

THE LIFE AND LABOURS
OF THE LATE
JAMES TURNER
OF PETERHEAD.

WITH A BRIEF NOTICE OF HIS BROTHER,
GEORGE TURNER.

By
WILLIAM ROBBIE,
ABERDEEN.

"They went everywhere preaching the word." . . . "And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord."—Acts viii 4—xi. 21.

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PREFACE

THE following Memoir is given to the Public in the belief that it will be gratifying to the many friends of the late MR. JAMES TURNER to possess such a record of his Life and Labours, and in the hope that it will be the means of stirring up others to labour in the same good cause. It presents us with a striking illustration of what may be achieved by persevering prayer and earnest working, and teaches us that it is neither splendid talents nor literary attainments that form the great requisite of success, but simple faith in God.

A much larger volume might have been produced from the materials placed at the disposal of the writer, but, while it has been his endeavour to embrace all the leading incidents of the Life, it was thought advisable that the details should not be expanded to such a length as would have the effect of unnecessarily increasing the price of the book.

The writer embraces this opportunity of thanking those parties who so promptly complied with the request that they would communicate any facts they might be aware of, deserving of a place in this memoir. Some apprehension was at first entertained that sufficient material would not be easily obtained for such a biography as the present, but so great is the respect in which Mr. TURNER'S memory is held in every place where he laboured, that information regarding his movements has been very readily afforded, and no difficulty whatever has been experienced in this respect. The difficulty was rather how best to select and abbreviate.

The sketch has been prepared under somewhat disadvantageous circumstances, chiefly during brief intervals of time snatched from the hurry of business, and it is hoped that this will be some excuse for any imperfections that may be observed.

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LIFE OF JAMES TURNER

CHAPTER I.

Prefatory remarks—Birth—Early years—The Spirit's striving— "What must I do to be saved ?"—Conversion— A relapse— "Restored again"—Joins the Wesleyan Church.

IT is interesting, as well as instructive, to mark by what a sovereign choice the Lord selects the instruments to work out the purposes of His grace. He takes them often, may we not say usually? from a quarter whence the world would be least likely to expect them. He chose Moses, the exposed son of a Hebrew slave—trained him up in the palace of Pharaoh, and then as a shepherd in the wilderness, to be the great leader in the deliverance of his race. He took David from the sheep-cot, to be ruler over His people Israel — to found the long promised Royal Line of Judah, and when the Lord of glory Himself came down to earth as the long expected Deliverer of the world, He chose for his companions and ministers, poor fishermen of Galilee, and they shall sit with Him on His throne.

In later times, He took the son of a miner in Mansfield, and made him his champion against the whole power of the Papacy and the Kings of the earth combined. He enabled him to gain the victory and an imperishable renown. Later still, he took a serving boy from a Bristol Inn, and he became, in His hand, the renowned Whitefield, to hold up, at home, and in the far west, the torch of evangelical light. There may be some even now, held in little esteem by men, humble, if not despised as enthusiasts, who shall yet attain to eminence as successful ambassadors for Christ. The men of the world may not receive or acknowledge such as the servants of God, because they would never have chosen them, nor considered them qualified for the work. Yet, these humble but despised labourers shall, at last, be openly acknowledged of God, while many, whose qualifications it would be thought uncharitable to doubt, may not be so owned.

Such are the ways of our God. He lifteth up one and setteth down another—chooses His instruments from among the high or the lowly as it pleases Him, and oftentimes uses the weak and the base to confound the mighty, and work His sovereign will.

Harlan Page, for instance, was one of those-quiet, humble instruments whom "the King delighteth to honour," and use for carrying, out the purposes of His grace. But little known in the world while he lived—a plain working man, a devoted Sabbath school teacher, and latterly in the American Tract Society's establishment; his mission was one of private influence, exercised by earnest correspondence, or visits to those in whose eternal welfare he felt an interest. His movements were little seen, and less noticed by the world, but after his death, some friendly hand was led to record his life and labours, and the crowning record is, that he was the honoured instrument in the conversion of about a hundred souls. The world puts but little value on such occurrences, and celebrates them with no rejoicings, but it is very different in the kingdom of grace. "There is joy in heaven" whenever an heir of glory is born.

He whose life we sketch in the following pages, was another somewhat of the same stamp as Harlan Page, although his path was different. Not much fitted by early education for the work he was yet to do, but gradually trained, and the way prepared

for him, by Him who has the hearts of all men in His hand, he was selected to be the chief instrument in promoting a wonderful revival of the Lord's work, and the means of the conversion, not of a hundred only, but probably more than a thousand souls. Quiet and humble in his walk, and noticed but by a few men of eminence, who esteemed him very highly for his work's sake, he was early called home and now, doubtless, holds a high rank in the kingdom of God, for, "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

JAMES TURNER was born at **Peterhead** on the 19th of September, 1818. His parents were in humble circumstances, outwardly decent and respectable, but strangers to the power of godliness. There is reason, however, to believe that in the decline of life, his father was brought to the Saviour through the prayers and unwearied exertions of his son for his spiritual welfare. His mother died many years previously.

With no one to instruct him in the right way, or to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, young Turner was, of course, allowed to grow up in utter ignorance of divine things, and to follow the promptings of a heart by nature depraved. In looking back, many years afterwards on this part of his life, Mr. Turner observes, in a brief and simple record of the Lord's dealings with his soul, — "When quite young, I commenced to serve the devil, and surely I was as faithful to him as ever any poor sinner was, for I did not fear to commit sin with all greediness."

When he was about six years old, he was sent to school, where he continued for about three years, but he made little progress, as he was not of an age to appreciate the value of instruction, or the importance it might be to him in after life. About a year after he had left school, that is, when he was about ten years of age, he was apprenticed, in his native town, to a cooper; somewhat, it would appear, against his own inclination, although he afterwards came to like the trade well enough. As an apprentice, his religious training was as little cared for as ever. Not one of those with whom he was associated feared God, and, instead of reproving him when he did that which was wrong, they rather encouraged him in his sinful courses.

During the years of his apprenticeship, he lived entirely without God. The thought that he had a soul, that there was a heaven or a hell, never occurred to him. The sanctity of the Sabbath was wholly disregarded. In the winter-season, the Lord's day was a great weariness to him, but, in the summertime, he used to rise on the Sabbath early as three o'clock in the morning, and, after meeting with a few ungodly companions, they were in the habit of going into the country, and spending the day among the woods, or in searching for bird's nests.

When he had reached his fifteenth year, he was, after some hesitation, induced by his eldest brother to become a member of a Bible class, taught by the Rev. Mr. Yule of **Peterhead**; but, although he joined this class and seems to have attended it regularly he took little or no interest in the instruction that was communicated. He says himself, "For five long years I sat in the back seat, but I was deaf to all that was said, and my heart was hard as a stone. I often wonder how I did not leave the class, for indeed I did not like it, but, somehow or other, I could not get away from it."

Although Mr. Turner did not experience the saving change during the five years he attended this class, there is reason to believe he received much benefit from it. Indeed we know that he himself attributed his first awakening to his attendance on Mr. Yule's ministrations. The Spirit of the Lord, by this instrumentality, began the good work in his heart, which was yet to be carried on and completed, to the praise of His glorious grace.

From this time his conscience was so far awakened that it would not allow him to commit sin with the same degree of pleasure as formerly. It is true, no change was, as yet, observable to others, and perhaps, scarcely to himself, so long as he was in the company of his sinful companions, all looking pleasant and happy; but when he retired to rest at night, he often laid his head on a sleepless pillow, and dark thoughts of death and judgment, of hell and eternity, haunted his imagination. "I lost the peace of this world," says he, "but I could not tell how, for up to this time, and for a good while after, I did not see myself to be a sinner in the sight of God, nor did I know the hell of wickedness that was in my heart."

He was careful, however, to keep these anxious thoughts to himself, for although he often felt inclined to speak to someone who might have been able to give him useful counsel and direction, that feeling of false shame, which Satan knows so well how to make use of, and through which many a soul is lost, prevented him from doing so.

In the early part of the year 1840, when Mr. Turner was in the 22nd year of his age, his convictions of sin assumed a more decided character. It was no longer a vague feeling of uneasiness that troubled him, for which he could scarcely assign any cause, but he now saw himself to be a sinner in the sight of God, and that, as a sinner, his soul was in danger of perishing eternally.

Being now anxiously enquiring what he must do to be saved, like many more, he at first supposed that all he had to do to obtain peace, was to give up his sinful courses, and try to live different life. He did so, but the result he expected did not follow. "I made trial," he says, "to give up a good many of my old sins, such as taking God's name in vain, and breaking the Lord's Day, but, instead of peace, I found sorrow. I then thought I should have a Bible, and went and bought one, so I made a god of it for a long time, and read it day and night, but I could not find the thing I wanted. Then I would try prayer, and made this my god also. In short, I tried everything but the right thing. I went into the fields with my Bible, and I read it, and prayed, and wept, but every day I grew worse and worse."

The salvation of his soul had now become the only thing he could think of. He thought he could give up all for Christ, but yet he could not lay hold on Him by faith. He went to every sermon or prayer-meeting he could hear of, in the hope that, *there*, his soul would find the blessing, but still it came not, and such a sense of guilt had now taken hold of him, that he thought all the people looked at him and avoided him.

For upwards of three months was he in this distressing state of mind, a state which none can understand but those who have felt it, and in much bitterness of soul he was brought to say with the Psalmist, "I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was none that would know me; refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul."

The Holy Spirit is sovereign in the means He employs in leading souls to Jesus, and, sometimes, these means appear to us to be very, unlikely. In the case of Mr. Turner, it was the feeling of desolation that crept over him, on seeing himself, as he supposed, overlooked by those to whom he naturally turned for guidance and direction, that constrained him to look only to God Himself. He accordingly betook himself to earnest and persevering prayer. He wrestled with God, and refused to let Him go till he received pardon through the blood of the Lamb; and God, for Christ's sake, heard his cry — blotted out his sins, and shed abroad His love in his heart.

"It was on a Monday morning (4th May, 1840), says Mr. Turner, "that the Lord blotted out my sins. I had three hours of heaven on that day; my soul was so shut up in God, that I had no knowledge of what was doing on the earth. I have not felt such heavenly peace since that time." This perfect peace in the felt assurance of pardon continued for three days from this time, and, in the warmth and ardour of his first love, he fondly imagined that such a thing as a doubt about his acceptance with God could never again enter his mind, but he soon found out that, in this supposition, he was mistaken.

"On the morning of the fourth day," says Mr. Turner, continuing the account of this solemn period of his life, "I lost all this peace of mind in a moment, and, as soon as the light became darkness, I thought I heard a voice which said, 'Did I not tell you before that God could not save you?' So I made it up in my mind that moment, that I would pray no more, nor go to God again all my life. I did not know that this suggestion was from the devil, neither did I blame God for this change from light to darkness. For some days, I did not know what to do nor what to think. To commit sin, and serve my old master, I would not, and to look up to God as my Father, I could not. But God had mercy when I had none. He again inclined my heart to go to Him in prayer, as I had done before. His Holy Spirit returned to my dark soul, and midnight darkness gave place to light, brighter than the noon-day sun."

For about eighteen months, his soul prospered and was in health, but, at the end of that time, he began to relapse into coldness and formality, and, for four years, it might have been said of him, that he was "at ease in Zion." In after life, he regretted much that, at this time, he had no Christian friend to take him by the hand, and encourage him in the right way, for, he thought, if he had had such a friend, he would have kept his ground. The meeting with one about the year 1847, who spoke faithfully to him on soul matters, was the means of reviving him again, and, moreover, of inducing him to leave the communion of the Free Church of Scotland, and join that of the Wesleyan Methodists, a body of Christians who have always been remarkable for the warmth of their devotion, and their abundant labours in the cause of Christ. Mr. Turner, briefly alludes to this circumstance in the following terms —

"The Lord led me into the house of an old woman — one who was decidedly, on the Lord's side. I was not over a quarter of an hour in her house, till she spoke to me about the concerns of my soul. She was the first that ever did so. I soon gave her another call, and many a blessed hour have I spent in her company, thankful always for an open door, and a faithful Christian friend to speak to. She asked me to go and hear her minister in the Wesleyan Chapel, and I went to the sermon, and also to the class meeting. The Lord blessed my soul among that people, and, shortly afterwards, I saw it to be my duty to join them. I found among them what my soul much needed, which was help heavenward. Thanks are to God!"

CHAPTER II.

Devout breathings—Anniversary of his conversion—Reproving sin —Birthday reflections—Souls for his labour—Success as a Class Leader—Saved at the eleventh hour—Longings for wider usefulness—Reflections on 1853—Light in the valley.

Mr. Turner never, after this period, relapsed into a lifeless formality. It is true, he was sometimes lifted up, and at other times cast down, for he had many a sharp conflict with the enemy; but, by the grace of God, he was more than conqueror. While he abounded in his efforts for the good of others, he kept a strict watch over the state of his own soul, and constantly longed for, and strove after, more holiness, and entire devotedness to his Saviour in all things. These devout breathings occur, now and again, in occasional reflections which he was in the habit of noting down, from about the beginning of the year 1853 to the end of 1859, when he commenced his more extended labours for the good of souls, in the towns along the east coast of Scotland. These reflections are not very numerous, and are always short, for Mr. Turner never possessed great facility in expressing his thoughts in writing; but, as they are *his own*, it is believed that a few extracts will give the reader a better idea of his inner life than anything that could be advanced, on that subject, by another.

April 22, (1853). "To-day I feel Christ in my soul the hope of glory. I am the chief of sinners, but Jesus died for me. It is through Him, and by Him, and for Him, that I look for the better country, for this is not my home, and I do thank Him that I have not to live here always. O for a pure heart! It is the pure in heart who shall see God."

Mr. Turner always believed that the first Monday of May, (1840), was the day on which he passed from death unto life, and the return of that day was, ever after, observed by him as a day of thanksgiving to God, and one on which he made a fresh surrender of himself, and all that he had, to his Heavenly Father. On the first Monday of May, 1853, he writes, "This day, thirteen years ago, the Lord set my troubled soul at liberty. I can never forget that day so long as I am here, nor do I believe that I shall forget what took place on that occasion while eternity rolls on. My dear Saviour! I give Thee anew this day my soul and body, my time and my talents. All that I am, and all that I have I give unto Jesus, and, if had more to give, He should have it. In prayer this morning I enjoyed nearness to God, and had much of the spirit of grace and of supplications. God, the hearer and answerer of prayer, seemed to say, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and they shall be granted." My prayer therefore was that God, the Spirit, would make me more holy, for this is his will, even my sanctification. I pleaded, moreover, that He would make me instrumental in the conversion of souls, and I feel assured that He will hear me in this petition also."

June 30.—" For some weeks past, I have had much of the light of God's countenance, but, more recently, I have had four days of darkness and despondency, so much so, indeed, that I could not open my mouth in our meetings for prayer. It is a strange state to be in, and one that I do not often experience. Today, I have a measure of comfort, but nothing more. I feel something of the Spirit's work in my heart, but not as I would wish to feel it. May the Lord humble me, and help me to learn of Him who is meek and lowly, for I long to be made like Him in all I say, and think, and do."

July 19—" Thank God my soul is still moving heavenward! May the Holy Spirit sanctify every power of my soul and body, making me a vessel meet for the Master's use. This is what I am living for. I felt a little bitterness in my soul this morning. I had

to reprove an old sinner who was indulging in very profane language, and making use of my God's name in an awful way. Yet I rather hesitated to rebuke him, for I knew the man I had to deal with. Lord, help me to be faithful to Thee at all times, and under all circumstances, so that I may rid myself of the blood of souls. My heart's desire and prayer for all sinners is that they may be saved, but, if they will not go the road that I am travelling on either before me, or along with me, or after me, they must go down the broad road that leadeth to destruction. Thanks be to God! I am heaven-bound, and rather than turn my back on the goodly land, I trust my Jesus will take me home."

It was Mr. Turner's practice to observe his birthday as a day of humiliation before God, wherein he looked back on the bygone years of his life, made confession of sin, and devoted himself anew to the service of God.

Sept. 19, (1853) -" My birthday. Thirty-four years has the Lord granted life, and a measure of health, to me the chief of sinners, while many who began the journey of life along with me now sleep the sleep of death. Their birthdays are over, and this may be the last that I shall see. I thank God for the thirty-four years He hath given me! Twenty-one of these years I spent in the service of Satan, and thirteen, I trust, in the service of a better master. When I look back on these thirteen years, I am ashamed to think how much of them has been misspent and wasted in idleness, or worse. How often have I slept when I should have been about my Father's business! How much time have I wasted in light and frivolous conversation! How often have I laughed when I should have mourned and wept! How often have I been poring into books, when I should have been wrestling in prayer! And, even when I have been at prayer, how frequently has it been but a mere bodily service, while my heart was occupied about other things! I have done much that I ought not to have done, and have left undone much that I should have done. Lord, forgive me! I cast myself anew this day on the finished work of Christ. May his precious blood cleanse me, and may the spotless robe of his righteousness cover me!"

Dec. 6 "As a pardoned sinner, I am still striving to gain the better country. For some time past, however, I have been looking more closely into the state of my heart before God, and, I must confess, it is cold indeed. Lord, have mercy on me! for I do not love Thee as I desire to do. Yet, with all my sins and short-comings, thou hast been pleased, in some measure, to bless my feeble efforts for the good of souls. I am struck with wonder that the Lord should condescend to make use of the like of me in saving sinners!"

The Lord had, already, been pleased to bless his humble efforts to the conversion of several souls. Up to this time he refers to about ten cases, in which, to all appearance, a saving change had been wrought, more or less through his instrumentality. At one open air meeting in which he took part, three individuals, after being deeply convinced of sin, professed to find peace in believing. A few nights afterwards, a poor backslider came to him in deep distress about her soul. After some conversation, he went with her to the house of a brother, where he, and one or two others, pleaded with God on her behalf for about an hour, and He was pleased, then and there, to restore her, and set her soul at liberty. He also speaks hopefully of a young man who found the Saviour on his death-bed, and, a few days thereafter, left his dying testimony, and went, as Mr. Turner expresses it, " to his Father and my Father."

He was also meeting with much encouragement among the members of the classes of which he was the leader, one or two of whom had found Christ, and others were anxiously enquiring what they must do to be saved. His success as a class leader will not be wondered at, when it is known how deeply he felt his responsibility, and how earnestly he longed and prayed for the salvation of every member. On this subject the following pregnant sentences occur, under date:

July 19, (1853) "How great my responsibility in having more than thirty immortal souls committed to my care! O my God, Thou knowest that I am holding up the case of these souls before thee, day and night. Save them, I pray Thee, and preserve their souls unto Thy heavenly kingdom and glory."

Whenever he observed any appearance of a tendency to lukewarmness in his classes, his soul would be much cast down, and he could not cease to pray for a revival of the Lord's work till the Spirit's presence was again felt in the midst of them. These occasions of special prayer for the blessing, were generally followed by a time of refreshing in the classes, and the conversion of some soul.

But Mr. Turner's labours were not confined to the members of his classes only. Wherever he found a door of usefulness opened up, he always availed himself of the opportunity thus presented of doing something for God, and the good of souls. He was much by the bedside of the sick and the dying, and, there, his labours seem to have been particularly owned of God.

One very remarkable instance of conversion at the eleventh hour was the case of a young woman whom he went to visit because her name had been mentioned to him as dying of consumption. On entering the room, Mr. Turner introduced himself by saying that he had come to see her, as he had heard that the Lord had laid his hand on her, and he enquired if she had much pain. She said she had not much pain, but chiefly complained of a cough and weakness.

"Do you think your sickness is unto death?" asked Mr. Turner.

"I do not know," she replied.

"Are you afraid that it is so?"

She did not reply, and he again asked whether she was afraid to die, and she answered "No."

"I am very happy," said Mr. Turner, "to hear that you are not afraid to die. What is it that has put away the fear of death, and brought you to this state of mind?"

"I cannot tell," was the reply, "I just feel that if I die I shall be happy."

"But tell me," said he, "are you born again? Have you got the new heart?"

"I do not know," she said; "I do not think that I have. "

"Then," said he, "you are still in your sins, still at enmity with God, and, if you die in that state, your soul is lost for ever."

She was extremely angry at being spoken to so plainly, but Mr. Turner immediately dropped on his knees, cried to God to open her eyes that she might see she was resting in a false peace, and immediately left her.

Some days after this, he called again and found her as he had left her. He again spoke most faithfully to her, warned her that she was ruining her soul, and that he was afraid she might discover this when it was too late.

Two days later she sent a message to him, not to call on her any more, for if he spoke to her as he had done before, he would drive her mad.

But Mr. Turner's compassion for souls was too strong to be so easily deterred from the faithful discharge of his duty, and, in place of not calling again, in half an hour he was at her bedside.

As soon as she saw him she shut her ears, and turned away, and refused to speak to him. He sat down, however, and, once more, warned her to flee from the wrath to come. "Woman," said he, "I know you do not want me, but in the name of God I am here again to trouble you, and I shall trouble you so long as your soul and body keep together, for your sins are still unrepented of, and unforgiven, and you are asleep in the arms of the devil."

"I have nothing to do with the devil," was her somewhat sharp reply.

"O woman," said Mr. Turner, "did you but know how near you are to the pit of woe, you could not rest for one moment until you were out of danger," and with that he got to his knees, and, again, earnestly pleaded the Lord to have mercy on her soul. The Lord heard his prayer. The woman herself began to cry for mercy, and he pointed her to the Lamb of God.

Two days after, he called again, and she received him with tears of joy, He found her resting on the sure foundation. "O," said she, "had I died as I was when you first came to see me, my soul would have been lost. Now I know my sins are blotted out. Jesus is mine. I am a brand plucked from the burning at the eleventh hour."

In a case like this, few would have called again an this poor woman, after a distinct request that the visit might not be repeated; yet there can be no doubt that Mr. Turner's doing so was the means of saving her soul. Some would doubtless, have been inclined to think that he was acting in a harsh and unfeeling manner, in intruding himself, and his message, on the sick woman against her will; but who would say that the surgeon is harsh and unfeeling, when he finds it necessary to perform a painful operation if he hopes to save his patient's life by it? And, surely, the same argument applies with inconceivably greater force when the salvation of an immortal soul is the object aimed at.

We frequently meet with expressions of his desire to be made more widely useful in the cause of God- "I feel a necessity laid upon me," he says about this time, "to preach the Gospel. It is at the peril of my soul if I do not preach Christ to perishing sinners. True, I have not been at college, but I have been with Jesus, and He calls me to the work; for in what I have already been enabled, through grace, to do, I have not been as one beating the air; but the Lord hath given me souls for my labour."

We think with him, that the last-mentioned fact is a sufficient proof of a call to the work, and one which cannot well be questioned. Indeed, the best evidence that any man is called of God to preach the Gospel is that He owns and blesses him in the work, and, if a man is not called of God, any other call is of little importance.

Mr. Turner closed the year 1853, with some reflections of a retrospective nature which will give the reader an idea of the amount of work he was able to go through in his Master's cause. When taken in connection with the fact that he had his business to look after, and, moreover, that he was always of a weak and delicate constitution, it

seems almost incredible. In the course of that year, he had preached about two hundred sermons. Took part in two hundred and sixty meetings for prayer. Led the classes committed to his care upwards of one hundred times, and stood by the bedside of the sick and the dying no fewer than five hundred times, and, better than all, "The Lord," says he "has given me more souls this year than during any previous year of my converted life."

Two members of his classes had died full in the faith, and, in the last week of the year, he stood by the deathbed, and took farewell, of four dear saints, three of whom were plucked as brands from the burning, at the eleventh hour, through his instrumentality. These all crossed the dark river leaning on the arm of Jesus. He was with one of them about six hours before she died, and she said, "I have a strong hold of Jesus. He is piloting me through the swellings of Jordan; I am in His good hand." Her last words were "The valley is getting brighter."

"Glory be to God!" exclaims Mr. Turner, "I shall soon meet her, and all the others whom the Lord has given me, in another and a better world."

But neither the abundance of his labours, nor the success with which they had been attended, led him to foster any feelings of vanity or self-complacency. On the contrary, his constant complaint was that he did so little for Christ who had done so much for him. "When I look back on the past year," he says, "my heart condemns me as an unprofitable servant. May God forgive my lazy soul — may He forgive my useless life!"

CHAPTER III.

Fresh Baptism—Diffusing the Hallowed Influence — Visit to Colliston —Wrestling in Prayer—Labours by the Sick-bed -Enquirers—The Secret of Success—The Grace of Humility.

THOSE who have read Christian biography to any great extent will have found that it is no uncommon thing for a child of God, even many years after he has been born again, to experience something like a second conversion. Numerous instances of this might be mentioned although, we believe, it will be found that this phase of religious experience is exclusively confined to such of God's people as attain to a greater measure of personal holiness than is to be met with among Christians generally.

It is, perhaps, for want of a better name that these have been called cases of "second conversion." - The term does not, of course, imply a second regeneration. All that it is intended to convey is, that the Christian (it may be gradually or it may be suddenly) attains to a broader apprehension than formerly of the fullness of Christ, not only as being made unto him justification, but also complete and entire sanctification.*

**Believers, while they are on earth, have all perfection of spiritual blessings, Justification, Adoption, the gift of the Spirit, holiness, eternal life, and glory in and with Christ. In the person of Christ, who is now in heaven, the old man is perfectly crucified; they are dead to sin, and to the law and its curse, and they are quickened together with Him, and raised up with Him and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. And believers do in their own persons receive and enjoy, by faith, all these perfect blessings of Christ, so far as they receive and enjoy Christ Himself dwelling in them, and no further." —Marshall on Sanctification chapxii*

The terms "perfect love" and "Christian perfection," employed by the Wesleyans, we believe to mean nothing more; for, although they make use of these expressions in speaking of such cases, they, at the same time, entirely disclaim the attainment of absolute and sinless perfection of heart and life.

The ways through which this state has been attained are varied in their detail, but there are features in which they will all be found substantially to agree.

"All alike begin with a sense of their guilt and peril, and come, sooner or later, to a sense of sins forgiven—blotted out in the blood of Jesus; and then again, sooner or later, in every, case, hungering and thirsting after holiness is induced, and, after varied strugglings, the issue in all alike is, that of finding in Christ the end of the law for sanctification."

(Higher Christian Life)

James Turner was one of those who are privileged to rise to this higher platform of Christian attainment, and to enjoy a second and yet fuller baptism of the Spirit. His was a case, moreover, that was as clear and marked as to the time and place of its occurrence as his conversion to God was at first, and he ever after considered it as the second most important epoch of his life.

From the time he became a member of the Wesleyan Church, he had heard and read a good deal about the possibility of getting into "perfect love," and the duty of seeking to attain to such a state. In fact, his heart had been long set on the attainment of this grace. He had made it matter of much prayer, and it was also so much of a matter of

faith with him that, long before the time he believed he experienced it—he felt assured that, sooner or later, he would do so.

It may be well to observe that we bring forward this matter here, simply because Mr. Turner looked upon it as a very important feature in his Christian life, and we think it would be wrong to keep it back. No doubt, many who read these pages may hold different views from Mr. Turner on this point; but, as we have already hinted, we believe that, on a closer investigation, the difference will be found to exist more in the *name* than in the thing signified. It would appear from some remarks made by Mr. Turner, long before the period of which we speak, that he himself had some difficulty on this subject, and was afraid he might err in regard to it; for, on one occasion, he says, "Last night my soul was so filled with God that I thought, at one time, that perfect love was laying hold of my heart. May the Lord keep me from erring in this great matter. I know that it is made over to me, and by faith I must enter in. Lord, help me to do so, for Thou knowest I long for it."

Some time later, he begins to make, more frequent reference to this matter, continuing to express the intensity of his desire to obtain it, and soon after he was fully persuaded that he received the much coveted blessing. The particular time was on Sabbath evening, March 5, 1854. On that occasion, he was in the company of two fellow-Christians who were very dear to him, and who were both eminent for their attainments in the divine life. Special prayer was made for Mr. Turner in this behalf, in which much liberty was enjoyed; and, as they prayed, the Spirit was poured out on him in such abundant measure that he was completely prostrated under the mighty power of God. His own account of this solemn hour is briefly given.

Writing on the following Monday, he says, "This day, by the grace of God. I can say the blood of Jesus has cleansed me from all sin. Last night, about ten o'clock, I was enabled to lay hold by simple faith upon my dear Jesus. When the Lord converted my soul, more than thirteen years ago, I had no one with me but the good Spirit of God; but in getting into perfect love, the Lord made use of _____ and _____, both full of God indeed, and dear to my heart. They had to *lift* poor me into God. O what power God gave them to bear me up in the arms of faith! When the Spirit of God came down on me, I sank to the floor speechless, where I lay for some time full of the glory of God, and I feel it up to this hour. Satan has done what he could to take the blessing from me, but I am sweetly resting in Jesus, and all is well. He is mine, and I am His. He has put the white robe upon me. This moment He is feeding me with the hidden manna. The kisses of His mouth are most sweet to my soul."

Mr. Turner was not long in letting the blessed results of this gracious outpouring of the Spirit on his soul be felt by those with whom he came in contact. While leading his class the next Sabbath, the peace of God so filled his soul that he could not refrain from weeping before them all, and, on that occasion, six others received a similar baptism of the Spirit. Other two meetings, which he held in the course of the same week, were similarly blessed. So much of the presence of God was felt that those who met together could scarcely bring themselves to separate, and the meetings were protracted to a very late hour. It is believed that not a few souls were saved during these days of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Certain it is that many of God's people were privileged to rise beyond the region of doubts and fears, and received such a full assurance of pardon, through the atoning blood of Jesus, that the hallowed influence remains with them to this day.

In the end of the same month, Mr. Turner visited **Colliston**, a village on the coast, about fifteen miles north from **Peterhead**, where, on the Sabbath, he addressed three meetings in the open air, at which large numbers attended, hungering for the bread of life. He had great liberty in speaking, and the Spirit accompanied the word with power. Much feeling was manifested among his hearers at these meetings. Many were convinced of sin, and anxiously inquired what they must do to be saved. He could scarcely get away from them; and, after he had left for home, late in the evening, one young man came after him inquiring more particularly as to the way of salvation. He pointed him to Jesus the friend of sinners and proceeded on his way lifting up his heart to God in prayer, that the convictions which had been produced might give place only to a sense of pardon and acceptance with God, through the merits of a crucified Saviour.

Mr. Turner continued to visit **Colliston** occasionally for some years, and there were several other places in the district around **Peterhead**, where he used frequently to preach, in all of which souls were given to him as the fruit of his labours.

It was always his practice in those places, whenever one or more souls were brought in, to set them also to work for Christ. Several meetings for prayer were thus established, and for reading the Scriptures and exhortation which had the twofold effect of bringing in others and of keeping alive and stirring up the faith and zeal of his own converts. Most of these meetings continue to be held to the present time, and prove frequent sources of spiritual refreshing to weary souls.

But while he sought to bring together those whom the Lord had given him, that they might pray for themselves and others, they were not forgotten by him at a throne of grace. There was not a single individual whom he knew to have received a blessing by means of his labours whose case he did not daily hold up before the Lord in earnest supplication that He would keep such from falling, and perfect the work of grace which had been begun.

The careless and the ungodly had also a large share in Mr. Turner's prayers, for, occasionally, he would spend the greater part of the night, sometimes alone, and sometimes in the company of one or two earnest Christians like, himself, praying especially for the revival of the Lord's work in the hearts of dry and lifeless professors, and that the multitudes around him, who were living as if there were no God, might be arrested in a day of His almighty power, and brought to reflect on that *Eternity* to which they were rapidly hastening. He has noted down the following on this subject.

April 10, (1854).—" I think the Lord is coming to save souls in **Peterhead**. I never had this feeling so deeply impressed on my mind before. I am sure it is from the Lord in answer to prayer, for I am crying to God day and night on behalf of this place." And again, towards the end of the same month—

"The Lord has put a spirit of prayer on me for this town. He is surely to do something for the salvation of souls here. The more I pray for this place, the more it is laid on my heart to pray for it, and, by the grace of God, I shall not hold my peace day nor night, for I never lost anything, even to my own soul, by crying to God for the souls of others."

The men of the world may think as they may, but it is no small privilege to have even one such praying soul in the midst of a community. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and who knows what manifold blessings may descend on the people in answer to the importunate cry of such a one? Yet, although such be the salt of the earth, and stand in the gap between a Holy God and a people laden with iniquity, how often does it happen that they are despised and persecuted by the very people whom they most benefit. We know that all who live godly, and who are the faithful reprovers of sin in every form, *will* suffer persecution, and Mr. Turner's case was not an exception. He was frequently, subjected to the rude insult and bitter scorn of the ungodly, but these things did not move him. "They are mad against me," he writes on one occasion, "yet not against me but the grace of God in me. I rejoice, however that I am counted worthy to suffer persecution and to be reproached falsely for my dear Saviour's sake."

But although he met with much opposition in his persevering labours for the good of souls, he was frequently privileged to see cases wherein his efforts were blessed and were made the means of converting sinners to God. About this time he mentions the case of two individuals who happened to come into his shop, and, while they were there, he embraced the opportunity of speaking to them regarding their souls.

It proved a word in season, and, it is believed, resulted in the saving conversion of both. A short time afterwards, other two persons were brought into one of his classes, merely as spectators, and, before they had left the house, they also professed to have found Christ.

The same evening, as he left the class, he went, as his custom was, to visit among the sick, and, as he passed by the door of a house in the locality where he visited, a person called him by name, and asked him to see an old woman who lived within, who had been blind for some years, and who was also very deaf. He accordingly went in and sat down beside her, but, as she neither saw him nor heard him, she did not know that any one had come in till he cried in her ear, "My friend, how is it with your never-dying soul?" As she heard this question she seemed surprised and put out her hand towards him, and when she had felt him up and down, she asked who and what he was.

"My name is James Turner," he said, "I am a servant of Christ, and am seeking souls for my Master."

"Well, I have heard of you before," she replied, "and have often wished that I could get spoken with you about my soul"

"Then it is the Lord who has guided me to your little room," he said, "that I might show you the way of salvation through Jesus Christ," and he proceeded to unfold to her the love of Jesus to poor sinners, and urged her to make a present and full surrender of her soul into His hand, to be washed in His blood and covered with His righteousness. In that same hour, the light broke in upon her darkness, and she cried out, "I have found Him, I have found Him!" From that time the love of Jesus was the theme on which she most delighted to dwell, and she never ceased to long for the time when He would come and take her home to be for ever with Him. She lived more than two years after this, adorning the doctrine of God her Saviour, and then fell asleep in Jesus. Mr. Turner thus refers to her death — "Blind M— has got home. She has had six years of darkness, but now she enjoys the light of an eternal day, and sees her Saviour face to face. The time is fast approaching when I shall follow her."

Shortly, before this, another case of a similar nature had occurred in which his labours among the sick appear to have been blessed to the saving of a soul. Having heard of a poor woman who had been ill for some time, and who dwelt in a little hut not far distant, he went to visit her. He found her able to be out of bed, and after some conversation about the benefits arising from sanctified affliction, he expressed a wish that the laying of God's afflicting hand on her body might be the means of bringing her soul to Jesus.

"I hope so," she replied.

He then said that God so loved her that He had sent His Son to die for her, and that there was nothing keeping her from present pardon through His blood but her own unwillingness.

"Well," said she, "I daresay that is true"

Mr. Turner immediately fell on his knees and began to pray, and the woman knelt down beside him. She became very much affected as he poured out his soul in earnest supplication on her behalf, and soon began herself to sob and cry, "Lord, save me! Jesus, pardon me! Saviour, wash me from my sins in Thine own blood!" In a short time she was able to say "I feel a change. My Saviour is saying 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' Jesus is mine and I am His." And Mr. Turner left her praising and blessing God who had called her out of darkness into His marvellous light.

The following brief entries which we find about this time, in a record which Mr. Turner kept of such occurrences, show further instances in which his labours had been attended with the divine blessing :-

"Since the 24th of June last (1854) three immortal souls have got hold of Jesus, two of them in the Ward of **Cruden**, where we preach twice a month. The other found Christ in my own room. All the three are aged persons, but, young or old, Jesus makes every sinner welcome."

"On Sabbath last a young man came to me about his soul. He was awakened one night that I was preaching in **Cruden**, more than a year ago. Since that time my soul has been on the outlook for him. May the Holy Spirit perfect in him the work that has been begun, and make him a chosen vessel and a useful labourer in the vineyard."

"This week the Lord directed a soul to me who was seeking Jesus. A happy sight indeed! I pointed her to the blood, and she was enabled, I think, by faith, to lay hold on Jesus, and, like the publican of old, went down to her house justified."

Mr. Turner was very far, however, from taking credit to himself for any success that attended his labours. He always considered himself as a mere instrument in the hand of God, and he often wondered how God should make use of him, while many, far more likely to be useful on account of their superior talents and training, were not so highly honoured.

But, we believe, the explanation of this is not difficult. We have seen how full of zeal he was in his master's cause. We have seen the fervency of his prayers, and the strength of his faith. In the moments of his closest communion with his Heavenly Father, he always "put in a word," on behalf of the multitudes that were perishing for lack of knowledge, and prayed that God would make *him* the instrument of bringing many of them to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Nor was the success of

his prayers hindered by the presence of *unbelief* so common even in the best of God's children, and which may be said, in one sense, to stay the Lord's hand from working. Matt. 13v58. On the contrary, there was nothing that he more firmly believed in than that God *would* crown his efforts with a measure of success, and give him souls for his labour. Do we really believe then, that God is the hearer and answerer of prayer, and that what He has promised he is both able and willing to perform? Do we believe Him when he says, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark 11v24. "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive." Matt. 21v22. If we really believed in the truth of these promises, we would cease to wonder at the power which often accompanied Mr. Turner's earnest words, but would rather be surprised if an unusual measure of success had not attended his labours.

But, like every true disciple in the school of Christ, the more he saw of the blessing of God accompanying his labour of love, the more did the beautiful grace of humility manifest itself in his life and conversation. Not only did he feel himself undeserving of the honour of labouring in the cause of God; but he always wondered at the riches of that grace which had revealed a precious Saviour unto an unworthy sinner like him, while the mass of the people around him were living without God, ignorant alike of their danger as sinners, and their need of Him who came to seek and to save the lost.

On this subject we meet with the following pointed reflections, under date June 24—

“What unceasing thankfulness I have to my great Saviour, in that He has condescended to reveal Himself to the like of me. Were I learned, or rich, or of the honourable ones of the earth, it might not be so wonderful, but I am none of these. I think I am the lowest down of all God's children—less than the least of all saints. But this is like God's way of working — to cleanse the vile and the filthy, and then use them for His own glory. This, at least, is the way he has done with unworthy me. But when I look around me and see how few of the rich or the honourable either know or fear God, it makes me content with my lot, yea even thankful that it has been ordered, for, if I know my own heart, I would ten thousand times rather be in the hovels of the very poorest seeking to bring souls to Christ, than sit down at the rich dining table, or in the fashionable drawing-room, where it might be considered a breach of good breeding to mention the precious name of Jesus.”

CHAPTER IV.

The Inner Life—A Solemn Dedication—Times of Trial—Peace Found in the Blood—The Watch Night—The Opening Year—An Anxious Soul sought out—Severe Illness—Visit to Strichen—Return to Peterhead—More Fruit—His Father's Conversion—Visits Dundee, Perth, and Aberdeen—Full Assurance.

IT will now be interesting to look for a little at Mr. Turner's private experience, as he has recorded it, after the important event which he used to call his "second baptism" described at the commencement of the previous chapter. It will still be found to have its lights and shadows like that of most Christians, but its prevailing feature was a calm and peaceful assurance that all was well with his soul. Indeed such a thing as a doubt on this point seems never after to have given him much trouble. The felt assurance of the love of God was too strong a principle within him for the enemy effectually to remove it, and, although it was frequently attempted, the dark thoughts suggested were not of long duration, but soon gave place to the calm serenity that usually pervaded his soul.

It has already been stated that Mr. Turner observed the anniversary of his conversion as a day on which he took the Lord anew to be his God, and gave himself again to Him in a perpetual covenant. On the first return of that day after the solemn event referred to, we find recorded a renewal of this covenant engagement, which, for intense earnest, and close personal dealing with God, we consider to be very remarkable.

May 1, 1854,—"A day, the return of which is ever sweet to my soul. It is fourteen years this day since I was enabled to give my heart to Jesus, and, Lord, thou knowest that I have never repented doing so. I now do so afresh, and I take all that is in this shop to witness. I take the sun that is shining in at my shop window, the pen with which I am writing, and the page that I am writing upon, all to witness that I give my soul, body, and spirit, this day, a living sacrifice unto God. Take me, O my God! as I am, and use me for Thy glory as Thou pleasest. I give Thee my time, I give Thee my talents, and if I had money Thou shouldst have *it* also, but I have none. And now that I give Thee all, Thou wilt give me Thy grace in return. To-day I make this holy bargain with Thee, my dear Saviour, and sign myself over to thee—*James Turner*—a filthy sinner washed in Thy blood, and now being sanctified by Thy Holy Spirit. And, Jesus, be pleased to take into the bargain the members of the two classes Thou hast given me to lead, and do for every one of them as Thou hast done for me. I feel that I am permitted to add Thy part of this solemn contract— I, *Jesus Christ*, the Son of the living God, do take James Turner at his word, and promise to give him strength according to his need, and that I will withhold no good thing from him so long as he is faithful to my grace."

This solemn covenant was afterwards renewed on the occasion of his sitting down at the Lord's Table. He writes—

"This is a time of God's love to my soul. My Jesus is leading me softly home. On Sabbath last I sat down at the table of the Lord, and it was a time of special blessing. Satan was shut out and I was alone with God. I gave myself anew to my heavenly Father at his table, and, there, my engagement to be the Lord's was ratified and sealed. I enjoy the peace of God which passeth all understanding. My soul followeth hard after God. But it is necessary that I do so, for I feel that Satan is following hard after me."

How frequently does the Christian encounter the fiery darts of the enemy immediately after seasons of the special manifestation of God's presence! The messenger of Satan is permitted to buffet the soul lest it should be exalted above measure. But, whether enjoying the light of God's countenance, or groping in fear and darkness, the child of God is equally, in the hand of his Heavenly Father, the object of His unchanging love, and the dark dispensation may have as much to do with the perfecting of the saint as the moments wherein he is most sensible of enjoying the light of God's reconciled countenance.

Whether Mr. Turner saw such a dark cloud approaching when he expressed himself to the effect that Satan was following hard after him, or whether he suspected, merely, that he would have an encounter with the enemy after a time of such sweet enjoyment to his soul, we do not know, but, immediately on the back of this season of communion, he entered on a time of severe trial and conflict, during which, he says, he was "more hardly pressed by Satan than he was in all his life before."

October (1854), he writes— "For two or three days back I have been sorely tried by Satan with something that I cannot write nor tell - I suppose God's people encounter such temptations occasionally, but perhaps not, I may be singular in this respect. I feel that it requires all my care and watchfulness to keep on the narrow way, but, by God's grace, I shall hold on, and have the victory at last."

It seems however, that this was but the precursor of other seasons of trial of a more terrible description, one of which he describes in the following terms. "Last night I had another call from Satan. It was truly an hour of the power of darkness. The enemy even went so far as to suggest self-destruction; and I thought it would be necessary for me to rise from my bed at once and put any instrument, with which I might be tempted to take away my life, out of the way; but, after a while, I began to feel a ray of comfort. What a mercy it is that these storms from hell do not last long!"

It may seem very strange to some, how a man like Mr. Turner, whose conversion to God, more than fourteen years previously, was so clear to himself, that he never entertained a doubt about it, and who, usually, enjoyed so much inward peace, should be harassed with such dark thoughts as the above, but we are strongly inclined to think they must have proceeded from physical causes. The state of the body has a very great influence on the state of the mind, and nothing will more readily induce seasons of mental despondency, than a physical system worn out and exhausted by incessant and unremitting exertions. That his weakly frame was often completely prostrated from fatigue, arising from his abundant labours for the salvation of souls, is quite clear from the following remarks, which occur almost simultaneously with his account of these times of trial.

"My body is completely worn out seeking to bring souls to the Saviour. Some people tell me that I am taking away my own life, but I am only devoting it to the God who gave it."

And again, "For the last few days I have been far from well, but
"The rougher the way, The shorter my stay,"
and this is not the Christian's home. My body must come down, and it feels this night as if it would not last much longer."

But from whatever quarter temptations come upon God's children, He who knows what strong temptations are is not an unconcerned spectator. In all their afflictions He is afflicted, and He will not suffer His members to be tempted beyond what they are able to bear, or rather beyond what He himself will give them strength to endure. In mercy He rebukes the storm that rages within, so that there is a great calm, and, although weeping may have endured for a night, joy cometh in the morning.

It was thus that the Lord interfered in behalf of his troubled and downcast servant. The clouds and darkness in which he was for a time enveloped were at length dispelled and the Sun of Righteousness again arose on him with healing in His beams. He thus indicates the happy change he experienced.

Dec. (1854.), "This has been a day of peace to my soul. Satan does all he can to rob me of this peace, but by the grace of God he shall not succeed. I have no particular feeling of soul, but thanks be to God for a calm and peaceful frame of mind. It is in the blood that I find it — that precious blood which has cleansed me from all sin. It takes away *all*, or it takes away none"

A few days later, "What a mercy it is that I have still a faith's hold of my Jesus. He is my joy, my crown, and my soul's everlasting portion. I have little in this world, but I would not exchange fortunes with the wealthiest worldling."

As he advances, we find he soon attains to that peaceful assurance of faith which was the prevailing feature of his experience. "This has been a sweet day to my soul. I feel happy in the thought that I am getting nearer home every day of my life. Jesus is close to my soul. By and bye I shall see Him as He is. Saviour, make me like Thee.",

The year 1854 now drew to a close, and the remarks which Mr Turner has made on looking back upon it, show that the work he had been enabled to do for God, notwithstanding his ill health and other hindrances, had still continued to increase. He conducted numerous stated meetings for religious exercises, both in **Peterhead** and the district round about. Almost every night he had some engagement of this nature, and, even in the depth of winter, amid darkness and rain, he would frequently have to travel several miles into the country to conduct or take part in such a meeting, and walk back again the same night, weary and exhausted in body, but strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. On such errands of love, he says, "God has enabled me to travel about a thousand miles this year."

On the last night of the year an interesting incident occurred, which shows the peculiar tact which Mr. Turner possessed for securing attention to divine things, and bringing good out of the most unlikely circumstances. He and some others were sitting in a friend's house previous to their going to the watch-night service in the chapel, and, among the company, were three strangers, the master of a brig then lying in the harbour of **Peterhead**, and two of his crew. A dispute arose between the two seamen about something that had taken place on board the vessel, and, as each of them began to manifest a considerable degree of warmth in the discussion. Mr. Turner abruptly rose up and said, "Well, friends, I think we will settle this matter best on our knees." No sooner had he said this than he accordingly knelt down, and the rest followed his example. He prayed with great liberty and fervour for all present, and such a deep impression was made on the heart of at least one of the disputants as is believed to have resulted in a saving change.

The reader will have seen, ere this time, that there were two things in particular that Mr. Turner constantly desired, and without which it seemed as if he could not be happy—the one was growth in holiness — the other, that he might be the means of saving many souls, and so strong was the latter desire, that it might have, more properly, been termed a passion. At the commencement of 1855, he has noted down a few brief sentences which bring out the truth of these remarks very prominently,—

“January, 1855, the first day of the New Year, I give myself to God, to live or die, to spend or be spent for His glory. My earnest prayer is that He would make me more holy in heart and life. O that this might be the best year I have yet seen! By the grace of God, I shall have less sin than in any former year, and walk more closely with Him than I have done hitherto. Lord, make this a year of saving souls! Thou knowest that I am willing to go into every hovel or den in this town to seek souls for Thee. Not only am I willing, but it is my meat and my drink to do so. I bless God this day for His great goodness to me when engaged in visiting the homes of the poor, for, although I have been amongst filth, and come in contact with sickness and disease in almost every form, both by day and night, I have not had so much as a pain in my head that I could say arose from infection. Let men say what they will, but I have no doubt this is due to the protecting care of that God whom I seek to serve. Holy Father, I will glorify Thee! I will serve and follow Thee! I love Thee because thou hast first loved me. O my Saviour, show me what I can do for Thee!”

After this date the information furnished by Mr. Turner's own pen in the form of Memoranda regarding his life and labours is far more scanty, for, although he still continued the practice of making occasional notes, it was now only at intervals of several months that he did so; the whole that he has written for the five years from January, 1855, to December, 1859, (after which he has added nothing further), being contained in a few pages of a little book. These remarks are sufficient, however, to show that, during these years he had not relaxed his efforts for the good of souls.

In the early part of 1855 he happened to hear of an aged person who lived about seven miles out of **Peterhead**, and who was said to be in great distress about her soul. Mr. Turner had not a very distinct idea as to the particular house in which she lived, but, as soon as his shop was closed in the evening, he started on this seven miles journey, determined, if possible, to find her out. After some searching and enquiry he at length met with her, and found that she was indeed anxiously enquiring what she must do to be saved, and was much troubled with doubts as to the willingness of Christ to receive and forgive an old sinner like her. He, of course, pointed her to the cross of Christ, dwelt on the efficacy of His blood to cleanse from sin, and His willingness to save even the chief of sinners. After being with her for some time, and recommending her to God in prayer, he left her; entertaining, at least, a hope of mercy, and walked back to **Peterhead**.

In the month of May, his usefulness was interrupted for a time by a severe illness, aggravated, if not brought on, by overtasking his bodily strength in the Lord's work. He was advised to proceed to **Aberdeen**, and go into the Infirmary there, which he did, and he remained in that hospital for about a month, when he came out, much better, though still very weak. On account of various circumstances, he was not able to do much for God during the time he was in the Infirmary, but after he came out,

and before he left **Aberdeen**, God made him the instrument of bringing a young man's soul to Christ, who, soon after, became a zealous labourer in the Lord's vineyard.

Being still quite unable to work at his trade on account of the weak state in which his illness had left him, he was invited by a dear friend to go to the Free Manse of **Strichen** for a change of air, with a view to promote the recovery of his strength. While he was residing there he did not allow his weakness to form an excuse for not attempting to do anything for the salvation of precious souls, but, on the contrary, he never missed an opportunity of doing good. It is true he was not able to do much in the way of addressing meetings, but, as he walked abroad, it was his custom to go into houses, here and there, and sit down as if to rest himself. He was never long seated until he introduced the subject that was ever nearest his heart, — that of salvation for sinners through the blood of the Lamb. The Spirit of God, in many cases, accompanied his earnest words with power. Hard hearts were melted under his tender and affectionate appeals, and, it has been said, that, during his brief sojourn in **Strichen** on this occasion, about twenty persons were brought to the knowledge of the truth by his humble efforts, one of whom entered her rest about seven days after she found the Saviour. But so carefully did Mr. Turner watch against being in any measure lifted up, as he saw one soul after another receiving the blessing, that, always on his return to the Manse, he retired to a room by himself, where he fell on his face before the Lord, praying that he might be kept humble, and that, while the Spirit was pleased to bless simple words of truth spoken in much weakness, he, and all others, might give the glory to God only.

After he had in some measure recovered strength, he set out for home, but, on the way, he spent a night at the house of a Christian friend, where the Lord gave him the souls of three of the servants. The following day he arrived in **Peterhead**.

On his arrival, he commenced, once more, to labour for the good of souls in the same way as formerly, and continued to do so in his native town for the next four years and a half, after which he entered on a wider field of usefulness. It might truly be said of him that he was instant in season and out of season, always abounding in the work of the Lord; and his labour was not in vain in the Lord. But our space will not permit us to give any particular account of the numerous instances in which his labours were blessed to souls in **Peterhead** and the surrounding district, from this date (July 1855) up to the end of 1859. We must therefore content ourselves with noticing one or two facts very briefly.

There was a woman who lived in a court that Mr. Turner had occasion to be in once every week, for the purpose of visiting, and praying with an old Christian who was lying on her death-bed. He could not go into this sick person's house but this woman was sure to see him, and she rendered herself very conspicuous by coming after him, and railing at praying people in general, and Mr. Turner in particular. He was much grieved by her conduct, but he bore it all patiently, warning her, however, in the most solemn and faithful manner, that she was doing much more harm to her own soul than she was to him, and that if she did not repent of her wickedness, she would yet find her portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. For some time his words seemed to have no effect, but, he had set his heart on her conversion, and prayed much for her in private. At length, one day, as he warned and entreated her in the most earnest and affectionate manner to think of her poor perishing soul before it was too late, the Lord broke her hard heart, she was melted into tears, and convictions of

sin were wrought in her which soon after led to her conversion. She joined one of Mr. Turner's classes, and became one of the happiest Christians in **Peterhead**.

A few weeks after this, a whole family, consisting of a man and his wife, a son and two daughters, got a blessing to their souls while attending a meeting held by Mr. Turner at some distance from **Peterhead**. Some days afterwards, the man thought he had lost his hold of the Saviour, and fell into great darkness, notwithstanding the efforts of the other members of the family to encourage him. For a long time, he could neither work nor sleep, and scarcely took any food, but lay in bed, groaning in spirit, and refusing to be comforted; and it was not till Mr. Turner saw him again, spoke to him of the great sin of unbelief, and pointed him to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, that he once more found peace in believing.

A man and his wife, who lived in **Peterhead**, were also brought to Christ about this time through Mr. Turner's visits to their house. Formerly the man had led a dissolute life, and had been turned out of a good situation on account of his intemperance.

A similar case also occurred the following year, in which another man and his wife were brought to the knowledge of the truth by the same means. This man had been an infidel for twenty years, but, after his conversion, he became a fellow-labourer with Mr. Turner in the Lord's work, preaching the faith which once he destroyed.

Short entries like the following, without specifying any particulars, occur now and again in his little book.

Nov. 4(1855) "Since I wrote here last, by the grace of God, I have been enabled to travail in birth with other five precious souls. O, to give God the glory!"

Dec. 20 (1856) "Since the beginning of last November, the Lord has given me other four souls. It is all of God."

(Without date) "In one place where I was visiting, a short time ago, a man, 84 years of age, was enabled to lay hold on Jesus by faith. What a merciful God to pardon that old sinner!"

The conversion of his father also took place in 1856, at the advanced age of seventy-six years. The few particulars connected with that event we shall give in Mr. Turner's own words—"For three months before my father's death," he says, "I had more liberty in praying for him than I ever had before. Some time before he left this world, he was enabled to lay his sins on Jesus, after which he never doubted for a moment, although his bodily sufferings were very great. I do not know how it is, but, after his conversion, I loved him with such a love as I had never felt for him formerly, and, at the thought of his being saved, my soul could not be silent. I ran home to tell my wife, and, as I hurried up the street, I could not help crying out 'Glory to a good Saviour!' almost at the top of my voice."

Towards the end of the same year, he visited **Dundee** and **Perth** in connection with the Lord's work, and met with a measure of success. He also addressed some meetings in **Aberdeen** as he passed through, but he visited that town again in the spring of 1857, where he spent four days in the same work, and, as the fruit of his labours, fourteen souls professed to find Christ. In Aberdeen, as in other places, he met with some who were inclined to scoff at his earnest labours for the good of souls, but Mr.

Turner was ever ready with such an answer as completely turned aside the shaft that was aimed at him. In visiting from house to house with tracts, one man said, "What an idle life for a strong-looking man like you to be going about with tracts this way — how many souls have you converted now?"

"I never converted any," was Mr. Turner's prompt reply, "I never tried; but I have a Master who can, and He wants you."

On another occasion, after addressing a meeting, a person made up to him and objected strongly to the manner in which he urged his hearers to an immediate acceptance of a freely offered Saviour.

"It is all nonsense" said the individual in question, "to tell people that they can be converted in a moment, or before they leave their seats, when it is clear from God's Word that many things must be done before we can truly be forgiven," and he went on to enumerate several of these preparatory steps, one after another.

"Ah," said Mr. Turner, when the man had done speaking. "If I were to take your advice, I might be dead and in hell long enough before I got through all these duties." Of course, such an answer as this met with no satisfactory reply, and the individual immediately retired, having discovered, no doubt, that Mr. Turner was not the weak-minded enthusiast he had taken him to be. It was by these labours in different parts of the country, and by coming in contact with men of every stamp, that in one sense he was prepared and fitted for that wider field of usefulness on which he was shortly after, in the providence of God, called to enter, and in which so large a harvest of souls was gathered in.

But amid all his labours for others, his own soul was not neglected. Perhaps at no period of his life did he enjoy a more settled peace, or a more comforting conviction that all was well with his soul. The notes he has made after this date, in regard to his own experience, are few, and exceedingly brief, but they are sufficient to show that the calmness of assurance reigned within.

Dec. 20, 1856. "My soul is at peace with God and man. Jesus is all my hope. He calls a worm his friend. He calls Himself my God. He will guide me to my journey's end."

March 14, 1857.—"For some time back, I may say my soul has been going full sail towards the haven of rest. Glory be to God, I can say Christ is in my heart, and the world beneath my feet. I have not only the promises, but I have the Promiser Himself, and what more can I desire?"

The last words he has written in his little book, as to the state of his own soul, are "All is well, my soul is in Jesus. Nothing shall separate me from His everlasting love."

CHAPTER V.

Labours in the Coast Towns—The Way opened up— St. Combs —Inverallochy and Cairnbulg—Broadsea—Fraserburgh—Portknockie and Cullen—Findochty.—Portessie—Buckie—Portgordon.

WE are now to enter upon the consideration of by far the most important part of Mr. Turner's life. It is true, he had already been blessed in no ordinary measure in his earnest endeavours to bring souls to the Saviour, but the fruit he had as yet been permitted to see was but as the day of small things, compared with the great success with which it pleased the Lord to crown his evangelistic labours, in the towns on the east and west coast, which, in the providence of God, he was now led to visit. It will be interesting to the reader to know how this was brought about.

For some years previous to this time, he and his brother were in partnership; and they did a considerable business in the curing of herrings. These who are acquainted with this business, are aware that the busy season is during the summer and autumn months, while in winter, the chief employment is in the making of barrels, so as to be ready against the next fishing season.

The herring fishing of 1859, having been very deficient at **Peterhead**, the Turners lost the greater part of the money they had previously made at their business, and moreover, as they had still a large number of their barrels left on hand at the end of the season, they found themselves with the prospect of having little or nothing to do throughout the winter. God had occasion for Mr. Turner's services in a higher and nobler field of labour, He had better things in store for him than temporal prosperity or worldly wealth, and, by this dispensation of His providence, He opened up a door of usefulness for him, which, if success in business had been continued, might have remained closed for ever. Indeed, this very thought had been previously impressed upon Mr. Turner's mind. More than one friend who knew and valued his gifts, had repeatedly said that the Lord had something better for him to do than the making of barrels, and one of them pointed to the want of success in the fishing as an indication that such were the leadings of Providence. He was thus led to consider the subject more attentively, and, having now plenty of time on his hand, was convinced that the opportunity for Christian usefulness which thus presented itself was one that should not be lost sight of. As he had long felt a great interest in the fishing population of the towns along the coast, from coming frequently in contact with them in connection with his business, he had now a great desire to visit some of these towns with the view of seeking the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants. Having consulted with his brother on the subject, he cordially concurred in the proposal, and it was arranged that Mr. Turner should proceed on his intended mission as soon as possible, after making such arrangements as would admit of his being absent for some time, if that should appear advisable.

After earnest prayer for the divine blessing, and committing his way to God, he started on his errand of love, and passing through the parishes of **St. Fergus**, **Crimond**, and **Lonmay**, distributing the "British Messenger," addressing meetings, and speaking to all he came in contact with about their souls, he entered the first town on the coast, called **St. Combs**, on the 6th December, 1859.

St. Combs is situated about twelve miles north-west from **Peterhead**, and contains nearly a hundred families. On his arrival, he went through the houses intimating a

meeting in the evening, and, at the time appointed, about three hundred had assembled to hear. Much interest was manifested by all who were present, and the meeting was protracted to a pretty late hour. The next day, he went from house to house from morning till the same hour again in the evening, speaking to all individually about the concerns of their soul, and at the hour of meeting, about four hundred had assembled in the same place. This second meeting was kept up till morning, and the interest shown by the people continued to increase.

There is a little place called **Charlestown**, situated close by the village of **St. Combs**, and Mr. Turner now embraced it also in his visitations throughout the day, and invited the families to come to the evening meetings. This increased his hearers to about five hundred. For ten days and nights in succession did he labour in these two places with increasing success. From four to five hundred individuals, composed of young and old of both sexes, some of whom had formerly been drunkards and fighting men, were bowed down under strong convictions of sin. Both villages were filled with mourners; and from the place of meeting,—from the private dwelling, and even from the people on the street, cries for mercy were heard on every hand. Nor was this mere temporary excitement, for the lasting fruits of a genuine work of God's spirit in the hearts of many remain to the present day.

About a mile and a half further north, are two villages called **Inverallochy** and **Cairnbulg**, containing together a population of from fifteen hundred to two thousand. Reports of Mr. Turner's proceedings in **St. Combs** soon reached those places, and many of them pressed him to come and hold similar meetings among them. As soon as he could leave the former place, he complied with this request, and having procured a place of meeting capable of containing about four hundred, he commenced to labour in precisely the same way as he had done in **St. Combs**, and with similar success. After this he visited the fishing village of Broadsea, in the same way, and wherever he went, more or less of the Spirit's power accompanied his preaching, and souls were saved. The following is an extract from a letter he addressed to his wife and brother, when he was in **Cairnbulg**, giving some account of the work.

"I am just about to leave this place for **Broadsea**. The work of the Lord is progressing, both here and at **St. Combs**, more than ever. The place where I preach is too small, and the dear people are coming up an hour and a half before the time to make sure of getting a seat. Numbers come to me daily, under deep concern about their own souls, or about the souls of those who are dear to them, and I think many have been enabled to give up all for Jesus — even drunkards are giving up their besetting sin, and coming to Christ and if the work goes on, the whisky shops will soon be without any customers. O do pray for us! I am depending on the prayers, both of you and the other dear friends whose names I mentioned. You know them who have power with God. Send this letter to Mr. _____ that he also may know how to pray. Jesus bless you all is my heart's desire and prayer."

After leaving **Broadsea**, he visited **Fraserburgh**, **Pittullie**, and **Rosehearty**, which occupied another week, and about the end of December, being quite worn out by his incessant labours, he retired to **Peterhead** for a short time to recruit his strength. Towards the end of January, 1860, he again left on a similar mission, and we first hear of him at **Portknockie**, a village on the north coast of Banffshire, about a mile and a half from **Cullen**, with about thirteen hundred of a population.

On his arrival there, having told his name and his errand, he requested that he might have the use of the Town Hall for the purpose of preaching to the people, which, after some enquiries as to his character and religious views, was granted. A meeting was immediately called by hand bell, and in a very short time, the hall was filled in every part with a large number of men and women, waiting to hear the glad tidings of salvation from his lips. Before Mr. Turner had finished his first prayer, it was quite clear to some of his hearers that the stranger who had come among them, was a man of no ordinary earnestness and power. He delivered two short addresses that evening, and between these there were some exercises of prayer by others in the meeting. A very deep impression was made on the minds of all present, as he dwelt on the solemn realities of death, judgment, and eternity, but, beyond this, nothing more was observable at the first meeting.

After this meeting broke up pretty late in the evening, he proposed to walk to **Cullen** to sleep, but the night being stormy, he was urged to stay at **Portknockie**, and was told that there was an inn, or public house, at which he could be accommodated. To this Mr. Turner replied that, when the Master appeared, there was no room for him in the inn, and that he would far rather walk to **Cullen** than put up at a public house. On hearing this, a friend came forward and asked him to go home with him for the night, which Mr. Turner did, and when he got to the house, several of the people gathered in, and the night was spent in prayer to God, that He would pour out His Spirit upon the village. Next day was spent in visiting, and in the evening, another crowded meeting was held in the Hall, but as yet, no cases of spiritual concern were visible.

The first tokens of the Spirit's presence occurred on the evening of the 7th of February. It appears that several young men, who were beginning earnestly to enquire how they, might be saved had assembled, of their own accord, with the view of having some conversation with Mr. Turner, and, as he was engaged in speaking to and praying with them, the Spirit came down upon them with such power as had never been seen in that place before. As this was one of the first instances of what have been called "striking down," which was a not unfrequent accompaniment of Mr. Turner's preaching, and in regard to which so much has been said by those who wish to throw discredit on the revival of religion brought about by his labours, we give the particulars regarding it as related by one who was present, a man of a strong mind, and correct judgment, and, we should say, very unlikely to be deceived in the opinion he would form as to the reality of this work of God. He states that as he and some others were sitting by the fire in his own house, a person rushed in, and in a very agitated manner, asked him to run to the house where Mr. Turner had his Enquirer's Meeting, as they were falling down on the floor, and, in fact, appeared to be dead or dying.

"I hastened to the house," he says, "as fast as possible, not knowing what had happened, and found, to my surprise, that there was not one in the house but Mr. Turner himself, who was not either completely prostrate, or so much overcome as to be unable to leave the room, or rise from their seats. I, of course, looked towards Mr. Turner, and asked what was the matter. He replied, with great coolness and composure, that it was the Spirit of God that had come down in answer to the supplications of His children, and asked me to engage in prayer for those under conviction, that soon they might be enabled to lay their sins on Jesus, and find peace in the Blood. After I had prayed, I left the room and went straight to my own house, where I earnestly implored the divine guidance in this matter, that if what I had just

seen was of God, I might be enabled to fall in with it but, if it was not of God, that I might at once reject it, and give it no countenance."

Very soon there was no doubt whatever left on this man's mind that it was indeed the Holy Spirit who was working by means of Mr. Turner, and surely he had good grounds for coming to this conclusion, when a short time afterwards, it was his privilege to see not a few with whom he was acquainted, including some of the members of his own family, brought to the saving knowledge of the truth before Mr. Turner left **Portknockie**.

On his return to the meeting, he was followed by a young man who was inquiring for a relative who was with Mr. Turner, and, when this young man entered the house and saw one of his companions on the floor in a profuse perspiration, he, too, was brought under strong convictions of sin, and, after a severe struggle, was enabled to give up all for Christ. After a similar conflict on the part of the others, in some cases of longer and in others of shorter duration, they too found peace, after which their joy in God as their Heavenly Father was as remarkable as had been the strength of their convictions. Their hearts overflowed with love to God and man. They went from house to house throughout the village, and to all their friends, declaring what great things God had done for their souls, praying in every house, and entreating all to taste and see that God was good — to come to that Saviour who had now become so precious to them.

It will readily be believed that such a proceeding would at once draw the attention of the whole town to the subject of religion. Nothing was now talked of but the revival that had broken out among them. Meetings were held in the Hall every day, which were sometimes kept up the greater part of the night also. Several young men, who professed to have found Christ related at these meetings what God had done for them, and many experienced bodily prostrations under a sense of sin, similar to the cases we have already adverted to. These meetings were continued, in the same way, for some weeks after Mr. Turner had left the village, and large numbers professed to obtain salvation.

Of course, where such a mixed multitude of people were concerned, it is but reasonable to suppose that not a few would be carried off merely by the excitement that prevailed on every side, and who, as soon as the surrounding influences were withdrawn, would return again to the world. The goodness of such would be but "like the morning cloud or the early dew that passeth away," but it is impossible, even for the most incredulous, to deny that a great amount of permanent good has resulted from Mr. Turner's visit to **Portknockie**, the full extent of which the day alone will declare. It was surely doing something towards the moral improvement of the village, to form a Total Abstinence Society, where such a thing never existed before, and to induce upwards of eight hundred to sign the pledge. This Mr. Turner did. And with regard to the spiritual privileges he conferred on this and other adjacent towns, it is, perhaps, not going too far to say, that the doctrines of grace were not generally known there till his visit, and that he will live in the memory of the following generation as the chief exponent of the glorious doctrine of Justification by Faith in Christ Jesus. The contrast of the state of religion now with the past is striking, the happy issue being very much traceable to the movement as begun by Mr. Turner, who still dwells in the minds of the Lord's people in that quarter, as one of the holiest and most devoted men that has appeared in their midst.

When on this subject, we may state the opinion of Mr. Turner's Christian character, formed by one who came much in contact with him in connection with his work in **Portknockie**, and also his views on some points of divine truth, which the same individual had frequent and ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with. He, in common with others, bears testimony to the fact that Mr. Turner was one of the most spiritual-minded men he had ever met. Few men maintained a closer walk with God, or lived more habitually under a sense of the divine presence than he did. He was a man of strong faith and simple trust in God. He was fully convinced of the fruitlessness of any human agency apart from the power of God's Spirit, but was led, at the same time, to believe in the fulfilment of the promise, "Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world," and to this simple faith in God, we believe, the success of his preaching is mainly to be attributed. It is worthwhile also to mention that, although Mr. Turner attached himself to the Wesleyan Church, no sectarian spirit ever characterised his labours in the cause of God: his sole object being to bring men to Christ, and not to any particular denomination of Christians. He would often exhort converts to watch against anything like party spirit in meeting together.

"If the enemy," he would say, "cannot hinder the work of God in any other way, he will try to sow dissensions and party spirit among those who have been brought in, and, if he succeeds in this, then, even the children of God will be made to do the devil's work unknown to themselves."

We believe that any supposed peculiarity in Mr. Turner's religious views is explained by the fact, that, being assured of his acceptance with God through the obedience and death of Christ, he rose to a fuller realisation than most Christians of the privileges which really belong to the children of God.

"He believed," says the person before referred to, "that the salvation which he preached was a *present salvation*, and not something to be received by men at death — that the moment a sinner believed, he was pardoned through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the power and love of sin was destroyed in the believer, and the love of holiness implanted by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, given as the earnest of the future inheritance."

Some have alleged that Mr. Turner laid claim to sinless perfection, and have, on that account, viewed himself as a fanatic, and his work with suspicion; but his views on this point are capable of the same explanation. They were simply these—that he was *complete in Christ*, and that, in virtue of his union with Him, he became, as he himself used to express it, "holy in principle though not in degree," a truth, as it appears to us, enunciated by the apostle in the striking words, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not." (1 John 5v18.)

During the time that Mr. Turner laboured in **Portknockie**, he went on several occasions to **Cullen**, and at this, and other times held a good many meetings there. In **Cullen**, the excitement produced was not nearly so great as in some other places, but many are of opinion that the amount of real and permanent good done was more than in **Portknockie**. With very few exceptions, those who gave anything like satisfactory evidence of conversion have remained steadfast, and two or three of these are now studying for the work of the ministry.

The next town visited by Mr. Turner was **Findochty**, about a mile and a half from **Portknockie**, containing about 700 inhabitants. Here also a very remarkable movement took place, of which some interesting details have been furnished.

It was on the 3d of February (1860), that Mr. Turner paid his first visit to **Findochty**, and the same night he addressed a full meeting in the Hall there; but little or no impression seemed to be made. He had a meeting also next night, but still there was very little appearance of any movement. On Sabbath the 5th, he preached in the Free Church in the afternoon, but left for **Portknockie** in the evening to fulfil a previous engagement. On Monday night he returned to Findochty, and gave a very arousing address to a large audience, at the termination of which, he called upon two of the brethren to engage in prayer, which they did. Before dismissing this meeting, Mr. Turner intimated that, immediately after they separated, there would be a meeting in a house at the east end of the village, for the purpose of conversing with any who might be enquiring after salvation, and giving them such counsel and direction as they might require. Before he got to the house indicated, it was filled, and the power of God was very manifest in that little meeting. A good many of those who were present, it is believed, were brought to Christ, and still show, by their walk and conversation, that what they experienced was no transient emotion, but the regenerating work of God's Spirit. These converts were of great service in the meetings afterwards held.

Next morning, a solemn awe seemed to pervade the village, and there was evidently something working with the whole community that they could not account for. Without the least notice of a meeting being given, the people, old and young assembled in the Hall, at Ten o'clock, a.m., and filled the place to such an extent, that some apprehension lest it should fall was produced. To this meeting, Mr. Turner came, and was just opening the proceedings with prayer, when an agonizing cry of distress that could no longer be restrained, was heard from a soul labouring under strong convictions of sin. In a few minutes the whole assembly were praying and crying for mercy. The place became a Bochim, and tears of penitential sorrow trickled down the cheeks of scores of people. Some in great distress of soul were crying, "What must I do to be saved?" Some with joy beaming in their countenances were praising God for their deliverance, and others were pleading for their unconverted relatives. This scene continued for four hours, and from this meeting of Tuesday, the 7th of February, 1860, which will not soon be forgotten, a great number of the inhabitants of **Findochty** date their conversion. During these four hours, Mr. Turner was going from seat to seat, speaking with anxious souls, and pointing them to the Saviour.

It will be observed here that nothing had been said or done by him on this occasion calculated to produce any degree of excitement, for, as we remarked, he was but opening the meeting with prayer, and had only uttered a very few words, when great numbers were suddenly convinced of sin, and led to cry for mercy. It would, therefore, seem difficult to assign any cause for these extraordinary manifestations other than the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in answer to earnest and believing prayer.

This meeting adjourned at two o'clock in the afternoon, to meet again in the evening. During the interval, a deep solemnity pervaded the whole village, and, perhaps, there was not a single individual in it but manifested tokens of concern. The first thing done after the dismissal of the morning meeting just referred to, was to hold small private meetings in different houses throughout the town. Any person entering the village at

that time, would have heard the sound of prayer coming from one house, hymns of praise from another, and the cry of some sin-burdened soul from a third, while, before getting through the town, he would have heard the same sounds repeated again and again.

During this time Mr. Turner was not idle. When on his way from the meeting, he met with a woman who appeared to be in distress, and asked her if *she* had found the Saviour.

"O no," she replied - in great sorrow, "Many have found him but I am left!" Although the ground was covered with snow at the time, he immediately knelt down with the woman on the road, and, as he was thus engaged in praying for her, she started to her feet exclaiming,

"I have found Him! Victory, victory through the blood of the Lamb!"

He was then going on his way, but she detained him, saying,

"Oh you must not go yet, for my husband is in the house, which is not far away, and you must come and pray with him, for he is in as great distress as I was!"

Mr. Turner accordingly went with her, and, on entering the house, he found the woman's husband, and some other men along with him, all under great concern about their souls. He directed them to the cross of Christ, where alone pardon and peace can be found, and, after praying with them, he left them, all rejoicing in a newly found Saviour. When he had arrived at the house where he was staying, many came to speak with him about their souls, and he was employed in pointing anxious enquirers to the Saviour for some time, but, in the afternoon, he went to **Portknockie**.

Notwithstanding his absence, however, the meeting was held at night, and the power of God was again manifested in a very striking manner.

Mr. Turner came back next evening, and although he had laboured the whole of the night before, and that day, in **Portknockie**, he addressed a meeting with great earnestness. This meeting was attended with even a greater manifestation of the power of God than any of the former meetings.

One who was present says, "I shall never forget it. The piercing cries of sin-burdened souls, and the awful struggles that they underwent before finding relief, were most extraordinary. But how they did sing when emancipated! The singing seemed heavenly. The scene was delightful and painful alternately."

This was continued till next morning, and a great number of souls were brought to Christ. Many objections have been stated to protracted services, but it would have been a difficult matter for any objector to have dismissed that meeting. The people would not leave on any account, and, besides, it would have been cruel to have sent the multitude away, labouring under deep distress of soul as many of them were. For some time Mr. Turner laboured, in this way, night and day, holding meeting after meeting, all of which were crowded to excess. Through his instrumentality, a work of God, such as has rarely taken place anywhere, was brought about in **Findochty**, and in no place that he visited has the work been of a more abiding and permanent nature.

Mr. Turner then went to **Portessie**, about a mile and a half farther west than **Findochty**, where he was very disadvantageously situated with respect to a meeting place, as there was, then, no Hall of any kind there.*

** The Public Hall which now stands on the eminence beside the village of **Portessie**, is a monument to Mr. Turner's memory. Through his labours there, the fishermen were induced to save money (formerly squandered very unnecessarily), for the purpose of erecting a place in which to hold their Prayer Meetings.*

There happened, however, to be a house in the process of erection at the time, with only the walls built and the roof on, but having neither doors nor windows, and this place, some of the friends of the cause got seated with planks in the best way they could. Notwithstanding the stormy weather which then prevailed, and the great exposure of the meeting-place to the cold in its unfinished state, Mr. Turner laboured there during the time he was in **Portessie**. His very first meeting was most remarkably blessed. On his arrival at the meeting place, it was found to be crowded to excess, and a large number were outside unable to get near the door. Many of them, however, opposed the work, and stood out bitterly against it for a time: yet, in some cases, these were among the first to experience the convincing and converting power of God's Spirit. Mr. Turner gave a very stirring address on that first occasion, after which, prayer was offered up by several of the **Findochty** converts, and the Spirit was poured out that night in rich effusion. The meeting presented the same features as characterised the one in Findochty already described, some weeping, and some praying, some bowed down under a weight of guilt, and others were rejoicing in a newly found Saviour.

Mr. Turner held several meetings in **Portessie**, which were attended with similar manifestations of the Spirit's power, and he had many souls given to him there as the fruit of his labours, who, in eternity will be his joy, and crown of rejoicing.

We will now have occasion to give some quotations from Mr. Turner's letters to his friends, giving some account of his movements. Before doing so, we must observe regarding these letters generally, that they were written under very disadvantageous circumstances, chiefly during brief intervals of time, snatched from the work in which he was constantly engaged: very often after the whole day, and sometimes the greater part of the night also, had been spent in incessant labour for the good of souls. We do not mention this as any apology for these letters, they require no apology, for the description contained in them is clear and graphic, but there is a want of detail, and a brevity of expression about them, which, to some, might appear strange, if unaware of the circumstances, in which they were written.

From **Portessie**, Mr. Turner wrote to a friend in **Aberdeen**, in the following terms: "In the strength of the Lord, I have got thus far on my mission. I got to **Cullen** the week before last, where I had one or two meetings, and, I hope, some fruit.

I then went to **Portknockie**, and on the Sabbath evening had a very crowded meeting, when the Holy Spirit came with great power on the people. Strong young men were smitten down, and became weak as water. This continued till the morning was far advanced, and many souls were saved. Glory be to God! I went to bed for three hours — got up again and called a meeting after breakfast, and from three to four hundred met with me. The power of God came on man, woman, and child, as I have no doubt many found the Saviour. The whisky shops were shut up that day. A man who kept a public-house was convinced of sin, and when the power came on him he made a great noise. I told him he could not be saved unless he gave up selling whisky. He cried out 'I give it up!' Then the Lord saved him, and he went home and pulled down his sign. I

formed a Temperance Society, and above eight hundred signed the pledge, including the three whisky sellers.

The next sea-town is called **Findochty**, about two miles from **Portknockie**. The first three meetings nothing particular occurred, but, at the fourth, the Spirit's power was manifested, just as the former town, and the Lord saved many souls. Next morning another meeting of about two hundred was convened, and the power of God was again manifested in a very extraordinary manner. About three hundred met again in the evening, and when I was speaking, a woman cried out for mercy. In a short time, nearly all present were similarly affected. My voice was completely drowned. I never saw such a scene in all my life. It was heartrending to hear the cries of great numbers, who felt that their souls were lost. I question if some of the dear people could have cried louder had they been in hell, but God gave the witness to many souls in that meeting.

The next town is **Portessie**, about two miles from **Findochty**. The first night I spoke in **Portessie**, I think there was much good done. Many souls found the Saviour, and the blessed work is still going on. O, do pray for us all here! I have two places to attack yet, but the Master is to deliver them into my hand.

Tell all the dear people to pray for **Buckie** and **Portgordon**. I fear I will have to rest for a day or two first, till my body gather a little strength. If I am well to get through, I hope to see you on my way home, if the Master wills. My soul feels just like a little child — Christ is all and in all."

The next town on the coast is **Buckie**, only about three quarters of a mile from **Portessie**; the two places containing a population of about three thousand. Mr. Turner's first service in **Buckie**, was held in the Free Church, on Sabbath evening, 12th February, on which occasion, about fifteen hundred were present, and tokens of the Spirit's power were not wanting. The following night he again preached in the same place, which was once more filled to the door. A great degree of excitement prevailed at this second meeting, which was much to be regretted, and which at one time endangered the success of his mission to that town. Some individuals having been stricken down under strong convictions, were carried out in a helpless state, and this raised such a tumult among the multitude assembled, both within and without the building, that all order was immediately, at an end, and Mr. Turner had no longer any control over the audience. It was in vain that he urged them to be calm and allow the Lord's work to go quietly forward. The commotion, once raised, could not be so easily allayed, and the upshot of the matter was, that Mr. Turner had to close the meeting and adjourn to the United Presbyterian Church, which, to the credit of all concerned, was at once thrown open to him, and was soon filled.

He often referred to what happened in the Free Church as a severe trial to his faith, as he was led to doubt whether, after such a scene, God would bless his labours in this town as he had done in other places. Before entering the U.P. Church, he spent a considerable time in prayer to God that his faith might be preserved and strengthened, and that he might not be left to hinder God's Spirit from working because of his unbelief. His prayer was heard. He felt assured that God would give him success in his labour still, and the meeting which was then convened, was blessed in a very remarkable manner. He continued to labour there for some days, along with the minister of the church. They usually addressed the meetings alternately, while at

intervals, some of those present were called on to engage in prayer, and such a work of grace resulted from these services as has seldom been seen among any people.

In one of his letters, Mr. Turner refers to the way in which some of the first cases of prostration in **Buckie** were treated by the medical man and some others who were present. They seemed to think that the whole was to be attributed to the crowded state of the meeting, and the want of proper ventilation, and hastened to remove the individuals into another apartment, and apply such restoratives as are usually administered to persons in a fainting state —

"As if air and water," says Mr. Turner with a touch of humour "could give relief to a troubled soul, or remove the load of guilt that was pressing it down!"

It seems also that some were foolish enough to suppose that he produced these prostrations by the secret use of chloroform, and, when the first cases occurred, numbers rose up hurriedly and left the meeting.

One person, who, for the first day or two, was very suspicious of the whole movement, but who was afterwards brought to see things in a different light, said to Mr. Turner—" Don't you remember that at the conclusion of one of your meetings, some days ago, you came up to shake hands with me, when I drew back and declined to do so?"

"Yes," said he, "I think I do — What was your reason for that?"

"O," she said, "I thought you had chloroform in your handkerchief, and I was afraid to come too near you!"

We have before us two letters which were written from **Buckie** to a gentleman in **Aberdeen**, at the time this movement was going on, a few extracts from which will serve to show the nature of the work there, and the extent to which its influence was felt in that town. The first is dated 15th February, 1860, in which the writer says,

"I think it my duty, on account of our friendship, and the interest that I know you feel in the success of Christ's kingdom, to acquaint you of the existence among us at present of one of the most wonderful works of God I have ever heard of, so much so, that I cannot adequately describe it. This revival has travelled from the East along the fishing villages. I first heard of it being in **Portknockie**, two or three weeks ago. After that, in **Findochty**, and then in **Portessie**, at which latter village it commenced on Thursday, last week, and on Sabbath evening last, in **Buckie**. It has been chiefly lay agency that God has employed to commence and carry on this work, the principal person being one Turner from Peterhead, I think, a fish-curer. This individual preached in the Free Church on Sabbath evening, some fifteen hundred were present, and good was apparently done."

After describing the circumstances connected with the leaving of the Free Church which we have already explained, the writer goes on to say—

"The number of old and young of both sexes, and of persons in middle life, who have been convinced of sin and brought to seek an interest in Christ is very great. Many are struck down, and the greater part cry out for Jesus to come to them with groanings which cannot be described. Hundreds of men and women, and boys and girls, after passing through this conflict have apparently found peace, after which, their faces

almost beam with joy, indicating the peace that they feel within, and they then manifest great concern for the salvation of their friends. The whole work reminds us of the shaking among the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, or the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The people have almost to be forced away from the meetings. It is often two o'clock in the morning, before all the anxious enquirers can be prevailed on to leave, and then only when intimation is made that they will meet again at eleven o'clock. They would remain day and night if allowed, and I believe that a good many who have been here for some days from villages to the east of this, have taken but little food since they came."

The next letter is dated a week later, from which it appears that there was but little indication of this remarkable interest in divine things disappearing—

" The enquiry here has not abated, although the people do not now turn out to the forenoon meetings in so great numbers as at first: of course that could not last, nor could it have been desired, but the evening meetings are still crowded, and there is still good doing. I have tried to judge of this movement as calmly as possible, and one of its most important features is that almost every individual, old and young, has been brought under concern about their soul's everlasting welfare. This can be seen in conversation with everyone in the town whom you come in contact with. There is a peculiar feature also connected with the crowded meetings which have been held that I have frequently been struck with, and that is, when some sinner is brought to see his lost condition in such a light that he is constrained to cry aloud for mercy, his cry is more eloquent than a hundred sermons: for many, feeling that they are in the same condition, are brought to pray aloud also, so that at times, from these meetings has gone up one great cry for mercy from nearly all present, succeeded perhaps by a universal prayer for the Holy Spirit to be poured out. It will, of course, require time to try the genuine nature of much that we have seen, but while I fear many have been but temporarily aroused to religious concern, and will soon lose these impressions, I am at the same time convinced that very many, both old and young, have really been brought to Christ, and will go on trusting in Him."

There can be no doubt that the conviction expressed in the concluding paragraph of the above extract was fully realised. A fisherman in the same town, writing three years afterwards, says,

"Mr. Turner's labours have been blessed among us here to the salvation of many a soul. I can give this testimony for myself, and for my family who are all rejoicing in the love of Jesus Christ. Several who were brought to the truth under his preaching, have carried the good news to other places, and have been greatly blessed. Some souls, who were the fruits of Mr. Turner's labours here, went to glory before him, and many will follow after."

When he had laboured for five or six days in **Buckie**, Mr. Turner went to **Portgordon**, a village about two miles further west, containing about 800 inhabitants, chiefly seafaring people. Before he had held any meeting here, he embraced the opportunity of writing a letter to his wife, which is dated 17th February, 1860, in which he says—

"I have come over to **Portgordon** this forenoon, to make arrangements for a meeting on Saturday night for the first time in this place. I have faith for this town. It is just

like others, when the Master sent me to them. O, pray for **Portgordon**! You will get this letter about nine o'clock on Saturday night and I trust to feel you then. I will be in the work all night, if my body be able to stand it. Pray for that."

The circumstances attending the commencement, of his work in **Portgordon**, were similar to those in other places. He had his first meeting on the evening of 18th February, but there was little indication of any good having been done. He spent the greater part of the next night in prayer, and, in the morning, he stated that he felt assured they would see the power of God manifested in their meeting that evening, and so it turned out, for, although upwards of two hundred had assembled, almost everyone present was completely broken down under a deep sense of sin and brought to cry aloud for mercy, and the same power was present at most of his subsequent meetings. Some of the most hardened sinners in the place were, as on former occasions, among the first to be arrested with agonizing convictions, and obtained no rest until they found it in the application of the cleansing blood of Jesus. It was not long till the news of this gracious work was carried into the surrounding district, and some who came into the town from mere curiosity, if not to scoff at these manifestations of the divine presence, became themselves so deeply affected by a sense of their guilt in the sight of God, that they were scarcely able to return to their homes. One or two farm servants, it is said, were unable to work for some days afterwards, or even to put the harness on their houses.

Shortly after leaving **Portgordon**, he wrote to a friend -

"**Portgordon**, famed for drunkenness, has been brought down. The Lord sent me to it ten days ago, that was on Saturday week. I spoke that night but not a move. It was a hard night's work, and I gave it up at twelve o'clock. I called a meeting next morning at eight o'clock, only a few came, but I carried on the meeting the whole day. At six in the evening, the house filled and many could not get in. The Spirit was largely poured out, and many were smitten down under the mighty power of God. Those who were nearest the door were carried out; others had to lie till they got power to rise. I stayed among them a week, and we had the Spirit's presence the whole time. Country people came down to scoff and to make sport of the work of God, but painful convictions seized upon many of these also, and they would fain have left the meeting but they could not walk. They staggered like people drunk, and had to be helped into the meeting again. Some of them continued all night in this state, and a cart came to take them home. O that they may all find peace in believing!"

One who was present says — "These were the most extraordinary cases of prostration I ever witnessed."

It may be quite true that physical prostrations such as these are extraordinary, but we do not think they need excite our wonder, or that they detract in any measure from the reality of the work with which they are associated. If a man were suddenly and unexpectedly to make the discovery that he was in immediate danger of losing his life by some dire calamity - that in fact he had long been so, but had never suspected such a thing, till the discovery flashed on him in a moment, would it be any wonder, or would it be attributed to weakness, that the appalling discovery should, for a time, so affect him as to take away all presence of mind and strength of body? Certainly it would not. And if a man is led to discover, by the operation of God's Spirit, that his soul is lost, that he is on the brink of that pit of woe, "where their worm dieth not, and

where the fire is not quenched," is it any wonder, that such an one should be similarly and even more powerfully affected? There is but one class of individuals to whom such a thing might appear wonderful, and that is those who have never felt the power of conviction themselves, or met with anything to disturb that state of indifference and carnal security in which all men are by nature. Such will ever be ready to attribute these manifestations to mere natural excitement, and to characterise those men under whose labours they are produced as persons who understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm. But show us a man who has felt the iron enter into his own soul, who like the sin-convicted Jailor of Philippi, has been brought to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?", and he wonders, not that such things should now and again be heard of, but that in saving conversion they are the exception and not the rule. He knows little of the guilt of sin who does not know that it is but a small measure of its infinite evil that is revealed to any anxious soul, and that a farther discovery of it might be altogether overwhelming.

It may be quite true that in cases where many have been stricken down at the same time, and in the same place it may be caused by a sort of sympathetic influence: but cannot God make use of such an influence as a means of promoting his own work as well as any other means. The Psalmist says, "many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the name of the Lord." When sinners see others anxious about their souls, it is to them powerful preaching, and God can bless it to their conviction and conversion. We would do well, however, to guard against supposing that conviction of sin, even although it should go the length of complete prostration, amounts to saving conversion. The future life of many who have been so affected shows that it does not do so; but that such prostrations as we have spoken of, are merely the natural effect that strong mental agony has upon the body.

In bringing this chapter to a close, we may state that there are many facts and circumstances which might have been told, and which would have contributed much to the interest of the narrative, but as the parties concerned are for the most part alive and well-known in the very limited circle in which they move, it has been thought advisable to suppress a number of incidents which appeared to be of a personal nature.

It must be gratifying, however, for those who have read this account of the work, but who are at a distance from the scene, to know that the blessed results of this revival are still very manifest, and that at the present time some of these villages are perhaps in a fully more lively condition as regards the state of religion than they were a year ago. In the beginning of 1863, three years after Mr. Turner laboured there, a deputation from the Evangelistic Association of Scotland visited **Portgordon** and some other towns along the coast, where they addressed crowded meetings every night, and were privileged to see much of the power of God, and to experience themselves something of the refreshing rain that had descended on these places.

Some account of the state of things as observed by this deputation was published in "The Revival," shortly after their visit. They say—

"The people of God will be encouraged to find that the 'latter rain' has been as refreshing as the former, which produced such wonderful changes three years ago, so that places, once noted for uproarious drunkenness and other vices, became as noted for prayer and praise, and attendance on religious duties. It seems from what is and

has taken place in these fishing villages as if Christ was again about to use fishermen to spread abroad the knowledge of the truth, and as if those of our day were to become wonderful instruments of grace and gifts, like those who in former times, at His command, forsook their boats and nets and followed the Saviour. Some of them are well qualified, and have a most wonderful gift of prayer. They seem to know no book but their Bible, and in that not a few are so much at home as to have it ready at all times to meet both the mistaken views of would-be friends and the open assaults of their enemies. The Lord has in a most striking manner accompanied the preaching of the Word and the more private exhortations of many young men for the conversion of souls, and in one instance has signally shown how independent He is of what we call the 'ordinary means,' by using children, and through them awakening a whole village. Many of those who have sown in times past did not reap. Now God has given the increase, and stained all human glory in the work. So be it."

CHAPTER VI.

Visit to Deskford—His Labours in Banff and Macduff—Individual instances of Conversion — The Extent of the work — Fordyce — Portsoy — Grange — Whitehills—Huntly—Return to Peterhead.

Mr. Turner did not go further west than **Portgordon**, but, on leaving it, went by previous invitation to **Deskford**, a parish lying three or four miles inland from **Cullen**. There had been a good work going on in that parish for some months previous to his visit, under the immediate superintendence of the Rev. W. T. Ker, the minister of the Free Church, but the movement was beginning to subside a little before Mr. Turner went there. He had several meetings in **Deskford**, in which he was associated with Mr. Ker. His visit was the means of refreshing and quickening the people of God in that quarter, and it is believed that some souls were brought to the Saviour.

Mr. Ker formed a very high estimate of Mr. Turner's character from what he saw of him, both in public and in private, and, from personal observation, he has given a valuable testimony as to the extent and genuine nature of the revival brought about by his labours in the towns along the coast (*See Appendix.*)

From **Deskford**, Mr. Turner writes, "We have had a good time here. Many have been brought to feel their lost state by nature, and I hope some have been saved. I addressed the scholars of the Free Church School, and I think our meeting was attended with good results. O for the Spirit of God to rest on the people both old and young! The U.P. minister of **Banff** came to see the work, and he has asked me to preach in his church on Monday first. O cry to God for that place! I must say that I feel unwilling to go to large towns, but this feeling may be from the devil, and if so I must try to conquer it. If the Lord had not saved souls in every place where I have been, I do not think I could have gone to **Banff**. There is not a day but I get a letter or a call to go to some place to labour. I will have to go home by and bye to attend to my business, and yet I do not see how I can give up the Master's work for any secular calling. My soul is well — just a little child at the Master's feet. I need great wisdom and the Lord is giving me just as I need. Help me to give Him all the glory!"

Having resolved to visit **Banff**, on leaving **Deskford**, he spent a few days in some of the coast towns in which he had lately been labouring, and thus describes the condition in which matters were.

"I came to **Buckie** and the work was getting quiet. We got up a meeting in the evening, but there did not appear to be much life. Next night we met again, and at first a little stiffness was felt, but soon the blessing came and the cry for mercy was heard. This was on Saturday night, and the meeting was kept up till about three o'clock on Sabbath morning. A great work of God is getting on there.

"I left **Buckie** on the Sabbath and came to **Portknockie**, but I did not find things as I could have wished. The dear people were not going back, but they were not attacking Satan's camp. A meeting was called at four p.m., when about five hundred assembled — I spoke for two hours, and at seven o'clock we met again. The meeting was stiff at first, but that was got over, and the Lord sent the Holy Spirit down. What a night of power! Many cases of prostration and loud cries for mercy. The meeting was kept up

till about five o'clock on Monday morning. In the forenoon, I preached again to the broken in heart, and after getting a little dinner I started for **Banff**".

The cause of God was rather at a low ebb in **Banff** when Mr. Turner went there. A few of the people of God had been stirred up to more 'fervent prayer, and more active exertion by hearing what the Lord had been doing in other places in the neighbourhood, but the great mass, even of the church-going population, were in a very cold and lifeless state. Mr. Turner continued there for a week, during which it may be said that he laboured night and day. Never did that town enjoy such a season of blessing. These were indeed days of the power of the Most High, wherein multitudes were added unto the church of such as shall be saved.

The services began on Monday, 5th March, 1860, in the U.P. Church, of which the Rev. Mr. Baxter is the minister, and it has already been stated that it was at the special request of that gentleman, and with the concurrence of his session, that Mr. Turner was induced to visit the town of **Banff**. The first meeting was held at two o'clock, p.m., when about sixty persons assembled to hear him. He began as was his custom, by singing the hymn, "What's the News?" (see***Appendix ***) but as neither the words nor the tune were at that time familiar to the people, he had to sing it almost alone. This meeting was conducted in the usual way, and another was held at eight o'clock the same evening, at which the attendance was about double that of the former part of the day, although as yet it did not appear to be generally, known, that he had come to **Banff**. There was nothing very observable at this meeting; only that many appeared to be wondering what all this could mean, and when it was intimated that it was intended to hold a succession of such meetings throughout the week, they seemed to think it rather a bold attempt.

By the next day, his presence and the proposed meetings became widely known, and as his proceedings in the villages along the coast had been reported in the local newspapers, and were matter of much speculation, great numbers now flocked to the church — many truly seeking a blessing, but the majority, perhaps from curiosity to see and hear one whom they regarded as a fanatic, and whose services they believed would afford more mirth than profit. It soon became evident, however, from the numbers that were brought to see their lost condition in the sight of God and to seek an interest in Christ, that the instrument he employed was the truth of God, and that the power by which it was applied was that of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven.

The same day he wrote a hurried letter to his wife and brother in **Peterhead**, in which he says — "It is clear we are to have the blessing in **Banff** too. To-day the U.P. Church was filled. Some ministers were present, but above all the Lord of Hosts was there. A good many were convinced of sin. I am going back to the church in half-an-hour, to meet with the broken in heart."

"Wednesday, 7th March.—I did not get my letter finished yesterday, so I can tell you a little more. Last night we met again, when the house was filled with rich and poor. Many were broken down, and a few found peace. I had another meeting today, in a loft, and nearly all present were brought to feel their state. We meet in the church tonight again. O for power with God! Do pray on! Tell Mr Peet, (*at that time Wesleyan Minister in **Peterhead***) to pray, and the names I spoke of before: in short,

all who have faith in God. My body is not strong, but the Lord is holding me up. O may God fill us all more and more with His Spirit for Jesus sake!"

The profound spiritual discernment of which Mr Turner was possessed, was now very apparent in the manner in which he directed anxious souls to God through the peace-speaking blood of Jesus. Enquirers became so numerous, that a meeting for prayer and conversation was opened during the day in addition to the evening meeting, which was nightly crowded to excess; and before the end of the week, the house, which is large, was literally filled with souls agonizing under a sense of unpardoned guilt. As there were only one or two believers, at first, who could or would assist Mr. Turner in guiding the anxious to the Saviour, the meetings were necessarily protracted to a very late hour, and, notwithstanding every effort to meet the most pressing cases, many had nightly to leave the place to pass sleepless nights and sorrowing days, till they either found rest in Christ, or quenched the Spirit and rushed back to the pleasures of the world.

One great hindrance to anxious souls resting on Jesus seemed to be that they did not think their convictions of sin sufficiently deep; but it was a remarkable feature of the movement that, some nights, when a blessed power was resting on the meeting, numbers were enabled simultaneously to lay hold on the Saviour, and went through the meeting telling all that the struggle was now past, and how Jesus had set them free. Thus, although Mr. Turner had few to assist him in the work at the outset, the labourers soon became plentiful, for, as soon as he knew of a soul finding peace, he sent that person through the meeting to search out and direct other seeking souls to the Saviour, and it was in this way that many were early led into the Lord's work, in which not a few of them have ever since continued to labour.

The most memorable evening for the manifestation of the divine power was Saturday the 10th March, when many a heart was opened to receive Christ, and many a mouth to show forth His praise, especially among the young men. The life-giving Spirit, like a cloud of glory, filled the Church, striking every one present with awe, and quickening dead souls to life in and by Jesus. It is believed that there were few anxious souls in the church who did not experience a gracious deliverance on that occasion. Next day being Sabbath, was a solemn day in **Banff**, scarcely one moving out of doors but to the house of God, and many were blessed in their own homes. Several became anxious, and came to the meeting, who had not been attending before, and, on that and the following days, many continued to be added to the band of heaven-bound travellers.

On the following Monday, when the town and district were thus mightily moved, Mr Turner was compelled to leave for another village, where he had engaged to speak. The meetings, however, were continued daily for three weeks longer in the United Presbyterian Church; and the Free Churches of **Banff** and **Macduff** were also opened for special services. During the second week, perhaps, more who were awakened embraced the truth than in the first.

On leaving **Banff** he wrote very briefly to his brother:

"I spent eight days in **Banff**. Oh that proud place! But the Lord has shaken it, and there has been a great movement among rich and poor, young and old. A young man came one night, as he himself confessed, 'to hear that fool Turner and get a little

sport.' On Sabbath night, I had to point him to the Saviour, and he found peace. Many scoffers have been brought to the Master's feet, last week in **Banff**. The last night I was there, the church was not only filled of all classes, but the crowd extended across the street. Truly we can say—'the Lord hath done marvellous things, His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory.'

On Sabbath forenoon I preached in our own Chapel; in the afternoon, in the Free Church, **Macduff**; and, in the evening, in the U.P. Church of **Banff**. We have been compelled to carry on the meetings nearly all night. On Sabbath morning it was daylight before we broke up. It is hard work but sweet work."

During 1860 and 1861, Mr Turner paid several visits to **Banff**, and laboured a great deal there till his health gave way. On these occasions he spoke more especially to the people of God, seeking to stir them up to a greater measure of holiness, and holding up faith in the atoning blood of Jesus as the grand power whereby the soul is purified and made to grow in the likeness of Christ. Repeated cases of conversion also occurred on the occasion of these visits, and many received strength to confess Christ more openly before men, rising up in the meetings and stating how and when they had found the Saviour.

We have recently been made acquainted with the particulars of several very pleasing instances of conversion which took place during this remarkable revival, a few of which we think it proper to introduce here, not so much because they form a valuable testimony to the genuine character of the work, but chiefly because they may be useful in directing to the Saviour any anxious enquirer who may read these pages, by showing him how it was that others were brought to lay the burden of their sins upon Him.

One man says —"Though I am thirty years of age, and have been a communicant for some years, I was dead to vital religion till Mr. Turner came among us. Having heard of the revival that had been brought about by his preaching in the West, I resolved to attend his meetings here, although, before, I never would have thought of going to a prayer meeting. Night after night I returned from these meetings more alive to my lost condition, and I had a strong desire that some Christian would speak to me personally. The fourth night Mr. Turner asked me if I was converted, but I remained silent. He asked me then if I knew the simple Gospel plan of Salvation, and although in deep anxiety and earnestly seeking it, strange to say, I still remained silent. He then quoted that glorious truth, 'God so loved the world, &c' and, by the application of the Spirit, it came into my soul with such a freshness and power, that, then and there, I was enabled to receive the truth in the love of it, and, from that time to the present, I have been enabled through grace to say, God is my Father, Jesus my Saviour, and the Holy Ghost my Comforter."

A young man was walking past the place of meeting, and thought he would just step in for a little to see what was going on. He was at once struck with the intense earnestness of Mr. Turner's manner. On that occasion he was speaking on Felix trembling as Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. "Tremble, tremble, tremble!" said Mr. Turner in his address. "Aye, well might he tremble. Felix was a sinner, and Paul spoke of a judgment bar where he would have to answer for the deeds done in the body. What a reckoning day for him that would be!" These words were carried home with power to the soul of this young man. He stood

trembling on the stairs till he was led by the good Spirit of God to the peace-speaking blood of Jesus. Night after night, for three years afterwards, this same young man conducted meetings in **Banff** and the district around it, when he went to a foreign land, and he has left behind him several who were brought to the truth by his labours.

Another young man says, "I had heard much about Mr. Turner's meetings in the West, and many different opinions were expressed regarding them. As there was such 'a division among the people,' other two young men and myself resolved to visit one of the coast towns on a Sabbath, that we might see the work and judge for ourselves, and the consequence was, that we returned home pricked in our hearts and earnestly seeking salvation. Mr. Turner commenced his meetings in **Banff** next day, and I confidently expected that these meetings would not pass till I had found the Saviour. One night Mr. Turner came quietly behind me, and asked if I was in Jesus, and I said "No". After this I felt a strong desire to call on God for mercy, and stood up in the midst of the congregation to do so, whereupon it was suggested to me, that as there was to be a great revival, those who professed Christ at this particular time would be marked men, and I might bring discredit on the work by going back — that I would have an opportunity, when things had calmed down, of giving myself quietly to God, and then, if I should fall back, it would not be so observable. These suggestions seemed to be reasonable, and I sat down. But then the Holy Spirit said with a voice of power that reached my inmost soul, 'It is the devil who would thus tempt you to lose the present opportunity. He is a liar from the beginning. Seek Christ now and you shall not fall away.' I immediately stood up again and prayed aloud for mercy, never doubting but I should find it. So God blessed me there, and said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace.' It is now three years past since this happy change took place, and I bless God, since that time, I have never lost the witness, that on that solemn occasion I experienced the saving change."

Many equally satisfactory and pleasing cases of the conversion of females also occurred, one or two of which it may not be out of place to mention.

A young woman came into the place of meeting, when the large assembly were singing the well-known words —

"Happy day, Happy day!

When Jesus washed my sins away,"

and seeing by the happy countenances of many present that their hearts felt the truth or what their lips sang, she resolved that she would not join in that song till she really knew that God, for Christ's sake, had taken her sins away. For nearly a week she attended all the meetings, and when these words were sung, she stood and held the leaflet in her hand on which the hymn was printed (for there were no little Hymn Books then as there are now), but not daring to join in the singing.

On the Saturday, being in a house at which Mr. Turner called, when she heard him come in, she went out by the back door that he might not see her. As she stood waiting till he should leave, the thought came into her mind—"How can I meet God when I am thus afraid to face man!" and she immediately went again into the house. Mr. Turner was not long in asking her if she was saved, to which she answered that she was not.

"Do you wish to be?" said Mr. Turner.

She replied that she did.

"Do you believe that God is both able and willing to save you?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Do you believe that He is willing to do it *now*?"

"Yes."

"Well then," said he, "believing this, and sincerely desiring to be saved, just ask God for Jesus' sake, to take away your sins now, trusting in His faithful word that He will do it."

She did so. The Holy Spirit enabled her in that room to lay her sins on Jesus, and since that time she has walked worthy of her profession, adorning the doctrine of God her Saviour.

Another female, in touching and simple language, recounts the Lord's dealings with her soul during the time of Mr. Turner's services in **Banff**. She was one who had the advantage of a religious education from her childhood, and after describing some early stirrings of the Holy Spirit in her heart, and her various attempts to work out a salvation for herself by the deeds of the law, she says,

"About three months before Mr. Turner came to **Banff**, I began to think that I was a Christian. I was praying and doing as well as I could, and, therefore, I thought I must be a child of God: but when I went to hear Mr. Turner I saw that all my righteousness was but filthy rags. My sandy foundation was swept away. I felt that I was a lost sinner, and thought, as I had quenched the Spirit so often, that now there was no mercy for me. I went to hear Mr. Turner every night, but my burden only became heavier. I could not see the simplicity of believing on Jesus, for I thought I could not believe what I did not feel, and I was looking for the feeling first, after which I thought I would soon believe, but I did not understand what faith was. In one of the meetings some one said to me, 'You will get the victory to-night,' and this was the first glimpse I got of what faith was. I saw it was to believe what I neither saw nor felt, but just taking God at his word, so I thought I would try to believe, but I could not. Mr. Turner was speaking one night about quenching the Spirit, and I was afraid to leave the Chapel without being saved, lest God should withdraw the strivings of his Spirit. O what a conflict was going on in my soul that night!

The Spirit of God was striving within me, and the devil seemed determined to keep me in his grasp: the Spirit urging me to give myself to Jesus where I was, and the devil telling me to wait until I got home. I thought, is it God or the devil who is to have the victory, and cried to God to save me where I was. I now felt the burden somewhat removed, but still I doubted if I was saved. I went home in this state, but was determined not to sleep till I had found Christ, so I went on crying to God to save me, always looking for the feeling in myself that I was saved, but I was no better. At last I thought within myself, I will just stop trying to believe and trying to feel, and cast myself as a guilty and helpless sinner on Jesus. I was enabled to do so there and then. With all my sins, I cast myself on the Sin-Bearer, who has promised that none who come to Him will be cast out, and I rose from my knees at peace with God. But I did not feel the joy of believing on Jesus till next day, when I thought on His love in coming into this world and enduring the wrath of God that *I* might have eternal life.

This thought so filled my heart with love to the Saviour that I went on exclaiming, 'Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus!' the whole day. It is now three years past, on the 10th day of March, since I experienced this change, and since that time, He has given me

to experience much of His love, and to enjoy much of His presence in my soul, for which I give Him all the glory."

Neither was it among those only who had a profession of religion, and led outwardly decent and moral lives, that the work of God took effect, but some were brought to feel the power of the truth who were scoffers at religion, and who had become so notorious for wickedness as to be shunned by all their former associates.

In connection with so large a harvest, of course, it is to be expected that much chaff would mingle with the wheat, and that much of the real wheat would be of indifferent quality. It has turned out to be so. Many who gave promise of repentance unto life have fallen back into flagrant wickedness; while others who gave indication of eminent piety have turned out weak and variable in the divine life.

When the Spirit is poured down the subsequent direction of the work is much modified by the character of the surrounding influences, but for these the leaders of the movement are not accountable. Indeed, had Mr. Turner's counsel and example been followed to a greater extent, many of his spiritual children would have presented a far more favourable appearance than they now do.

But that the work was, to a large extent, genuine and very deep, the experience of three years abundantly testifies. If real Christianity takes the most vicious and profligate sinners, and not merely makes them moral; but elevates them to a spiritual, holy, and useful life, then scores of such living witnesses can easily be found to prove that the movement was of God and not of man. If a down-pouring of the Holy Spirit goes to the cold, dead, and heartless formalist, strips him of his self righteousness, and brings him a broken-hearted penitent to the feet of Jesus, crying for pardon and salvation, then, many are to be found of this class who testify they formerly had a name to live and were dead. If true religion demands of its professors, that they observe closet and family prayer, and makes parents concerned for the salvation of their children, then many a well-ordered household, where formerly nothing but sin reigned, proves that this awakening was genuine: and if it be a mark of genuine faith in Christ to give victory over death, and make the bed of affliction full of comfort, from fellowship with Christ, and hope of eternal glory, then several such cases proclaim the reality of this work.

The question has often been put as to the probable number who underwent the saving change. It is impossible to get at the truth. Those who had the best opportunity of getting nearest the amount had far too many to converse with to take any record of their names. Besides, comparatively few joined the fellowship of those churches whose ministers were constantly engaged in directing anxious souls to the Saviour. It often happened that, after they found peace in believing, they disappeared from the meetings, or were no more seen after the special services terminated, and the great majority being under thirty years of age, many of them soon left the neighbourhood in quest of employment. It will not, however, be reckoned an over estimate by those who have followed the history of the movement, of which Mr. Turner was the chief instrument, to say that, from first to last, two or three hundred immortal souls have been added to the family of God, in and around **Banff**, including the villages within three miles.

From **Banff** Mr. Turner went to **Fordyce**, a small village situated in the midst of a wide and important parish of the same name, where he had a meeting in the Free

Church a few hours after his arrival. As this meeting had been intimated on the previous Sabbath, the church was so crowded that many were unable to gain admission, for, as he was quite a stranger in that place, there was a great curiosity both to see and hear one who had now become the talk of the district, on account of the great things that God had wrought by him. A very deep impression was made on many hearts on that occasion, and he laboured in **Fordyce** the two following nights under circumstances that will never fade from the memories of many who were present. After an earnest address on the second night, a lively prayer meeting was proceeding when the same tokens of the Spirit's power as have already been described became manifest. Many professed to experience the saving change, and it may be said that "fear came on every soul." One who was in the meeting says:

"In the midst of all this, Mr. Turner seemed to enjoy a more than usual serenity of soul as he moved gently among the people, sometimes raising the song of praise, then charging the undecided to yield up their whole hearts to God, cut every tie and close with a freely offered Saviour, and very frequently he would urge on the people to make sure of giving the glory to God only for these mighty works."

On the following evening, the same power was present. Night fled into early morning like a dream before the multitude left the hallowed spot, for like Peter on "holy mount," the people felt it was good to be there.

During the time he laboured in **Fordyce**, he slept but little, being engaged the most of the time either at a public meeting, or in dealing with awakened souls in private, and sometimes walking a few miles into the country on the same errand of mercy.

With regard to the result of these labours, the Rev. M. M'Kay in whose church the meetings were held, says—

"I have reason to believe that Mr. Turner's visit to **Fordyce** was the means under God of awakening not a few to a sense of their state by nature, and of their need of an interest in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus. Several of these cases occurred in my own church, and, by the subsequent life and conversation of not a few, I have good grounds for believing that they have truly tasted that the Lord is gracious."

Mr. Turner's next field of labour was in **Portsoy**, a town on the coast situated between **Banff** and **Cullen**, to which he was invited by the Rev. Alex. Reid, minister of the Free Church there, since that time gone to his reward in glory: a man who prayed and laboured much for the salvation of souls during his ministry, and who was ever ready to welcome as fellow-labourers all whom, he believed, the Lord was with. He opened both his heart and his church to Mr. Turner, and most certainly he never regretted doing so, for the week that he spent in the work there was truly a time of blessing to many souls, as Mr. Reid before his death often testified. The manifestations of the Spirit's power were similar to those in other places, and although several who appeared to be deeply impressed at the time did not turn out well, yet there were many who were really brought to the truth, and remain steadfast to the present time.

Besides addressing meetings daily in public, and giving counsel and direction to enquirers in a more private manner, he visited a number of old and sick people in their

own homes, and in this way much good was done. To a lady who conducted him to several of these houses, he said,—

"Why don't *you* speak more for Christ?"

She was perhaps a little taken aback by the pointed nature of the question, and only-replied, "I am so shy."

"I cannot understand an excuse of that nature," said Mr. Turner. "As for me I feel such a necessity laid on me to speak for Christ, that if I did not do so I think I should burst!"

There were some who opposed the work in **Portsoy**, characterising it as mere excitement which was calculated to do more harm than good.

"Excitement?" said he, when this was told to him. "Blessed excitement! Would to God we saw more of it!"

It is strange that men can understand and have a measure of sympathy with intense earnestness in almost every worldly pursuit, but when it takes the form of deep anxiety about eternal things, that they cannot understand. But surely it is better to be excited and alarmed about our soul's salvation, and to cry vehemently for it in time, than to be among those who, in eternity, shall "cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." What excitement will prevail among the wicked on that awful day!

Mr. Turner remained for a week in **Portsoy**, after which he visited **Grange**, **Whitehills**, and **Huntly**, in all of which more or less good was done: but as it would greatly exceed the limits of the present memoir were we to enter into a minute account of his labours in all these places, we can only quote from a letter which he wrote to his wife and brother from **Huntly** a few days before his return to **Peterhead**, which contains an outline of his movements.—

"You will be wondering how I have been so long in writing to you, but till now I could not find time to do so. Since I wrote last, I have been in **Portsoy**, where the Spirit's power was manifested in a very remarkable manner, and I believe many souls have been saved. From that, the Master sent me to **Grange**, where I was for two nights. The second night I was there, about three hundred remained to speak with me about their souls. I then went to **Whitehills** where two churches were filled. I went from one church to the other, and great concern was manifested by many. Next night I spent in **Banff**, and a great night it was. Many souls I believe found the Saviour. From **Banff** I went to **Huntly**, where I now am, and have been for the last four days, trying to storm the devil's camp. Now, there are tokens of the Spirit's power, and I believe souls are being saved, some in the higher, and others in the common walks of life. I am to remain here for a few days, and then I am coming home to take a little rest and come out again. You may expect me in the beginning of the week. I have much work to do for God, but my body is not able to stand it until I rest for awhile. I trust you are all praying for me, and that my God will give me wisdom for this work. My soul is in perfect peace. O may the Holy Spirit rest on you all for Jesus sake!"

He arrived at home in a very weakly state of health about the middle of April (1860), which was about five months from the time he left **Peterhead** to labour in the coast towns. During these months, with the exception of a brief season of rest in January, it

might be said that he laboured almost without intermission. Not a day passed in which he did not address some meeting. Some days he preached three times, and on several occasions he conducted one continued meeting from morning till night, and from night to far over in the morning: then after three or four hours rest he was up and at the work again! The tear and wear of body and mind must have been dreadful: enough to destroy the health of the strongest; and how a weakly man like Mr. Turner was enabled to go through it seems nothing short of a miracle. It can only be explained by the fact that the Lord had called him to special work, and, therefore, He gave him special strength to perform it; graciously fulfilling His precious promise, "As thy days so shall thy strength be."

CHAPTER VII.

Labours in Aberdeen—Visit to Inverness—Return to Business— Meetings in the Cooperage—His Mission resumed—Labours in Cornhill—Gardenstown—Crovie and Pennan.

For about a week after his return home, he was so ill as to be unable to leave the house, but soon began to recover a little strength and to think of resuming his labours in the cause of God. He felt very much the indifference that prevailed in **Peterhead**, in regard to divine things, compared with the towns in which he had just been, and had a strong desire to see it otherwise.—

"This is a stronghold of the devil," he writes at this time. "May the Lord send a firebrand into the enemy's nest and set it in a blaze! I think, however, the work in the West has brought several to feel their cold state and to long for revival, and they want me to hold a meeting on Sabbath first. How it may end I cannot tell."

In accordance with this request, he held several meetings in **Peterhead** before leaving it, but although there was good done, the work never assumed the same importance as it had done in many other places.

About the middle of May he returned to **Huntly** for a few days, from thence he went to **Aberdeen**, where he held a series of well-attended meetings in different churches, extending over a period of about ten days, and the word spoken by him on these occasions was in many cases attended with the Spirit's power. From **Aberdeen**, he wrote to his brother—

"30th May, 1860, I am still in the Master's work. On Sabbath last I spoke four times: on Monday night, I had a meeting in the North Free Church, and on Tuesday night, and this evening also, in Dr. J. C. Brown's church. On all these occasions the Spirit of God was manifestly working, and a good many have professed to find the Saviour. I have similar engagements in **Aberdeen** and the vicinity every night this week. We have a forenoon meeting everyday in Dr. Brown's Church at which a good few praying people and anxious enquirers are generally present. At mid-day we meet to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit. I know you will join us. Holy Spirit, descend on this city! O for a wave of converting grace!"

Towards the end of June, having been urgently requested to visit **Inverness**, he did so, and laboured there for some time in the same way as he had been doing in **Aberdeen**, and his visit proved a blessing to many souls. From **Inverness** he wrote to his brother in **Peterhead**.—

"I have been four nights in our chapel here, and it has been filled to the door. Last night even the passages were crowded — many crying for mercy, and I trust not a few finding it. It was daylight this morning before I got to bed, it being about one o'clock, a.m. before we could leave the chapel; and the house continued nearly full up to that hour. On Friday, Mr. Parker (*The Wesleyan Minister in Inverness*) went with me to the Infirmary, and nearly every person we spoke to was moved and melted down, and I hope some really found peace in believing. A backslider on his death-bed has been restored. He was once a member of our chapel here. What a severe conflict he had! I thought he would have died in the struggle. I am to see him again today. I thank my God that I have a measure of health. It is surely of His great goodness seeing that I

have to speak so much and get so little sleep. Pray on nothing doubting, for truly we can say the Lord is with us."

It was now drawing near the hurry of the fishing season, when he must of necessity go home to look after his business, and, referring to this, he says in a postscript to the above letter -

"You will try to do without me as long as you can. Take a week of a man until I come."

About the middle of July he returned to **Peterhead**, and was soon busily engaged in the pursuit of his ordinary calling which he prosecuted none the less vigorously from the fact that he had so long been employed in a very different way. But while he was diligent in business, he was fervent in Spirit serving the Lord. And not only did he serve God in secret as too many real Christians are content to do, but he devised ways and means, and he and his brother put themselves to much personal trouble and some expense, in order that they might carry on the work of God in **Peterhead** during the time that Mr. Turner was necessarily detained at home.

They had their cooperage, which was a pretty large place, capable perhaps of containing about two hundred persons, arranged in such a way that it could be seated for a meeting with very little trouble. Gas was also introduced, and although it was very open and much exposed to the cold during winter, they made it as comfortable as they could. In this place, sometimes amid a great deal of opposition from without, Mr. Turner and his brother commenced to labour, meeting every night, and twice on the Sabbath. Mr. Turner himself took the leading part in these meetings so long as he was in **Peterhead**, and had strength to do so, then they were chiefly conducted by his brother until his health failed also, after which they were carried on by one who was brought to the truth by Mr. Turner's labours, so that, by one or other of these three individuals, the meetings continued to be held for nearly eighteen months. Sometimes few attended, and sometimes they were crowded. Sometimes there was but little appearance of fruit, and at other times the quickening Spirit was vouchsafed in a very remarkable manner: but whether they met with discouragement or with success, still the meetings were carried on, and that humble but hallowed spot, it is believed, was the birth place of souls, some of whom have already joined the company of the redeemed before the Throne, while others are living for God here, and preparing to follow them who are now through faith and patience inheriting the promises.

The following extract from a letter written by Mr. Turner to a friend in **Aberdeen**, a short time after these meetings had been commenced, is very characteristic, and shows both the good that was doing and the strong opposition with which he had sometimes to contend.—

"I am happy to say the blessed Spirit is working here. I think I told you before that we had resolved to hold meetings in our cooperage on the nights that the boats were not at sea. We now have these meetings every night, and the Lord is saving souls. Last night was a great night: many crying for mercy, and four were struck down under strong convictions of sin. I think some were saved, but a few got frightened and fled out. The devil in them could not stand it! On Sabbath we had a remarkable time of the Spirit's power, and tonight I expect a great blessing. O to live at Jesus' feet and gather in souls in armfuls to our blessed Master! I feel so thankful, that we have carried on

these meetings in the cooorage, notwithstanding the determined opposition we have met with. They are speaking of preventing us from holding them but they cannot, for He that is for us is greater than all who can be against us. Do pray for us and for the work of God in this place! My brother is a little better and labouring with me. There are also a good many young converts from the **Banffshire coast** here at the fishing, and they help us in the meetings. They have such power with God! O how they pray! aye, and preach also, and I give them all work to do."

Towards the end of the year, very decided symptoms of a pulmonary complaint began to manifest themselves in Mr. Turner; a distressing cough accompanied with a bringing up of blood, showing but too plainly that the disease had made considerable progress. Feeling assured that the time which remained to him for active labour in the cause of God was now very short, he was anxious to make the most of it, and towards the end of November or early in December, the symptoms of his complaint having somewhat abated, he proceeded to **Banff**. The services which he conducted on the occasion of this visit were seasons of great blessing to many, especially to those who had been brought to the truth by his labours in the preceding spring. Of one meeting, he says—

"I had a meeting in **Banff** on Tuesday, such as I never saw in my life. I never saw so many of the people of God in one place. It was a precious season — nearly four o'clock in the morning ere we separated."

On leaving **Banff**, he went to **Cornhill**, an inland village which he had not formerly visited, lying about eight miles in a south-westerly direction from **Banff**. In the Free Church there, he laboured incessantly for four days, speaking as he used to do almost day and night; taking only a few hours sleep in the morning. His visit to **Cornhill** was greatly blessed. After his first meeting, he writes—

"I came to **Cornhill** last night and had a meeting in the Free Church which was filled to the door. The Spirit was present, and I trust some souls were blessed. I hope this will be a great night. O that the mighty power of God may be manifested in plucking sinners as brands from the burning! As regards the state of my body, I put up blood for a whole day last week, and was compelled to take two days rest. This, with what Dr. Pirrie ordered me to take, has stopped it.

(Dr. William Pirrie, Professor of Surgery in the University of Aberdeen, showed the greatest kindness to Mr. Turner, and, without fee or remuneration, did all that human skill could devise to restore him to health, or stay the progress of his complaint.)

"I will be all this week in **Cornhill**, and on Sabbath in **Banff**. O for strength of soul and body for the day is short! The night is coming on, and many souls are on their way to the pit — going down every day! O let us pray and work! Surely the devil is not to have it *all* his own way!"

The next letter he writes is from **Macduff**, in which he gives further particulars regarding the work in **Cornhill** —

"I came from **Cornhill** to this place to take four days rest. At **Cornhill** the Master was indeed present, and I believe many precious souls have entered into life. I was four days in it, and had hard work, for God gave me strength to speak from twelve to fifteen hours out of the twenty-four. On Saturday night and Sabbath morning, the Spirit's power was particularly present. Many found the Saviour, both young and old.

What a sight to see old grey-headed sinners weeping and laying hold of Jesus! It was nearly five o'clock, a.m., before I got to bed, and that same day I had to preach three times in **Banff**."

"At **Cornhill**, I did not meet with a single scoffer, and although the nights were dark and rainy, and the roads bad, many of the people came from several miles distant to hear, so that the Free Church was filled to the door."

"In this place (**Macduff**), I have had three meetings and a good many cases of concern. I am not labouring throughout the day, but some anxious souls come to my room. I leave this tomorrow for **Gardenstown**, but intend returning to **Macduff**. The Lord has many souls to be saved in this place. I am glad to say that I have not put up any blood since I wrote you last."

For the next fortnight he laboured in **Gardenstown**, **Crovie**, and **Pennan**, places which he had not formerly visited, and in the two former towns his labours have been attended with very pleasing results. **Gardenstown** is a village on the coast, about five or six miles east from **Macduff**; **Crovie** and **Pennan**, are both fishing villages in the same neighbourhood. Some degree of interest in spiritual things had been created among a few, particularly in **Gardenstown**, by the accounts which had reached them of the movement in other places, and these were longing and praying for the blessing, but with this exception, these villages, at the time of Mr. Turner's visit, were in the same state of spiritual death and wickedness for which they had been noted. By the praying people, he was of course received with feelings of joy and gratitude, but the great majority were indifferent and many of them positively hostile. The weather was at this time very trying for Mr. Turner's weak body, being the depth of winter, and the ground was covered with snow, the greater part of the time. But notwithstanding this, he laboured with his usual zeal and devotedness for two weeks, and we may add also with his usual success. In his first letter regarding the work in these places, he says —

"I am working in **Gardenstown** and **Crovie** night and day. The first night I came, there were many indications of the Spirit's presence, and these are becoming more marked every day. So many crying for mercy, that sometimes my voice has been completely drowned. The place in which we meet is so crowded, that the other night I had to go out by the window instead of the door! I am to be in the Free Church on Wednesday and Thursday nights. Many old people are finding the Saviour. As old as eighty-five years. Glory be to God! I would give you a longer detail, but my time is up, as I have to go to **Crovie** at twelve noon. This is a day of snow, but my God will give me strength of body. I am not putting up any blood. It is God alone who is holding me up."

As in other places which he had visited, the days were spent in conversing with anxious souls, and in visiting from house to house in the different villages, and although he was well received by many, in some cases it was otherwise. One old man on whom he called received him kindly on his entrance, not knowing who he was; and being a stranger, proposed that they should have a game at cards or drafts together, if he had nothing better to do. But when Mr. Turner declined his proposal, and began to speak to the man about his soul, he at once suspected that he was "that blackguard Turner," as he called him, and ordered him out of his house, threatening to use violence if he did not go immediately. In all cases of this nature, Mr. Turner recompensed good for evil, the only result being that individuals who treated him

thus, had a more than ordinary interest in his prayers. Soon after this, the old man died, but Mr. Turner's prayers for his family have not remained unanswered, some of them having since that time been brought to the knowledge of the truth, and are now living as consistent believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The evenings were spent in the meeting house, which was so densely crowded before the hour, and the people so loath to separate, that, on different occasions, he had to enter by the window, and go out in the same way. In these meetings many were brought to feel their lost and ruined state by nature, and the necessity of being born again, who had never thought of such things before, and not a few who till then had supposed themselves very good Christians indeed, were led to see they had been deceiving themselves with a name to live, while they were dead — that although they had a form of religion they had never felt its saving power. As the refuges of lies in which multitudes were trusting were swept away by the power of the truth, the anxiety of some was indicated only by their countenances, while others were so moved by the discovery of their guilt and danger, that they were constrained to cry aloud to God to have mercy upon them. And though with some the concern thus manifested was of a temporary nature, there can be no doubt that many were really enabled to lay hold on eternal life, some of whom have already reached the better country, while others are living humble followers of Jesus here, recommending His gospel, not only by the eloquence of their words, but by the still more irresistible eloquence of a consistent and holy life.

The fruits of Mr. Turner's labours, are perhaps most apparent among the young men in these places, many of whom are labouring much for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom, not only at home but in the villages and district round about, and their efforts have been largely accompanied with the divine blessing. Two of their number, one from **Gardenstown**, and one from **Crovie**, have left their boats and nets to become fishers of men, and are now pursuing the ordinary course of study in **Glasgow**. Of other happy changes — which must be well-known to all who knew the former state of some of these villages, and can compare it with the present — an individual writing recently from **Gardenstown** says —

"Some have been raised from ignorance, vice, and wretchedness, to respectability, influence, and happiness. They have changed their obscene language for the sweet language of Canaan; their profane songs for the songs of Zion; the dance for the prayer meeting; and the time and means which were formerly spent in the dram shop, are now employed in seeking to promote the interests of religion. In short, the general aspect of the community has been changed for the better. Drink was the besetting sin of these places, now it is ashamed, hiding its face in the streets. There is not now half the number of public-houses in this district that there were formerly, while in the village of **Crovie** not a drop of spirits can be bought. Before Mr. Turner came to this quarter, family worship was a thing unknown in **Crovie**, while in **Gardenstown** it was little attended to. Now there is scarcely a house but has its altar, while the prayer meetings commenced by him, are kept up with life in both villages. We do not overlook others who by their labours of love have been the means of doing much good in this place and neighbourhood, yet we must say that Mr. Turner was the *first* instrument used by God in bringing about a general awakening, and in addition to the fruit that must be apparent to all, there can be no doubt that the seed sown by him in faith, and watered with prayers and tears, will yield increase to the glory of God that will be unseen by us, till this mortal shall have put on immortality."

The case was different in the village of **Pennan**, for there Mr. Turner and his message were very coldly received by the people, and, what was much to be regretted, in visiting that place in a stormy day he caught a cold which greatly aggravated the complaint under which he was labouring.

He now made the best of his way to **Macduff**, where on the 2nd January (1861), he wrote to a friend in **Aberdeen**.—

"Your letter reached me at **Pennan**. I am not long in one place, so that I do not get my letters very regularly. I am at present able to do little in the Lord's work by reason of illness, for I am coughing a great deal, both over night and during the day; a hard dry cough, but no blood. I got cold at **Pennan** having travelled through much snow to that place, and when I got there they had the meeting in a cold fish-house. Little good appeared to be done. The people seemed to be afraid and would not go in to the meeting, but stood about the door. Next day I sat by the fire from morning to night and felt very cold.

At night I went to the meeting and a good many more came in to it than on the previous night. The Holy Spirit was present, and about ten o'clock, a woman became very much affected and cried out for mercy. When the people saw this, they sprung out of the house as if they were to be shot, and up with the woman and carried her off. I then went to a private house and had a prayer meeting, the Spirit was present, and I think some good was done. I left next morning, and I heard afterwards that a good many in **Pennan** were in a somewhat anxious state. My body must have rest, and for this purpose I intend going to **Huntly** for a few days in the end of this week."

CHAPTER VIII.

Illness—Residence in Ventnor—Letters—Return Home—Second Visits to the Coast Towns—Portgordon—Portessie—Findochty—Portknockie—Banff and Macduff—Incidents—Fatal Symptoms—His last Illness and Death.

He was not able to proceed to **Huntly** so soon as he expected, but was for sometime confined in **Macduff** by illness, where he was cared for, night and day, with the utmost tenderness and affection by the Christian family under whose roof he resided. So soon, however, as he had recovered sufficient strength, he went to **Huntly** as he had proposed, but had positive orders from his medical adviser to do nothing in the way of addressing meetings, or engage in any work of that nature, as the least exertion would assuredly bring on a relapse of his illness. He remained in **Huntly** for about three weeks, and although he was not permitted to engage publicly in the Lord's work, yet he could not be altogether silent, for, as he walked about, he embraced the opportunity of speaking to several persons with whom he met about their soul's everlasting welfare, and in this way he was enabled to do something for God.

The letters he has written at this time, were chiefly in reply to affectionate enquiries as to the state of his health, but they show how deeply he regretted being laid aside from active labour, and how greatly he longed to be once more engaged in the delightful work of seeking to gather in souls to Jesus. In one of them he says —

"I have many calls to go into the work again, but I am not able. I have faith that the Lord would continue to use me for the salvation of souls if I had strength of body. As it is, a word spoken in much weakness is blessed now and again."

In another letter after alluding to a very slight improvement in his health, he writes —

"May God bless the means used for my recovery and let me in to His work again. If I had a little more strength I must be trying to do something, for I find it difficult to keep back from the Lord's work. I feel just like a fish out of the water."

About the middle of February (1861), he returned home, passing through **Aberdeen** where he had another consultation with Dr. Pirrie, who recommended him to try a milder climate, and accordingly, about the end of the same month he went to **Ventnor**, in the **Isle of Wight**, where he resided for the next three months. He wrote frequently to his friends during the time he was there, and a few extracts from his letters will best show how he was exercised under God's afflicting hand, and how earnestly he longed for an increase of bodily strength, only that he might use it for the glory of God and the good of souls, as he had done in days past.

March 6th.—"I am not labouring any — I did pray and spoke for about five minutes at one meeting, but this was several days ago. My tongue has not been so long silent in the Master's work for years. I had a blister at my chest on Monday, and that has kept me in bed the greater part of the week, but it will do me good. My cough is a good deal away, and I hope to get out to the free air very soon."

March 12th.—"I have found out a good many of God's people here. The people in whose house I live are on the Lord's side, as also a fellow lodger. I have been at the chapel and at three of the classes, and I have been asked to address the Sabbath School Scholars and preach on Sabbath night, but I am not able. But although I have

not strength to speak, I can weep and pray, and the Holy Spirit knows what that means. I like the Patmos to which I have been sent very well. We may surely like any place if God be with us."

19th March — "I have been doing a little to-day with tracts and plain speaking with some whom I met. I would find work here, and souls would be saved, had I strength, but then, if I had that, I would not have been here at all. The people are beginning to stare at me on the streets. I suppose the devil is giving them my address, being afraid lest this place gets awakened out of its sleep like some others. The Lord is feeding my soul with the best. I may say that I am up to the knees among clover!"

About a week later, he writes, in a very hopeful way, in regard to some appearances of revival in **Ventnor**, with which he was so pleased, that, for a time, it seemed to have a beneficial effect on his bodily strength. He says —

"There are some indications of a work of God in this place. Last night in the chapel several were in a very anxious state, and were earnestly crying for mercy. I spoke and prayed shortly, and, in a few words, tried to point the broken-hearted to the Saviour. Glory be to God, for I thought I was at home again in the Master's work! I do not feel worse of the exertion. O may the Holy Spirit be poured out on this place for Jesus' sake."

But however willingly he would once more have devoted himself to earnest and unceasing public labour for the good of souls, his increasing weakness prevented him; and his next letter to the same friend, which is dated May 16th, is written in more desponding terms, though indicating entire submission to his heavenly Father's will:-

"For about a fortnight I have been very unwell and unfit for anything, though, for the last four days, I feel somewhat stronger. I begin to doubt, however, whether I shall ever get better. The Master's will be done! I thank you and Dr. Pirrie. You have done what you could in every way. O may God repay you both for all your kindness. The Lord has told me nothing as yet, whether I am to be restored again or not; indeed, I have never put it to Him, for I am in His good hand. I do thank my Jesus for the forty-two years He has given me. It is nine years more than He took to Himself. I spent twenty-one of these years in the service of the devil, and twenty-one of them I have tried to serve my God. My birthday to God was Monday last. I intend to leave this in a few days, and make the best of my way home again."

After leaving the **Isle of Wight**, he spent a few days in **London**, and about a week in **Edinburgh**, on his way north, arriving in **Peterhead** in the beginning of June. On the whole, he was a good deal better on his return home than when he left, for, although the disease was not removed, its progress seemed to be stayed for a time. His business was conducted, as usual, during the fishing season of 1861, and the evening meetings were kept up in the cooperage, in which he was some times able to take a part, but these were now attended chiefly by the praying people. His health did not, however, continue to improve during the summer.

Some days," he says, "I think myself a little better, and at other times I feel not so well, so that I cannot say, on the whole, that there is any improvement." Being but little able to attend to business himself, he visited several friends in places where he had formerly laboured, and in the month of August he went to **Macduff**, where he had

another serious attack of illness, attended with haemorrhage from the lungs, which confined him to the house for some time. This illness had the effect of weakening him very much for the time, but when the alarming symptoms abated, he gradually recovered a little strength, and returned to **Peterhead**. In October he writes —

"I think I am getting a little better. The cough is not so bad now, and I am able to walk about a good deal. There is no appearance of any 'shaking among the dry bones' here at present. My soul is stirred within me when I think of multitudes going into a lost eternity, and so few warning them to flee from the wrath to come. O for strength of soul and body to cry aloud to a sin-stricken world —'Behold the Lamb of God!'"

He was yet once more to have the privilege of engaging for a brief season in this work, on which his heart was so much set. This opportunity was brought about in a rather unexpected manner, and it appears, to have been the last occasion on which he was able to speak with something like his former power, although his life was prolonged for more than a year after.

Having occasion to visit **Buckie** on a matter entirely connected with his business, he extended his journey to **Portgordon**, for the purpose of seeing and taking leave of the people of God in that quarter; and being urged by them to hold a prayer-meeting, in which he would only be expected to take part with themselves, but not to give any lengthened address, he consented to do so. But when he found himself in the midst of so many people, all thirsting for the preaching of the Word, yet unwilling to ask him to speak, and when he thought on the blessed seasons he had formerly spent there, and on the mighty power which had accompanied the word of truth in that very room, he could not resist the burning desire which he felt to speak to the people, whatever the consequences to his frail body might be; and, however extraordinary it may appear, he was enabled to continue the work, thus commenced, for nearly three weeks, visiting the coast towns he had laboured in formerly, taking but short intervals for rest, and speaking with the same power and unction as he did when he was comparatively a strong man.

Many interesting facts might be mentioned connected with these last days of active labour in the cause of God, both as regards conversions, and the restoration of backsliders, but we cannot now enter into these particulars. We cannot refrain, however, from giving Mr. Turner's own sketch of the work, which he communicated to a friend in two hurried letters, written from the scene of his labours.

"**Portgordon**, 25th Nov., 1861.— You will think it strange when I tell you that I am once more busily engaged in the Lord's work, seeing that I was so weak and ill when you heard last. I went to **Buckie** last week to engage boats, not intending to have any meetings, and after I had the boats engaged I left **Buckie**, and went to **Portgordon** to bid the people of God good-bye, intending to leave it that night again; but they got me persuaded to hold a prayer-meeting, saying that they would not press me to speak. So I went to the school where the meeting was to be, and a great number of people were assembled. Of course, in such circumstances, I could not be silent, and, before we separated, there were many indications of the Spirit's presence in our midst. I have now been three nights here, and the movement is as great as at my first visit. I left the meeting this morning at two o'clock, and the broken in heart were kneeling on the streets, praying to God to have mercy on them. I am to begin this night's work in about an hour. O for strength of soul and body! My cough is much away since I came

here, and I actually think the work is making me better. I do not know what Dr. Pirrie will think of me for this step, but it is the Lord and not me."

The next letter is written from **Macduff**, nearly three weeks later, in which he says:—

"I was in **Portgordon** when I wrote you last. After being six days there. I returned to **Buckie** for two days. The people of God there got a lift up, and I hope some were brought to Jesus who were strangers to Him before.

I then went to **Portessie**, where there were signs of the blessing, even at the commencement of our first meeting, but before we separated the Spirit seemed to be poured out on every soul in the meeting, and the people bowed themselves down before the Lord, and a great cry for mercy went up from old and young. Next day was the Sabbath, and we resumed our meeting at 4p.m., when about six hundred assembled. We encountered some opposition on this occasion, from a rather unexpected quarter, but the Lord restrained it, and the power of God was revealed in the salvation of several souls.

The day following I went to **Findochty**, where the same power was manifested. I could not describe the scene there. As broken-hearted penitents, many backsliders returned unto the Lord, who 'healed their backsliding' and the people of God were weeping for joy. This continued for a day and a night, out and out; but I slipped quietly out of the meeting, leaving the people with the Master himself, and went to **Portknockie**. We had a good night there, too, but next day the boats were going to sea, and I did not stop another night, but came on to **Banff**. After getting two days rest, I began the meetings here, which have been blessed from the commencement, and the work appears to be deepening every day. My body is keeping up better than I could expect. I sometimes wonder at what God has enabled me to go through; and yet, why should I do so? as if it were anything extraordinary for the Lord to give strength for the performance of a work to which He calls us. As a promise-keeping God, this is what He will always do."

After labouring for a time in **Banff** and **Macduff**, he was again laid aside by an illness which confined him to his bed for nearly four weeks, and, although he gradually recovered this attack, he never again regained sufficient strength to labour publicly in the cause of God, as he had done formerly, though, we believe, on one or two occasions, he did take part in meetings for religious exercises.

The last year of his life was spent chiefly at home, though sometimes he moved about from place to place among his numerous friends for the benefit of a change of air; but so long as he was able to speak, he never ceased either to warn the wicked, or give a word of counsel to the children of God as he had opportunity.

One day, as he was walking with a friend, they were joined by another person who was rather of a sceptical turn of mind, and, after some conversation, the great subject of salvation was introduced, when this person began to cavil at it, and state sundry objections, which were fully answered. Finding, perhaps, that he was likely to have the worst of the argument, the man said, with some warmth —

"Well, I'm sure *you* cannot save me."

"No," said Mr. Turner, who had scarcely put in his word before, "no man can save you, but the living God can; yes, or damn you in a moment!"

His faithfulness to all with whom he came in contact was a very striking feature of his daily intercourse with the world; high or low, rich or poor, being spoken to with equal plainness. On one occasion he was in conversation with a gentleman occupying an important position in society, but whom he discovered to be full of self-righteousness. He, of course, urged on him the absolute necessity of being born again before he could be accepted in the sight of God.

"What," said the gentleman, "do you suppose that I am a filthy sinner, like Richard Weaver!"

"Yes," said Mr. Turner, "every bit as filthy. Till you are washed in the blood of Jesus your whitewash on the outside is worth nothing."

As his strength was passing away, he saw many opportunities for doing good which he was not able to embrace, and this seemed to affect him much. One Sabbath evening, in **Banff**, as he saw crowds of people violating the sanctity of the Lord's Day, by strolling about idly, and indulging in light and frivolous conversation, he was much grieved, and regretted that he was unable to take up his position by the wayside, and preach to them, as he would have done formerly.

"O" said he, "had I been as strong as I once was. I would have gone and shouted 'hell-fire' between **Banff** and **Macduff**" — meaning thereby, that he would have faithfully warned the people of the sin they were committing, and shown them the awful doom that awaited the Sabbath-breaker in eternity.

The country air was sometimes resorted to, in the hope of deriving benefit from it, and his company and conversation were much prized by the Christian families with whom he generally resided. In fact, his common sense and general knowledge of affairs rendered his conversation very agreeable and edifying to any class of people; though he often met with individuals who enjoyed his society very much so long as he talked on general subjects, but when he came to speak of the one thing needful, as he never failed to do, they did not like that so well.

One evening, he was in the company of a certain farmer, and the conversation happened to turn on the subject of the man's threshing mill, which, for some time had not been working in a satisfactory manner. Mr. Turner heard his remarks on the mill very attentively, and suggested various improvements in the construction of the machinery, to all of which the man listened with the utmost deference and attention. But when, after a short time, Mr. Turner began to speak to him about his soul's everlasting welfare, the farmer very soon excused himself and withdrew, Mr. Turner quaintly observing that "he could have got the man to remain all night if he had built windmills to him!" A remark which he sometimes made regarding gossiping and frivolous conversation was as pertinent as it is instructive; that "the devil will keep in the straw so long as he can find any one to twist the rope!"

Although he was now unable himself to labour publicly in the cause of God, nothing delighted him more than to hear of that work prospering in the hands of others. He possessed a most unselfish spirit in this respect. It seemed to matter nothing to him of what name or of what denomination the individuals were whom the Lord was pleased to use and honour with success in His work, but it was enough for him to hear that Christ was preached, and that souls were being saved. That was indeed the sweetest music to his ear. Yet he was very sensitive as to injury being done to any truth,

whether doctrinal or experimental, which he considered to be of vital importance. Having seen it reported one day in a newspaper, that Mr. Brownlow North, in one of his discourses, had deprecated the idea of the Christian attaining to full assurance of his eternal salvation, in this life; he was so much affected when he read it that it was long before he could get it banished from his mind: feeling that if the report was true, the cause of Christ had suffered an injury from an unexpected quarter. The statement, however, proved ultimately to be without foundation.

So long as he lived his heart burned with zeal for his Master's glory, and it was not till very near his end that he was compelled to relinquish the fond hope of again being able to resume his labours. Among the last letters which he ever wrote, is one to a friend in **Aberdeen**, with whom he had been long in the habit of corresponding, in which he says -

"It is long since I wrote to you because I had little to write about. When I was in the work of God I had something to tell, but now I have little or nothing. I hope by this time you will have something good to communicate about the cause of Christ in your quarter. What little I have I will tell you when we meet. I have felt a little stronger for ten days past, but I cannot say that my breathing is any better. My soul is at peace. When my mouth is closed the devil is pleased. I suppose he will let me jog on to heaven in this quiet way, content, as we say, to let alone for let alone, but when I get a little more strength, I hope to be in the face of him again if the Lord wills!"

This was a hope that was never realised. The slight improvement in his strength to which he alludes was of a very temporary nature, and was succeeded by greater weakness, and an increase of the more alarming symptoms of his malady.

About three months before he died he was recommended to try the effect of the hydropathic treatment, which has sometimes been resorted to with advantage, and he accordingly came to an institution of this nature in **Aberdeen**, where he continued for a few weeks. There were a number of boarders in this establishment, and it was customary for them to amuse themselves by engaging in different games, or singing songs; harmless enough amusements, perhaps, in their own way, but, to a spiritual-minded man like Mr. Turner, it may readily be supposed that they had no attraction, and he did not join in them. From this circumstance some of his fellow patients thought he was unhappy, and that his melancholy must arise from his illness or the little prospect there was of his ultimate recovery.

One gentleman, compassionating what he supposed to be his forlorn state of mind, said to him,

"O cheer up! You'll get better yet, don't be so unhappy."

"I was never happier in my life," said Mr. Turner. "I am as happy as a man *can* be."

"But you don't join in our games."

"I am a Christian," was Mr. Turner's reply.

"A what?" said the gentleman, rather surprised at such an answer.

"A Christian," said Mr. Turner.

"Well, but supposing you are a Christian," said his friend, "does that prevent you from joining us in our innocent amusements?"

"Well," said Mr. Turner, "I'll leave it to yourself to decide. Do you think if the Lord Jesus or his apostles were to come down among us, would they take part in such amusements?"

"Ah, I did not think of the matter in that light; but, then, might you not join us in our songs? I understand you can sing."

"The Christian," said Mr. Turner, "has songs of his own."

During the time that Mr. Turner lived in this establishment, a patient came to it from the country, in a very feeble state of health, with appetite gone and nerves unstrung, creating a sort of restlessness which prevented him from obtaining any sleep. It was now his turn to compassionate this poor man's melancholy, and, with his usual quickness of discernment, he soon discovered that his disease was more of a mental than of a physical nature; in short, that it proceeded, in a great measure, from a deep anxiety about eternal things. Mr. Turner spoke to him about Jesus — of the efficacy of His blood to cleanse from sin, and give peace to the troubled soul, and the man was enabled to lay his burden upon Him. He soon found peace in believing, and, in a very short time, completely recovered his health and strength.

On leaving **Aberdeen**, Mr. Turner went again to **Macduff**, but there his health did not improve. His legs began to swell, and this, instead of being temporary, as he expected, did not go away, so that he became alarmed lest he should die at a distance from **Peterhead**, and hastened home as soon as possible.

It was quite apparent to all his friends that he had now come home to die, and although he lingered for some weeks, he was seldom able to leave his bedroom. During his last illness, he was much troubled with a distressing cough, and was so weak that he was able to speak but little. He said, on one occasion,—

"If I have any desire to live, it would only be for one object, and that is that I might gather more souls to Jesus."

For all who came to see him he had a suitable word of exhortation. If they were unconverted, or not sufficiently decided in the cause of God, he would urge them, with all the earnestness with which he was capable, not to rest till they had found Christ, and knew that their sins were blotted out; sometimes adding with great solemnity—

"Nothing is worth a thought beneath,
But how you may escape the death
That never, never dies."

He was constantly exhorting his brethren in Christ to labour more diligently in the Lord's work, while they had the opportunity, beseeching them to think on the multitudes around them who were passing into eternity, strangers to the grace of God that bringeth salvation, with all their sins about them, unrepented of and unforgiven.

"Surely" he would say, "if the people of God only realized this awful thought more, they could not be silent, nor cease to warn every one, night and day, with tears."

Alluding to what some of his friends had said, that he had brought on, or at least very much hastened his death by his abundant labours in the cause of God, Mrs. Turner asked him what he would do if the Lord was pleased to give him back his strength.

"O," he replied, "I would do all that I have done for Christ over again, and much more."

When any spoke to him of the good he had done, and of the many souls who had been brought to the Saviour under his preaching, he would not look at, nor take any comfort from this thought.

"I have no plea in the sight of God," he would say, "but the BLOOD;" and, at other times, he would be heard saying to himself in a kind of audible whisper, "Yes, the blood—the precious blood!"

When very near his end, he was often overheard to breathe the name of JESUS, that name which was so much on his lips when he was in health; and sometimes he would faintly exclaim,—

"Blessed Jesus, what will it be to see thy face in glory!"

During the last night that he lived, his mind wandered a good deal, but it was quite clear that, even then, his thoughts were exclusively occupied about his Master's work, He imagined himself to be engaged in addressing meetings, and might be heard at one time as if speaking words of comfort and encouragement to the people of God, and then as if pleading with sinners, in the most earnest and affectionate manner, to come to the Saviour.

Towards morning he became quite collected and appeared somewhat better. He was lifted to his chair, and when he had sat for a short time, he looked into Mrs. Turner's face and said—

"Good-bye! I am going home to-day; call George," meaning his brother, who was in the next room. Mrs. Turner replied that she thought he was rather better, and did not think she should disturb George, as he had been sitting up all night, and had just lain down to get a little rest: but Mr. Turner said that he felt assured his end was near, and wished to see his brother while he was able to speak to him. George having been called, came into the room, when Mr. Turner gave him the charge of all his affairs, and earnestly exhorted him to fight the good fight of faith to the last.

To Mrs. Turner he said —

"The Lord will be your portion and deliverer, Trust in Him."

He was then assisted to bed, and, about two hours afterwards, he calmly fell asleep in Jesus, 2nd February, 1863. aged 44 years. The last words he uttered were—
"CHRIST IS ALL."

The tidings of his death were received with deep and unfeigned sorrow in every place where he was known, for many felt that it was the removal of him to whom, under God, they were indebted for that faith in Christ, and hope of eternal life which now sustained and cheered their souls. A day or two afterwards a good few came into **Peterhead** from the different towns along the coast, without any invitation, simply that they might have the melancholy satisfaction of looking on his remains, and following them to their last resting place.

At least one man came as far as from **Portgordon**, and, on being spoken to of the great distance, replied,—

"It is surely but a small matter for me to go to **Peterhead** to pay a tribute of respect to his lifeless body, when he came as far to save my soul."

We heard also of a young man who happened to be in **Peterhead** at the time of Mr. Turner's death, and went the following day to see his corpse. He had always respected him much for his earnest and self-denying labours in the cause of God, and had often listened to his addresses, but, in his case, the word had not been with power, and he was yet in his sins. As he looked on the wasted features and the pale lips, now silent in death, many of the warnings and exhortations which he had heard from him, but which he thought little about at the time, crowded into his memory, and such an impression was produced on his mind as soon after issued in his conversion. So true it is of a faithful ambassador for Christ, that "he, being dead, yet speaketh."

Mr. Turner's remains were followed to the grave by a large company of mourners. "Devout men carried him to his burial," some of them his own children in the faith, and all felt that they were performing the last offices to one who had not lived in vain. Not in vain! "Always abounding in the work of the Lord," "for him to live was Christ, and to die was gain" and multitudes brought to the Saviour under his faithful preaching are the living witnesses that his "labour was not in vain in the Lord."

He has now gone to his reward. To him who saved the life of a citizen, the gratitude of heathen Rome decreed the wreath of fame, and for the same generous act, modern societies are ready with their pecuniary rewards. But the men of the world have no honours awaiting him who rescues *souls* from death, and oft hold the humble instrument in but little esteem. Yet the glorious work does not pass unheeded. "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth," and infinitely higher than any earthly approbation, is the gracious welcome from the lips of THE KING himself -

"WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT, ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD!"

NOTICE OF GEORGE TURNER.

WHILE these sheets were passing through the press, Mr. Turner's younger brother, George, frequently referred to in the foregoing pages, departed this life and went to another and a better world. He was a man animated by the same zeal for the glory of God, and compassion for perishing souls, for which his brother James was so remarkable, and it has been thought proper to add a very few words here regarding his history and labours.

His conversion took place thirteen years before his death, and Mr. James Turner was the instrument whom God employed in bringing it about. Between the brothers there existed a very strong affection, connected as they were both by the ties of nature and of grace. The circumstances attending the conversion of George were so marked that no doubt was left in his own mind as to the time he experienced the saving change. Before leaving the room in which his soul passed from death unto life, he sung these lines beginning —

"My God is reconciled,

His pardoning voice I hear,"

and, from that day forth, he never lost the witness of the Spirit; and his heart was filled with love to God, who had called him out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Immediately after his conversion, he began to take part in little private meetings for prayer and exhortation, but it was nearly two years longer before he commenced to preach more publicly; and among the first fruits of his labours were two of his nearest relatives, both now in glory.

About this time, his business led him to reside in **Portgordon** for about six months, and although he was then a very young man, his walk and conversation were such as would become an aged and experienced Christian. His light was not hid under a bushel, but shed its influence on all around him. He was very faithful in reproofing sin, and even his presence acted as a check to ungodly and profane conversation.

In **Portgordon** he was placed in very disadvantageous circumstances, either for soul prosperity or for holy living, for some of his fellow-workmen lodged in the same room with him, none of whom were converted men, and the landlady with whom he resided was a Roman Catholic. But notwithstanding all these obstacles to a faithful testimony for God, during the whole of the time he resided there, he kept up family worship in the house, and laboured to recommend the religion of Jesus, both by his example and precept, as he had opportunity. Nor was his labour in vain. Several with whom he was associated were brought to the truth, including the mistress of the house, who connected herself with a Protestant Church, and became a true Christian.

On his return to **Peterhead**, it was quite clear to all who knew him that he had made much progress in the divine life during his absence. While he continued to labour hard for the bread that perisheth, his labours in the cause of God were now more abundant, and, like his brother, he led classes, conducted meetings in his native town and the district, round about, and visited the abodes of the sick and the destitute. Almost every night he was out on some such errand of mercy, and every second or third Sabbath, for upwards of seven years, he travelled out to different places in the country, sometimes as far distant as sixteen miles, where he would have two meetings, and travel back again the same evening in summer or winter, in fair weather or foul, it was

all one; for no ordinary hindrance could prevent him from fulfilling such an engagement.

He would often say —" I want to be a Christian out and out," and there are few more decided or active Christians than he was, for, until he was completely prostrated by his last illness, he was always found walking in the footsteps of Him who went about continually doing good; taking up his cross through good report, and through bad report; neither courting the smiles nor fearing the frowns of any, if God was glorified and souls saved.

It will seldom be found that such earnest and persevering labours in the cause of God are not attended with success, and the Lord greatly honoured him in giving him souls, both in **Peterhead** and elsewhere. He visited several of the coast towns nearest to **Peterhead**, after his brother had left them and gone further west, and there he followed up the work so well begun; encouraging and directing the recent converts, and urging such as were halting between two opinions to give up all for Christ, and close with the overtures of mercy.

It has already been mentioned that the conducting of the meetings in the cooperage devolved, for some time, chiefly on George Turner. In fact, it was he who laboured most in these meetings. The cooperage, owing to its construction, was a very trying place to speak in, and the meetings there, towards the end of his life, soon began to tell on his strength; but, night after night, sometimes amid the most determined opposition, he laboured on, and not without seeing much fruit.

We have before us a letter from one in **Peterhead**, in which the following passage occurs:-

"In 1860, when the meetings were held in the cooperage, I was living a backslider, and I thank God that I was not cut off in that state of estrangement from God, for, had I been so, my soul would have been lost. I began to attend these meetings, and one evening, our dear departed brother, George Turner, spoke from Rev. 2v4-8: "Nevertheless. I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love," &c. This address proved a message from God to my soul, and I was brought to repent and turn again to the Lord. It was George who laboured most in the cooperage, and the Lord blessed his labours, and many souls were converted to God. Eternity alone will reveal the good that was done in that place."

Another says—" The meetings in the cooperage were crowded for some time, and George was there every night, when his brother was at the **Isle of Wight** for his health, and in different towns in the West, labouring for God. George's strength soon began to give way. Such constant labours in a place like the cooperage would soon have told severely on the strongest frame, but the Lord upheld him wonderfully, and, so long as he was able, he failed not to warn sinners of their danger, and beseech them to flee for refuge to the cleansing blood and perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ."

During his brother's absence and illness, he led his class in the Church, dealing faithfully with every soul present, and praying fervently for those who were absent and this he did so long as he was able to speak.

Like his brother, he laboured under disease of the chest, and sometimes vomited large quantities of blood, but his heart was so set on the work of God that these attacks were not allowed to interfere much with his usefulness, for he felt that his time was short, and that he must work while it was day. The last time he led the class, it was most affecting to see how unable he was to do so from weakness and difficulty of breathing, for by that time it was clear his end was drawing very near.

During the last days of his life, he enjoyed a calm peace of mind, having no wish to live or die, but content to know that he was in the good hand of his Father in heaven. Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, it might be said that he was waiting by the river for the message to come over to the other side, and, when it came, he was ready to go, and found the river calm and shallow! The night before he died, when one said,

"You will soon get the victory,"
he answered, "Yes, Jesus has got many a victory."

About an hour before he breathed his last, he was able to say, "Washed in the blood of the Lamb!" trying at the same time to repeat a portion of a hymn, and requesting that those about him might sing it, but none of them were able to catch the words. So peaceful and calm were his last moments that the exact time of his departure was not known.

As in the case of his brother, his remains were carried to the grave by those who loved and honoured him. They both lie side by side in the Parish Churchyard at **Peterhead**, close by the ruins of the Old Church, and on the East side thereof.

"They shall be brought with gladness great
And mirth on every side,
Into the palace of the King,
And there they shall abide."

APPENDIX.

Testimony by the Rev. W. T. KER of the Free Church, Deskford.

I may best do my part in setting **James Turner** and his work before the Church of Christ, by briefly stating the impressions produced upon my mind by personal contact with him, and by personal observation of its results. This refers only to the period beginning with the early part of 1860, before which he was wholly unknown to me even by name.

A very special and extensive work of divine grace had been proceeding under my own close observation, in the rural districts, during four months preceding the time of his visit to the villages on the coast. This had impressed me with the conviction that the Lord himself was come in mercy to this neighbourhood, which had, for so many generations, been lying in the deepest spiritual darkness, and that His time to favour it had begun. It did not surprise me, therefore, to hear that the fishing population, for which no man had seemed to care, was also visited with such manifestations of His mighty spiritual power, as to compel men to acknowledge that it was from heaven. At the same time, rumour brought with it most alarming descriptions of the way in which the work was carried on, and most doleful prognostications of the effects which would follow from it.

Having already had full experience of the prevalent unbelief which in such movements can see nothing but what appears on the surface, and is accordingly carried away into extremes, on the one side or the other, either accepting all as divine, or else condemning all as earthly, I went at the earliest moment to form my own opinion. I had full opportunity of observation while all was quite recent, and when every shade of popular feeling could be distinguished. That which first struck me most strongly, was the absence of all evidence of reaction, which must have been apparent had there been physical and mental exhaustion arising from what was mainly, or even largely, a work of human excitement. I never for a moment doubted, that there had been an intermixture, such as has, in all ages, been exhibited in every such work of spiritual power, carried on among weak and sinful men, and by a fallible human instrumentality. A special miracle alone could have prevented it; and no evidence has anywhere been given, that God will now exempt men from the necessity of exercising all their faculties in the most prudent and wise following out of the directions in the inspired word.

But it was from the first quite plain to me, that there had been a very decided predominance of that which was truly divine, sufficient to give its true character to the work, and to secure the production of good fruit in due time. I felt, in consequence, no hesitation in expressing my sentiments on the subject, and in doing all in my power, so far as my own field of labour admitted, to impart encouragement and instruction in scripture truth to those who attended the meetings held by me from time to time.

At one of my earliest visits, I was brought into contact with **Mr. Turner**, having the opportunity of seeing him in private, but not of being present at any of his meetings, until somewhat later, when he acted entirely under my own control in **Deskford**. The impression produced upon me then was confirmed by all my subsequent intercourse. The genuine humility and childlike simplicity of a real believer in Jesus were most strongly marked in him. There was the absence of all self assertion; and it was plain

that he was living in an atmosphere of peace and serenity, which had not been disturbed by all the exciting scenes through which he was then passing. He had all the appearance of a man who was not thrown off his balance by either the praise or the blame of his fellows, which he was then receiving in large measure, because of the power which accompanied his words. He felt his entire dependence upon God, and everything about him showed that he lived under the deep and abiding impression of the Master's presence, exemplifying in the strongest manner I had ever met with, the realizing sense of the servant spirit which looks up for direction in everything. A living faith was manifest in his whole deportment. At the same time, it appeared that his emotional faculties predominated over his intellectual powers, and that his vivid perception of the spiritual prevented the full exercise of a discriminating judgment.

Hence it was, that he was naturally more fitted for the duties of an evangelist, than for any other part of the Church's work. And in the exercise of that office, in the work given him to do, he did not feel called upon, as another would have done, to interfere for the prevention of even what he recognized to be human imperfections. He felt so strongly that "The Master" would take care of His own work that he feared to lay his hand upon it lest he might mar what was divine. His principle of action seemed to be that he had no right to perform the duties of any other department than that committed to him, and that the Lord would himself, by his Spirit and by his providence, do all that was thus left undone.

In this respect, he was peculiarly fitted for that particular work with which his name stands most closely associated, as one by which the living King of Israel would compel men, in these days of practical unbelief, to recognise His own hand, in the midst of man's weakness, and to give the whole glory to Him. The far mightier and more extensive work of grace which was being carried on in the same district, just before he passed away from this earthly scene, without any special human instrumentality being employed, is fitted to prevent his memory being dishonoured by any unworthy magnifying of the servant; and to be a call from the Lord to "cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

WILLIAM T. KER. **Deskford** March, 1863.

Extracts from the information communicated by the Rev. THOMAS BAXTER of Banff, being in addition to the portions of it already made use of in the pages of the Memoir.

By many, a prejudice has been entertained against the reality of the revival produced by Mr Turner's labours, because of the humble instrument employed by God in bringing it about. That has often been renewed by a closer acquaintance with his mental and especially his spiritual attainments. Those who came to the house of God not seeking the heavenly treasure, but the glory of the earthen vessel in which it was contained, left with disgust when they found nothing to entertain from refined speaking, logical arrangement, or flashes of eloquence. Though his mind was destitute of polish it had great strength. He thought for himself and owed more to reflection and observation than book knowledge.

Many of his ideas were profound and original. Many of his expressions have been incorporated into the devotional language of the district he visited, so that his spiritual children can easily be detected by any one acquainted with his teaching. He did not prepare set addresses, but as he often spoke from the same passages of scripture, he was always most powerful when he travelled over ground he knew. He purposely confined himself to those subjects which refer to the state of the unsaved, for it was his aim to win souls rather than edify saints.

It was, however, chiefly in his spiritual attainments that he excelled. Of him, above most, it may be said that he was 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.' He lived in the closest fellowship with God. As he lived with God, so he lived *for* God. His faith in God giving His Spirit was extraordinary. The blessing often descended like a thunder shower, deluging a whole assembly at once. While all were moved he remained calm with God.

His discerning of spirits was wonderfully penetrating, and seldom incorrect. His tone of piety was so far above the ordinary attainments of Christians, that only the most spiritual could fully understand many of his sayings and doings. His all-consuming zeal knew no bounds but the grave. That he erred sometimes in conduct and judgment unconsciously, he willingly admitted, but it was more from ignorance than want of piety. He reaped more in a half year than many do in a long lifetime who sincerely seek the good of souls, and if his over-exertions consumed his frame, the cause for which his life was sacrificed was infinitely higher than that which has gained for the noble Howard the merited commendation of ages.

"WHAT'S THE NEWS?"

Whene'er we meet you always say, What's the news ? What's the news?
Pray what's the tidings of the day, What's the news? What's the news?
Oh, I have got good news to tell! My Saviour hath done all things well,
And trampled over death and hell, That's the news! That's the news!

The Lamb was slain on Calvary; That's the news! That's the news!
To set a world of sinners free. That's the news! That's the news!
'Twas there His precious blood was shed: 'Twas there He bowed His sacred head,
But now He's risen from the dead, That's the news! That's the news!

To heaven above the Conqueror's gone: That's the news! That's the news!
He's passed triumphant to His throne. That's the news! That's the news!
And on that throne He will remain, Until as Judge He comes again,
Attended by a dazzling train: That's the news! That's the news!

His work's reviving all around: That's the news! That's the news!
And many have redemption found, That's the news! That's the news!
And since their souls have caught the flame, They shout Hosanna to His name,
And all around they spread the flame, That's the news! That's the news!

The Lord has pardoned all my sins: That's the news! That's the news!
I feel the witness now within. That's the news! That's the news!
And since he took my sins away, And taught me how to watch and pray,
I'm happy now from day to day, That's the news! That's the news!

And Christ the Lord can save you now, That's the news! That's the news!
Your sinful heart He can renew. That's the news! That's the news!
This moment; if for sins you grieve, This moment, if you do believe,
A full acquittal you'll receive, That's the news! That's the news!

And then if anyone should say, What's the news? What's the news?
Oh! tell them you've begun to pray; That's the news! That's the news!
That you have joined the conquering band, And now with joy at God's command,
You're marching to the better land; That's the news! That's the news!