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WILLIAM AND HELEN

FRANK AND MARY

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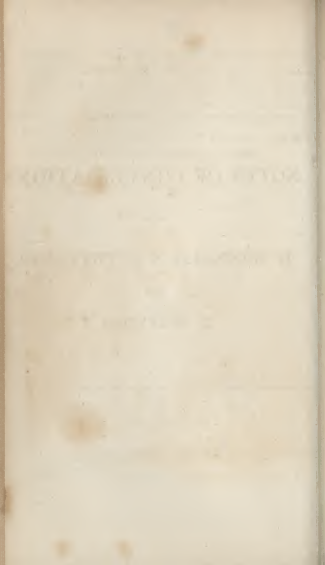
NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS

WITH

H. M'DONALD, N. SUTHERLAND,

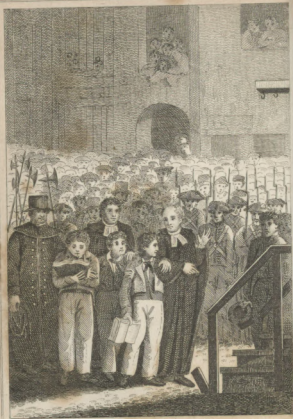
AND

H. M'INTOSH.





FRONTISPIECE



W. & A. Leitch.

The Memorial procession—marched slowly down the high Street—the Magistrates the Clergy and the Criminals preceded forward & ascended the Platform. . . . Page 36.

Edinburgh Published by Waight & Jones 1821.

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NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS

WITH

H. M'DONALD, N. SUTHERLAND,

AND

H. M'INTOSH,

(Who were Executed at Edinburgh, April 22, 1812,

DURING THE TIME THEY WERE

UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH;

WITH AN

ACCOUNT OF THEIR BEHAVIOUR DURING THEIR
LAST MOMENTS ;

AND SOME ORIGINAL PAPERS, INCLUDING AN ADDRESS
WRITTEN BY NEIL SUTHERLAND TO THE
OTHER PRISONERS IN THE JAIL.

BY WILLIAM INNES,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

NINTH EDITION.

EDINBURGH :

PRINTED FOR WAUGH AND INNES ;

M. OGLE, GLASGOW; R. M. TIMS, DUBLIN; JAMES DUNCAN
J. NISBET, AND F. WESTLEY, LONDON.

M.DCCC.XXV.

NOTES ON CONVERSATION

THE HISTORY OF THE CONVERSATION

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PREFACE.

THIS tract was first published in 1812. It then rapidly run through several large editions, and seemed to excite a very general interest. For some time it had been out of print. But as it was frequently called for when a copy was not to be found, the 8th edition was put to press some time ago, and now the 9th is in demand. From this it would appear, that though the circumstances which gave rise to this small publication have in a great measure been forgotten, the interest produced by the observations of the young men, whose conversation, during their imprisonment, it records, has not yet died away. Indeed, as I consider myself

only the vehicle of conveying to the public an account of that change of mind which appears to have been produced upon them by means of the Gospel, I cannot but view this as a subject which ought to excite the most permanent interest.

It has often been objected to publications like the present, that there is a great danger of speaking too strongly of any appearances of repentance when a man is under sentence of death, as many cases have occurred, in which such appearances, though very favourable for a time, entirely vanished after a pardon was obtained. Of this fact I am fully aware, as some examples of it have come within my own observation. I have however guarded, I trust, against any expression of opinion which could offend the most scrupulous, and have rather left every reader to form his own opinion, of the state of the young persons, who are

the subjects of this tract, from the language which they themselves employed.

I cannot, however, here avoid remarking the inconsistency of those who seem so very jealous of entertaining any favourable hopes of those who, for the first time, listen to the Gospel in a prison, and in the near prospect of suffering the punishment inflicted by the laws of their country. Such objectors not unfrequently profess to found their opposition to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, partly at least on their gloomy aspect—on their too great severity, that they are really enough to lead men to despair:—and yet this is the very class who seem offended if you freely proclaim forgiveness to a poor dying fellow-mortal, who is placed in circumstances, whatever his guilt may have been, certainly claiming the deepest sympathy. No one will, in so many words, say, that we ought deliberately to

abandon such to despair. But, if we should not, through what channel are they to be delivered from it, but through that unlimited proclamation of mercy by Jesus Christ, which meets all the various degrees of guilt with which our race are chargeable? To a benevolent mind, it cannot but be a source of gratification to observe, that even a flagrant transgressor appears to have experienced genuine repentance, and to have been led to a humble reliance, amidst all his guilt, on that blood, which, on the highest authority, we are assured cleanseth from all sin.

The following are the circumstances which originally led to the publication of these Notes.

Having gone with my friend Mr WAUGH, then one of the Magistrates of Edinburgh, in the spring of 1812, to see three unfortunate young men who had been con-

emned to death, in consequence of the share
 they had in certain riots which had taken
 place at the end of the preceding year, I
 found every encouragement, from their state
 of mind, to repeat my visits as frequently as
 possible. As by treating them with sym-
 pathy, and showing a disposition to instruct
 them, I gradually obtained their confidence,
 they frequently expressed their feelings,
 both in their former state and in that in
 which they were then placed, with a con-
 siderable degree of freedom. Besides visit-
 ing them repeatedly in the earlier period of
 their imprisonment, I spent a considerable
 time with them every day, except one, of
 the week immediately preceding their ex-
 ecution. I had thus the satisfaction of
 marking the very rapid progress they made
 in the knowledge of those truths to which
 their attention was directed by the different
 ministers who were in the habit of attending

them. Many of their observations, in themselves extremely interesting, appeared to me still more so, from the manner in which they were expressed, as they exhibited some very striking views of the state of the human mind, when placed in uncommon and peculiarly trying circumstances.

When these Notes of Conversations were first published, it was chiefly in the hope that, as the execution of these young men excited a very general interest in this city, they might fall into the hands of some of their former companions in iniquity, and that they might thus be led to consider in what light M'Donald, Sutherland, and M'Intosh, viewed the life they had been leading, when the prospect of a future world was immediately before them. Of this we have an affectionate illustration in the very interesting address which Sutherland wrote to his fellow-prisoners, on the very day of his execution.

which will be found among the documents presented to the reader in the following pages.

It must not, however, be supposed, that these Notes are only calculated to be useful to persons of this description. In so far as they relate to what brings peace to the conscience under a conviction of guilt, they relate to a subject which ought to be equally interesting to every human being, whatever the nature or degree of his individual guilt may be. Indeed, since the last edition was printed, I have had great satisfaction in hearing, that one gentleman, whose character was formerly in a high degree respectable, but who, like many, had been spending his days without well-grounded hope for eternity, was led, by the perusal of this tract, to a cordial acquiescence in the revelation of mercy by Jesus Christ. For this I desire to feel the most unfeigned

gratitude to the God of all grace.—It is the hope that, through the divine blessing, these Notes may excite the attention of some other readers, to a subject which will appear one day to be infinitely more important than any other, that they are presented, in this new edition, to the public view.

WILLIAM INNES.

Edinburgh, May 18, 1825.

NOTES OF CONVERSATIONS,

&c. &c.

HUGH M'DONALD was bred a shoemaker ; but, having left his employment, went to sea, where he continued for some time. In consequence of this, he was distinguished by the name of *Boatswain* among his companions. Neil Sutherland was an apprentice to a painter ; and Hugh M'Intosh, a shoemaker. They were indicted to appear before the Court of Justiciary, as having been actors, or art and part in the riots and some of the robberies that were committed in the last night of the year 1811. M'Intosh was further charged as implicated in the murder of Dugald Campbell the police-officer. After a full trial, being found guilty, they were sentenced to be executed at Edinburgh, April 22, 1812 --not at the usual place of execution, but on

a gibbet erected opposite to the spot where Campbell was murdered. M'Donald, who was an orphan, was not quite certain what his age was, but thought he was between 19 and 20 years; Sutherland had just completed his 18th year; and M'Intosh was only 16.

My first interview with them was after they had been condemned to die. Sutherland and M'Intosh, I found, could read—M'Donald could not. He was indeed very anxious to improve any little time he had in learning to read the Scriptures. I could not, however, encourage him to devote his attention to this object. Had he had any prospect of remaining in the world, it would have been highly proper; but as his time was to be so short, it seemed of the utmost importance to turn it to the best possible account, by communicating instruction by conversation and reading, in the way that was most suited to his previous ignorance of the plainest principles of Divine truth. Besides, by being in the same room with Sutherland and M'Intosh, he had the benefit of hearing them read those portions of Scripture which were more particularly recommended to their attention.

Having asked Sutherland and M'Intosh, one day, if they ever read the Bible before they were apprehended?—Sutherland replied, "My mother used sometimes to make me read it, but I felt a hatred of it, because when I read it, I found it condemned the ways I knew I was go-

ing on in, and I tried to get quit of it as much as possible." What a striking commentary was this on the language of the Saviour, when he says, "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; for every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved!" M'Intosh said, that he often used to read the Bible, but he never thought any thing about what it contained. He added, with much emphasis, "I think if I had known as much of it as I do now, I would not have been here to-day!"

M'Donald, though he could not read, told me he often felt a conviction that he was not right; but, he added, I was stout and young, and I always thought I should have time enough to repent before I came to die, and this helped to quiet my mind.

Sometimes they used to ask questions, which may appear rather questions of curiosity, but which we can easily suppose to occur to minds which had been led for the first time seriously to reflect on the great truths of revelation. One of them asked, how it was that men were saved before the incarnation of Christ? I referred him here to the early promise of the Saviour, soon after the introduction of sin, which is contained in the prediction, that the "Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." From this I proceeded to notice the subsequent

prophecies relating to the same point. These, I showed them, increased in number and perspicuity, as time rolled on, till we come to the days of Isaiah, who described the sufferings of Christ, (chap. liii.) rather as a history of what was past, than a prediction of events not yet accomplished. By comparing these various prophecies with the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is plain that the people of God, before Jesus Christ appeared in the flesh, died in the faith of a Saviour who was to come, as Christians do now in the faith of one who has come already. In this way men in every age are saved, through the same atonement which has been made by the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ.

M'Donald asked me, what we had reason to think would be the state of the soul between death and the resurrection? This led me to quote the case of the thief on the cross, and the language of the apostle Paul, in Phil. i. 23. as a proof that the soul would be in a state of consciousness immediately after death, either in happiness or misery. I also read the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Luke xvi. 19. When I came to the 28th verse, where the rich man is represented as in the world of misery, requesting Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his five brethren whom he had left on earth, that they might not come into the place of torment, I mentioned an observation that has been often made on this part of the parable, viz. that one

reason why he might tremble at the thought of their presence in the future world, was, that as they had been companions in wickedness, and perhaps encouraged one another to commit iniquity, their presence would only aggravate his misery. While I was reading the parable, they were all attention. By the attitude in which M'Intosh (the youngest) was sitting, M'Donald was nearly behind him, though a little to one side. When I came to notice this remark on the 28th verse, M'Intosh, as if awaking from a reverie, and by a sort of instinctive impulse, of which he seemed hardly conscious, turned his head, and cast the most expressive look at M'Donald, whose downcast eyes showed that he understood its import, and felt its force.—Yes; it was a look full of meaning—it seemed to say, You know you have awfully contributed to my ruin.—Perhaps some of their former companions, if they shall read these lines, may understand, better than I can do, the signification of such a look. How dreadful is the guilt, not only of going to ruin one's self, but of contributing to encourage others to walk in those paths that lead to destruction!

At one of my visits, just as I was taking leave of them, M'Donald asked, with considerable emotion, what was the meaning of the expression *being born again*? They had been reading John iii. 3. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Such expressions are often both heard and read

with much carelessness by those in the vigour of health, who are looking forward to many days or years yet before them ; but they sound very differently in the ears of one who is certain, in two weeks, of passing into eternity. Such solemn declarations *then* possess a peculiar interest indeed. Two questions naturally occur, which appear of such moment, that every other consideration seems the most insignificant trifle when compared with them. The first is, What is the meaning of such an expression ? and the second, Am I personally interested in what this expression implies?—The explanation given of the phrase, being “born again,” in reply to M'Donald's inquiry, it occurred to me, would be properly drawn from his own history, as that explanation which he could best understand. It was remarked to him—You confess that you have hitherto been living in the total neglect of the authority of God, and in opposition to his commandments ; now if, instead of living in neglect of the Scriptures, you had attended to them, and believed what they contain, only think what a different person you would have been. We are commanded in Scripture to love God ; and, in the Gospel, we have the most powerful motives to this. But, if we really love him, this will appear by our keeping his commandments. The belief of the Gospel, then, would have led you to abandon the sins in which you were living. Instead of spending the Lord's day in idleness and wickedness, you would have

attended the preaching of the Gospel.—The language of profaneness and obscenity would have been laid aside.—Instead of being the terror of your fellow-creatures, and availing yourself of every opportunity of injuring them, you would have found yourself commanded and disposed to love your neighbour as yourself, and to do good to all as you had opportunity. Now, supposing you had been led, when you were going about at liberty, to consider your ways—to see the evil of them—to believe the declaration of the Word of God respecting the guilt of sin, its fatal consequences, and the willingness of the Saviour to receive all who come to him for mercy ; you would have been led, by the belief of these truths, to a totally different kind of life ; you would have undergone a great change by the operation of the Divine Spirit ; you would have acted according to a new rule—the Word of God ; and from a new motive—a regard to the glory of God :—This is what is meant by being “ born again.”

In your present situation, you have not the same opportunity of showing any change that may take place in your views and sentiments, which you might have had ; but if you have experienced any thing of the change spoken of by our Lord in this passage, you will deeply lament your former course of iniquity ; you will see the evil of it ; and you will be truly desirous of having the love and the power of sin

subdued in your heart, as well as to be delivered from its future consequences.

On a subsequent occasion, when we were talking on another subject, I was struck with the use which Sutherland made of the same figure that is employed in Scripture, though I believe he was not thinking of it, at the time, as a scriptural expression. "I think," said he, "had I been spared with my present views, and allowed to return to the world, I would have just been like a new-born child, to begin life anew, upon quite a new footing." It was on the same occasion, he observed, "One of the chief reasons why I regret being removed so soon out of the world is, that I have yet learned so little of what is contained in the Bible. I think, from what I have already learnt since I came into this prison, it would be my greatest pleasure to know more about it." I reminded him, that if it was really from the love of the truth contained in the Bible that he wished to remain on earth, he might justly entertain the hope of soon understanding much more of the nature and excellency of that truth, by being removed out of this world, than he could have attained all his life, had he been permitted to continue here below.

"I believe it to be a part of God's mercy to me," said Sutherland, "that I have been brought into this prison. Had not this been the case, I dare say I should just have been going on in my old ways, as forgetful of eternity as ever."

When he expressed this sentiment, both M'Donald and M'Intosh seemed cordially to unite in it. He told me, he thought it would be his greatest pleasure to have an opportunity of dissuading his former companions from continuing in their evil courses; and that, had he seen things formerly as he now saw them, he would have done all in his power to prevent the riots on the last night of the year. He added, "I think I could be willing to suffer any thing for the Saviour; and when I read the account of Stephen, I sometimes think how desirable it would be to die as he did, for the sake of the Lord Jesus." Agreeably to the spirit of these observations, he wrote a letter to some of the rioters, his former companions, who were confined in the room below, to request their forgiveness of any injury he had done any of them, and expressing his forgiveness of any thing injurious which they had done to him. He also sent an address to them, earnestly beseeching them to consider their ways.

Several of the questions they proposed, and the remarks they made, indicated a good deal of reflection on what they heard and read. "There is one thing," said Sutherland, "which we do not fully understand, and that is, how a person can feel that peace and comfort which the belief that Christ died to save us should give, and at the same time experience that deep distress on account of sin, which we are often told we should feel also. For my own part, I

am often afraid I am too easy ; I cannot feel that deep distress which I could wish. I think, if I were as much afflicted with a sense of my guilt as I should be, I could neither eat nor sleep ; but I can do both. I wish I could get my heart more softened than it is. I find, indeed, one of the principal things that does this, is reading such passages of Scripture as the 53d chapter of Isaiah. I very often read it, and I find it warms my heart, when I think of the Saviour being willing to suffer so much for such creatures as we are." In reporting the conversations I had with these young men, I all along give their own language, as nearly as I can recollect it.—Though Sutherland spoke on this occasion, as he usually did, more than the other two, it appeared that what he mentioned had been the subject of their previous conversation. It was particularly pleasing to remark, that when he complained of the hardness of his heart, that he could not get it so impressed with a sense of his guilt as he wished, both M'Intosh and M'Donald added, " that is just the case with me too." In endeavouring to remove the difficulty he had mentioned, I attempted to show him, that so far was the peace of mind that was produced by the belief of the Gospel from being inconsistent with a deep impression of our unworthiness, that it was this very truth that tended most powerfully to produce this impression. Suppose a son, I remarked, has most unreasonably offended a kind parent ; that, after

having for a time persisted in doing so, his father still shows his willingness to receive him ; that he returns to his father's house, and, instead of being treated with harshness and severity, his father loads him with expressions of kindness, what do you think his feelings would be, when he was receiving these marks of his father's kindness? While they were a source of satisfaction and gratitude on the one hand, do you not think they would lead him to reflect on his own previous conduct on the other? that they would make him deeply lament that he should have acted in such a manner, towards one who deserved to be treated in so very different a way? Now, you have this case strikingly described in the parable of the prodigal son, Luke xv. 11. This may give you some idea of true repentance. The repentance enjoined in the Bible, is not mere regret on account of the effects of sin. When persons find themselves involved in distress on account of their conduct, they will then, from mere selfishness, repent that they acted in such a way, as to expose them to such distress. But this is very different from a deep sense of personal guilt and unworthiness. This arises from a view of the infinite excellence of that Being whom we have offended, along with a discovery of his undeserved love towards us, and his willingness again to receive us into his favour. Now, this is what the Gospel reveals. The testimony of Divine mercy is there freely given to all.

“ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on him, might not perish, but have everlasting life,” John iii. 16. You have just mentioned, that you find your heart *warmed*, as you express it, by reading Isaiah liii. You know what you intend to express by this—if it really import what I wish and hope it may. This must be, because you believe the representation there contained, and, of course, the willingness of Jesus to save you, notwithstanding all your guilt. While this, then, is suited to bring peace to your mind, you will see in what light it will place your former course of life. It will fill you with disgust with yourselves, that you could be guilty of acting in such direct opposition to the will of a Being of such infinite goodness; and the more you reflect on this goodness, and especially on the display of it given in the sufferings of the Saviour, the more will this feeling of disgust with your former conduct rise in your minds. There is an expression in common use in this country, and which perhaps you will understand: When a person does what he afterwards deeply regrets, he often says, he is *quite mad at himself* for doing so. This may often, indeed, be applied to what a man regrets on account of the *folly* of his conduct, or the inconveniences in which it involves him. But it is when people use this expression, in reference to what produces compunction of mind on account of the *evil* of their conduct, that it expresses somewhat of

the feelings connected with true repentance. It is thus that the belief of that revelation of mercy, which proclaims pardon to the guilty, is inseparably connected with that repentance which fills men with disgust at their former iniquities, which leads them, in the emphatic language of Scripture, to *loathe* themselves in their own sight, on account of their iniquities, and on account of their abominations ; and it is this feeling, when produced, that effectually leads men to forsake sin, and walk in newness of life.

All of them listened with much attention to my discourse to them on this occasion, and seemed to enter into the train of sentiment by which it was illustrated. I was some days afterwards a good deal struck with a remark of Sutherland's, in consequence of having a passage in a book pointed out to him, which contained a description of the awful punishment denounced against sinners. " I have read this description," said, he " and can read it without being much affected by it. But the case is quite different, when I read of the love of God, as described in the Scriptures. It is when I think of this, that I am most affected at the thought of offending a Being of such goodness."

They all seemed a good deal impressed with a sense of the Divine goodness, in preserving them when they were going on in their evil courses, and not calling them by a sudden death into a future world. " I believe it is a part of God's mercy to me," said Sutherland, " that I

have been brought to this prison. I should never otherwise, in all probability, have thought of any thing about my soul, but have gone on in the same way I did formerly." M'Intosh added, " I am sure I may say the same thing." " And what a mercy," said M'Donald, " that I was not cut off in America, or in the West Indies. I remember one night, in a gale of wind, I was on the top-mast, when my feet went from below me, and I hung for sometime by a rope. I cried, ' God, have mercy on me ! ' but so stupid was I, that when I got safely down again, I never thought of it more. Had I been lost at that time, I am sure I must have died in a miserable condition indeed." Sutherland observed that though they were to suffer death, he thought their situation was much more favourable than that of their companions, who were to be transported to Botany Bay. " I should be afraid," said he, " if I were exposed to the society of wicked men, that I might not have a steadiness to oppose them."

In the course of their reading, they met with the expression, Gal. iii. 10. " Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." The sound of such language alarmed them. They were startled at the thought that it might be applicable to them, from the way in which they were doomed to die. Under this impression, they asked me at one of our interviews to explain it. I showed them, that it was introduced in reference to the language of the law under the Old Testament,

and to manifest that Jesus actually, according to the tenor of that law, suffered the curse. But as a most satisfactory evidence that it could not apply to those who were appointed to suffer a public and ignominious death, if they did indeed repent and believe the Gospel, I mentioned the case of the thief on the cross, to whom, though he suffered in this way, the Lord Jesus expressly declared, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." This case, so directly in point, seemed to bring immediate relief to their minds.

In the course of our conversations, either M^cIntosh or Sutherland mentioned a striking incident, which took place during the time they were in Glasgow. Before they were arrested, they lodged in a house, where they heard the family in the neighbouring apartment engaged in worship. This led them to some conversation about religion; and they tried to persuade themselves, and each other, that there was no God, consequently no future world, and no state of punishment. As they had gone to Glasgow with stolen goods, and were in danger of being detected, they felt that they needed such a doctrine as this to keep their minds in any measure of ease. "But," added Sutherland, "at the very time I was saying I thought there was no God, I felt something in my mind secretly revolting at such a supposition." It is by no means uncommon for men to endeavour to accommodate their creed to their circumstances.

They attempt to deny the existence of a God, when they have reason to tremble at the thought of a Being, to whom they must give an account. And it will generally be found, that those who can see no truth in the Scriptures, are living in the indulgence of some tempers or habits which they decidedly condemn. How little are persons of this description qualified for an impartial examination of the evidence on which Christianity rests ! The cause is by them prejudged. It is impossible, in the language of our law, to purge them of malice or partial counsel, while their lives proclaim their hostility to the doctrine to be investigated.

I was frequently gratified to find some very strong expressions used by all of them, but especially by Sutherland, respecting the evil of their former ways, and of the dispositions they were accustomed to indulge. "One thing," said he, "which I now find lies heaviest at my heart, is the revengeful temper I used to feel, and which I was accustomed to gratify. When any one offended me, I could never rest contented, till I had my revenge upon him. If I could not get it in one way, I would take it in another. But I now think I could bear any thing. Yes ; I could endure to be struck by one, for whom I knew I was fully a match, rather than indulge such a disposition any more."

In one of my conversations with them, I asked them, what it was that first led them into those pernicious practices, which had at last

brought them into those deplorable circumstances in which they then stood? Sutherland replied, (and O ! let the reader attend !) that *idleness* was his ruin. He had unfortunately quarrelled with his master ; a law-suit ensued about his indenture ; and till it was settled, he was not permitted to work with any other person. It was when thus reduced to idleness, that he became acquainted with his dissipated companions, and this led to his ruin.—I am totally ignorant who his master was ; nor do I mean to insinuate any charge against him, while I here remark, that this part of Sutherland's history ought to suggest a caution to all who have young people under their care, to guard as much as possible against any measure which may expose them to the curse of having nothing to do. Young men can certainly never be placed in a more perilous situation, especially in cities where they are assailed by temptation from every quarter, and where a steady and regular occupation of their time is almost essentially necessary to their safety.—In answer to my inquiry, M'Intosh answered with much emotion : " I may say, that *South Bridge* was my ruin. We used to meet there, and do nothing but work mischief. We were always worst, too, on the Sabbath evening, as then we had nothing else to do." M'Donald, I think, expressed himself in a similar manner.

I wished to obtain their own testimony respecting the state of their minds, when they

were living in those practices, which at last subjected them to the stroke of public justice. I wished to have *their* evidence to a fact, of which, indeed, there is no room for entertaining the smallest doubt, that, while such a conduct exposes a man to the most imminent danger, it is at the same time quite incompatible with any *present* enjoyment. Their testimony to this point was indeed very ample. They were strangers to any thing like comfort or satisfaction, when living in habits of iniquity. M'Intosh told me, he often used to stop in the midst of his work, and begin to reflect on his conduct, which frequently filled him with the greatest uneasiness.—On one occasion, in particular, he said he had gone on a Sabbath evening into Mr Aikman's meeting-house, at the head of the Horse-wynd, when he heard the preacher describing the solemnities of the last judgment. He felt his mind filled with horror, when he thought of the appearance he must make there. “But,” he added, “whenever I got out, I went away to my companions, and, by getting into conversation with them, all my impressions soon vanished.” Sutherland said, that he had, in general, no particular uneasiness, because he endeavoured as much as possible not to think of his conduct. He conceived, that the more ignorant he was of the Bible, his guilt would be less; and thus he studiously kept all thought about it as much as possible out of his mind, not reflecting that the guilt of ignorance of the

Divine will is great, where a man has an opportunity of having that ignorance removed. There was one night, however, he said, when he had come earlier than his companions to the head of the Bridge, he began to feel very uneasy when he was alone. But as soon as the rest came, their conversation helped to dissipate all his gloomy thoughts. M'Donald observed, that very often, on the Sabbath evening particularly, he used to feel deep regret at the manner in which he had spent the day, especially in not going to any place of worship. That he often used to resolve to go the following Sabbath. But when it came, his resolutions were all forgotten, and he continued as careless as before. The thought that he would have time enough before he died to repent of his sins, and to obtain forgiveness, he repeatedly mentioned, chiefly contributed to remove the uneasiness, which the recollection of his conduct frequently produced.

It may be well supposed, that, in my conversations with these young men, we occasionally talked of the crimes for which they were condemned to die, though it was my chief object to impress their minds with their deep guilt, as transgressors of the Divine law, which had been continually accumulating during the previous period of their lives. The following is the amount, I think, of the information they gave me respecting the association with which they were connected, and the scenes of that

dreadful night, which proved so fatal to them. There were 18 or 20 of the gang who were intimately acquainted, and were determined, in the case of any scuffle, to stand by one another. They had a certain whistle, by which they called on each other, and which, of course, all of them knew. They denied, however, what had been alleged against them, that they used the expression, *Mar him!* as a sort of watch-word, on the last night of the year, (alluding to the shocking murder of Mr Mar and his family in London.) It is, I believe, already very generally known, that M'Intosh most peremptorily denied to the last having any thing to do with the murder of Campbell, though he acknowledged the justness of the other charges brought against him. He was at one time determined to declare this on the scaffold; and, I believe, it was partly at my persuasion he did not. I remarked to him, that, from the bustle at the moment, he might be imperfectly heard, and, of course, misunderstood; that it might be supposed he was denying his guilt altogether, which I knew was a sentiment he did not intend to express. I told him, however, if it would be any satisfaction to him, that I should, wherever I had an opportunity, state the fact of his denying that charge. With this he seemed satisfied, and agreed to give up the idea of making any public declaration respecting it. M'Intosh added, "There were many grown-up people among the mob that night, whom I never saw before, and

new nothing about, who were just as busy as we were. But to be sure it was at *awfu'* night ; the gentlemen were lying in the strand in every direction."

Some interesting remarks occurred in the conversation I had with them two days before their execution. "I have often been happier," said Sutherland, "in this prison, notwithstanding what is before us, when thinking of the love of the Saviour, than I ever was when engaged in our rioting. When we think of the Saviour's death, and converse together about it, it warms our hearts, and makes us think our manner of death nothing." "Aye," added McDonald, "when we think of the sufferings Christ endured, though he was quite innocent, and that he suffered these for such creatures as we are, the just for the unjust." Sutherland continued (alluding to the High Street as the place of execution, and the principal scene of the riots,) "I hope when we next go to that place, we will be in a different state from what we were in when there last. We were then without the fear of God ; I hope that will not be the case with us when we go there next." I suggested to them a method by which they might, in some measure, judge of the value of the Gospel, viz. by conceiving for a moment what their state would have been, if, amidst a sense of that guilt, they had not had the revelation of mercy contained in the Gospel, to which they could have recourse. Sutherland

said, with much emphasis, "I sometimes think if it were not for the Bible, I would lie down in despair. The remembrance of our sins confounds us; and it is nothing but the thoughts of the Saviour's love that makes us happy. Oh I wish my former companions would but think of what is in the Bible." M'Donald added, "It is probable that many of those who used to be our companions will witness our execution.—I wish they may take warning by our example.—I wish they may enjoy the same advantages before they die, that we have done; that they may have as long warning, and as many of God's servants ready to instruct them." Thought M'Intosh, I think, spoke little at this time, he plainly showed his acquiescence in the sentiments expressed by the other two.

On the morning of the 22d of April, (the day of their execution,) I spent the last hours with them they were permitted to remain without a guard. They had indeed two centinels upon them the whole of the preceding night, but they retired when I came; and, before I left the prison, the irons of the prisoners were knocked off, after which six soldiers were always in the apartment. I was struck with finding all of them extremely firm and composed. They had all slept more or less the preceding night, though they were somewhat disturbed by a light placed in the room, to which they had not been accustomed. When I went in, Sutherland was writing an address to his fellow-prison-

ers, which he gave me to read to them after his death.—As M'Donald could not write, M'Intosh was writing a letter for him, which he (M'Donald) was dictating to his half-brother, a soldier in the 90th regiment. As I could write faster than M'Intosh, and as their time was short, I offered to write for him. I accordingly wrote the greatest part of that letter with my own hand. I was greatly pleased to find all of them much more composed than they had been in the conclusion of the preceding week. They were then in a state of considerable depression, and complained of being in a great measure incapable of fixing their thoughts. Now, however, their state seemed very different, and they exhibited a degree of composure far beyond what could have been expected. Their situation led me to suggest an illustration of the love of Christ, which seemed to give them much comfort. Conceive, I said, the case of one coming into this jail, and being willing to occupy your room, saying, "Take me, I am willing to suffer in the room of these persons, and let them go free." Would you not think this a most singular display of kindness, and would you ever afterwards question the willingness of that person to support and assist you if you applied to him? Now, we are told, Jesus died for the ungodly; he suffered the just for the unjust. This is precisely the case I have been supposing; this shows the encouragement you have to put your trust in him, while, as poor guilty creatures,

you come in the way of his own appointment imploring mercy.

I this morning got an explanation, which do believe to be the true one, of the very hardened appearance which M'Donald exhibited immediately after his condemnation. It is already very generally known, that he then assumed the tone of the most determined carelessness and indifference; nay, that he behaved with a degree of levity altogether unbecoming his melancholy situation. This morning he said to me, "When I came into this prison, I thought I had been so bad, and that my sins were so great, that they could not be pardoned, and that it was therefore no matter which way I took; but I bless God I have seen since, that they can be pardoned, and the blood of Christ can cleanse from all sin; and this is my comfort." Thus we find that that which appeared the effect of hardened indifference, was, in truth, the behaviour of one who was at the point of despair; a state, however, from which he afterwards found, I trust, to his eternal joy, that the grace of the Gospel was able effectually to deliver him. The justness of this view of his case is much confirmed by what he said on a previous occasion, that he thought if it had not been for what he found in the Bible his situation was enough to put him mad.

M'Intosh, who was sitting by me, looked at some copies of the Bible on the table, and said, "I am *swear* (loth) to be taken away so soon to leave these fine books,"—a similar sentiment

to what Sutherland had before expressed. This, I trust, was a true indication of what it was he then chiefly valued in the world. I reminded him, that those who died interested in the Saviour, would soon have a much more enlarged knowledge of what was in the Bible than could ever be acquired by those who remained on earth.

I was much gratified on this occasion to find M'Donald look so much to the overruling providence of God, in bringing him into the situation in which he then stood. Though they were all disposed to acknowledge their guilt, yet they did not admit some of the facts that were alleged at their trial, and sworn to by some of the former associates of their wickedness.—This had, on some previous occasions, rather been the subject of M'Donald's murmurs; but this morning he said, "We need *wite* (blame) no one for our being brought here, but see the hand of God in it; and I hope it has been for our good."

The smith looked in at the door, saying, he was coming in a few minutes to take off their irons. "Aye," replied, I think, two of them, "I hope it is the happiest irons ever you took off." "I feel," said M'Donald, "my mind quite lightened." When their irons were off, Sutherland began to change his clothes. I asked him what clothes he had got? He answered, "These are the clothes I used to wear on Sabbath, which my mother sent up." When he pronounced the name *Mother*, I could perceive the tear glisten in his eye. He seemed

to feel a momentary agitation, but almost instantly recovered his former tranquillity. "Aye," said M'Donald, who was standing by him, "I hope it will be a blessed Sabbath to all of us—the best we ever saw." Before I left the room, I saw two of them take their breakfast with much composure. After this I took leave of them, as I knew several other ministers had engaged to be with them early in the forenoon, and my services were no longer required.—I, of course, saw them no more.

The following account of what took place on the day of execution, after I left the jail, I take from one of the newspapers of the day; as I understand, from those present, that it contains a very correct representation of that solemn scene, which excited so very general a sensation in this city:—

"The unhappy culprits rose at an early hour, and being released from their irons, they dressed themselves, and took some breakfast. They afterwards spent the forenoon in devotion, with Mr Porteous, the chaplain of the jail, who, since the day of their commitment, had laboured without intermission for their eternal welfare, and some ministers who had been in the habit of visiting them. Just before they were bound, Mr Sibbald offered them some wine and water, which they declined taking, but gave it to the guards.

At one o'clock, the streets, from the tolbooth

to the scaffold, were lined with 400 of the Royal Perthshire Militia, who came from the Castle for that purpose. At the same time, all the avenues leading to the High Street were guarded, so as to prevent carriages or carts from appearing on the street. At a quarter before two o'clock, the four Magistrates of the city, preceded by their officers, and accompanied by the Rev. Drs Fleming and Campbell, and Mr Andrew Thomson, three of the ministers of this city, with the Moderator and a party of High Constables, dressed in black, proceeded from the Council-chamber, Royal Exchange, to the tolbooth. Before the arrival of the Magistrates, the criminals had been brought from the iron-room into the hall; and, in coming down stairs, M'Donald bade farewell to several of the rioters, who were confined in the room below. After the Magistrates and Ministers came into the hall, a psalm was sung, which was followed with a prayer by the Rev. Andrew Thomson. The 130th psalm was then sung, which was in like manner followed with a prayer by Dr Campbell.

In all these exercises, the unfortunate young men joined most fervently, singing with a firm voice. They afterwards kneeled down, and prayed by themselves, in a manner so sensible and solemn, as to affect all who were present. They then rose, and declared they were ready.

About twenty minutes before three, the procession moved from the tolbooth in the following order:—

The Moderator and a party of the High Constables.

The city-officers bareheaded.

The four Magistrates in their robes, with white gloves,
and their rods of office in their hands.

The principal officer of the city, with his baton
and badge.

Neil Sutherland, accompanied by the Rev. Dr Fleming,
dressed in his gown and band.

Hugh M'Intosh, accompanied by the Rev. Dr Campbell.

Hugh M'Donald, accompanied by the Rev. A. Thomson.

A large party of the extra Constables, of whom 150 had
been sworn in for the occasion, closed the procession, which
was escorted on each side by the city-guard.

All the prisoners carried Bibles in their hands.

The mournful procession came round by the
west end of the prison, and moved slowly down
the High Street, till the constables who walked
first approached the scaffold, when they formed
two lines, within which the magistrates, the
clergy, and the criminals, proceeded forward,
and ascended the platform, which was raised
about three feet above the pavement.

M'Intosh and Sutherland were dressed in blue
coats and pantaloons, with white vests, and
M'Donald in a blue jacket and white trowsers.
They were all bareheaded, by their own desire,
and wore white gloves.

On ascending the scaffold, the fifth Hymn,
'The hour of my departure's come,' was given
out by Dr Fleming, and the prisoners seemed
to join in singing it with the most fervent de-
votion. Dr Fleming afterwards prayed for a

considerable time. The devotions being finished, the clergymen took their leave of the prisoners, and about half-past three they mounted the fatal drop, and were delivered over to the executioner.

During the awful moments of suspense, while the ropes were adjusting, they stood firm, and continued in prayer. The executioner having performed this part of his duty, they took a last farewell of each other, shaking hands with great warmth and affection. In a few minutes, the signal was given by Sutherland, when they were all three launched into eternity. The great bell immediately began to toll, which, joined to other circumstances, struck inconceivable awe into the minds of the spectators, many of whom took off their hats and remained uncovered. After hanging the usual time, the bodies of the prisoners were cut down, and, being put into coffins, were conveyed into the tolbooth. The Magistrates and Constables retired into the Council-chamber. Before the soldiers left the street, the gibbet and scaffold were taken down, and, at half-past four, the whole was over, and the street cleared."

I have been kindly favoured with the following information from the Ministers who attended the criminals from the jail to the place of execution.

Dr Campbell, who accompanied M^cIntosh, tells me, that on looking up at the gibbet, he said, "This is a blessed sight; I trust I shall

soon be with my Saviour." Sutherland was accompanied by Dr Fleming. When the Doctor took hold of his arm, as they were walking down from the jail, Sutherland said, "You need not; I am quite firm; I feel no uneasiness; I know the ground on which I rest." Observing the crowd, he expressed an earnest wish that his fate, and that of his fellow-sufferers, might be blessed, as the means of leading many of them to reflect, and of bringing them to glory.—He mounted the platform easily, and looking up, observed, "I hope this is a blessed gibbet."

From Mr Thomson, who accompanied M'Donald, I have the following communication:—

"I asked M'Donald how he felt in the immediate prospect of leaving the world. He replied, 'I am happy to leave this wicked world—I know it to be a wicked world—and to go to my Saviour.'

He repeatedly and earnestly spoke of the mercy he had experienced in having been arrested in the midst of his sins, and brought into a situation where he was made acquainted with the Saviour of sinners, and where, though he could not read himself, he enjoyed the means of instruction in the great truths of the Bible.

Before leaving the prison, they requested leave to retire by themselves for prayer. They went into a small apartment adjoining the common hall. I listened, and heard each of them pouring forth the most appropriate and fervent petitions. I heard distinctly these words, "O Lord,

"I am a poor unworthy sinner—have mercy upon me—forgive my sins, for the sake of thy Son, who died for me on Calvary,—receive me to thyself."

They showed no desire to protract the time. As soon as they had finished their devotions, which lasted not above three minutes, they voluntarily opened the door, and cheerfully came out to join the magistrates and ministers, who were waiting for them.

I shall never forget their appearance when they came out of this apartment. Their countenances beamed with a hope full of immortality. They looked as if they would have said, 'We are now ready to depart. We have thrown ourselves into the arms of Divine mercy—we believe that God has accepted of us. The Almighty Jesus is *our* Saviour. We have no fear of death, whom Christ has conquered. We are going to his presence to dwell for ever with the Lord. Our joy is unspeakable and full of glory.'

In walking down the street, M'Donald said, 'I trust in my dear Saviour—a *dear* Saviour to die for such a sinner as me.—The pain of death is nothing, for I am going to everlasting happiness.—What a multitude of people are looking at us—a multitude of *wicked* people!—O that they may all be made to repent and brought to glory!—I am quite comfortable and happy—Surely the Lord is with us—I feel that the Holy Ghost is in my heart!'

On the scaffold, they sung the last hymn with

a firm and unshaken tone of voice, which formed a contrast with the agitated and faltering voices of those beside them.

I uttered, or rather whispered, to M'Donald, some short simple ejaculations, suitable to his situation—he joined in them with great fervour.

When giving away his Bible, I said to him, 'Hugh, you are about to leave that book, and I trust you are going to its author.' 'Yes,' said he, 'I trust I am; and that is a *blessed* book!' (with great emphasis).

I may here add, that the only other psalm which was sung on this occasion, and selected by themselves, was the beginning of Psalm lvii. which will be found peculiarly suited to the very affecting circumstances in which they were placed."

Thus terminated the mortal career of these three young men, who, at a very early period of life, fell victims to the laws of their country. In all such cases, where there is not an opportunity afforded of proving the reality of any change of sentiment that is professed, by its subsequent effects upon the conduct, it certainly becomes us to speak with caution. But, in the present instance, we may safely assert, that, in so far as we can judge from appearances, (and it is only in this way we can judge in any case,) these young men saw the excellence of that Gospel which reveals salvation to the guilty; embraced it as the refuge of their souls; experi-

need its transforming influence upon their dispositions ; and, in the hour of death, were eminently supported by its precious consolations.

Here I shall insert a few documents, in which, in addition to what is contained in the preceding notes, will be found expressed in their own language, the impression they had of the importance of the change that was before them, and what the foundation was on which their hopes rested in the prospect of it. The first of these is an address by Sutherland to his fellow-prisoners, which has been already mentioned, and part of which I saw him write between eight and nine o'clock in the morning of the day of his execution. It is as follows:—

“ My Dear Fellow-Prisoners,

“ You may think my case is very distressing, on the thoughts of meeting with a gibbet, or the appearance of an executioner ; but let me tell you, there is something of greater importance than that—We are all to meet with a great and just God, who made heaven and earth, and all that in it is : and another thing you must know, that we all belong to that God ; and we must all give an account of our sins ; and that he is a God that will by no means clear the guilty. Now, my dear friends, I beg you, for the love of your souls, look into your hearts,

and turn from your evil ways. I do not say that you are such a great sinner as your unfortunate writer, to sin so much as to bring you to the gallows ; but you must all acknowledge, that you are sinners before God, and every sin deserves God's wrath and curse ; so that you are all as guilty before God's eyes as your unfortunate writer is. Now, my dear friends, hear the last dying testimony of a great sinner, who tasted the fruits of sin. Beware of bad company, and breaking the Sabbath, and disobeying your parents ; for this is the first thing that led to all evil, and has been my ruin.

“ Now, my dear friends, for the love of your poor souls, turn from your evil ways and fly to God, and provoke him not to anger ; for what an awful thing is it to fall into the hands of an angry God ! Oh ! my dear friends, think only on the love of God, in sending his Son into the world to save sinners ; and look to what Christ Jesus suffered for sin, and not his own sin, but yours and mine. That he might get us reconciled to God through his sufferings, he died the cursed death of the cross. Oh ! think on the nails that pierced his hands and feet, and all for our sins—and will you ever sin any more ? And though we have injured him so much, he still invites us to come to him, and cry for mercy, and he will pardon. He invites me, a poor condemned prisoner, that is to be hanged by the neck, by the laws of my country, till I be dead, to come to him. Though I am thought so little

of in this wicked world, that I am put out of it by the hands of man, though not good enough to live in it, yet he says, 'Come to me, and I will not put you out.' Oh! think on that love, and pray to God to give you grace to repent of your sins. Make a free confession of your sins, and Christ will pardon; for he is able and willing to save to the uttermost. Hear his own words, 'He that cometh to me for pardon and salvation, I will nowise cast out; be his guilt ever so great, this shall be no bar.'

"My dear friends, embrace this opportunity, for you do not know how long you may be in this world; and there is no matter how soon you be out of it, if you have your peace made up with God; for that is the grand thing, and always throw your burden on Christ Jesus, looking to—'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;' for it was this that gave me comfort, when I thought on my grave. Now, my dear friends, let me once more pray you, for the sake of Him that loved you so well, as to lay down his life a ransom for your sins, never to sin any more, and for the sake of your poor souls, but flee to Christ Jesus, your strong-hold. Now, my dear friends, I hope you will take example by me and my fellow-sufferers.

"Another thing I would mention to you, that I hope you will command passion, for that is a great evil. I do not speak of sin, because

I am going to suffer for it ; but I speak of it because it is such a hateful thing before God. And, O ! think what a pity it is to offend such a good God, who is so merciful to poor sinners, that he sent his only begotten Son into this wicked world to die the cursed death of the cross, that he might redeem poor lost sinners with his blood. And, Oh ! what a blessed thing it would be to be in heaven, redeemed by the precious blood of a Saviour. Now, my dear friends, I am going to suffer for sin in this world, and no mercy from man. But, Oh ! think on the love of Christ, who, most of all, I have injured. He still invites me to come to him, and cry for mercy, and he will give me it. Now, my dear friends, Oh ! beware of sin. No more from your unfortunate lover of your souls,

NEIL SUTHERLAND."

*Edinburgh Jail, 1812, April 22d,
the day of the Execution.*

The foregoing is a correct copy (except in regard to the spelling, which in the original is very bad) of the address which he put into my hands on the day of the execution, that I might read it to his fellow prisoners. I accordingly embraced the earliest opportunity of doing so, as several of his former companions were, on the following Friday, removed from Edinburgh jail, to be sent to Botany Bay, having received the sentence of transportation. I may here mention an incident, which gave me a striking proof

of that high degree of composure he felt on the morning of the day of the execution. The address (which I have by me) is written on a long sheet of paper. When he had finished the last page but one, as there was but little light in the apartment, he held up the paper extended between his hands, to see what he had inserted at the foot of the page. In such an attitude, had he felt any agitation, it must have communicated a tremulous motion to the paper ; but nothing of this appeared ; he held it as steadily, as if he had been placed in circumstances in which there was not the smallest cause for uneasiness.

The next paper I shall insert, is a letter which M'Donald dictated to his brother, who is a soldier in Ireland, on the morning of the day of the execution. The greater part of this letter, as I have already noticed, I wrote for him at his dictation. I can thus vouch for the accuracy of the copy here printed.

“ Dear Brother,

“ I take this opportunity of writing you this letter, informing you, that I hope by the time you receive it, my poor soul will be in everlasting happiness, where there will be rejoicing and happiness that will never have an end. I hope you will mind your Bible, and look to it, as I never did in my lifetime ; and I trust it has been the saving of my soul now, while I lie in this prison. I hope you will never take a thought about me after I am dead ; for I hope

my soul will be happy. I look to the dear Saviour, who suffered on the cross for us. He came to save sinners, of whom I am chief, and I just put my trust in him to be saved by his blood, for he has attended me in the time of trouble. I do not fear what man can do ; but I fear what God can do. Man can only destroy the body, but God can destroy both soul and body. I hope you will not fear man, but God ; for he is the only one we have to look to in this world, that our souls may be saved. For God is able and willing to save us, if we cry to him in the time of need. He has helped me in the time of trouble, and his good promises in his word have comforted me. I hope you will notice what company you keep, and think of the company I have kept, which helped to bring me here, though I hope I shall have a happy end ; and my being here has been the means of saving my soul. The streets of Edinburgh have been the ruin of many a one. They have been the ruin of my body ; but I hope not of my soul. The blessed Bible, and the attendance I have got within this jail, has been the means of comforting me, since I have been bound within these gloomy walls with chains. God has been all my comfort in this world ; and, I hope, in the next, he will take me to himself, so that my soul may be happy, and rejoice for ever. Now, dear brother, look at the company which brought me here, and I hope you will avoid the like. Hugh M'Intosh, my fellow-sufferer, joins me in

compliments to you ; and desires me to say, that he believes it is God that has brought us here, and though it be distressing in the mean time, he trusts it is to save our souls. I remain your unfortunate brother,

(Signed) HUGH M'DONALD."

Edinburgh Tolbooth, April 22.

While I was writing this letter for M'Donald, when he cautioned his brother the second time against bad company, I reminded him that he had mentioned this already. He replied, "No matter, we'll come over it again ; he was not so careful of his company as he ought to have been." This strikingly shows, how deeply he was impressed with the danger arising from associating with those whose principles or example were apt to lead to the paths of destruction.

In order to convey an idea of M'Intosh's state of mind in his own words, I add the following extracts from two letters he wrote to his parents. The one of them was written nearly two weeks before the execution, and the other the day immediately preceding it. They are both full of the tenderest expressions of affection to his father and mother, while, at the same time, they discover what was the ground of his comfort in the prospect of being removed from them.—The first letter runs thus :

“ Dear Father and Mother,

“ I write you this letter to inform you, that it comes from a sincere but troubled heart, for the grief I have caused you and all the family. Dear father and mother, you may think my case is very distressing, but I have reason to thank God I never felt so much comfort all my life, as since I have come within these gloomy walls, and with reading the Bible, that blessed book that I thought so little of, and the comfort it gives me at this present hour, I am at a loss to describe to you. But I hope that God will be your comfort ; and, dear father and mother, it is better for me to die on a scaffold, than on a bed of down in an unconverted state. Dear father and mother, these chains that now bind me to the ground, I hope, are the best friends that ever I had in this world ; for if I had carried on in sin, God might have struck me dead before I could have cried for mercy to him. I believe, from the bottom of my heart, that it has been God that has brought me to this prison. Dear father and mother, all that man can do is but to destroy the body ; but God can destroy both soul and body in hell ; but I hope in God that he will receive my soul in mercy ; and I hope by this time two weeks it will be in heaven, that glorious part where there is everlasting happiness. Oh ! that God may receive my soul, which I hope he will, from all danger. God will hear the groaning of the prisoner, and

those that are appointed to die. God will comfort them that are drowned with grief, and dry up the tears of the afflicted. God be with you all when I am dead and gone. Dear father, take no grief about me, for I hope I am going to a place where there will be no grief, but everlasting happiness—happiness that will never have an end.”

The following extracts are taken from the second letter :—

Edinburgh Tolbooth, April 21.

“ My Dear Father and Mother,

“ I write this letter, letting you know it comes from a sincere well-wisher ! Oh ! that God may be your comfort, and help you to get over all this, which I hope in God he will. God grant that those that swore against me that day may take an example by me, for they swore false about Dugald Campbell’s murder ; for, as I shall answer to God, I am innocent of it, which I am very happy that I have none of that man’s blood on my head. Dear father and mother, dry up your tears, for my sufferings in this world will not be long, if my soul be happy, as I hope, in God, it will. O brothers and sisters, think what God is, and take a thought. O God ! what would I have done if it had not been for that blessed book the Bible : it gave me comfort when I thought of my grave. Oh ! for God’s sake, brothers and sisters, read, read your Bibles, and you will find comfort in them.

Always go to the church, for if I had taken my mother's advice, I would not have been here; but it cannot be helped now, for I believe, from the bottom of my heart, it has been God that brought me to this prison, just to let me see a sight of my sins, which I thank God for! Oh think upon God's goodness to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever might believe on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Oh! I am sorry for the way I have grieved such a God—such a loving God, as to give his only Son for sinners, even the chief of sinners.

“ Oh! Gregor, (his brother,) help my mother and poor father, as long as you live. Now do it, dear brother; for if I had it in my power, I would do it with all my heart. God be with you, dear brothers and sisters. Hear my last dying words,—be good to my father and mother as long as you live. God be thanked I am brought to see what sin is, and the evil of it. I am sorry for the shame I have brought you and all the family to; and I thank you most kindly for all the good attendance you have paid me. Oh! brothers and sisters, be good to my poor father and mother. For God's sake hear my last dying words. God be with you all, to comfort you, for ever and ever. Amen! Farewell, dear father and mother. No more from your unfortunate, but loving son,

HUGH M'INTOSH.”

By Mr Porteous, the worthy and indefatigable chaplain of the jail, I have been favoured with the following information :—

At an early period of their confinement, they were heard to say, “ Sin and Satan are bad companions, they have ruined us and the families to whom we belong. O ! could we recall what is past, how differently would we live ! Did our companions know what we feel now, how differently would they think—they would shun the society of the wicked, and cleave close to God and good advice——Oh, sin ! Oh, these women ! (alluding to those prostitutes who had contributed to lead them to ruin.) Oh, what a fool was I ! Lord pity me, for I have ruined myself.”

One day, Neil Sutherland said to me, “ I never thought about the nature of sin till of late. I now see nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ can take it away. Man may pardon a crime, but he cannot remove the guilt from the conscience: When I die, I will leave my mother—my friends—the world—life itself—and the body too ;—but alas ! sin will pursue me to the throne of God, and, without Christ, even to hell for ever !”

“ O !” said Hugh M'Donald, “ if we are saved through Christ, then are we not free ?” Turning to a Minister sitting by, “ Does not the Bible say so ?”—The following passages were quoted and explained :—“ The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin.”—“ God

was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them."—God punishes sin in the person of the Saviour, and gives the guilty a free pardon, while the Holy Spirit purifies the conscience.

They have left written on the Bibles, and other books they read, several short thoughts and declarations, which show the happy state of their mind. Among these were the following :

"This blessed book has been my instructor and comfort when I thought on my grave. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

NEIL SUTHERLAND."

"Jesus Christ is all my salvation, and all my desire, and the Bible all my hope.

HUGH M'DONALD."

(M'Donald had learned to write a little while in prison.)

"I feel deeply grieved for my sins, but trust for a free pardon through my Lord Jesus Christ.

HUGH M'INTOSH."

The following declaration of his innocence of Campbell's murder was written upon his Bible, I believe, the day before the execution :

"Sentenced to death for murder and robbery.—Guilty of robbery only.—This I declare before God, and on this holy book.

HUGH M'INTOSH."

After the former edition of this tract was put to press, I received from Mr Porteous an additional communication, of which the following is the substance:—It was written in answer to a request I had made to him, to give me any information he had been able to procure, either from these young men, or others in jail, respecting the way in which they had at first been led astray, as I thought this might furnish an impressive warning to others. Though the whole letter is rather long for insertion, yet the substance of it is too interesting to be omitted.

“ I perceive,” says Mr Porteous, “ there are three sources of evil, which are dangerous to the youth in Edinburgh. 1st, The want of principle in many parents, who allow their children to go at large almost daily, but particularly on the Lord’s day, when they become an easy prey to every worthless idler or street-walker. 2d, The great number of recruiting parties in the city, who go about, night and day, and lead idle thoughtless boys into evil company, into drinking houses, and the society of infamous women. 3d, The daring impudence of these vile prostitutes, who lie in wait at every corner to entrap and entice. I found from the history of several of the rioters, that after they were led astray by these abandoned females, they became totally disinclined to work at any regular employment. They became regardless of their parents and of their homes; and as at the same time there were perpetual demands made upon them by

these women for money to drink, and to purchase clothes, they were induced to steal, or rob, or do any thing, except working, in order to procure it.

“ One of the late rioters, I found, had been induced by one of these worthless female companions to steal his mother’s clothes, that this profligate woman might dress herself in them, and walk with him to the country on the Lord’s day. The three young men told me that they knew several lads who were drawn away by these women, and who were tempted to steal from their parents, from their masters, or wherever they could find any spoil, to support them, and to purchase for them clothes and drink. That they suggested robberies and shop-breaking to them, encouraged them in these, and often assisted them. Neil Sutherland one day observed to me, ‘ that the human heart must be very wicked indeed, when it was capable of robbing friends to feed the worthless and the wicked.’ M’Donald added, ‘ Once I thought there was no evil in these things, but now I feel very differently. Could I convince all the young men in Edinburgh who live in such a way, I would lie down, with my chains, upon my knees and entreat them. Ah, how I feel now that the end of these is dreadful ! that the wages of sin is death ! Does not the Bible say so ? Had I read it I never would have been here ! ’ ”

Thus far Mr Porteous.

I shall only here add two or three sentences, which I found written on loose pieces of paper lying on the table before them. They were all in Sutherland's handwriting. "Hear, O Lord ! the cry of the prisoner, and be merciful to them who are appointed to die. Oh ! that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night."—On another paper were these lines :—

" I once had a heart that would never melt,
When I thought upon sorrow and woe ;
But now when I look to my Saviour who bled,
It pierces my heart through and through."

I found also the following sentence : " What do these sounding bells mean by their mournful voice ! Why do they strike their murderer so, and wound him to the heart !" Sutherland told me, he wrote this, as expressive of his feelings on hearing the clock strike, when he thought how fast his time was passing away, and reflected how much he had formerly abused it.—Every reader, of the smallest degree of sensibility, will be easily able to conceive what he must have felt in the very affecting circumstances in which these youngmen were then placed. I often found similar feelings powerfully awakened in my own mind, while sitting by them at the time that the stroke upon the bell announced that another hour was gone of the few they were permitted to remain on earth. May this view of the value of time, when our hours on earth are drawing to a close,

teach every reader, now, so to number his days, as to apply his heart to heavenly wisdom !

Some of the inquiries, suggested by these young men, tend strongly to show the importance of connecting the doctrine of repentance with the annunciation of that truth which furnishes materials for a genuine change of mind. When we call upon a man to repent, it is manifest that we do not merely mean, that he is to be sorry for the effects of his conduct, or for the distress in which it has involved him. This is what will naturally flow from mere selfishness, without the smallest portion of Christian principle. When we speak of repentance, as enjoined in Scripture, we speak of that ingenuous contrition, which a man ought to feel on account of offending a Being of infinite goodness ; which regards the guilt of sin fully as much as its consequences ; which is accompanied with abhorrence of his former ways, and disgust at himself on account of them ; and which, wherever it is felt, will lead to reformation.

Now, to produce this feeling, you must give a man some information that is calculated to do so. That repentance, then, which is enjoined in Scripture, can only flow from the discovery of the Divine character, as it is revealed in the Gospel. There the eternal God is made known to us, as a Being of infinite mercy, and, in the

exercise of that mercy through Jesus, ready to pardon the guilty, and to make them happy for ever. It is this truth believed, which furnishes materials on which reflection must operate, when genuine repentance is to be produced.

By dwelling on the evil of a man's conduct, you may convince him he ought to repent. But this is only one point gained. Still there is a want. Still the question recurs, How is the emotion of grief, and contrition on account of sin, to be awakened? This was the very want which these young men at first experienced. Their language was, "We cannot get our hearts softened as we could wish. We are not affected on account of our conduct, as we are sensible we ought to be." They wished grief, on account of sin, excited; but they knew not how this was to be accomplished.—Here the revelation of a free pardon to the guilty, especially as procured through the atonement of Jesus Christ, was productive of effects, which could be produced in no other way. The belief of this revelation was the powerful operative principle, which melted the hearts of those who were formerly most hardened, and filled them with contrition, at the thought of living in opposition to a Being of such unspeakable love, as that which marks the Divine character in the revelation of mercy through Jesus Christ.

This is precisely that state of mind represented in the prophecies of Ezekiel, as produced by the manifestation of undeserved goodness, Ezek.

xvi. 62. "And I will establish my covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord. That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for (notwithstanding) all that thou hast done, saith the Lord." An overwhelming sense of guilt is here inseparably connected with a discovery, that the eternal God was pacified toward the guilty, and could thus be viewed in the endearing character of a reconciled Father.

Again, what a comfort is it, that, when called to visit those in the near prospect of death, who have formerly spent their lives in habits of iniquity, we can even then announce to them the good news, that God is willing to pardon the guilty, and that none who come to Jesus shall come in vain ! It is well known what opposition many express to this doctrine, from the dread of its supposed tendency to licentiousness. But let me for a moment request such persons to consider, how they would address a poor dying sinner on his death-bed, or in the near prospect of his final hour, whose life had been stained with innumerable crimes. Would they tell such a man, that he must die in despair ; that he is now beyond the reach of mercy ? No ; they would revolt at such a supposition. What instruction then would they communicate ; what source of consolation would they in such a case unfold ? They would talk of a repentance, which no doubt ought to be

felt, but without furnishing materials to produce it; and they would perhaps talk of the possibility of the most atrocious character being included within the range of God's general mercy; for it must be recollected, there is no medium between despair and the hope of forgiveness.

Now, if we speak of licentiousness, this, it is to be feared, is too plainly the doctrine which leads to it. If a profession of reliance on the general mercy of God be not a mere apology for want of thought about futurity, (which I believe it commonly is,) it is most certainly the avowed refuge of those who are living in the indulgence of iniquity. The deficiencies of this doctrine are obvious. It is so vague and undefined, that it must be, in a great measure, destitute of any practical efficacy; and while it presents the idea of mercy to all, without any exhibition of the evil of sin, so far as it can produce any effects, it must tend to impart to men a false peace, although living in opposition to the known will of God.

In these points, how different is the religion of Jesus! Instead of talking of vague and undefined hopes, it presents a specific fact, on which the mind can fasten—a fact which, while it exhibits a sure foundation, on which we can build our hopes of pardon, gives a most impressive view of the evil of sin, and thus carries in its own bosom a most powerful antidote to the love of iniquity. Here, the truth presented to the understanding is distinctly de-

fined, and, from its nature, is full of practical energy.

What comfort, then, I must again ask, could we present to a poor dying criminal, unless we could tell him, in the most unqualified manner, that God was willing to pardon the guilty, who came to receive pardon in the way which he had appointed? Unless we could declare to such a man a free salvation, we would have nothing to present to him which suits his case. If Christianity, then, did not authorise us to do this, there would be something materially defective in it, as a revelation addressed to such erring creatures as we are; it would not meet our exigencies; it would not be a religion for sinners. But it is the peculiar glory of the Gospel, that while, on the one hand, it is completely suited to our wants, by holding out an encouragement to the most guilty to come and receive forgiveness, it is, at the same time, effectually secured against any tendency to promote licentiousness, by establishing it as a fixed principle, that whatever a man has been *before*, whenever he embraces the Gospel, it has an irresistibly renovating and purifying influence, and from that moment he walks in newness of life. This is involved in the very character of the truth he believes. How strikingly is this displayed in Sutherland's address to his fellow-prisoners! He expresses the genuine tendency of the doctrine he had received, when, with true, though simple eloquence, he observes, "Oh! what a pity

is it to sin against a God of such infinite goodness!" Thus, while Christianity gives the most impressive view of the evil of sin, and furnishes every motive that can be addressed to the human mind to forsake it, it further establishes, beyond contradiction, its purifying tendency, by making the transforming effects of the doctrine, the only satisfactory evidence that this doctrine is really believed.

What system, then, can be found which equally meets the exigencies of man—which follows us in our wanderings—which stoops to us in our depravity, nay, which descends to men in the lowest state of moral degradation, to impart its aid, without the smallest risk of ever appearing to wink at iniquity? It, in this respect, resembles its Divine Author, whose intrinsic purity was such, that, while he held intercourse with publicans and sinners, with characters the most abandoned, in order to raise them from their degradation, accomplished this divinely benevolent object, without the most distant danger of being contaminated by such an association.

Of the religion of Jesus, it may be still more emphatically said than even of the benevolence of a Howard, "that it dives into the depths of dungeons—that it is prepared to enter the mansions of sorrow and pain—to take the gage and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt—to remember the forgotten—to attend to the neglected—to visit the forsaken."

Nay, it can do what the most distinguished benevolence, which is merely human, cannot do ; it can produce a mighty moral transformation.

While it removes the deepest guilt, it raises the man who partakes of its divine influence, from the debasement of living in the love and practice of iniquity, and imparts that elevation of character, which, in this world of imperfection, makes him, in some measure, resemble the pure inhabitants of the world of light.

It seems, at first sight, a strange notion which Sutherland entertained, that it would greatly diminish his guilt, while living in opposition to the precepts of the Bible, if he remained ignorant of what this book contained. One, however, would be apt to suppose that many have imbibed the same sentiment, otherwise they could not continue so indifferent as they are to the truth communicated to us in the word of God. But how fallacious is such an opinion ! Does not the guilt of ignorance plainly depend on the opportunities of having it removed, being disregarded ? In such a country as this, however, by means of being taught to read the Scriptures in early life ; of the public preaching of the word ; of Sabbath schools ; or of conversing in private with those ministers or Christians, who would gladly give instruction to any who are disposed to receive it ; the opportunities of acquiring knowledge are so numerous, that if any man be igno-

rant, he is *willingly*, and, of course, *criminally* ignorant.

Let us, for a moment, suppose that the same opportunities were afforded men of acquiring some worldly advantage, and would they be thus disregarded? No! they would be improved with the utmost ardour. Whence arises, then, the neglect of the means of receiving instruction respecting Divine truth, but from a criminal indifference about the will of God, if not an avowed opposition to it. This radical depravity is that productive root whence all our evils spring. Its first fruit is continued ignorance; and while men continue ignorant of God, and what he hath done for them, how can they love him, and, while strangers to his love, how can they obey him? While ignorant of themselves, and of the guilt of sin, how can they be brought to repentance? And, while unimpressed with the dangerous consequences of iniquity, how can they be solicitous to avoid it, or to discover the way in which these consequences may be escaped for ever?

In the history of these young men, we have a clear proof how much knowledge may be acquired in a short time, where the mind is fully devoted to this interesting object. Even M'Donald, who could not read, by hearing the other two read the Scriptures, and by conversing with those who were willing to instruct him, made rapid progress in the knowledge of Divine truth. It is true, all of them had an

opportunity of conversing a good deal with different ministers who came to visit them. But this is an advantage which others also may enjoy. There are, I know, not a few ministers in Edinburgh, of different denominations, as well as private Christians, who would consider it both a duty and a pleasure to communicate instruction to any, who, under a consciousness of ignorance, should be disposed to apply for it. I the more readily state this fact here, because I believe many who grow up in ignorance are ashamed to let their ignorance be known, and thus live in the neglect of those means, of which they might otherwise avail themselves to have it removed.

To the former companions of these young men, and to all living in similar practices, their history presents a solemn warning. If they would speak out the truth, they would be constrained to acknowledge, like them, that they are strangers to happiness. But why are they so? Because, under the deluding influence of sin, they are rejecting the only way to happiness pointed out by Him by whom alone it can be bestowed. If any such shall cast their eyes over these pages, I would, with all seriousness remind them of their danger, and warn them to consider their ways. There is a high responsibility connected with living in a country where they have so many advantages—where they have an opportunity of knowing the will of the eternal God, and the way he hath revealed for

the forgiveness of the guilty. If such opportunities be disregarded by any one, he shall, at the final day of trial, be found speechless—in-capable of pleading any excuse. That day is every hour drawing so much nearer, however much men may wish to banish it from their thoughts. At that period, we are informed, on the highest authority, all shall stand either on the right hand of the Judge, or on the left. I shall leave the reader with the most important question that can occupy the attention of any human being :—On which of the two have I reason to think I shall at that trying day appear ?

THE END.

