, I thought I had come across mortals from another world altogether, who had nothing in common with me."

He describes the appearance of the pilot and the second harbour-master; and then, upon getting ashore, the aspect of the streets and houses, so very different from anything he had ever seen, being struck with the furious driving of the Arab Jehus. The great Mahommedan fast of Ramidzan was

being held at the time of this visit to Alexandria.

“This is a yearly fast, and is observed for a whole month. But it appeared to me that in its real character it was no fast at all, but rather a feast. Lord Byron seems to have been of the same opinion, for in his ‘Childe Harold’ he says :—

‘Just at this season Ramidzan’s fast  
Through the long day its penance did maintain,  
But when the ling’ring twilight hour was past,  
Revel and feast assumed the rule again.’

During the whole period they neither eat, drink, nor smoke, from seven in the morning till seven at night. But the consequence was that in most cases night was turned into day ; and gorging themselves with food in the night-season, they are unfit for anything during the day but sleep. I did not wonder at them enduring the want of their food and cigarette in the day time, but how these poor wretches could work all day under a broiling eastern

sun without tasting water, was more than I could well understand. The explanation of this month of fasting given me by some at Alexandria was as follows: it is somewhat ridiculous, and I do not vouch for the truth of it. Tradition declares that Mahomet fasted one day in the month of August, and as his followers wish in every respect to follow his example, they naturally wish to fast on this day; but tradition has not recorded which day it was, and so to make sure of hitting on the right one they fast the whole month!"

Here he made the acquaintance of the clergyman then in charge of the Church of Scotland's mission to the Jews in Alexandria, and had much pleasant intercourse with him. He attended service in the church on Sunday. "It was quite refreshing to get in out of the bustle and excitement of the streets; for Alexandria, like the majority of foreign places, dons holiday attire on Sunday, and the day is spent in the gardens on the square listening

to the strains of music. The old psalms sung to the old tunes had quite a soothing influence on one, and brought the thoughts back as it were all of a sudden to home. Although all windows were open, it felt very hot indeed, and nearly every one used a fan freely. Mr Scott, our minister there, preached a very vigorous sermon; I say vigorous, because the heat was so intense that any one would have excused a somewhat quiet and languid discourse, but Mr Scott threw all his energy into his discourse. The congregation was very fair; not, I believe, up to its usual, as during the hot season many of its principal members are out of town; but the congregation was eminently respectable, not only as regards members, but also in regard to the class of people present. The singing was led by a pretty good choir, and pretty bad harmonium. It was somewhat asthmatic, and very shrill in tone. Its best days are evidently over, and a new one would be a great acquisition

to the church. There is also in connection with the mission a floating Bethel for the purpose of getting the sailors to a service on the Sunday evenings. I was present at one service, and had the pleasure of seeing a Jew admitted by baptism into the church. A goodly number of sailors were present, and a few friends from the shore. The service was altogether very impressive, and calculated to do much good."

He gives a description of Pompey's Pillar, the principal object of interest in Alexandria to sight-seers. He describes the population, which is a very mixed one, comprising almost all nationalities under the sun. "Here you find a treacherous Greek trying to strike a bargain with a wily old Jew; there an Italian and a Maltese are earnestly discussing some point of common interest. An Englishman and a Spaniard are to be seen in the same carriage, while a Frenchman tries a donkey race with a sallow-faced German. Turks,



Copts, Egyptians, Syrians, are all to be met with in a single street, and their various dresses are quite a study in themselves. Such a heterogeneous mass of people necessarily implies an equally varied number of languages. Modern Greek and Italian are, I believe, the principal languages used in the commercial world there; but as the Arabs exceed in numbers all others, Arabic is universally talked, and there was no getting on without it.

“My inability to communicate my wants in Arabic got me into one or two difficulties, which might have been more serious than they were. In the lodgings, for example, of Mr Scott our minister, one evening I found myself in rather a fix. He left me in his bed-room to go to his study, where I was to follow him at leisure. The house was of good size, and contained several corridors. I never but thought, however, that I could find my way back to the study with the great-

est ease, and sallied forth with the air of a man who was walking across his own floor. But no study could I find. I went up one corridor, round another, and down a third, with the result that I was quite confused as to my latitude and longitude. At a turn I came in view of some Arab servants, and the moment they caught sight of me they came rushing towards me *bah-ing* in a most unearthly manner. At a great distance, and evidently from behind a door, I heard a shrill voice (whether of man or woman I know not) crying, 'Who's that? What man's that? Put him out! Send for the officer.' I would most certainly have taken advantage of this English-speaking person, and sought an interview with him or her, but I could not get moving a step one way or another for the Arabs who now encircled me; and indeed, from the excited way in which the questions and orders were uttered, I thought that no matter what explanation I cried to the indi-

vidual behind the door, he or she would not believe me. At last, with not a little difficulty, I got the Arabs to understand I was Mr Scott's guest, and had lost my way. With a look of great scepticism they then took me to his room, where I found him wondering in all the world what had kept me so long."

But their stay at Alexandria could not be of long duration. They were soon off again. For the first day or two after leaving port they altogether were out of sight of land, but in a very short time they were sailing through the classic isles of Greece. He takes note of some of these and their associations. A little further on he remarks, with peculiar interest, that they are passing between the plain of ancient Troy and the island of Tenedos, where the Greek ships were hidden preparatory to the great Trojan war, so famous in song and history. They now approached, with a glowing sunset, the entrance to the Dardanelles. They proceeded up the sea of

Marmora, and now approached the Capital of the Turkish Empire.

“Constantinople occupies a splendid position; indeed, for a large city, the finest in the world. Seen from the water, the sight is most imposing. Large, square and dome-like buildings, in striking contrast to flat oriental roofs, rise tier above tier from the water’s edge, and extend for miles. Here and there churches and forts, all set on rising ground, and relieved frequently by tall, graceful minarets. A high back-ground of verdant foliage and rustic-looking houses gives the finishing touch to the magnificent picture.

“Some papers connected with the ship had to be taken ashore here, so we came to an anchor at the mouth of the Golden Horn, and I embraced the opportunity of getting ashore for a little. On doing so, I found that the old proverb, ‘All is not gold that glitters,’ held true in the case of Constan-

tinople. For although externally it looks grand, internally it looks dirty and miserable looking. I find I have jotted down in my note-book that 'as far I could see, smells and dogs were the chief feature of the place,' and I find that my opinion agrees with that of others. Instead of finding large, broad boulevards, what we do find are narrow, dirty lanes, which we do not grace with the name of street. These lanes are the receptacles of all the refuse of the houses; it is pitched right into the centre, and is soon spread out in all directions by the numerous dogs of the place. These dogs are quite a characteristic of Constantinople. I never saw so many in one place before. They are the scavengers of the place, and I believe the Turks are either compelled to keep them by law, or demanded to do so by their religion. They are to be seen in half dozens—wretched looking brutes indeed—lying burrowing in piles of refuse. Each dog, too, knows his

rubbish heap or district, and if one dog offers to intrude on the heap of another, he suffers for it pretty severely at the hands, or rather the teeth of his canine brethren."

They now proceed cautiously through the Bosphorus. "Beginning with the splendid view of Constantinople on the one side, and Scutari, one of its flourishing suburbs, on the other, right on till we got to the outer forts on the Black Sea, we enjoyed a panoramic view of no mean order. On either side, which rises to a considerable height, there is an endless terracing of romantic looking houses with large eaves, mosques, fountains, palaces, forts, churches, and many large mansion-houses, one of the finest of which is the British Ambassador's Palace. The back-ground is green and evidently highly cultivated. Picturesque houses are built right down to the water's edge; the lower storey indeed, in many cases, being a boat room, into which the canoe or canque, as

it is called, floats, and from which a passage leads to the rooms above. The pleasure of the sail was moreover much enhanced by the many gaily decked boats of all sorts and sizes, from a canoe to a man-of-war, which were constantly passing us. Boats, indeed, in Constantinople, take the place of cabs here, and can be hired at a similar figure."

And now they enter the Black Sea, and after about a day's sailing they reach Selina at the mouth of the Danube. He gives a graphic description of the town and the serpentine character of the river. Here for the first time he makes the acquaintance, in all their ferocity, of the mosquitoes. He could not forget them in a hurry. Many a wailful entry he makes in his journal: "Oh, the mosquitoes! such swarms! I can with difficulty write this on account of them, and I hear the captain and mate lashing about their rooms with towels, endeavouring to kill the brutes."

They sailed 103 miles up the river to Ibrail, and there cast anchor. It was of no special interest. Here the steamer took in cargo, and he records about a week afterwards, "It was with no heavy heart that I awoke one morning and found we were moving, and from the motion of the ship I knew we were in the Black Sea. The Danube with its fogs, fever, and flies, or as I would put it, its mud, mosquitoes and malaria, was now a thing of the past, and I was quite content that it should be so. Our nose was now turned homewards, although we did not know exacty whither. We were at all events sailing for Gibraltar, where we would get orders as to the name of the home port."

In the return journey a good part of the old ground was gone over again, but it was felt that nothing was stale. Some objects which had failed to attract his attention before were noticed now. There was no time now to lose. "A pleasant sail of five days brought



us within sight of the fruit-clad slopes of Sicily, and another equally enjoyable sail of like duration brought us to Gibraltar. But I cannot now detain you with a description of the wonderful rock with its extensive galleries, its 1881 guns and 8000 soldiers. We got orders to sail to Havre, and lost no time in setting out. A short sail brought us into the dangerous Bay of Biscay once more, but it presented an entirely different appearance from what it did on the way out. A bright sun shone on us, and a slight breeze ruffled the water, but that was all. A splendid run up the channel brought our trip to an end, and our good ship was made fast in the docks of the gay city of Havre."

#### IV.

#### BEGINNING WORK.

THE result of this short voyage was that Alexander's health was considerably improved, and he was able in November to enter the Divinity Hall, at the same time taking over again the class of Natural Philosophy, which he had failed to complete the previous year. This unfortunately entailed on him double work, but he entered on it with his usual buoyancy of spirit and calm courage, and succeeded so well, that though, as we have said, the latter subject had nothing peculiarly attractive to him, he was, by the votes of his fellow students, awarded the first prize. At the commencement of

the following session he was capped for the degree of M.A., an honour, however, which did not bring with it the pleasure he expected. It was to him an unusually dull day. He received the congratulations of his friends without even a smile. It seemed as if the conviction were haunting him that after all it would be useless, that, however elaborate his preparation might be, it would come to nothing.

This however was only for a moment. He soon brushed the thought away. And now, though in great weakness, and with much caution, he threw himself into all the studies peculiar to the Divinity Hall. It was to him most congenial employment, his only regret being that he found it quite impossible to go so thoroughly into any subject as otherwise he would have liked to have done. His spare energies during the recess were devoted to the interests of the University Missionary Association. In

several pulpits within the presbytery he pled the cause of the Association with considerable effect. He was greatly quickened and refreshed by some meetings for the deepening of spiritual life which he was privileged partially to attend in the Autumn of this and the following years, especially by the addresses of the Rev. Evan Hopkins and the Rev. Webb Peploe, of London, on the difference between doctrinal and experimental religion.

On the 10th of June, 1884, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Irvine as a preacher of the Gospel in connection with the Church of Scotland. On the Sabbath following he preached for the first time in his father's pulpit, his subject being Paul's thorn in the flesh, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9, specially as illustrating the difficulty connected with unanswered prayer. The sermon, it was felt, revealed a depth of experience scarcely to be expected from his years, and many hearts were not a little moved as they felt how truly he was

expressing his own heart's experience. It was indeed the spirit on which he was entering on the work he loved so well, and to which so long he had been looking forward and preparing—expecting divine strength to be made perfect in his weakness, that God Himself might be glorified.

The old college friend already referred to says, "I cannot help speaking about the delightful times we had when he used to come up to Glassford. On Sunday he and I were thrown much together. We used to go out in the mornings and sit on the garden seat at the side of the house in the sunlight. I never enjoyed such peaceful Sabbaths or such refreshing conversation. Then the short walks we used to take down the braes to the Avon, almost daily, were such a source of joy to me. He possessed that peace which our Lord gives to those whose mind is stayed on Him. His calmness was most infectious,

and that made his companionship so pleasant and so elevating. I shall never forget the first Sunday he preached for father. It was either the first or second time he had ever entered the pulpit. He seemed to realise, as few others do, the responsibility of his position as an ambassador of the Lord. His implicit trust in God, and his great desire to win souls for Christ, made him forget himself. He showed me more clearly than any one the true spirit in which we should preach. His first sermon was very characteristic. His subject was saving faith, and the forcible illustrations he used to point out his meaning made an impression on us all. His subject was the conversion of the jailer through the instrumentality of Paul. I have again and again heard many at home referring to that sermon."

It now became an anxious question what he was to do, his whole soul was on fire to be a preacher of the gospel ; and he was prepared

to enter on any sphere to which the Lord might call him. Had the way been at all made plain, his own inclination would have led him at once to seek a sphere of labour in a more genial clime. But all through life he had acted on the principle of being "content with one step at a time"; and having light sufficient for that, he desired no more. For a few months he had great delight in ministering on successive Sabbaths to the congregations of friends, and many have borne testimony to the high spiritual tone which characterised his services, and the blessing they received from his helpful words.

At this point there came to him the offer of an appointment which seemed in every respect the very place he was waiting for. It was an assistantship in the small rural parish of Birnie, near Elgin, where only such an amount of work was expected of him as he felt quite able to do, and it was in a district where it was thought the conditions of climate would be

peculiarly favourable to the state of his health. It was therefore with high hope that he set out for his new home, and entered on his work there on the first Sabbath of November. As it turned out, the place was somewhat disappointing. Perhaps it was an exceptionally severe winter, and the intense cold which at times prevailed, told on his fragile body very materially. At a distance from any considerable town or village where some society might have been enjoyed, the greater part of his time was spent in the solitude of his lodgings. His very limited powers of walking prevented him from visiting even so much as he would have done the few families who were scattered at great distances from one another throughout the parish.

What he felt more than anything else, was the widespread coldness which prevailed in regard to spiritual things. Very few indeed received him with cordial sympathy. He very soon, however, won the hearts of all. An old



parishioner writes : " There was in his whole demeanour an earnestness, a seriousness, a solemnity, and depth of kindly feeling which left a vivid impression in his favour on the mind of every one with whom he became intimately acquainted. In our house his happy and familiar manner, his good-humoured and amiable pleasantry, can never be forgotten. His pulpit addresses were highly appreciated, and listened to with rapt attention by his hearers ; and when on Sabbath evenings he preached in another part of the parish, a crowded audience attended him. In his position no man could be more highly esteemed, no man *better liked*." Another says, " Mr M'Nab was very dear to us both as a minister and as a friend. As the latter, he was usually bright and happy, and interested in all that affected us. As a minister, we have not heard any one like him, and I fear never will again."

He set himself with great resolution to

arrest the attention of the people that they might listen to him and be interested; and this he succeeded most effectually in doing, though it was at an expenditure of energy which was more at times than he could well spare.

One of his first addresses to the people was on Phil. ii. 12, 13, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," in which he clears the text of the erroneous uses to which it has been applied, and points out very plainly the true sphere of Christian work and service. "To represent Paul as here urging the necessity of personal effort to secure salvation is contrary altogether to the spirit of the gospel, and goes right against the whole teaching of God's Word. Frequently do we find sin in scripture compared to a service—'the wages of sin is death.' You labour in the service of Satan, and, hard task-master as he is, he pays his servants at the end of their service—their

wages is death. But how does the Apostle go on to speak of salvation? Does he continue the metaphor and proceed—‘but salvation is the wages of those who make a grand effort throughout their whole life to lead good and holy lives, who struggle and strive against sin, and, as far as in them lies, endeavour after goodness and purity and holiness’? Nay, verily; he changes the metaphor at once—‘the wages of sin is death, *but the gift of God is eternal life.*’ Sin is a service but salvation is a gift. Salvation is not the result of work, it is in no sense of the term ‘wages’; it is all of grace, all unmerited favour, the gift of God.

“The Apostle here exhorts the Philippian converts to manifest the salvation which they possessed, to exhibit it in their lives, to show forth in their character and mode of life that they were really what they professed to be—namely, Christians. And this is an exhortation which is suitable to Christians at all times.

Having received the gospel offer of salvation, how many seem to think that they can enjoy a life of quiet ease with the prospect of an eternal rest when done with time. But how far is this from the truth! Becoming possessed of salvation is to have implanted in the human nature a seed of divine life, which seed requires to be nourished and cherished; yea, it is but implanted there that it may grow and reveal itself to mankind in the fruits of holy living, in a God-like life. The christian religion is no mere subscribing to a creed which affects not the conduct; it is no mere assenting to a dead formula which gains one admission to a certain sect or society; it is no mere adornment which is assumed or set aside at pleasure. No, it is a life. It enters into all our concerns. It moulds the character; it directs the conduct; it is the distinguishing feature of all who are really its followers. As a tree is distinguished by its fruits, so is the Christian known by his life and by his works. This

then is the force of the exhortation ; having then this new life given you, show it to all, let it shine forth in your every word and every deed. Possessed as ye are of the life of God, having Christ in you the hope of glory, do not repress this life ; nay, let it permeate your very being, that so it may show itself in your every action. Thus living, thus working out your salvation in your every day life, no one shall need to ask you if you are a Christian ; that will at once be manifest. A Christ-like character, a disposition which nature does not give, a life, in short, unlike men of the world, is conclusive proof of that divine nature, of that life of God which at regeneration man receives." Then looking at the matter a little more particularly, he proceeded to say, "Work out your own salvation, 1. In your every day employment. 2. In a zealous endeavour after the welfare of others. And 3. In advancing in knowledge of divine things and in holiness."

It was in the spirit of these words he entered on his work among that people, and continued to prosecute it, the little time he was permitted, with an increasing enlargement of spiritual experience and power. His constant aim was to make real to them the essential verities of the gospel, and to insist that these should have a corresponding influence on the character and life of those who received them. He longed to have the joy of winning souls, and he was not altogether without his reward. He was no less successful in leading humble believers into an acquaintance with the deep things of God. He eschewed all subtle disquisitions of an unprofitable character, and aimed constantly at what was calculated to bring a substantial, practical blessing to the heart and life.

He often recalled a discourse he preached on Ps. xi. 1, "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, flee as a bird to your mountain?" in which he set forth some of the

considerations which a heart of unbelief is apt to use in tempting a child of God to desert the post of duty. In writing and preaching that sermon, he experienced an unusual elevation of soul. He was so earnest and energetic in preaching it, that when done he was utterly exhausted; but was gratified to find that the people generally were deeply interested, and many afterwards referred to it as a sermon that had brought a special blessing to their souls.

He was engaged in writing on Romans viii. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are IN CHRIST JESUS," when he received the intelligence of two young friends, whom he greatly loved, having undergone the great and vital change. It filled him with much joy, and made the topics on which he was writing so real and precious, that he felt it a very easy thing to write his sermon. In it he explains that "the change involved in this union, this being in

Christ, is a definite act, accomplished once for all; not a process, not a privilege that comes to us gradually, but complete and absolute—'out of Adam, in Christ'—a direct transition from the one to the other. He illustrates this from examples that occurred in the ministry of Christ, and many recorded in connection with the ministry of the Apostles. He then proceeds to point out very fully the security which this union entails.

"In Christ, he is eternally saved; saved beyond the possibility of ever being lost. Nor think that this statement savours of presumption. It is surely no presumption to declare that Christ now stands before God, perfect, spotless, holy; that His work on earth was so well-pleasing to the Father in heaven that He was received back to the presence of the glory. It is surely no presumption to hold that He who has thus fulfilled all righteousness, and offered Himself up a voluntary sacrifice for fallen man; He whose sacrifice was



accepted, and who now sits on the right hand of the Most High till all His enemies are laid low; it is surely no presumption to hold that He is beyond the possibility of ever becoming an object of displeasure to the heavenly Father. To harbour such a thought would well-nigh amount to open blasphemy. And if, then, Christ's position is an all-secure one, if the very thought of it is repelled at once by common consent, why can it be maintained that to say those in Christ are secure is a presumptuous statement? Far from being that, it is but the natural outcome of the most logical reasoning. Christ before God occupies a position which no power in the universe can deprive Him of, hence it naturally follows that those in Him, those united to Him by faith, are as secure before God as He.

“Were I a poor bankrupt man, name and credit gone, it would be presumption on my part to declare myself as on an equal footing

with those holding positions of honour and respectability in the commercial world. But if I, in all my poverty and misery, am taken into partnership with one whose name is respected and whose standing is an honourable one, who pays my debts and shares his profits with me, it ceases to be presumption on my part to declare myself solvent and on an equal footing with my fellows. And if I, a poor, perishing, already condemned sinner, were to declare that I myself am sure of entering heaven and sharing the joys and blessings of the redeemed, it would certainly be presumption. But if in all my helplessness and wretchedness I am taken by the hand of Christ, united by faith to Him, to Him the second Person in the Trinity, to Him whose words were 'I and the Father are one,' to Him to whom all power in heaven and on earth belongs, united to Him in bonds so intimate and everlasting as to transcend the grasp of the human mind—is it presump-

tion to declare myself absolutely and eternally secure? Surely not: no glory redounds to the sinner; all that belongs to Christ. It is *in Christ*. He is accepted not in himself. It is in Him he stands complete."

In addition to the usual service during the day, the interest in which he was gratified to see was gradually increasing, he conducted frequently a service in the evening, held in a school room in a small village or hamlet in the parish. On these occasions the place was uncomfortably crowded, persons coming great distances and from all churches. He found in these services the greatest delight, speaking with the utmost freedom, plainness and directness of aim. He spoke on such themes as these:—Phil. i. 21, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain;" Ezek. xxxvii. 3, "Son of man, can these dry bones live?" Acts xvi. 30, 31, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The people on some of these occasions were deeply moved. Many of

them told him they would never forget the impressions that were made upon them. In the case of some, he had good reason to believe they were the dawn of a new and better life.

Much of his time was necessarily spent alone. He improved it by a more systematic reading of his Bible than for a while back he had been able to give it, and a careful study of some theological works of a practical and devotional character, such as Godet's "Studies in the Old and New Testaments," Murray's "Abide in Christ," Hopkin's "Law of Liberty in the Spiritual Life," and "Marshall on the Gospel Mystery of Sanctification"; while, anxious to keep abreast of his contemporaries in the matter of literature, he was regularly supplied with books from the excellent libraries of the county town.

But one cannot be always reading, and not a little of his time he found taken up in very earnest self-examination. Many questions that

had an important bearing on his own spiritual life presented themselves for searching investigation, and he could not lay them aside until he was able to give to them an answer that would satisfy his mind and conscience in the very sight of God. He underwent many a painful struggle, and fought many an earnest battle in the secrecy of his own solitary rooms, which he never spoke of to a human being, though he often told his father, in whom he had unbounded confidence, how important he felt the lessons he had learned, and what an increase of power they gave him in doing the work of the ministry. The spiritual growth is very marked in the few sermons he has left behind him, and the light became brighter and brighter on to the very last of his public utterances.

Near the end of the year he had a slight attack of hysteresis, which however soon passed away, but it left him with a feeling of nervousness he had never to any extent

experienced before. This caused him not a little trouble, as it generally came on somewhat unexpectedly, and in the pulpit. On several occasions, had it not been for his remarkable presence of mind he would have been unable to proceed with the service. He tried a variety of remedies, but they were all in vain. He made it the subject of very special prayer, and it was to him a matter of no small perplexity when he found that even that failed. There were none at hand to whom he could with freedom unfold his mind, or from whom he could get the sympathy and help he so much needed. The only earthly things which at this time cheered him were the letters which he received regularly, twice a week, from those who knew him so well and loved him so dearly in the distant home.

In these circumstances he felt that his work in that corner of the vineyard was done. Accordingly, to the great regret of every one, he resigned his appointment, and prepared by the

first of July to return home. Before however saying farewell (which in public he could not venture to do) to the dear people whom he so sincerely loved, he received from them a valuable presentation, and an address signed by all the parishioners, irrespective of denomination, in which it is said :—“ We, the office-bearers, members and adherents of the Established Church, and others in the parish of Birnie, viewing your unexpected departure from our midst with unfeigned regret, desire to place on record the respect which we entertain for yourself personally as the assistant of our highly esteemed and worthy, venerable pastor Dr Gordon, our deep sense of gratitude for the benefits we have received through your ministrations as a faithful preacher of the gospel, a lucid and persuasive expounder of the doctrines of Christianity, and a fearless and skilful assailant of the sins and false casuistry of the present day with the spiritual weapons furnished from the

Word of God. That you may soon obtain a charge where your services may be fully appreciated, that the great Head of the Church may sustain you and render your labours successful, and make you a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, is the sincere wish and fervent prayer of, Reverend and dear Sir, the Parishioners of Birnie.

“29th June, 1885.”



## GOING HOME.

AFTER returning home he preached only twice, in fulfilment of previous engagements, and made a hasty visit to London, that the doctor with whom he had long corresponded might have the advantage of a personal examination of him. The opinion he received was that the symptoms of chronic asthma he at first suffered from had entirely disappeared, and that he was suffering now from nothing of which he might not with care be cured. With that statement he was much encouraged; but as the summer advanced, though he enjoyed occasional gleams of betterness, he felt reluctantly as if he would be obliged to abandon hope. It was not that he was

indifferent to the blessedness of departing and being with Christ, or had any doubt on the ground of that hope ; but he was so anxious to have a term of service here, that he might have some jewels for the Master's crown in the day of His appearing. Nothing perhaps could better express his feelings than these lines, not "I want to go home, for I'm weary here," but

"I want to stay here, though I fain would go ;  
I know there is nothing but trial below ;  
But in sorrow and pain I want to prove  
There is nothing so sweet as a Saviour's love.

"I want to stay here, though I long to see  
The face of the One who was slain for me ;  
I long in this valley of death to proclaim  
The quickening power of His precious Name.

"I want to stay here, though often I sigh  
For my glorious home in the cloudless sky ;  
But with me, when there, I am longing to bring  
Some trophies of grace for my conquering King."

In this state he continued, till in the beginning of January his disease seemed to enter upon another and sharper stage, which was little dreamt of, baffling all efforts to effect its arrest; and the London doctor, in whom all along he had reposed the greatest confidence, was obliged to give him up. It was then that he realised for the first time, or at all events openly admitted it, that his condition was very critical indeed. On the 9th of April a consultation by two local physicians was held, and at its close it was intimated to his father that they could do nothing for him; that his trouble was such that no power on earth could help him now; that they might help to make his end more comfortable, but they could do nothing to prolong his life.

When the doctors had gone, the father felt that Alexander ought to know at once exactly what had been said; and so with a very sorrowful heart, as will be readily believed, but with much prayer, he went

straight to the sick room and told the dear lad. He listened to all most attentively, and then simply said that he was not surprised, he fully expected it; that when he preached in Glasford upon his return from Birnie, he had a presentiment that as he had preached his first sermon there, he had now preached his last, and would never be able to enter a pulpit again. He asked if the doctors thought the end might be near. He was told that they thought he might continue a few weeks, but not more.

“There must be no laying of plans for the future now,” his father said. In subdued tones, and with an expression of great sweetness, he whispered,

“Oh, no!” and then added, “the prospect of death gives me no concern; I feel sorry that I have to go with such a poor record; I have done so many stupid and sinful things, even since I became a Christian; but I rest on the word which dear old

Mr Gebbie gave me long ago—the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

His father spent a little time every forenoon, when he was freshest, alone with him, and they were precious seasons of communion and prayer. One morning he was asked if anything was disturbing or troubling him. He answered,

"No, I am thankful to say I have perfect peace; for a day or two, after the doctors were here, thoughts of the past were coming up and troubling me, but it is all over now; I have left it under the blood, and now with my eyes resting on Jesus I am looking straight onward."

Having asked one day what was meant by the "glory," he was told that it "summed up the blessedness of heaven; no more sin or suffering; an unclouded vision of the countenance of God; the companionship enjoyed of all the good and holy."

“Oh, yes,” he said, “there is only one word that can express all that, it is GLORY.”

Being asked in a time of great weakness if he was quite conscious that Jesus was with him, he said,

“Oh, yes, He is with me, and I am quite happy. I just hope that as the weakness increases I'll not let Him go.” He was comforted with the thought *Teneo, teneor*.

His mind often reverted to the happy meetings that were held in '73 and subsequent years, when so many young men and others were gathered into the Kingdom, and the words they then delighted to sing kept ringing in his ears. He seemed often to hear them singing,

“The great Physician now is near,  
The sympathising Jesus ;  
He speaks the drooping heart to cheer,  
Oh, hear the voice of Jesus.  
Sweetest note in seraph's song,  
Sweetest name on mortal tongue,  
Sweetest carol ever sung :  
Jesus ! blessed Jesus !”

One day after the doctors had visited him, he enquired if they thought the end was yet near. He was told that they said

“The end was evidently getting nearer, but there were no signs as yet that death was at hand, though they did not know how soon a sudden change might take place.” This seemed to affect him somewhat, but he checked himself, saying,

“I’m not grieved at the prospect of dying; I go to be with Jesus; of that I am quite sure: but I do feel sorry to be parted from you all. I have cost you, father, more than any of your sons, but I always hoped I would be able to repay you.”

In the evening his father said to him,

“I fear, Allie, I disconcerted you to-day by telling you so abruptly what the doctors said.” He looked astonished, and said,

“Oh, no, I’m not afraid of death, I can leave myself and all my cares with Jesus; but it is what comes before I am afraid of, that

when my body gets very weak, I may lose my confidence and hold of Him." After trying to comfort him on that point, his father knelt for a few minutes with him in prayer, and tried to tell the Lord what he thought was passing in his heart. He added very heartily *Amen*, and after that seemed quite calm and cheerful.

One day, when one of the doctors had left him, he said,

"I wish the doctor would not call me *poor laddie*; I don't think I need to be pitied at all."

His father said "he had managed to extract a good deal of enjoyment from life."

"Indeed I have," he said; "I cannot recall a single day in which I could have said I feel now quite well, but for all that I have had a wonderful enjoyment in life; and now look at the comforts I possess, and the good hope through grace which I enjoy; all that is comprehended in the glory soon to be revealed."



He had no great suffering, though at times his weakness must have been very oppressive. When any one was reading or praying with him, the very effort to listen caused the perspiration to run down his face. But the danger he feared, that he would be tempted in a moment of weakness to lose his confidence in the Lord, was never permitted to trouble him. His faith became very manifestly stronger and stronger, and his hope brighter and brighter to the very end. Often he would lie for hours as if absorbed in deep thought. He revealed to no one what these thoughts were ; and once, when spoken to about it, he simply said,

“ You know, father, I have never been very demonstrative.”

A few friends one day met by request, and in an adjoining room made him the subject of special prayer. It was felt that though doctors gave him up he might still be prayed for ; for “ is there anything too hard

for me? saith the Lord." It was still in humble submission to His will, for the Lord might be willing to give the faith that would claim the blessing. When told of this, he said, "It is so kind of them to come: I feel very thankful; no one has greater faith than I in prayer: but you know my position is this, I took it long ago, and I stick to it still—to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

There was not a particle of gloom about him. Whatever interested those around him was still of interest to him. He watched with great pleasure from his sick bed the gradual growth of the foliage upon the trees. And when a friend who had come to see him had been taken round the garden, he asked when he returned if he had seen the nest a bird had built in a clump of cabbage stocks, in which he was all the more interested that it was soon filled with a company of beautiful, little chirping young ones. He was greatly

interested in two younger brothers, who were hastened home from college that they might see as much of him as possible before the end came. He gave them many good, practical advices respecting their work; not as if he felt that such studies they were engaged in were useless, but anxious only that they might be prosecuted in such a way as to insure the ends that were desired. When alone with him, he made them promise that they would not only meet him in heaven, but do their very best to persuade their brothers and sisters to come along with them. It was a great satisfaction to him to know that these two had consecrated themselves to the Lord, and were prepared, as God would enable them, to take up the work he had been compelled so early to lay down.

Very frequently he was thinking of the people he had left in Birnie. When the Sabbath came round he constantly heard the ringing



of its church bells in his ears. One night he said,

“I have a great desire to go back once more to Birnie : I would like so much to see some of the poor bodies there : I have a great love for them : and many of them are so ignorant : they have never had much of an opportunity of hearing the gospel. If I had had just a little more physical strength when there, I could have done so much more work.”

On another occasion he said, “I hope, father, you'll some day take a jaunt through to yon country ; I would like you so much to see it.”

His early college friend, the only companion he said he ever had, came to see him, and they spent a long time alone together. Before leaving they put their arms round each other's necks and kissed each other.

“Farewell, Jim,” he said ; “if we do not see

each other here again, we'll meet up in the glory."

It was a very trying ordeal for both, and poor Alexander did not get the better of it for some days. Care was taken that a similar scene should not occur again.

He was full of the hope of the Lord's speedy return in Person to the earth. Years ago his attention had been called to the subject; and it was accepted as a settled article of his creed. It seemed to be increasingly precious to him as the time of his own departure drew near. He often quoted Colos. iii. 4, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

He said, "I am going away, but I'll soon be back again. It is a mystery that I cannot understand, but it will be all made plain hereafter, that having been spared to come through so much, I should yet have so short a term of service; but when Christ appears, and we appear with Him in glory, perhaps I may

have a ministry then, and my labour in preparation will not be altogether lost: perhaps I'll be sent to India, and I'll be upsides with M'Cheyne Paterson" (his dear old college friend, who had just gone as a missionary to India). His voice continued as vigorous as ever. He said he could preach a sermon yet, but he could not write one. His mind, too, was clear and active as ever. One night, very late, he felt uncommonly well, and he said he felt fit for any kind of mental work; only he added with a little touch of his old humour, "I think I could scarcely face an essay on free-will," referring to one of his old Moral Philosophy exercises.

His mother was his constant companion. When it was seen that the end was not far off, a couch in his room was made into a bed for her. And many a sweet hour of gentle converse they had together. She often read from the Bible to him, and also passages from Murray's "Like-

ness to Jesus," and Maclaren's Sermons, which he pointed out. She was engaged in reading, at his request, Murray's new book, "With Christ in the School of Prayer," but was not permitted to finish it. He was always most tender and gentle with his mother; and when in the night-season he had occasion to waken her, it was always with many apologies and expressions of regret for the trouble he was giving her. Nothing pleased him better than to have the little ones in his room singing his favourite hymns. Once he sent for them when he heard them making several unsuccessful attempts to catch the proper tune, and led the singing. His last Sabbath evening was spent in this way. He lay still, with his face to the wall, and listened as the children sang one after another the beautiful hymns they thought he would like best, and with which they knew he had so many pleasant associations. Once or twice a message was sent to him,

“Had they not better now stop?” But the answer was—

“No, no! bid them go on: bid them go on.”

On the morning of the sixth of June Alexander looked very poorly, and had spent a somewhat restless night, the cough troubling him very much. He was extremely weak, and not a particle of any thing would lie on his stomach. It was hoped, however, that, as on former occasions, he might rally as the day advanced. But it was not so to be. About ten o'clock, immediately after family worship, his father entered his room. He expressed a desire to be helped up. When this was done, with some difficulty, his poor body and limbs being now greatly swollen and unwieldy, as he sat in silence, apparently bracing himself for an effort, all of a sudden his head fell on his breast. It was felt that the end was come, and no time was lost in laying him down again. He was unable to



utter a word. The children were all called in. Every one around him knelt down, and the father as best he could commended him in prayer to God. Then turning to the much-loved boy, he said,

“Dear Allie, this is the end; but you know where you’re going, don’t you—tell me now, and tell these, is Jesus with you, and are you quite happy?” He turned his eyes upwards, and gave a little nod; and so the eyes continued looking upwards until the eyelids began to droop, and then with a deep-drawn breath he passed away. And all was over.

The precious dust was laid on the Thursday following in its last resting-place, “in a new sepulchre wherein was never man yet laid,” where it awaits the summons to “stand in his lot at the end of the days.”

The Rev. James Lindsay, B.D., B.Sc., his early and beloved college friend, conducted divine service in his father’s church on the

following Sabbath, and made the following beautiful and touching reference to the event :

“I will not conceal from you, my hearers, that it is with hesitation almost as great as my sorrow is deep that I appear in this pulpit to-day; for I have been too painfully conscious what a supreme effort it would require on my part to suppress an emotion which, I feel, it would be unnatural and unworthy, did the special circumstances not profoundly stir within me. The thought that lies nearest our minds to-day is, that our church has lost one of her youngest ministers—an individuality of rare spiritual promise; and, what comes home to us still more closely, that your minister has been bereft of his eldest—an equally loved and loving son. There is, perhaps, a special fitness that I should be here to allude to his loss; for few knew him better or had more regard for him, and yet I feel that, had our mutual attachment been less, I should have been able to speak more freely of points which still touch me so deeply that of them I cannot trust myself here to speak. From the outset of his college career, there were few subjects, I believe, on which he did not seek from me, as being somewhat his senior in years, such counsel as I was able to offer; and it was through this mutual interchange of feeling, thought, and sentiment, that I came to

form for him the regard I cherished. What he accomplished in that course of study was indeed astonishing to those who knew the limits of his physical capabilities, and that accomplishment was largely due to a most laudable perseverance and tenacity of purpose, wedded to a remarkable buoyancy of spirit and cheerfulness of disposition. There were in him qualities which those who knew him not thus intimately might not suspect ; as, for example, a fund of native humour ever kindly and genuine. But upon his lovable natural qualities I will not dwell ; I wish now to speak of his possession of the Christ-like spirit, the growth of which within him appeared to me manifestly to increase with his later years. A living piety he early evinced ; of this germinant piety his desire to be equipped for the work of the ministry sprang. Not long was he spared to engage in that work, for a purer, loftier ministry awaited him. Thoughtfulness, simplicity, intense moral earnestness, directness, and practical force, were eminently characteristic of his preaching. When I held converse alone with him during his last illness, no shadow of a doubt as to his personal acceptance and fellowship with God rested upon his mind ; his faith had pillowed itself upon the bosom of a Heavenly Father's love as it lay in conscious encirclement of the everlasting arms ; but it was with a noble self-forgetfulness that he appeared solicitous as to

how far his brief ministry might have been profitable to the people among whom it had been exercised. Would that our hearers were equally solicitous that the word preached might prove for their spiritual profit! But he is gone, for death knows not ruth; and may God bless his memory to us all! His life's brief day had run, and now he was to set—

‘As sets the morning star which goes not down  
Behind the darkened west, nor hides obscured  
Among the tempests of the sky, but melts away  
Into the light of heaven.’

There was fitness in the ordering that, while your church-bells were ringing last Lord's day, his spirit should be so passing away; for him they rang in the larger, fuller ‘Christ that is to be,’ for us in the ‘upper sanctuary.’ With Christ he now lives; and there may we ‘find him worthier to be loved.’ Fail not, beloved, to be instant in prayer and supplication that to your minister and his bereaved spouse and family, the God of all grace and consolation would make His strength and comfort abound, and render this sorrowful dispensation a means of advancement in their Christian life. To His divine grace and Fatherly keeping with much fervency I commend you all. Amen.”

“This do in remembrance of Me.”

Luke xxii. 19.

(The last sermon preached by Mr M'Nab, on Sabbath, 28th June, 1885, preparatory to the dispensation of the Lord's Supper.)

THIS the last commandment of our Lord, it will be your high privilege to obey on a coming Sabbath. To-day, we wish to call your attention to the special aspect of the Lord's Supper which these words indicate, and to point out some things which may be helpful in carrying out the wishes of our Saviour, and hence aiding us in getting the blessing we each require. The view of the supper which the words of our text point to, is that of a memorial of our Lord—a service designed for the purpose of bringing vividly to our recollection the personal Jesus—His life and death. Whatever else we may see as designed in this simple service—a pledge of Christ's return to the world—a representation of the gospel—a seal of the covenant—a badge of discipleship—an expression of the church's unity—this stands in the foreground, placed there by our Lord Himself; that its

great purpose is to serve as a memorial—a rite which is designed to bring Him to our remembrance. "This do in remembrance," or *for a remembrance* "of me." All these other purposes which we have mentioned, and which the ordinance does serve, find their origin in these words; for nowhere else in the New Testament is there any statement of the end to be gained by its institution than that which these words set forth. Let us then, for a little, look at this command in its first and chief signification, as pointing to the Lord's Supper as a memorial rite.

One might at the very outset be inclined to ask the question, What prompted our Lord thus to institute an ordinance for the purpose of calling Him to the remembrance of His people? Was our Lord afraid that they would become so occupied with worldly matters or work for Him as altogether to forget Himself; and fearing this, He asks them to take part in this service "for a remembrance of Him," to keep up their recollection of Him, to prevent their forgetting Him altogether? We think not. Looking at Jesus as our Brother man, as one possessed of every human sympathy, we cannot think such were the feelings that prompted the institution of this memorial feast. It was instituted for those who were His, who had their hearts filled with love to Him beyond the possibility of forgetting Him. Why then the need of anything to aid the memory? Why then

the simple ceremony of the supper as a memorial of Him who presupposes, in all who approach that table, a vivid and loving recollection of Himself? Such questions might be answered by others. Why does the dying father or mother give some *keepsake* to the loved ones who are left behind? Is it because there is a danger lest, when gone, they will be forgotten? We think not. That they will be remembered and loved is the ground on which the little gift is made, which is to form a special link of connection between the seen and unseen. Such gifts exercise a powerful influence on all. The plaything of a child now gone, the ring of our nearest and dearest on earth, are so intimately connected, so associated in our mind with those whose they were, that but a look at them is sufficient to call up a train of thought, stretching from the past away into the dim and mysterious future, and fraught, too, with aspirations in many cases prompting to living a life not for this world, but in view of the world to come.

In this way would we regard the Lord's Supper as a memorial feast. It was the human heart of Jesus that prompted the giving to His loved ones—those who were to be left on the earth to carry on the work He commenced—this service, this “keepsake,” if we may with reverence use that term. Every part of the simple service is suggestive of Himself. The taking of the

bread suggests the incarnation ; the act of breaking it throws the mind back to His life of humiliation, His sufferings and death ; the giving of the bread declares the free gift of that salvation which His life and death accomplished ; the poured out wine is significant of His outpoured blood for the remission of sins. No earthly gift of loved and departed friends could be more suggestive of memories than is this simple ceremonial of the Lord's Supper suggestive of His character and His work. It is a gift of love to us. To refuse to accept it, to refuse to come to the memorial feast, is to refuse to give that response to the love that prompted its institution, which the All-Loving One expects ; it is to refuse to acknowledge Him in the way He has so thoughtfully and lovingly marked out. Let us then, brethren, regard this feast with similar feelings to those with which we view the dying gift of any dear one ; let us look on it as such, and with reverence and yet all holy boldness ; let our response to the Master's command, "This do in remembrance of me," be

According to thy gracious word,  
In meek humility,  
This will I do, my dying Lord,  
I will remember thee.

What, then, let us now enquire, does this remembering of our Lord imply ? The command seems a simple one,



but perhaps there is more in it than we may be at first sight inclined to think.

One thing is clear, that remembrance implies knowledge; that the command, the "do in remembrance of me," presupposes a knowledge of Him who desires to be remembered. We cannot remember what we do not know; our memory only deals with what has already entered our minds. I can only recollect matters which in some way I have become cognisant of. Nor is the remembrance our Lord asks of us a general calling to mind of things with which He was connected, but a personal recollection of Himself—the words are, "in remembrance of me." Hence it follows, that the knowledge which this remembrance presupposes is a personal acquaintance with Himself; only in so far as we know Him will we be able to remember Him. Hence the first steps for the exact fulfilling of this command of our Lord, is to see to it that we have this personal knowledge of Him. Many, alas! substitute for this personal knowledge of the Lord an accurate acquaintance with the Scriptures. No book of the Bible but has been read by them, and many have been re-read, and studied; and others content themselves with a superficial knowledge of the word, but are familiar with the broad outlines of Scripture history, and could give a satisfactory account of the facts of our Lord's life and

death. Others again, going a little deeper, have pleasure in the study of different systems of theology, and delight in finding a basis in the word for their different views. Now, we ask, how can these persons, having only such a knowledge of God, fulfil this command of our Lord—"this do in remembrance of me"? It is impossible that they can fulfil it. They may come to the communion table, they may fulfil the first injunction "this do"; but without a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, they cannot, in the nature of things it is impossible that they can, "remember Him." He who has an accurate acquaintance with the different books of Scripture may, as he sits with others round the table, have brought to his recollection some other like institution, such as the feast of the passover, and he recalls the points of resemblance and difference between them. He who has but a general knowledge of the facts of Scripture history may view the simple ceremony as in some way connected with the death of Christ, and recall the story of its institution. He who delights in systems of Christian doctrine may, as with calm demeanour he partakes of the bread and the wine, recall to his mind the different theories of the Sacrament, which throughout the centuries have sprung up in the church, and been the cause of much division and strife. But, we ask, have they kept the commandment? Have they done all in remembrance

of Him? Alas! that were impossible—they had no knowledge of Himself—they knew about Him, about His character, His offices, His work; but they had no individual dealing with Himself—no personal knowledge, and how could they remember Him?

Let me then impress upon your attention, brethren, that if you would on a coming Lord's day carry out fully the commandment, “this do in remembrance of me,” you must have a personal knowledge of the Lord. A knowledge about Him will not suffice—you must know Him individually, and for yourself, as your own personal Saviour—not merely as a Saviour of sinners, but as your Saviour. You must be able to say not only, “the Lord is a Shepherd,” but “The Lord is my Shepherd.” Without this personal knowledge you cannot have that remembrance which the Master of the feast demands. But why be without that knowledge? Christ is only waiting to reveal Himself to you in all His saving and sanctifying power. His work on earth is accomplished; He has done everything now that is necessary to put the sinner in possession of that knowledge of Himself which is life eternal. On the accursed tree He poured out His soul an offering for sin. See then in that victim, fellow-sinner, none other than the only begotten Son. See in that cross, and in that exalted personage nailed thereon, the depth thy fallen nature had sunk, when none

but God's own Son could ward off the well-deserved consequence from the sin-cursed one. Gazing there—learn to know thyself—to know the awful heinousness of sin in the sight of God—sin with which your every thought and word and deed is charged. And as the light of God's own holiness streams past that solemn sight and lights on thy dark polluted heart, revealing nought but wretchedness and woe, may the cry issue from thy lips: "Unclean, unclean!" "I am as an unclean thing, and my righteousnesses as filthy rags." That is the first step towards knowing God, viz. :—Knowing oneself. Till we take our rightful position as undone sinners, as men and women utterly beyond the possibility, because of the evil of our fallen nature, of doing one single thing towards our own emancipation, we cannot know God; we are debarred from entering His presence by our sin, until it is put away; we are shut out from all intercourse with Him, and must remain ignorant of His character and worth.

But once the sinner realises his position as such, once he gets a glimpse into his own deceitful and corrupt heart, and in the light of God's holiness sees his utter sinfulness and helplessness, there is but one step between him and deliverance. Once the load of sin is felt, there is a prospect of its being borne away; once a man acknowledges he is lost, there is hope of his being saved;

once the sinner knows his true character, knows himself, he is within reach of the knowledge of God. Any one who has had that view of himself, that revelation of the depth of wickedness his heart contains, and who has been forced to cry, “O wretched man that I am!” I would again point to the cross of Calvary. There, fellow-sinner, you have learned your sinfulness; there I would have you learn your freedom from sin. There see not only your sins but your sins borne away. Listen to the last words that come from the lips of Him who hangs on the Cross: “It is finished.” In these words, fellow-sinner, learn that thy salvation is accomplished; the work that brought the Son of God to earth is completed; justice has been satisfied; now even the chief of sinners may be saved. The work is done. The Father has given His seal to that work, by receiving back to the glory-land His well-beloved Son, and seating Him on His own right hand. The work is done. Why not claim it as done for you? The step is a simple one. Having recognised your own utter sinfulness, having recognised in Christ’s death that which atones for all that sinfulness, accept that death as yours, and in the risen and ascended Christ see thyself cleansed from sin, with the divine life in thy soul, and thy sure pledge of entrance into heaven.

By that act you place yourself within the family of

God. His countenance is no longer averted. He delights in you as a child of His; and in the sunlight of His presence you daily learn of His character, of His works, and of His ways, and thus grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This, brethren, is the knowledge without which all else is vain; that personal, intimate, individual dealing with God Himself, which alone is effectual in change of heart. Till we have had experience of it, until our knowledge is more than a mere hearing of the ear, until we each know the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, we cannot have that remembrance of Him which He desires should characterise our observance of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

But it may be objected by some that that personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ may be the possession of the communicant and yet he may fail to receive that blessing from the ordinance which he desired. That may have been the experience of some; indeed, not a few, we feel confident, would own to leaving the table at different times, feeling as if they had in some way missed the blessing, although they had no doubt of their being friends of the Master of the feast. How then is this to be accounted for? Is it not in this way? We have failed to receive the blessing, because we failed to keep the commandment, "This do in remembrance of

me." We went to the table filled, it may be, with thoughts of self, recollecting our own troubles and trials and shortcomings, and never getting our attention-raised above these things, losing sight of Him in thinking of self; in other words, remembering ourselves instead of Him: we do not fulfil the commandment, and as a consequence fail to reap the reward. Or it may be we go to the table expecting some vague manifestation of this presence, some mysterious consciousness of this nearness of which He has given us no promise. Or again, we went expecting a blessing, but expecting it because we went.

In these different ways we may have taken part in the ordinance, but without benefit to our souls. Nor is it any wonder, brethren. We have been all sufficiently careful to carry out literally the first part of the injunction, "Do this." We have performed with all due solemnity the external acts of the ordinance; but the last part, the "remembrance of Me," has not, we fear, had the same careful fulfilling. It is the overlooking of this part of the command that accounts for our not receiving blessing at the feast. It is a means of grace; it is one of these sources from which we can go to get strengthened and refreshed as we journey through this wilderness world. But it is only so when we are obedient to the will of Him who instituted it, and carry out His instruc-

tions regarding its observance. In proportion only as we in the feast remember Him, can we look for blessing. The phrase, *means of grace*, often, we think, is misunderstood. It seems to be surrounded by a sort of halo of mystery in the minds of some, and more especially when taken in connection with the Lord's Supper. It is a means of grace in a special manner, because our observing it is obeying a command of the Lord, "and in the keeping of His command there is great reward"; and, because in the ordinance we have our thoughts turned to Him, our faith and hope thereby strengthened. But how can grace enter the heart? how can spiritual blessing be received? Only in one way; by the occupying of one's mind, heart, and will, with Jesus Christ, by whom grace and truth came, and with the gospel of glad tidings which tells of Him. To have the mind occupied with Him, with His person, with His work, to yield up the will, to surrender the life to Him, is to open the heart to the inflow of Divine grace. And only in so far as the emblems which are present at the Lord's Supper—the bread broken, the wine poured out—lead the mind of the communicant away from the emblem to the reality, from the visible manifestations of the story of Christ's life and death, away back to the actual life and death, and the memory becoming refreshed and quickened, will then be this inflow of Divine grace, that special



blessing we individually desire. What I want to emphasise and make as clear as possible is, that if we come to the table only looking for a blessing, viewing the ordinance only as a means of grace, without reference to the provision the Lord has in His love made by which it only can become such, the ordinance ceases to be a means of grace ; we will fail to get the blessing. To put it in a word, come to the feast only looking for something for yourself, some spiritual benefit you desire, and you receive it not. But come to the feast to remember Him, and in this remembrance—in the train of thought which with a memory quickened by the sensible signs present, in the swelling up in your heart of a fresh fountain of love to Him who endured the agonies of the cross—there will come a blessing. The very stirring of the thoughts and centring them for one brief time on Him who to you is more closely related than any earthly friend, who suffered and died on your behalf when you were yet a stranger to His love ; cannot that bring lasting good to your soul ? In this way only, brethren, will the feast become a means of grace to us, by regarding it as our Lord would have us, viz. : a memorial feast. Only going forward with a steadfast resolution and ardent desire to follow out His command, “this do,” not to promote your growth in grace, not to receive some spiritual blessing, but “this do in remembrance of me,”

can we look for any help and strengthening for the battle of life, any comfort of hope.

May each intending communicant be helped to obey this command. Let none forget that "to remember him," we must know Him. If there be a doubt in the mind of any one who means to take part in the Holy Ordinance regarding this vital point, I pray you, get the matter settled at once. With an open Bible you can easily see the marks by which the children of God are distinguished. If these do not correspond with the traits of character you exhibit, take warning at once; the feast was not meant for you, you are not a child of His, you know not Him, you are a stranger to His love. But haste thee to the throne of grace; there on bended knee own your sinfulness; ask God to put away your sin and receive you into His family; and you may depend upon it your request will not be refused. Then having experienced His wondrous love, and having some insight into His character, you can with joy approach His appointed feast confident that in the keeping of His commandment, "in the remembrance of him," you will receive blessing great and precious.

"If by some parent's dying bed  
Some child in seeming sorrow kneeling,  
Waiting to catch the last faint word  
Ere yet the silver cord doth sever,

Should hear one sad request preferred  
 By lips soon to be sealed for ever ;  
 Who with a heart so cold, so dead,  
 So lost to shame, so lost to feeling,  
 Could rise unmoved and go his way,  
 Nor that last sad request obey ?

And can we kneel His cross beside,  
 And there recall His dying token ;  
 And hear the scoffs, the cry, the scorn  
 Of furious foes exulting round Him,  
 And see the nails, the spear, the thorn,  
 The scourge that smote, the thongs that bound Him,  
 And then, His last request denied,  
 His wine outpoured, His bread unbroken,  
 Pass proudly on, despise, forget  
 Of grace the pledge, of love the debt.

Is not that bread the flesh, the meat,  
 The manna which from Heaven proceeding ?  
 Is not that wine in truth the blood  
 From His deep wounded side fast flowing ?  
 Can souls which loathe far choicer food  
 Than angels' food—in grace be growing ;  
 Or live, who fail to “ rise and eat,”  
 When Christ with His own body feedeth ?  
 O ! death for life they surely choose,  
 Who their dear Lord's command refuse.”

“ This do in remembrance of Me.”

AMEN.















