

Life and Labours  
OF  
DUNCAN MATHESON,  
*THE SCOTTISH EVANGELIST.*

BY THE  
REV. JOHN MACPHERSON.

“REALITY IS THE GREAT THING: I HAVE ALWAYS SOUGHT REALITY.”

New Edition.

LONDON: MORGAN AND SCOTT  
(OFFICE of “The Christian.”)  
12, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS. E.C.  
*And may be ordered by any bookseller.*

1876.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *THE DIOCESE OF OPEN AIR.*

THE Huntly meetings played an important part in connection with the work of grace in the north of Scotland. They had their origin in a thought of Duncan Matheson's, and to him under God they owed no small part of their success. One day, pondering the best means of promoting the good work, the thought of gathering the people from the surrounding country for a great field-day of the Gospel in the Castle Park flashed across his mind. After prayerful consideration of the scheme, he mentioned it to his fellow-labourers, Mr. Williamson and Mr. Bain, as they were all three returning from Cullen feeing market, where they had been preaching. They resolved to lay the matter before the Lord. There and then, wearied though they were, they betook themselves to the throne of grace, and as the train was speeding on its way, they cried to God for light to guide them. Light was not withheld: the scheme was settled at the mercy-seat. The use of the Castle Park, with suitable aid in other respects, was freely accorded by the Duchess of Gordon, and preparations were made, the burden of which mainly rested on Mr. Matheson and his pastor. The labour thus entailed was extremely great, and our evangelist was well-nigh crushed beneath the load of responsibility and care. After a sleepless and prayerful night on the eve of the Huntly meetings, he said to me, "I feel as if I were breaking down. I have been putting up blood, and feel very ill. Sometimes Satan tempts me to take it easier, and do less for souls: he whispers when I am speaking in the open air, 'You had better take it easier, or you'll burst a blood-vessel.' But I just reply, 'Never mind if I do; I could not die in a better cause.'"

The object of these meetings was stated in a printed request for special prayer. "We do not believe," said the pastor and the evangelist, "in any special virtue in meetings in the open air. We put no confidence in any peculiar form of address, neither in any instrument. But we do believe in the power of prayer: we believe 'the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.' We believe it a good thing and ground of hope to see a number of the Lord's people met together 'with one accord in one place.' And we most firmly believe that the God of all grace may be expected to honour such meetings and efforts, when preceded and accompanied by earnest and united prayer for the outpouring of his Spirit.

"We, therefore, most earnestly ask secret, social, and united prayer, that the arm of the Lord may be revealed; that Jesus may be lifted up, and draw all men unto Him; and that throughout eternity many may have cause to bless God that they were present at these meetings and found salvation."

The first meetings were held on the 25th and 26th July, 1860, and were renewed for three successive summers. Many thousands assembled year by year in the Castle Park, with its hoary ruins towering amid the softest scenes of sylvan beauty. Here of old the Gordon clan were wont to gather in preparation for some distant and bloody raid. Now another clan assembles for very different ends. The children of Zion gather themselves together to meet their King; the soldiers of the cross rally around the standard of Christ. The coming and going of the people to serve God amidst the loveliest retreats of nature reminded one of the conventicles of the Covenanters in some remote glen or dewy hollow, and of the still more memorable scenes when multitudes gathered round the Prince of open-air preachers by the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Here nature and grace embrace each other in true fellowship, and the works of God throw a peculiar charm around his word and worship. The lofty canopy of heaven reminds you of the true tabernacle which God hath pitched, and not man. The fair landscapes on every side picture heavenly things to the sense, and shadow forth in natural form and hue the invisible glories of the spirit-world. The grassy plains suggest the green pastures where the Good Shepherd feeds his flock, and makes them rest at noon. The sighing of the wind among the trees, and the warbling of the birds, seem like the rustling of angels' wings, and the stir of ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. The pure air comes to wearied pilgrims like deep, refreshing draughts from the Creator's wine-cup. The sweet sunshine is to faith but the visible radiance of the Redeemer's face; and the alternations of light and shade are like the mysterious comings and goings of our God in his sanctuary. The very sound and shock of the falling rain carry into the believer's heart symbolical thoughts of grace far more true to nature than the peal of organs or the swell of pompous choirs. Altogether there is a naturalness, a simplicity, and a freedom more akin to the spirit and privilege of new-covenant service than is often realized in those dull artificial caverns in which custom and the rigors of climate compel us to worship. Sitting under the shadow of cumbrous roofs and dingy walls, and too oft fettered by form, truth, love, joy, and praise, pine away like caged birds; but out in the open, unbounded expanse, where form is simplest and sense is purest, worship is the more free and unrestrained.

It was pleasing to witness the assembling of the people in the Castle Park; old and young, rich and poor, master and man are there. Yonder the honest cotter, with his wife and bairns in the rude cart consecrated to the service of God, it may be for the first time, jogs cheerfully along not far behind the gig of the well-to-do farmer, whose wife and daughters are looking forward to the ongoings of the day with deeper and stronger feelings than any they ever felt on their way to kirk or market. Some are trudging on foot, and all are talking with more or less personal interest in the great event of

the time—the Revival. Listen to yon knot of ploughmen and farm-lads. One wonders “what it’s gaun to come tae.” Another “kens weel aneuch what it’s gaun to come tae, for he has fan’t in his ain heart; it has brocht him to Christ, an’ it’ll bring him to heaven.” A third admits that “a wonderfu’ change has come o’er Jake Tamson; for there was na a rocher chid in a’ the country side, an’ noo he’s as hairmless as a stirk, an’ sings an’ prays instead o’ swearin’ an’ fechtin’ as he used to do.” “Eh, men,” says a half-grown lad, “gin ye only heard my brither Jock! he prays like a minister; in fack, his prayer is ilka bit as guile as the parish minister’s prayer on the Sacrament Sunday.”

“Do you ever take God’s name in vain?” asks a minister of the Gospel of one of these herd laddies. “Na, na, sir; God’s children never sweer.”

“You are one of his children, then? When did that come about?”

“Weel, sir,” says the lad, “it was at the Mertimiss term last year, when I gaed hame to see my father’s fouk. I wonnert when I saw a’ things sae sair changed. My father was changed, an’ the hoose was changed-like. An’ my father, he prayed afore the supper an’ after the supper, an’ he never used to say a grace at a’. An’ sync he said, ‘Fesh ben the buik;’ an’ he read, an’ he sang, an’ sync they a’ gaed doon upon their knees, an’ I never saw that afore. An’ my father he prayed, an’ I grat, an’ we a’ grat, an’ I was convertit that night. That was Mertimiss last year, ye ken, an’ I never could sweer sin’ sync.”

The full meaning of all this can be comprehended only by those who know what a northern bothy used to be. There, if anywhere on earth, Satan was wont to have his seat; now, however, to some extent the “strong man” has been displaced by a stronger than he.

The greater number came by rail, which, in this way serving God as well as man, seemed to anticipate the day when “holiness to the Lord” shall be upon the bells of the horses, and doubtless also on the whistles of the engines. In one carriage prayer is being offered for a special blessing on the meetings. In another the Word is read with comments, homely enough, but well-seasoned with a devout spirit and a gracious experience. In a third a distressed soul is being lovingly dealt with; difficulties are cleared away, and the cross lifted up before the eye of the afflicted sinner. High over all, and above even the din of the train, is heard the voice of holy song. One group is singing “Rock of Ages, cleft for me;” in another part of the train you can hear the splendid burst of the ancient church,

“All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.”

A traveller who has left his religion at home—perhaps because it was scarcely worth the carriage—is to be pitied, for in escaping from one com-

partment to another he finds that he is only out of the pan and into the fire. It would be a curious turning of the tables if some day this poor foolish world should be so filled with purity, goodness, and the love of God, that the few remaining sinners, to escape the gentle persecution of light and grace, should flee for refuge to dens and caves of the earth. Then, indeed, the church would be "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

The services were characterized by the fervour and simplicity of the prayers, the heartiness and jubilation of the praises, and the variety, directness, and power of the addresses, full as these were of the richest truths of the Gospel, and fragrant with the perfumes of *the one great Name*. In love, joy, and unanimity, the believers seemed to anticipate the general assembly of the Church of the first-born in heaven, and the triumphant services before the throne. On the other hand, the deep shadows of eternal verities seemed to rest on the minds of the unconverted, not a few of whom found Him whom they sought after, and sometimes, ere the tears were dry on their cheeks, were beginning to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The testimony of an eye-witness, a venerable minister of Christ, may be here given. "During each day," he writes, "numbers were personally spoken with and specially prayed for, in every stage of religious concern. Not a few were awakened for the first time during the time of the meetings, principally by witnessing the great earnestness manifested in prayer in behalf of the unconverted, as well as by listening to the pointed and soul-searching appeals addressed to the various classes. Others, who had previously been under great spiritual distress, had come some of them twenty and even thirty miles, as well as lesser distances, seeking relief to a conscience ill at ease. In the case of others who came under our notice, former convictions that had well-nigh died out were revived with double power. The superficial observer could form no correct estimate of the amount of impression by merely looking at the appearance of the assembly; for there was comparatively little manifestation of emotional excitement; nor by simply looking at those in the tent and marquee, who professedly took their place among other inquirers. We found numbers of the most interesting cases of this class at a distance from the crowd, either holding intercourse with God alone, and breathing into his ear their noiseless grief; or in some by-corner holding close conversation with some godly friend who sympathized with them; or in the midst of little groups among the trees, where spiritual things were freely talked over by those with open Bibles in their hand, following up conversation with prayer. We conversed with several persons, some of them considerably advanced in years, upon whose minds something like the dark shadow of despair had been brooding for months. They could distinctly tell what was the matter with them, and what they needed; but somehow they stumbled at

the simplicity of entering upon the way of life as sketched in the charter of human salvation. Of the above-mentioned cases a considerable number, before they left the meetings, were enabled to leave their sins and their sorrows within the shadow of the mercy-seat at the foot of the cross, and went home in possession of a good hope through grace. All who took pains to make themselves acquainted with what we have stated are firmly persuaded, and on good grounds, that in connection with these meetings, ‘to Satan many captives were lost, and to Christ many subjects were born.’”

The meetings were held for two successive days every summer, from 1860 to 1863 inclusive. Duncan Matheson was the presiding genius of the arrangements: he was everywhere and in everything. Here speaking to an afflicted soul, there encouraging a young Christian; now pouring out his quaint, spirit-stirring speech amidst a group of youths, and a moment after gravely settling some deep experimental question with an aged pilgrim. Almost at the same point of time he is providing lodgings for his friends, and making suggestions of the most sagacious character as to the programme of religious services. Now he is leading the devotions of the great assembly in his own impressive and Elijah-like manner, and in less than five minutes he is in the outskirts of the crowd, endeavouring by wise, kind words to hush some rising controversy. At every juncture he knows what to do. When the people were hurrying away on account of a thunder-storm, he stopped them by reminding them that the Covenanters could stand a shower of bullets, and that God can stay the rain in answer to prayer. Prayer was offered, and the rain ceased. “Look!” exclaimed the evangelist. “Behold the bow of promise spanning the heavens! emblem of God’s goodwill to earth.” All eyes were turned to look on the rainbow, “like unto an emerald around the throne of God.” Revealing itself just as the thunder-torrent swept over the horizon of the distant hill, as if chased away by the sudden outburst of sunshine, it symbolized to many the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, in whose cross mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Many who have forgotten the preaching, remember the lesson of the evangelist, who, with hand uplifted to heaven, bade the vast multitude read the Gospel in the sky, and see the beauty of Jesus in the bow with its matchless hues.

It was a good work to bring together so many thousands of Christians to sing the same song, to mingle faith, hope, and charity in the same prayer, and to encourage one another in the common Lord. It was the gathering of all the live coals into one great fire, whose flames were bright enough to illuminate no small part of Scotland. In this way the evils of sectarianism were mitigated, and the bonds of Christian brotherhood strengthened. Young converts, suffering from isolation and the lack of fellowship, were refreshed and sent on their way rejoicing. The poor starved sheep of Christ’s

flock were fed on green pastures and strengthened to endure. Persecuted believers, reproached by friends, scorned by neighbours, cast off by companions, and frowned upon by carnal pastors, were emboldened to fight the good fight of faith. Many who were halting between two opinions, being uncertain as to the nature and tendencies of the great movement of the time, had their doubts and fears cleared away. Many earnest and faithful ministers of the Gospel went home from those happy scenes to labour in their own quiet vineyards with a still holier zeal, livelier hope, and deeper joy. Many saints returned to walk more closely with their God; and some whom we knew received at the Huntly meetings a double meal, like Elijah in the wilderness, in the strength of which they went, and came even to the mount of God. To many it was the starting-point of their pilgrimage to Zion, and the sweet memories of those gracious espousals and first loves will merit and inspire “nobler songs above.” In short, thousands live to praise God for the open-air meetings in the Castle Park, and similar meetings elsewhere, of which the gathering at Huntly was at once the parent and the broad, distinct pattern.

Thus the little germ of thought arising in the mind of our evangelist bore choicest fruits in marvellous abundance. It was part of the arduous and honourable work assigned him by his Master. A double grace was bestowed upon him in it—grace to do the work faithfully and well, and the grace of abounding success. For this kind of work he was pre-eminently well qualified. His powerful physique, his cheerful countenance, his exultant voice, his overflowing humour, his innocent, and childlike egotism which carried in it something of the charm of genius, his practical sagacity and swift decision, his fertility of resource and power to grasp a multitude of details, his keen-eyed intuition of human character, his ability to inspire and command, his invincible ardour in the presence of difficulties, his great faith, largeness of heart, and Christian self-sacrifice, combined to fit him in an extraordinary degree for the masterly and successful management of a great undertaking such as this really was. There were many witnesses to the grace and truth of Christ at the Huntly meetings, ministers of every name, learned professors, eloquent divines, lawyers, physicians, lords, land-owners, merchants, officers of the army and navy, and many others down to the fisherman and the butcher, who said, “I canna write my ain name, but it has been written by the finger o’ Anither—written in blood in the Lamb’s book o’ life,” one of the truest and noblest of them all was the old stone-cutter, Duncan Matheson. His it was not merely to speak for Christ, but to gather up this great united testimony, which illustrated the unity of the true faith as it has seldom been illustrated in our own day or in our fathers. His it was to concentrate as in a focus the scattered rays of the glorious sun that was then pour-

ing his golden floods upon our favoured land, alike on hill and dale, on barren moorland and fruitful field.

At a “conference on the subject of the present religious awakening,” held in the Free South Church, Aberdeen, on August 15th, 1861, we find our evangelist saying: “Revival is an established fact. It is a great fact. Thousands, many thousands, have felt the power of God in their own souls. I do not, perhaps, know of one place in the county of Aberdeen where there are not living witnesses to the power of God’s grace and the might of his Spirit. There is one thing that has always struck me with wonder: it is this—Why should we think it a strange thing to see a work like this work of revival? If we believe God’s Word at all, we must believe that He is able, willing, and mighty to save. Why wonder, then, that He is saving so many? Might we not rather expect that He will do far greater things? A man said to me, ‘Are you in the revival?’ ‘No, sir,’ I replied, ‘the revival is in me; it is in my heart.’ I believe that many of God’s people feel this. We never did feel so much joy, and blessedness, and gladness, as since these blessed days when the Lord has been pouring out his Spirit—planting flowers in his garden that will bloom through an endless eternity. I could hardly tell you where I have not seen God’s work. I have been wandering for nearly four years—north, south, east, and west—and the Lord is doing great things everywhere. We see the sheaves being gathered to God’s harvest-home; and what can we do but say, ‘Our God reigns; verily we have seen the salvation of Israel; verily we have seen answered the prayers of the men whose blood was shed in defence of our faith—the witnesses whose souls have been crying under the altar.’ And we have only seen the beginning; the end is at hand. Why, I ask again, should this be thought a strange thing? What is the great end of the Christian ministry? There is no antagonism between us and the ministry; we go as breakers-up of the way and God has been pleased to own us. We do not interfere in the least with the constituted ministry; for I believe, as solemnly as I do in any part of God’s Word, that He has appointed a ministry for the conversion of souls, and the upbuilding of his people; and the cry of our heart day by day is, ‘Oh, would that all the Lord’s people were prophets!’ We look and see day by day souls going down to perdition; and if we believe in a heaven and hell, in an unending eternity, we will go forth like men going to quell fire, saying, Stop, poor sinner! come with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.’ I might tell in this meeting what I have seen in many places. I might speak of what I witnessed in S\_\_\_\_\_ during the last few days; of the awful solemnity upon our spirits, when it seemed as if we felt the immediate power of God in our hearts; and we were almost afraid to speak, as if one felt very near the gates of heaven. Some of us felt so at S\_\_\_\_\_. And when we saw the Lord working

and the slain so many, we lifted up our hearts and sang, ‘Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.’

“One thing I have seen, and I have thanked the Lord for it; it has done immense good; it is the deliverance of the last Free General Assembly on this great and glorious work. The results from that deliverance, the good it has done, we cannot estimate. I have seen members of the Free Church lifted up in their souls, and thanking God for that noble testimony. Since it was issued it has given a great impetus to the work. It has been true, and always will be true to the end, ‘Them that honour Me I will honour.’ I have seen the objections of many scattered to the winds since it was given. And since it was read from the pulpits of the churches, I have seen a manifest blessing upon the ministry and the people. Let me remark this other thing—that some people always find fault. Well, we cannot help it; and we admit that there are very many things that we ourselves cannot prevent, that yet we do not desire. A great many things have been said about inquiry meetings. I look upon these as the most solemn part of the work—just dealing with souls face to face. It is of great importance that all who thus speak to the anxious should be known—that their real state and character before God should be tested. We should know also that they have something of that wisdom that cometh down from above. I believe there are many of God’s people who fail in this work. I have seen them giving the comforts of God’s children to the anxious. I have heard godly persons saying to such, ‘Wait God’s time;’ and, ‘You are in a very hopeful state,’ just strangling their convictions. Oh, if there is one part of the work in which we need more than in another the aid of the Holy Spirit, it is in dealing with anxious souls. Mr. Ross has spoken about the coast. I know a great deal about the coast, and upon this coast no one has been more honoured than Mr. Turner, of Peterhead. That man’s footsteps, speaking after the manner of men, I have been able to trace all round the coast. Look at Banff—what a work he has done there; and at Portknockie, Buckie, Portgordon. You see the Lord taking that instrument and using him; he was used for a time, and then put aside. It is a solemn thing when God uses a man for a time, and then puts him aside. It is not the opposition of man we fear. I was never able to do anything till I was opposed, and so it has been with others. I would remark, in closing, that I have always seen the work produce greatest fruits under the soundest teaching. An old Highland minister said, ‘It is a dangerous thing for a child to get bad milk;’ and you generally see where there is not sound teaching they are like the young thrushes, ready to eat mud if given to them. They have no discernment. But where there is sound teaching they grow up like calves in the stall; the grace of God is in them, and we see it shining. There is just this in it—the good old doctrines will stand the test, for they are built upon the Rock of Ages. Oh, may we hold them fast; and when we depart hence, leave

behind us ‘footprints on the sands of time,’ or, rather, on the shores of eternity.”

Not content with scouring his native country, he sometimes crossed the border, and everywhere the strong voice and steady hand were raised to point men to the cross. In the autumn of 1862 he visited his old friends, the soldiers, at Aldershot, and described his visit in the following letter, which appeared in *The Revival*:<sup>1</sup>

“MY DEAR FRIEND: Swiftly has the time passed since I came here, and never throughout eternity shall I forget my visit to this place. There is not a spot in Britain around which such interest clings, and for which more prayer has been offered up.

“My heart thrilled as I saw a camp once more, heard the strains of martial music, and gazed on the red coats, either singly, or in groups, or regiments marching along. The past was brought vividly before me, but the contrast could hardly be realized. In the Crimea, day and night, nothing was heard but the roar of the cannon, or the din of battle; and during a long dreary winter, nothing seen but misery, that made the heart bleed, borne with calm endurance and heroic valour, giving English history a page it never had. It is true that at Aldershot the bugle sounds, but it calls only to parade, or to take part in mimic fights. Regiments march, but not to battle. The gun fires, but only to mark the hours as they pass along. The scene is bustling but peaceful, and order reigns in the camp supreme.

“I have met few old friends, for death has done his work, and the heroes of Alma, Inkermann, Sebastopol, have passed away—yes, away like the snow-flakes before the summer’s sun, or the leaves of the forest before the wintry blast. In the lone graveyard here, on the bleak moor side, lie many who escaped unscathed amidst the iron showers and the deadly pestilence. With constitutions impaired, they returned to die, leaving as an heir-loom in many a home the medal and its bars of glory, worn but for a little, and then laid aside forever. *Sic transit gloria mundi*.

“It is estimated that during the summer from 15,000 to 16,000 men are stationed here, and the influence of such a mass on the town of Aldershot is of the most ruinous kind. Much has been written about it, and yet it is impossible to make the picture too dark, or to bring out in relief its degrading aspects. Just think of upwards of seventy public-houses outside the camp, and you will realize in some measure the seething mass of iniquity behind. The camp has made the town what it is, and the town sends back to the camp the curse intensified it has given. Many a daughter comes here to die, over whom a mother, it may be in the far north of Scotland, is weeping day

---

<sup>1</sup> A weekly periodical now incorporated with “*The Christian*.”

and night. One was asked lately if she had a mother; and, as if stung by a serpent, she fled out of sight. Another says she is dying fast, but asks what she can do. A third laughs; but it is hollow, coming from a heart torn with anguish, from burning fires within, fed by the memory of home and days gone—never more to come back again.

“Blessed be God, all is not dark. The cloud has a silver lining! There is much to quicken and cheer; for the great God is visiting the camp, and drops of blessing have descended. Witness after witness is being raised, and the prayers, so long lying on the altar, are being answered. Hardly a week passes but there is an accession to the little army, and twelve prayer-meetings are held weekly by the men themselves. At some of these I have seen sixty men and a few officers present. What songs from yours ‘Hymns of Prayer and Praise’ they sang! With what a heart did they peal out ‘Rest for the weary,’ and with what holy pleading did they cry for their comrades drifting to perdition! The heaven is working; the seed is springing up; and many are halting—lingering at the gate.

“Mrs. Daniell, so well known for her labours in the cause of Christ, has founded a mission for Aldershot, and forty officers and men have come forward as volunteers to help her on. The United Presbyterian Church is organizing a congregation, and will, I doubt not, succeed. May God speed them, and may their church be the birth-place of many a soul. May He also bless the labours of the chaplains and Scripture-readers, whose work is so arduous, and who need more than common wisdom and zeal. Night after night I preached outside the camp in the open air, with a body-guard of Christian soldiers around me, some of whom, with much feeling, have addressed their comrades passing by.

“What noble missionaries these soldiers, if converted, would make! How would their influence tell amongst the heathen abroad! What a sight to see Britain sending forth an army of living men displaying a banner for the truth!

“I feel assured there is many a Hedley Vicars, Hammond, Vandeleur, Marjouram amongst them, and that God, by His Spirit, will soon bring them out. Aldershot is the cradle of the British army. The fire here is kindled. The work has begun. The Prince of Peace is saving souls, and God is calling on his people to bestir themselves. England, Scotland, Ireland, your sons need help. Will you cry for the army, and forget not Aldershot?

“Yours in the Lord,

“DUNCAN MATHESON,

“Late Soldiers’ Missionary in the Crimea.”

The Rev. H. M. Williamson, Belfast, who was at once the pastor and fellow-evangelist of Mr. Matheson, writes:

“Confining myself to what I have witnessed, I would like to give you a brief sketch of his labours in the north of Scotland. He used to map out a district, and arrange for an evangelistic tour, extending over six or eight days. I frequently accompanied him on such expeditions. Starting perhaps on a Monday, we were accustomed to preach generally twice each day, holding meetings in all conceivable places—in barns, on the squares and streets of villages, under the trees of the woods, sometimes in various churches placed at our disposal. He thoroughly knew the feelings, habits, and prejudices of his countrymen, and with singular sagacity he employed that knowledge to gain the attention of his hearers and a favourable hearing for the Gospel. He was never at a loss, and full of hope; he had a remedy for every difficulty, and was ready for every emergency. Let me give you as an illustration a scene which occurred on one of our preaching expeditions. We had arranged to hold a meeting in the streets of a certain village. The place was drowned in drink, and consequently spiritually dead above most places. At the appointed hour we made our appearance, and having made our way to the square of the village, and having borrowed a chair for a pulpit, we were prepared to proceed; but audience there was none, save two or three ragged children, who gathered round and stared at us as a curiosity. It was certainly a situation exceedingly trying to flesh and blood, and one that gave ample room for the exercise of faith. Matheson by the grace of God, was equal to the occasion. I think I hear his cheery words, as he said to me, speaking in his broadest Doric, ‘Hand on, hand on, Mr. Williamson, for a wee bit as wed as ye can, an’ I’ll fetch out the folk wi’ the help o’ God.’ He started off, leaving me on the chair—no envied position, I assure you—with the children for my audience. He started off, and beginning at the extreme end of the village, he knocked at every door, and cried aloud *as he could cry*, ‘Come awa’ out, come awa’ out; the Gospel is come to the town;’ and using at the same time, with his usual sagacity, the children he met as his agents, he said, ‘Rin, laddie rin; and tell yer mither to come awa’ to the square, and hear the preaching.’ We had a meeting—a successful meeting—we adjourned in the evening to a church in the village; and I have good reason to believe that redeemed souls in eternity will bless God for that meeting.

“There are few parishes in Aberdeenshire and Banffshire in which the name of Duncan Matheson is not known and loved, and very few in which he has not preached the Gospel. The extent of the blessing which rested upon his labours shall only be known on that day when the secrets of all hearts are made manifest. I regret exceedingly that the account of all these labours is now lost forever. Had he been spared to give it, it would have been a record of the Lord’s doings of thrilling interest, and well fitted to strengthen

every labourer in the Lord's vineyard. Many incidents attending his work were of a very remarkable nature, and if they had been recorded would have been pregnant with instruction and encouragement. I remember while holding a meeting one night in a certain place an occurrence which made a deep impression upon me at the time, and which I had occasion to mark afterwards. The meeting was crowded, and better still, it was full of spiritual power. Many souls were deeply wounded under the sharp strokes of the Holy Ghost. Some smitten ones were crying out, 'What must we do to be saved?'

"While we were going about among the anxious, seeking as we were enabled to point them to the Lamb of God, the individual who had control over the place of meeting began to urge the people to go home, and to crown his advice he proceeded to put out the lights. I think I hear Matheson as turning to me he said, 'Mr. Williamson, mark my words, you will see something happen to that man—the Lord will put out his candle!' Matheson, though pretending to no spirit of prophecy, knew how dangerous it is to meddle with the work of the Holy Spirit. And so it came to pass. Matheson lived to see that man disgraced and dishonoured, and driven from his position. But if I persevere in calling up the events of these years of blessing my letter will swell into a volume.

"The great gatherings for Christian fellowship and for preaching the everlasting Gospel with which Scotland, and especially in the northern parts, was favoured in past years are closely connected with Duncan Matheson.

"Shortly after the work of the Spirit began to be manifest in the awakening and conversion of sinners in Aberdeenshire in the years 1858-9, a conference of ministers was held at Huntly Lodge, under the auspices of the late Duchess of Gordon. That conference brought out the fact, that the work of God was much more extensive and thorough than anyone had supposed. The work still made progress under opposition of various kinds and from all sources. Matheson traversed almost every parish of Aberdeenshire and the district around, everywhere preaching the Gospel, and much blessing was added.

"Returning from one of these preaching expeditions, he proposed to me the idea of a grand gathering at Huntly, seeking the aid of men of all churches, both lay and clerical, whom God had honoured in the work of revival. The proposal took shape. It was approved of by the Duchess of Gordon, and by others whose good judgment, spirituality of mind, and zeal for the cause of God we could trust. The whole arrangements of the meetings were put into Matheson's hands, and the results were great and blessed. Multitudes of believers from every corner of the land were refreshed and strengthened, and multitudes of the unsaved brought to Jesus.

“He had a singular gift for organizing such meetings. He thoroughly knew the people, as I have stated,—their mode of life, their habits, their prejudices on religious subjects, their wants, and their religious position. And with all this knowledge, when the meetings were assembled, he arranged accordingly with wonderful tact—he put the right man in the right place. He aimed at the conversion of sinners as the great end of the meetings, and in carrying out this end he exhibited marvellous spiritual instinct in selecting the right speaker at the right time to give, under the Holy Spirit, the message which would bring about the blessed end. He knew too the men that were mighty in prayer, and endeavoured to keep them, with praying companions, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. And in this matter he suffered no respect for persons to interfere. The men he believed were likely to be the instruments in the hands of the Spirit to do the work needed at any particular time in the services, these he brought forward.

“You and I have seen, in other cases and at similar gatherings, the whole work marred, and the fruit almost completely lost, because those who conducted such meetings deemed themselves bound to put forward speakers in a prescribed order, because of their social position or ministerial standing in church connection.

“Matheson never for a moment allowed such considerations to influence him. The result corresponded. As he sought to honour the Holy Spirit, and keep a single eye on the great end, the salvation of souls, much fruit appeared.

“His efforts in preaching the Gospel in the feeing markets of Aberdeenshire were also attended with a very abundant blessing. It is a question upon which, perhaps, Christian men form different opinions. I think it admits of no controversy with all who are taught of God, that whenever men are willing to hear the Gospel, then the Gospel should be preached to them. Now, it is also a fact beyond dispute, that for some years the Lord poured such a spirit of hearing upon the people that they were willing to hear; and this also I may add, I have seen as marked and manifest fruits of the Spirit’s presence and power attending these market-preachings as I have ever witnessed on the Sabbath and in the most solemn assembly. This market-preaching was a department of labour for which Matheson was in many ways singularly fitted. Ready for every emergency, and with a tact which usually disarmed opposition, with a courage that never faltered, and with a voice like the tongue of a trumpet, he laboured in this field most laboriously, and in it I feel persuaded reaped many sheaves of the harvest of the Lord. I have met many in later years who have testified that they would have cause to bless God forever for these market-preachings.

“Alas, the band of labourers in that field are now widely scattered! What sweet and solemn memories of these days and of the beloved fellow-

labourers who wrought in this work with us! The saintly Macgregor and the good soldiers of Jesus Christ, Colonel Ramsey and Major Gibson, and the fearless Matheson—a prince of evangelists—all gone to their rest and their reward. The devoted pastors, Bain and Forbes, and Fullarton and Campbell (tried and true helpers), Tytler, and Macpherson, and Anderson still with us, and many other beloved brethren who have never been ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

“But this letter is drawn out far beyond what I intended, and yet I feel as if I had said almost nothing concerning the labours of our departed friend. Let me add, he was one of the most unselfish of men; he would and often did share his last shilling with a poor saint. He was ever ready to commend the Gospel to the careless and the scoffer by deeds of generosity and liberality. What the Church owes to Matheson has never been acknowledged. His share in elevating the standard of religious profession in the land, and especially in the northern part, has never been justly estimated. But his reward is on high. They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.”

An important part of our evangelist’s mission was the preaching of the Gospel in village fairs. The feeing market, at which farmers engage their servants from one half year to another, is a long-established institution in the northern counties of Scotland. It is usually held in the street or neighbourhood of some little town or village. Early in the morning of the market-day there is a wonderful stir in the erection of refreshment-tents, booths for the sale of sweets, trinkets, and all things dear to a ploughboy’s heart, shows, and all the other paraphernalia of a village fair. Soon after breakfast the market is crowded by farmers and their wives, ploughmen, female servants, and all who have business to do. Besides these there is a general assembly of all the idlers and *ne’er-do-weels* in the country-side; tramps, tinkers, ballad-singers, fiddlers, rogues, beggar-women with starving babies, the man who is “out of employment” because he will not work, the shipwrecked sailor who never was at sea, the veteran soldier who has seen no service but the devil’s—in short all the scoundrels within a radius of thirty miles.

No time is lost; the whole machinery of the market is set a-going. All the animal spirits of half-a-score parishes and villages are now crowded into one place. There is no restraint; universal freedom reigns. Wild hilarity, roaring frankness, outrageous demonstrations of friendship, characterize the scene, and a tumult of varied sounds fills the air. Underneath all this, however, there is an eye to business. Yonder in the open air, at the end of a tent, a fat, red-faced dame is piling up a blazing fire of peat, over which a huge pot is boiling with the farmers’ broth. Close by a master is haggling with a ploughman about five shillings more or less of half-yearly wages; and the

bargain, after an immense deal of manoeuvring as if both were perfectly indifferent to the matter, is settled in the good old Scotch way of “splitting the difference.” Then follows the indispensable dram. A young swain has just spent his “arles” in treating his sweetheart with rude demonstrations of attachment. Another, already drunk, is dancing and capering to the wretched strains of a fiddle. Sailor Jack moves along with a curious limp as he sings his favourite ditty. The showman is doing his best to entertain the people and obtain their pence. Cheap John, with incredible generosity, insists on enriching the public to his own certain ruin, mixing his jokes and lies in due measures to meet the tastes of the gullible portion of market-goers. A recruiting sergeant is describing to a knot of young men the glory and blessedness of a soldier’s life. On the outskirts of the fair a crew of drunken carters are bargaining with an unscrupulous horse-dealer for an old nag, which is being trotted up and down at the utmost speed possible to his wooden limbs. A tall, villainous, one-legged speculator in human simplicity tempts to a game of chance, which is yet no chance to himself; whilst his one-armed brother offers to teach the young idea how to shoot by means of bow and arrows which Tell himself could not have shot straight. A hundred voices are crying their wares. As the day advances men and matters become more and more lively. Suddenly the crowd begins to surge to and fro, everybody knocking into his neighbour, no one knowing why. There is a fight; strong drink is master of the situation. A score of voices are raised with a score of hands; hard blows are dealt; but the greatest sufferer is the poor old woman whose “sweetie stand” is overturned in the scuffle, all her gingerbread cakes and coloured sweets are scattered in the mud. The same commander-in-chief is marshalling his hosts in a neighbouring tent, where a fierce conflict rages around the rude board. You can see the whole affair from without by the moving of hostile heads and arms against the canvas, which at length gives way, and the entire tabernacle of Satan, with a loud crash of bottles and glasses, rolls over upon the ground. Still the business of the fair goes on as before, its very life being in noise, excitement, and uproar. Towards evening the more respectable people take their way homewards, carrying with them all sorts of useful household articles purchased at the fair. Among the remaining portion the drinking and quarrelling go on apace; coarseness, profanity, and violence increase, till at length the deepening shades, not a moment too soon, cast the mantle of God over a very hell of riot, charged with all the elements of misery and ruin.

It was a bold idea to introduce the Gospel here. It was like David’s attempt to save the lamb by attacking the lion and the bear. For men of fine feelings to stand upon a box or barrel, occupying as it were the same platform with all that is coarse, sordid, and villainous, and amidst the bawling, the laughing, the blaspheming, the singing, the fiddling, the fighting, the

ribaldry of mockers, the rage of the ungodly, and in the very atmosphere of black-guardism, to raise the “still small voice “of the Gospel and speak to men heated with every passion, of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,” was a work of the most trying kind. Sometimes they were made to feel that it were easier to face an armed host than bear the calumny and the shame. Often were they threatened, often assailed, and sometimes well-nigh put to silence; but they trusted in Him who hath all power in heaven and on earth; and sometimes, when they thought the Word was only like water spilt upon the ground, they were amazed and overjoyed to discover rough, burly ploughmen breaking down under the truth, weeping like children, and asking what they must do to be saved. All over the north-eastern counties you come upon strong, hard-headed, tender-hearted, God-fearing men, who tell you that they were “brocht tae the Lord” at such and such a market, giving you place and date of their second birth. Besides that, the general improvement in morals, particularly in the matter of sobriety, decency, and order, at some of the feeing markets, was so marked as to draw forth expressions of wonder and admiration from even men of the world. If a sufficient number of suitable labourers were found for this work, a thorough reformation should be effected, as the experiment proved; but men possessing the necessary courage and zeal appear to be few, and such gigantic labours exhaust or kill them.

Nature and grace conspired to make Duncan Matheson a prince of market-preachers. His handsome, well-knit form impressed the sons of the soil with a sense of his great strength; his frank, straightforward manner commanded their respect; his ready wit captivated a people whose genuine humour is proverbial; his voice, rising above the din, summoned them as with a trumpet to listen; his manifest superiority to all fear made him a hero in their eyes; and the grace of the Holy Ghost with the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, did the rest. In this rough, self-denying work he was nobly assisted by several ministers of the Gospel and other right-hearted servants of Jesus Christ.

Sometimes when a hearing could not be obtained, and further prosecution of the work seemed an utter waste of energy and time, Duncan would start up and begin thus—“I will tell you a thing that happened when I was in the Crimea.” Immediately there is a respectful silence; the audience seem as if spell-bound while the preacher proceeds to tell his story, which is only an introduction to the Gospel.

In a certain town a gentleman well known in the place came up to him as he was preaching in the market, and mockingly said, “Well, what is the word of the Lord today?” Our preacher turned with a piercing glance of his eye, and promptly replied, “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!” Shortly afterwards that same scoffer lay at the point of death in a room right

over the corner where he had assailed the servant of God. He had been suddenly seized with what he believed were the pains of death; and in his alarm he cried, "I am dying—run, run for Mr. \_\_\_\_; get a Bible—quick, quick!" But ere human aid was procured, or the Bible brought from the shelf where it lay neglected, the accomplished scoffer had passed to his final account. This incident, with others of a similar character, tended to lessen the hostility at first shown to preaching in the market, and to pave the way for a respectful hearing of the Gospel.

In another town the preachers were one day furiously assailed and subjected to much personal indignity and violence by a mob, led on by paid agents of tavern-keepers, whose profits were diminished by the effective preaching of the Gospel. For hours the preachers maintained their position in the outskirts of the market; towards the close of the day, led on by Matheson, they pushed their way into the centre of the fair. Here they were set on by the entire rascality, hired and unhired, of the town; but a shower happening at that crisis, the stentorian voice of our evangelist was heard high above the clamour shouting, "Off hats, men, and let us thank our Father in heaven, who sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, for this refreshing shower, instead of fire and brimstone to consume us." The effect of this appeal was striking. Every voice was hushed, and every head uncovered, and one who was present describes the prayer of the evangelist as overwhelmingly touching and solemn. The battle was now turned to the gate, and the preachers carried all before them.

On another occasion the showman of a penny theatre, finding that his sarcastic merriment did not shame the preachers into silence, challenged them to come up to his platform, and see if they could speak there. The challenge, contrary to the expectations of the showman, was accepted, and our evangelist accompanied by Mr. Hector Macpherson took possession of the stage, to the astonishment of the whole market. Mr. Matheson began; the showman was put to silence, and went away, leaving the evangelists in possession of his platform, from which they addressed an immense crowd with remarkable effect.

Prudence and tact were needed as well as courage. Sometimes he deemed it right to buy up the showmen; by giving them a fair day's custom he procured their silence.

In a "Special Call for Prayer," he says: "These markets are fields of deepest trial. For long they have been left in the power of the wicked one, and thousands of souls have been ruined for eternity. Surely, we shall not ask for prayer in vain; and when the banner of Christ is unfurled shall there be one living soul found shrinking from the fight, or refusing to cry from the depths of their hearts, 'Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord'?"

The “special call for prayer” was accompanied by the use of other means, such as the following advertisement in a newspaper:—

“MARKET PREACHING.

“If the Lord permit, the Everlasting Gospel will be preached at Longside, Ellon, Aberdeen, Turriff, Inverury, and other teeing markets.

“A SOLEMN QUESTION.

“How long do you think it would take you to count a billion? A billion is a million of millions; and if you were to count at the rate of two hundred a minute, it would require more than nine thousand years to finish it. Now, you must live a billion of years either in heaven or hell, and when that billion of years is past, you must live another billion of years, and then another; and another; and even then your life will only be, as it were, beginning. *You must live forever, whether you will or no.* Is it not an awful thought that you are an immortal being, and that there is no escape into nothingness? Dear friend, you are making an awful blunder if you are living for this world only; and, if you die unsaved, it is a blunder that can never be remedied. Jesus offers to save you now. He died to save; and if you come to Him as you are—no matter how great a sinner you may be—He will save you; for He says, ‘Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out.’ the time is short, your soul is precious, and eternity is near.—D. M.”

Mr. Matheson frequently assisted his friends in preaching at the Dundee annual fair. In those days this fair was held in a quarry-pit in the centre of the town, and for crowds, excitement, dissipation, and ruin to the souls of the gay and thoughtless revellers, was equal to forty country markets. Here, as we too well know, many of the young tasted for the first time the devil’s sweets. Here receiving their first great impulse hellward, they went bounding down the steep of dissipation until they disappeared amidst the darkness of a living death, or were wrapped in the deep shades of a premature grave. Here I have known the girl of fourteen disappear; and no tongue could tell the father and the mother’s agony as they prosecuted for days and nights the saddest search on earth, in the hope of plucking from the jaws of ruin some fragments of their lost child’s humanity.

In this very place, where Folly was scattering wide the seeds of death, handfuls of the good Word of God were cast in, not without yielding fruit. To preach here seemed mad enough to many, and useless enough to most. Amid such sounds and scenes it was hard to sustain the voice and maintain composure of spirit; but exhaustion, loss of voice, violent opposition, occasional peltings with stones and other missiles, mockery and scorn, only

served to inflame zeal, deepen compassion, and rouse every energy in the interests of the divine glory and of the souls of men. The pains thus taken were amply rewarded in the snatching of brands from the fire. "Let us raise the banner once more," our evangelist used to say. Accordingly, after much prayer, we sallied forth with joyful hearts, and, surrounded by a little band of singers, we continued preaching, praising God, and praying till the latest hour of night. We were often assailed by "lewd fellows of the baser sort;" but in the most tumultuous moment of danger prayer never failed, and frequently at the worst a sense of the Lord's presence suddenly filled our hearts with joy, so that we spake the word with boldness.

On one occasion a burly Yorkshireman attempted to stop the preaching by driving his horses and caravan in amongst us. Matheson, who was speaking at that moment, turned his face to the adversary, and in his solemn way, thundered out these words, "Prepare to meet thy God!" The showman drew up his horses, listened for a few minutes, and then turning deadly pale, quickly beat a retreat.

One night a showman, thinking we had taken our stand in too close proximity to his tabernacle, fetched his magic bottle, and with a significant glance in our direction, said, "Talk of revivals! Here is something that will revive you!" Shouts of derisive laughter followed. We paused a moment, then began to sing the twenty-third Psalm. As we sung, the people began to leave the showman, and come to our side: there was a charm for them in King David's song. Prayer was offered: more of the people came over. A simple exposition of the Psalm followed: the larger portion of the showman's audience left him to hear about the green pastures and the still waters. Ere we finished the show was well-nigh deserted, and we could see the tears trickling down the cheeks of some as they listened to the story of the Good Shepherd coming into the wilderness of this world to seek and to save the lost.

Patience and love always prevailed. One Sabbath evening, at the time of the fair, we were resting ourselves in the house after a service in the open air. Suddenly four young men, maddened with strong drink, rushed into the room, and furiously assailed us, while a fierce and numerous reserve remained at the door. The object of their wrath was the person of the writer, who had reproved them in the street for scoffing. A violent struggle followed. Matheson interposed, and seizing the ringleader by the arm, said, "Let us pray." We both dropped upon our knees, and fervently entreated God to bless and save the young men. For a moment they were paralyzed by astonishment or fear. Again and again, for nearly two hours, the battle was renewed; again and again we resorted to prayer, striking no blows but those of faith and love. At last the victory remained with us; the young men became as quiet as lambs. We preached the Gospel to them, and ere they went

away we formed an alliance of peace and friendship that has never been broken. Such incidents were not infrequent, and the result often illustrated in a striking manner the sovereignty of the grace of God. Men who were at one time leaders of the mob in their most violent attacks on us in the open-air meetings are now, as the writer can testify, ranked among the peaceful disciples of Jesus, and distinguished for their zeal in the cause of the Gospel.

One night at Perth, while we preached in the street we were set on by an infuriated crowd. We sang the hymn, "There is rest for the weary;" but as we sang matters grew worse and worse. Not contented with hooting and yelling, they rushed upon us, and gathering the dirt of the street, bespattered us freely. Matheson, who never lost his self-possession, frequently whispered in my ear, "Never mind; perhaps a soul will be saved." We continued to sing until we reached the door of the hall where a meeting was being held. Our strength exhausted, our pride in the dust, we turned to address a word of affectionate entreaty to our victorious assailants, when suddenly the Spirit of God fell upon us and upon all those people. Our hearts were filled with a new and wonderful joy, heaven seemed to be opened above us, the awful verities of eternity were disclosed with soul-piercing vividness, and with bleeding hearts we besought them all to repent and believe the Gospel. At the same moment the great crowd ceased its fiendish rage and mocking; the stillness of death followed; and as we urged them to flee to Jesus from the wrath to come, many burst into tears. The people seemed ready to cast themselves at our feet as we preached Christ to them. It was a memorable night, the issues of which are with the Lord. Thus we learned that Satan rages when his kingdom shakes and his victims are about to escape.

One night at the fair in Dundee a young man bent on folly stopped for a little to hear the preaching. Stung by the truth, and angry lest he should lose his pleasures, he tore himself away, and rushed into the next street, saying, "Now I've got rid of them." Scarcely had he turned the corner, however, when he came upon another preacher, was arrested, and brought to the Saviour. A policeman on his rounds stood for a moment to hear "what in all the world those preachers could have to say in the fair," when suddenly a ray of light shot through the darkness, and he too was converted. Two young women, bent on pleasure, stopped as they pressed through the crowd to hear the singing of the hymn—

"O happy day that fixed my choice  
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!  
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,  
And tell its raptures all abroad."

"Come away," said the one to the other; "we'll be too late." "I dare na gang," was the reply.

They strove, and parted; the one going to the pleasures of death, the other remaining to seek the protection of Jesus, and to join the society of His people.

A poor woman, a drunkard's wife, steeped in poverty and clothed in rags, was coming along the street with a babe in her arms. Happiness had forsaken her long ago; desperate struggles with want made her weary of life; hope, that most patient of angels, had disappeared in the clouds; and all her days and nights seemed but steps to deeper woe. A voice strange to her fell upon her ear. The one utterance that fell like dew upon her weary heart was the word of the Lord—"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." She stood still upon the pavement, far off from the preacher; and as she listened, the voice seemed to come nearer and nearer to the heart. "Rest!" she said to herself, as the preacher went on to explain rest in the Lord Jesus—"rest! that is what I want." Jesus heard the groaning of that oppressed spirit, and came to her relief. There and then she believed on Christ; there and then she entered on the rest of the Gospel. Peace and joy, like birds of Paradise, began to sing in her soul. She carried the blessing home, and the light that filled that mother's heart illuminated the drunkard's house, and transformed it into a Bethel. Years have passed; she still hearkens to Jesus, and still hears Him saying, "Come unto Me, and rest."

"I hear the voice of Jesus say,  
'Come unto Me, and rest;  
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
Thy head upon my breast.'

"I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary, and worn, and sad;  
I found in Him a resting-place,  
And He has made me glad."

These are a few instances out of many; the day alone will declare all the results. To the wise and prudent the preachers might appear to be fools; but the Gospel was preached to the poor, evil was prevented, good was done, souls were saved, and God was glorified. From strange quarters, and in ways too strange to find an explanation in the philosophy of the rigidly systematic Christian, God gathers his elect. It does seem meet, that from amidst those scenes where Satan has his seat, and those on-goings where the destroyer of souls enjoys his proudest triumphs, the Redeemer should gather the trophies of his matchless grace. When in glory the ransomed shall tell each his strange story of a Saviour's love; and one shall say, "He found me in the nursery;" and another, "He found me in the school;" while others tell how they were found in the house of prayer, the sick bed, the workshop, or the field; one will say, "He found me mad upon my idols, amidst the revels

of the fair—there He cast the charm of his love around me, and thence He drew me to Himself:”

Several of the Christian helpers in this work have gone to be with the Lord. Mr. Johnstone, pastor of a Methodist Church, fell like a true soldier at his post, and passed from the hallowed services of the Lord’s day on earth to the joys of the everlasting Sabbath in heaven. He was mighty in prayer, and it was the practice of our evangelist to ask at the commencement of his meetings, “Is Johnstone here to pray?” Robert Annan, the stoutest of street-preachers, is also at his rest. Dan Collison, a young man of remarkable faith, said one night as he left the fair, “I am gaun’ hame to tell my Faither,” meaning that he was going to spend the midnight hour in prayer. In a few hours afterwards he reached the Father’s house of many mansions. When charged, like Paul, with madness, Dan was wont to say, “If I’m mad, I’ll get heaven for an asylum.” “The Lucknow Hero,” a Christian soldier of gigantic stature, who had fought in the Indian mutiny, used to assist in these services by marching in front to clear the way. He could not preach, but he could help in his own way. Drawing himself up to his full height between the preachers and their opponents, he seemed to say, “If you dare meddle with these men, you see what you have to encounter.” He also has received the palm of victory. Mr. Nairn, merchant, an unwearied helper in the work of the Lord, is also numbered with those who have crossed the flood. Amidst the ravings of the fever that closed his earthly career, he spoke only of the Saviour whom he loved. Others, whose chief part was not to speak or act, but to watch and pray, we have accompanied to the border-land, and have seen them depart, leaning on the arm of their Redeemer.

Dr. W. P. Mackay, pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Hull, who accompanied Mr. Matheson to the feeing markets and assisted in the work, writes as follows: “Among the very first times I spoke with him was at a railway station. We had been speaking of entire consecration to the Lord, and the noble work of preaching Christ and getting souls saved. My mind was not very clear as to my own path. I was seeking light as to my future course — whether I should give myself entirely up to preach the Gospel or enter a professional course. Many young men are similarly placed, and often require an encouraging word when all around seems doubtful or dark. We had to go in different directions. He crossed over to the other side of the platform, and his last words before our trains came up were in his manly accents, ‘Go and read George Muller, of Ashley Down.’ I had never heard the name before, but I put it down in my memory. On the first opportunity I read his history, and for the first time in my life saw the meaning of practical everyday faith. I had known about faith to save my soul, but this opened up quite a new aspect of God’s glorious truth.

“Time wore on. I was often in his company, and always felt in his presence, There is a man in real earnest, and his one word is ‘Eternity.’ He used to say to me, ‘Stick by what God has blessed to your own soul. Every evangelist has a something that God has given him as a great reality, and God uses the evangelist to carry home that truth to do his own work. One, for instance, has this word, *God is love*; another is used to impress on his audience, *It is written*; a third has to preach *Oneness with Christ*; and a fourth, *Believe and live*; and so on, just as God has burned the truth into their own souls.’ ‘Well, Duncan,’ I said, ‘What is yours?’ Ah mine is plain, *Death, Judgment, and Eternity*; and by God’s grace I mean to hold by it.’ And so he did.

“Well do I remember my first introduction to the feeling market campaign under his guidance. It was in May, 1862. On the 13th we went to Ellon, in Aberdeenshire. Here, supported by a number of earnest pastors, we preached till nightfall the words of eternal life, Duncan’s voice reaching well over the whole fair in an earnestness all his own. Next day we went to Potarch market, up Dee-side, and there we met with strong opposition. A goodly number of labourers, pastors, and evangelists—several of whom, as Major Gibson and Colonel Ramsay, are now with the Lord—drove down to the fair. This was about as hard a battle-field as we were on in all the campaign. We had had much prayer about it, but the opposition, or rather indifference, was very marked. We could hardly get a dozen at a time to listen. But Duncan was determined they should hear. ‘Come,’ said he, ‘let us blow the rams’ horns outside the city.’ We all went to the outskirts of the crowd, and knelt round in a circle, and began to pray to God, as we felt we had no power with men. Many of the men inflamed with drink came round and looked at the rare spectacle. There were more than a dozen uncovered heads of kneeling men, who were entreating God to have mercy on those who had no mercy on themselves. As the spare grey locks of several of the veterans waved in the summer breeze, and the tones of entreaty went up to the throne, there was something that seemed calculated to calm the wildest opposer; but Satan appeared let loose. They danced, and whooped, and yelled round the circle of prayer like so many fiends. One coarse fellow deliberately came beside Major Gibson and spat in his face while he was praying. The gallant soldier merely took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and prayed for the poor sinner. We rose from our knees. ‘Now,’ said Duncan, ‘let us again unfurl the banner,’ and turning to me, he said, ‘Strike up “Rest for the weary,” and let us in to the centre of the camp.’ Then we got an audience indeed, and the word seemed to be with power. I spoke at least to two who were stricken with great conviction of sin. Duncan would not stop preaching even when the horses were being yoked to drive us from the fair, but from the conveyance preached, exhorted, and entreated sinners to come to Christ.

On Friday, the 16th, we went to Inch, where there seemed many attentive hearers, several of those who had been converted under Duncan and other labourers rallying round us. On the Monday following we were at Alford, where constant preaching went on all day, many dear brethren from Aberdeen and elsewhere taking part. I have letters in my possession from those who profess to have been benefited for eternity from this day's work, besides having seen several who had been brought to the truth at former preachings there. On Wednesday we went on to Huntly, where such wonderful things had been seen in years gone by, when Duncan, Radcliffe, and others, gathered by the Duchess of Gordon, were so owned of God in the market. Here, assisted by other brethren, the Gospel was proclaimed, and there were many attentive listeners.

“On the following Friday we went to Elgin. In the train, as Duncan and I took our seats, a man sat down beside us, whom we recognized as a very prominent Cheap John in the fairs, and who we supposed was going to Elgin. He recognized us also, and said, in a very hoarse voice, ‘Are you going to Elgin?’ ‘Yes,’ said Duncan. ‘Like ourselves, you seem to be very hoarse; here is a lozenge for you. But, man, if you would use that splendid voice of yours in the service of our Master instead of the service of Satan, it would be worth living for.’ He was about the smartest in the whole of the markets, and he smiled at us as he took out a handful of pound notes and shook them before us, saying, ‘Ay, but you could not bring me that with your preaching.’ No,’ said Duncan; ‘but what shall it profit you, if you gain the whole world, and lose your soul? Ah, Jack, perhaps you had a praying mother, who took you to her side as she knelt and taught you “Our Father,” and who prayed that she might meet you in heaven. Shall we not see you preaching in the markets yet? When God converts you, send for me, and I’ll join you, wherever it is.’ The poor fellow seemed quite solemnized, and took it all in the spirit in which it was given; but the Searcher of hearts knows if Duncan’s desire was realized.

“A week after this we went to a fair in the south, upwards of a hundred miles from where we parted with Jack, and no sooner had we taken our stand than the first man we saw was our railway friend. He immediately recognized us. He had his large hand-bell ready to begin operations, when Duncan said, ‘Let us pray.’ The man stopped his bell, bowed his head until the prayer was done, and then began to scatter coppers to draw a crowd. Coppers were, of course, more attractive than the Gospel of eternal life, and so he gathered the large crowd, and we the small; but Jack, noticing this, and, as if not to interfere with our work, wheeled his platform away to the furthest end of the fair, and left us undisturbed.

“Duncan had a rare gift of getting respect from even the unconverted by his manly, open-faced manner. The lame sailors, with their shipwreck pic-

ture before them, and other itinerant beggars, lifted their hats to him as he gave them a word of warning and Gospel.

“From Elgin we went to Turiff, and met with considerable opposition, but also considerable attention to the Gospel preached. In private we had a meeting on our knees here, that brought us so closely into the presence of the Master, and showed us the worthlessness of all flesh, that it will never be forgotten by many of us.

“These scenes happened eight years ago, and it is difficult to recall particulars; but many will have to thank God through eternity for having raised up Duncan Matheson, who with living voice and his *Special Herald* carried salvation home to their souls. It is a noble and fruitful work. One man came to us saying, ‘I at least hear the Gospel once a year, and that is at the fair.’ Another said, rather from sarcasm than anything else, ‘Your sermons here seem to have nothing in them but Christ. It seems to me that you can speak of nothing else but Christ—Christ from beginning to end. Ye let us hear more about Christ than we get in a whole year.’

“Duncan used often to say, ‘Keep the Word at them;’ and when he could scarcely be heard in a continued discourse he launched out short, pithy, telling texts of Scripture. As a man would be pushing his merchandise, he would sound in the ears of buyer and seller, who were thinking of profits, ‘What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’ He would come in front of a man being weighed for a penny, and in his solemn tones and earnest manner, making the man tremble all over, he would say, ‘Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.’

“Many other places we visited in company during the happy years I had the privilege to labour with him; but I have no doubt you have fuller information than I can give. His warfare was no easy warfare. He never thought of rest. ‘Rest’ said he, no, I can’t. Eternity! eternity! I’ll rest there; and you can gather the northern converts, and over my grave sing, “*Rest for the weary.*” Often he got the opposite of a kind reception, of course, as did his Master. At one place we were going to get our tea at a temperance hotel. A woman came after us, saying, ‘You shall not go there as long as I have a house;’ and she did give us a hearty reception. He was too independent of men’s smiles or frowns to be universally acceptable. He rejoiced to do God’s work in God’s way. The water of life flows as a river, not as a canal; and many men quench the Spirit by determining the exact shape, depth, and width of the canal, instead of taking the winding, irregular river as God sends it.

“The life of Duncan Matheson may well stir us all up to live more in the light of eternity, working to please but One, working to gather souls to that glorious One, and build them up in the knowledge of Him who is the light of eternity.”

For two or three years—from 1862 to 1865—there was a slight and natural reaction in many places where a real work of grace has been wrought. This lull was not pleasant, but it was profitable. Heaps of stones having been gathered from the quarry, the work of selection and rejection, polishing and building, had to be carried on. Reaping, with its sunshine and its songs, is delightful work; but after it comes the work of the barn, with its din, its dust, and its stern process of separating the chaff from the wheat. At the same time new fields were opening to the indefatigable evangelist; slumbering communities here and there were moved by the voice of the awakening Spirit. During those years his labours were without ceasing. “We must not lower the standard” was his constant saying. If the field was ever widening, his power for work seemed to grow in equal measure. Wherever a religious interest was awakening he hastened to render help. Where no work was wrought and no testimony raised, true captain of the forlorn hope as he was, thither he bent his steps, and there to use his own martial style, he “unfurled the banner.” He was seldom at home. One evening, before a meeting, he said to his wife, “Mary, this is a royal night with you. How long is it since you took tea with me on a Sabbath evening?” “Just three times the last three years,” was her reply. Solemnly and tenderly he said, “There will be plenty of opportunity in eternity to speak together.” At another time he said, “Wife and children must be nailed to the cross; I must go and preach the Gospel.”

In carrying on the work he was opposed on various grounds. A minister of the Gospel in a certain town was accustomed to offer prayer for a revival of religion. The great awakening in America took place; but it was “too American,” and the minister went on praying as before. The work of grace in Ireland followed; but it was “too Irish,” and he went on praying as before. Remarkable movements occurred in various parts of Scotland; but it was “wild-fire, and he would have none of it.” The Spirit of God began to work in his own town, very much through the instrumentality of our evangelist; but in the opinion of the minister the instruments were contemptible, and the whole thing of doubtful tendency, and he now began to pray for a *true* revival. At length members of his own congregation were converted under the preaching of Mr. Matheson, who said to them, “Go and tell your minister what the Lord has done for your souls; it will cheer his heart, and do him good.” They went; some to ask direction, and some to acknowledge grace received. The minister was angry. Next Sabbath he said it was all excitement and delusion, and he stamped with his foot as if he would stamp out the spiritual rinderpest [cattle-plague]. The excitement and delusion seemed to be all his own. His prayer had been answered; but he would not accept the answer in God’s way. The work of grace stood before him, but he knew it not. Jesus came to his own, but his own received Him not, because his

visage was so marred. The Holy Spirit came to the minister, but the minister disowned and rejected Him because He came in a garb of humiliation offensive to human pride. A work of grace without a flaw must be an impossibility so long as God is pleased to work by means of imperfect tools on the corrupt material of human hearts and lives. The minister would accept no revival but one according to his own ideal. What a pity that ministers should go a-dreaming when the world is perishing!

Some opposed the work because they had no scruples of conscience, and others because they had too many. Certain religious people have more scruples in their conscience than conscience in their scruples. To those who in effect said, "Sermons, sermons are our business," his reply was, "Souls, souls are mine." His constant cry, "Eternity! eternity! souls are perishing!" It was a cutting rebuke to mere sermon-makers and sermon-hearers. He did not practise trumpet-blowing for a bit of bread. His was not the soft serenading of lovers, but the sounding of shrill battle blasts. He refused to say, "Peace! peace!" when he ought to cry, "Fire! fire!" To gratify carnal tastes, he would not put the devil's butter on God's bread. In this way he offended both the lullaby players and the lullaby lovers. Moreover, his zeal sometimes carried him beyond the bounds of prudence; and Mr. Perfectly Small—the same who is denounced in an ancient prophet for making a man an offender for a word—could not tolerate the evangelist on account of his blunders. Does he never blunder himself? No; no more than a periwinkle blunders. Small, heartless men do not usually blunder so much as men of much feeling and soul. Heartless people keep to the arithmetic of everything. But love, zeal, courage, feeling, heart, soul, rise above vulgar-fraction rules of mere carnal policy. Some men can gauge the tear of penitence, and weigh as in a balance the breath of a dying saint. There is a crow's nest in the great oak; therefore, hew down the tree. There is a cobweb in a cornice; raze the temple to its foundation. The watch-dog barks out of season; slay him. There is a crook in the furrow; hang the ploughman. Let a man live a holy life; let him toil for the good of others till life is shortened by his self-denying labours; and let the broad seal of heaven be stamped upon his work; yet one word amiss shall, in the estimate of some, outweigh the whole. Shall a single particle of dust outweigh and render of no value a hundred talents of fine gold? Well, shall the warrior stop the battle because the grasshopper is chirping? I trow not. So this soldier of the cross went on.

At this time a handsome offer was made him by the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand. They proposed to ordain him as their first missionary, with the status of a minister in the Presbytery, and offered him a suitable salary. This offer he declined. Ordination by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery he did not despise; and although to a high spirited-man, such as he in the best sense was, with an increasing family, a stated income was to be pre-

ferred to his uncertain and precarious mode of living, with its inevitable humiliations, he could not leave his own country, where his labours were so much blessed, and over whose spiritual necessities his patriotic and Christian spirit brooded with a singular love. "So long as God is blessing my labours here in the conversion of sinners," he said, "I cannot on any account go away."

During the rest of his active ministry his work, both in its character and results, was very much of a piece. A few facts, therefore, in illustration will suffice. To gather the people in obscure and out of the way places, he procured a hand-bell, which he was not ashamed to ring up and down the streets, announcing to the astonished inhabitants that he, the bell-ringer, was going to preach at the cross or market-place. Curiosity brought many to hear him; and frequently those most unlikely, in man's estimate, to come under the power of the Gospel were awakened and saved. The bell-ringing and similar devices he felt to be a humiliation, and he sometimes said, "I never knew I had so little grace till I began to do that."

One summer evening the quiet little mining village of Stevenston, in Ayrshire, is startled from its centre to its circumference by a strange voice, whose loud sonorous tones waken the echoes and compel men to ask, What is this? The people rush to their doors; a hundred windows are thrown open, and the heads of eager listeners are thrust out. Even the public-house is emptied of the drunkards, who come out in stark amazement. The stranger, like Jonah in Nineveh, has come no one knows whence.

He stands alone, calm, bold, and solemn, as if he had just come out of eternity. With prophet-like authority, he cries, "Prepare to meet thy God!" As night falls, the voice waxes louder and louder, and many of those rough miners tremble. The service closes with an appeal to the great I AM, and the people somehow feel they are in the presence of God as they have never been. The preacher then takes his way along the street, and improves the awakening interest by speaking of Christ and eternity to every man, woman, and child, as they stand at their doors. Coming to the public-house, he goes up and says with great tenderness, "Ah, men, prepare to meet your God!" Words cannot describe the feelings of the villagers that night. The whole affair is so novel, so unexpected, so conscience-moving. It was as if God had suddenly come to the village, as He was then coming to many a village in the land. What was too little considered, He was come not to stay but to pass on.

In another mining village, known to the writer, he was violently opposed by a band of infidel mockers, who came to the meetings for the purpose of turning the evangelist and the work into ridicule. For a time, it seemed as if they should carry everything their own way. Strong in the hardness of their hearts and their unholy league, they laughed and jeered. The evangelist

marked their conduct, and having offered prayer for their conversion, drew his bow at a venture. One of the scoffers was arrested and turned to Christ. henceforth he separated himself from his companions, who only seemed to grow more profane. Next night they returned to the meeting to scoff. Again one of those highhanded sinners was prostrated by grace, and the mocker began to pray. Again and again was this advanced guard of Satan thinned by the sword of the Spirit, till at length only one remained, and he the worst of all. It seemed as if he would hold out. At last, however, the thought took possession of him, "Am I to be left to go to hell alone?" That led to his conversion. This triumph of grace made a profound impression on the unconverted people of the district, and the work of God made remarkable progress at that time, the fruits of which are strikingly apparent at the present day.

He found his way into places where gates were barred against all evangelistic effort. "You need not attempt to go there," said his friends, speaking of a certain country town in the north. "The ministers have told the people that the revival is a delusion; nobody wants you, and you will get none to hear you." Not discouraged by the failure of attempts made by others, he resolved to go. After praying for a blessing, he went, hired a hall for a week, announced his meetings, and commenced at the appointed hour. Not a soul appeared: undisputed victory seemed to remain with spiritual apathy. Most men would have looked on the empty hall as an intimation of the will of God to depart and seek a more promising field; but our evangelist opened his book, and saying, "Let us praise God," sang one of David's psalms, with somewhat of David's spirit. Thereafter he said, "Let us pray," and proceeded to pray aloud, as if all the town were there. As the prayer was closing, a little boy dropped in, and sat down with all a child's wonder and simplicity. The Word was read, the text announced, and the sermon preached, the great voice ringing and reverberating strangely in the empty hall. Ere the close, two or three men came stealing in from sheer curiosity, to see "a man preaching to nobody," and sat as near the door as they could. The service ended, and the preacher announced that having made an engagement with the great God to meet Him for prayer, praise, and preaching of his Gospel in that hall on every night of the week, he would be there, God helping him, at the same hour on the following evening, come what might, come who may. Next night more came from curiosity, and ere the week closed the hall was crowded by an attentive, and in some instances awakened audience. Faith triumphed. Bolts and bars of triple steel gave way before the invisible artillery of believing prayer. Our evangelist once more realized our Saviour's words—"All things are possible to him that believeth."

In another part of the country, the name of which I forbear to mention, an extraordinary power attended the word one night. The distress of the awakened was exceeding great, and the individual who presided at the meeting,

becoming alarmed, ordered the people to retire to their own homes. It seemed a hard case for those weeping inquirers to be sent away without an opportunity being afforded them of stating their difficulties and hearing an answer to the great question then and there. The meeting-house was cleared, and as the key turned heavily in the lock, these unsophisticated children of the soil stood about the door and wept. "Go home," it was said to them. "Go home!" they exclaimed. "We are going down to hell; and what are we to do?" Seizing the arm of the evangelist and his companion, they begged them as servants of Jesus Christ not to leave them. That night the woods resounded with their cries to God for mercy as they went away.

Duncan's labours were much blessed at Hillhead, a mining district near Glasgow, where there was a considerable movement in 1865. This place has been singularly favoured of the Lord. Here that Christ-like missionary, David Sandeman, preached and prayed and wept for souls. Sometimes he tarried at the throne of grace all night, and towards dawn he could be heard saying, "The whole district, Lord—the whole district! I cannot ask less." "He made everybody love him," say the people still. Here too James Allen, who, like David Sandeman, went to an early rest with Jesus, preached with Baptist-like solemnity and power. Of him the people say, "He brocht eternity doon about us." It was Matheson's privilege largely to reap what these faithful men and other earnest labourers still living had sown in the unpromising soil of Hillhead. Night after night he continued the services there amidst striking displays of divine grace. At the close of the meetings, often near the hour of midnight, when he tore himself away from the group of men in the agony of conviction, he trudged his weary way for miles through the deep snow to the neighbouring city of Glasgow, where necessity compelled him to lodge. Next night, however, invariably found him back at his loved work as cheery as ever.

His circuit was now a very extensive one. At one time—July, 1864—we find him preaching at Dover, where several officers of the army are converted, and ere the month is out he is in the extreme north labouring amongst the Highlanders at the herring-fishing at Wick. Now he is raising his voice on Glasgow Green, where during the last ten or twelve years many a soul has been saved; by and by he is ranging the lonely glens of Sutherland in search of the lost sheep. Here the proclamation of free grace is blessed. "I have heard that Mr. Matheson was riding very high, that he was preaching *assurance* to the people of \_\_\_\_\_," said a pastor, who seemed to think that the Christian is safe only under the shadow of Doubling Castle. "Is it not a matter about which we should be sure?" was the reply. "Oh, you women!" was all the good man had to say in defence of his system of ultra-Calvinistic exclusiveness.

In 1856, when lying at the point of death on the scene of his exhausting labours among the soldiers in the East, he had asked from his God ten years more of life to preach the Gospel and win souls. He was now entering the tenth and last year; and as if conscious that his more active career was about to close, he inserted in a newspaper the following address:

1866.

NEW TEAR'S ADDRESS.

**D**EAR READER: The sand-glass is running out. Another year is *gone!* Three hundred and sixty-five days past! How silently—yet how quickly again—has grain after grain, particle after particle, hour after hour, dropped in this glass. Deathless hours they are; uncounted, unnoted, and forgotten it may be by man, but every falling grain has been noted by God. The busy pen of Heaven has been marking every moment. Ask thyself the searching question, “Has it been with me a *happy* year? It has brought me nearer Eternity; but has it brought me nearer God? Does it find me better fitted for Heaven, with more of the *pilgrim spirit* than I had when the year began?”

What a time for serious thought! Another new year summons thee to a Pisgah-Mount—from the top of one of life's memorable eminences solemnly to review time past—consider time present—and prepare for time to come. Cast, then, thine eye on the past year's journey, and how full of impressive recollection is the retrospect!

God has been dealing with *thee* individually, and speaking to thee surely, in language not to be misunderstood. Hearest thou not the rustling wings of the Angel of Death? Have not his arrows been flying fast and thick, and thousands made his victims? Look back! Seest thou that crowd of fresh-made graves?—they are silent preachers to *thee!* and this is their silent text and sermon, “*be ye also ready.*”

Many of those who slumber underneath these sods were cut down without a note of preparation. One was busied in the market-place; the Angel of Judgment met him *there*, and before evening he was DEAD! Another was seated at his fireside, planning bright thoughts and schemes for the future—he *never saw the morrow's sun.* Another was in company, loud in godless merriment, and breathing out his blasphemies—a few hours more, and he was arraigned at *the bar of God!* Another flung himself prayerless on his nightly pillow—next morning he awoke—but it was—in ETERNITY!

And, reader, has He spared *thee?* What! cut down others and left *thee* to count in the review of a past year—fig-tree after fig-tree blighted and fallen—and yet *thyself*, the most “barren “of all—a fruitless cumberer—still “*spared!*”

Canst thou calculate on another year? Let these green graves answer. *Another* year! Thine own grave may be among the number of these silent preachers on another anniversary. Who can tell but the summons may even now be on the wing, “Get thee up and die!” *Thou* mayest this time next year be reading to others the solemn lesson now read to thyself, “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.”

Dear reader, if this be a *possible* thing, take one look *forward.* If the arrow of death were indeed during this coming year to mark *thee* out, how would it fare with thee? Couldst thou say with exulting Paul, when he had the prospect of death before him, “I am NOW ready? “(2 Tim. iv. 6.) Are you at peace with God? Are you resting your eternal all on his dear Son? Are you in that blessed state of holy weanedness from *this* world, and holy preparedness for another and a better, that “living or dying” you can say and feel that “you are Christ's”?

Would the angel summons, "Behold! the Bridegroom cometh," find you exclaiming in joyous rapture, "Even so! come Lord Jesus! come quickly"? Would you be ready to pass from a death full of hope to a judgment divested of all terror—a God reconciled—an immortality of endless glory? These are solemn things and solemn thoughts! Answer them on thy knees—with the solemnities of the past year *behind* thee—an unseen God *above* thee—a great eternity *before* thee. Answer them *speedily!*

And as ye begin to descend the mount and commence the journey of a new year, let the feeble voice of the old one whisper its dying accents in thine ear, "Seek ye the Lord *while* He may be found: call ye upon Him *while* He is near; "for He who testifieth these things saith, "*Behold I come quickly!*"

"Time is earnest, passing by;  
Death is earnest, drawing nigh:  
Sinner, wilt thou trifling be?  
Time and death appeal to thee!  
Christ is earnest, bids thee Come;  
Paid for man a priceless sum I  
Wilt thou spurn the Saviour's love  
Pleading with thee from above? "  
INSERTED BY D. MATHESON.

*Perth, Jan. 1, 1866.*

Early in the year we find him in the north-west Highlands, whence he writes:

"Balmacara House, Lochalsh, Jannary 5th, 1866. I am here! What a place of beauty, yet of tempest and storm! I left Dingwall yesterday in an open gig, and came on here through a range of mountains covered all the way with snow. Now and then it was grand going along lake sides and then down mountain steeps. It was very cold, and we had at the end of our journey very heavy showers. I am none the worse. I think we came sixty-five miles in an open gig. When I reached, the thunder was rolling and lightning flashing. The rain fell in torrents. In summer it must be a glorious place. The people are scattered, and my work is laid out for next week. May the Lord guide! Captain O\_\_\_\_, his wife, her sister, and daughter, are here. They are kind to me. He is a good, good man. My work will not be amongst large companies, for few understand English. Pray that the Lord may bless my efforts. I have a meeting tonight, and tomorrow, Sabbath, here.

"Balmacara House, January 8th. Yesterday Mr. Colville joined us. We drove to church—a most uncomfortable one. No plaster, no roof—only the bare boards, no flooring. The minister is a good man. It was a good sermon. We drove back, singing all the way till the very hills rang again. At five we dined, and at seven we met in a shed. It was packed with people, some having come six or eight miles. I preached first, and then Mr. Colville. The people were intensely interested, and about twenty waited after the meeting. At ten o'clock we left. We meet there tonight again. It is a poor, poor country, but very beautiful to look upon.

You see nothing but green mountains and mountains covered with snow. I am to be very busy. I wish you were here. I always like you to see anything that is grand.

“January 9th. We are working away. The people seem very dead. It is a lovely spot; but how sad to see people going down to hell unmoved! I feel deeply for the people, but as yet have no power. . . . Oh for a blessing! Life is ebbing fast away. Eternity is near. Pray for me.

“January 10th. At 4 p.m. yesterday we started with the carriage over the hills. It was a grand drive. Now and then we had to come out and walk, as the hills were so steep. Coming to a ferry, we crossed, singing all the way in the boat. In a village on the other side we got a school, and held a meeting, Mr. C\_\_\_\_ and Captain O\_\_\_\_ with me. I preached; and, blessed be God, I had great freedom and power. The Lord helped me. I was happy in my soul. Mr. C\_\_\_\_ followed. In the second meeting we saw awakened souls.

“January 13th. I have to go some six miles over the hills to Plockton, the place of my father’s birth. I have seen some poor highland girls here. It would be a good thing to get places for them; they are so faithful and trustworthy. Poor things, I feel for them. In the snow many of them have no shoes. I am glad I am come to this place. I have seen much of the country and people. It shows me the value of my work among the Highlanders.” The work to which he here refers was chiefly the religious books which he was getting translated into Gaelic, and circulated freely, or sold at a mere nominal price, throughout the Highlands.

In course of the summer we find him in Nairn, Inverness, Ross, Sutherland, and Caithness. Returning south, he preaches at the fair in Glasgow; and from that city he proceeds to Laurencekirk, Bervie, Kirriemuir, and other places in the eastern and central counties.

On Aug. 4th he went to Forfar, whence he writes:—“I have only fifteen minutes, passing through. We had good meetings last night, open-air and indoors. I hope God blessed the word; but the place is hard, and the people sadly indifferent. The whole land seems at ease. Few are seeking God; few are caring for God. I often feel it deeply. Cholera is not apparently decreasing. The voice is loud and solemn. Nothing, however, will do but the Holy Ghost.

For Forfar he had often prayed. Frequently, as he passed it by rail, he raised his voice in prayer for the salvation of its people. “When I die,” he said, “you will find Forfar written on my heart.” “If God would only bless Forfar,” he said, characteristically, “I would be content to stand and hold Harrison Ord’s hat while he preached.” His prayers were now to be answered, and his longings in measure gratified. Early in September he went to Forfar, took lodgings, obtained the use of a school-room for his meetings, and commenced in the open air and within doors. For paying the necessary

expenses means were liberally furnished by Christian gentlemen whose sole interest in this town was the salvation of the lost.

“Forfar, Monday, September 10th, 1866. Praise the Lord, He has begun his work. We commenced at seven on the street on Saturday. A great crowd gathered round. They listened breathlessly. It was a blessed meeting. I have seldom seen such a solemn meeting on the streets. At eight we went to the school. A good company were present. At close some waited in anxiety to be spoken with. We did not leave till ten.

“Yesterday Hopkins, Boswell and I went through the streets giving tracts and speaking. We had solemn talk with the people. At six we met on the green. About one thousand were present. God helped us all wondrously. He gave a very solemn address. The people hung on our lips. We then went to church. About four hundred came. It was a very solemn meeting. Barely did I ever feel such power at a meeting. About a hundred remained to the second meeting. Some ten or twelve were really anxious. We could hardly get the church cleared. Mr. C\_\_\_\_, who had been preaching in a village, came and had a meeting for the anxious in the street. Someone asked them in. He had to speak till eleven o’clock. Some evidently found the Lord. Is it not blessed? I praise the Lord. The Lord send floods. It is sweet to see such fruit at first.

“September 13th. What a night we had last night. I shall never forget it. We met at one o’clock, and spoke in a small street; at seven H. Ord at the Cross, and Hopkins and I took another place. We then collected all into a school. It was packed. At close, going out, they laughed, swore, and mocked. Within we spoke to anxious souls, a few; and outside I tried to control the rabble. Oh, how obscene they were! It seemed as if the devil had entered into them. At ten o’clock we could hardly get the gate shut. We go to Mr. M’Phail’s church tonight, as the school is too small. This is a fearful place. No tongue can tell its sin. I do pray that God may convert many. Nothing is too hard for Him.

“September 14th. The work goes on. God will work here yet, I do believe, wondrously. We wait, we long, we pray.

“September 18th. We had good meetings last night. We only want more power—more power from on high. A breath would fan much that is now smouldering into a flame. We had some anxious ones last night. Pray for me, and very specially for Forfar. The time is short. It is passing away. It will soon be done. Some thirty attend our daily prayer-meeting at noon.

“October 3d. We had a blessed meeting last night. I was very ill yesterday, but today am quite well. It was a very solemn meeting, and several were brought to peace at close. One, a farmer’s daughter, was a very decided case. All yesterday I had much freedom. The work here is truly a very decided one. We find every night some new cases. It is a great thing to get

something to cheer. Oh, rejoice in the blessing descending! We have trial, but we have many blessings. We shall have a kingdom yet and a crown of glory.

“October 15th. We had a very remarkable night at the Cross on Saturday. About one thousand came to hear. We went to the school at eight o’clock. Last night (Sabbath) was a great night in the church—great every way. I had much freedom. Truly the Lord spoke through me. *I never left a place with such regret, never in twenty years.* The work seems only beginning.”

In November he went north to the feeing markets, and on his return visited Forfar, to find precious and abundant fruits of his trying labours there. The end of the year found him at home, making preparations for an evangelistic journey to the Orkneys.