

MEMOIR
OF THE
LATE REV. JOHN McLEAN, A. M.*

BY THE REV. A. BLAIKIE, BOSTON.

I. PARENTAGE AND EARLY LIFE.

THE subject of the following memoir was born at the West River of Pictou, Nova Scotia, September 1st, 1801. He was the descendant of emigrants from the South of Scotland, who have been for several generations distinguished by the fear of God. His paternal grandfather was one of the first elders in the County of Pictou, of whom Dr McGregor says, "they were my companions, my support and comfort, when Pictou was destitute and poor, and I was without the assistance of a co-presbyter," and of his maternal grandfather (William Smith) the Dr says, "he was an active, pious, spirited man; but he did not live long, and his death was to me the death of half the congregation." His parents, John and Janet McLean, were both under the ministry of Dr McGregor, and afterward of the Rev Duncan Ross. From early life his father held, and continues to hold with much consistency and usefulness, the office of ruling elder in the congregation of West River. In his dwelling "the voice of rejoicing and salvation" has been always daily heard, and under its associations and influences the subject of this narrative was "trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In the district school he was early noticed for his apparent carelessness, and yet at recital he was seldom unprepared. When about thirteen years of age he was removed to the Grammar School commenced in 1805 by the late Rev Thomas McCulloch, D.D., in the town of Pictou; and when the Pictou Academy was opened, in 1816, he was in it a member of the first class. The erection of this Seminary resulted from the exclusive character of the prelatial establishment called King's College at Windsor, Nova Scotia, and it was in its course of instruction modelled after the University of Glasgow.—Reared in a scene of rural piety, he, by association with young men less religiously trained than himself, became during his Academical course in much

* The following memoir was prepared to accompany a selection of sermons by the lamented subject of it, which it was intended to publish in a small volume. The difficulty of deciphering his MS. and other causes prevented the execution of this purpose. The MS. of Mr Blaikie's memoir has been placed in our hands with permission to make what use of it in the pages of the *Instructor* we might see fit. It has been submitted to several friends of the deceased, and from information received from them and from other quarters, particularly a notice of him by the Rev James Waddell in the *Christian Teacher*, a few corrections have been made and some additional matter introduced.

danger of losing his early impressions, and of being led by those fashionable "communications which corrupt good manners." With him it was early a maxim to endeavour to excel, whether it were study, pastime or social pleasure, in which he was engaged; and the dangers to which he was at this time exposed are forcibly set forth by the Rev John L. Murdoch, of Windsor, in the following language, "Mr McLean and myself were classmates almost from the time we entered the Grammar School until we finished our studies. We entered the Divinity Hall together, and were licensed about the same time. We travelled to Britain and returned together, and it is probable that I had as good an opportunity of becoming acquainted with his character as any other person. His talents were above mediocrity, and by diligence in his studies he had made himself a very respectable classical scholar. About the time of finishing his Academical studies he fell into gay company, and was in danger of contracting habits which might have led to his ruin. We all saw the dangerous ground upon which he stood, and were concerned for his safety. But the bands which would have led him astray were dispersed. He returned to his father's house to prosecute his theological studies, and here and about this time his mind took a decidedly pious turn. After being ordained to the office of the ministry, and conversing together about past events, he has told me that when he looked back he trembled to think of the precipice on which he once stood, and from which he was delivered by the grace of God alone. Any eminence to which he afterward attained I ascribe, not so much to any superiority of talent which he possessed, as to his deep toned piety, which gave a solemnity and impressiveness to all his ministrations, and indeed to all the acts of his life, both public and private."

II. FROM HIS LICENSURE TO HIS ORDINATION.

As the first-fruits of the Pictou Academy, and of the theological instructions of Dr McCulloch, under the direction of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, he, in company with the Rev Messrs. John L. Murdoch, Angus McGilvray and Robert Simm Patterson, was on the 8th day of June, 1824, by the Presbytery of Pictou licensed to preach the gospel.— During the autumn of that year he visited Britain, and, as stated by the Rev R. S. Patterson, of Bedeque, Prince Edward Island, "On Tuesday, the 15th of February, 1825, Mr McLean, in connection with Mr Murdoch and myself, received from the University of Glasgow the degree of A. M. Previous to this we were examined by Professors Walker, Sandford, Jardine, Miller, Mylne and Meickleham. Mr McLean acquitted himself well in the several branches of learning on which we were examined. He shewed himself to be well-deserving of the literary honor conferred upon him. His pulpit exhibitions in Britain would have been creditable to one who had been longer in the ministry. By competent judges they were considered as indicative of future usefulness."

After visiting London and other principal places in Britain, he with the gentlemen above named returned to Pictou, and in the autumn of 1825 he was sent to visit the scattered (resident) Presbyterians around the Bay de Chaleurs. The difficulties and dangers to which on this journey he was exposed, not "by flood and field," but by flood and forest, and "by perils in the wilderness," I could here to some extent particularize, as I visited nearly the

same stations, six years afterwards, on the same errand. It is sufficient to say that they were real. His ministrations on this tour were not only acceptable, but highly popular. The people of Restigouche took steps toward obtaining him as their minister, and he looked forward to that place being the future scene of his labors. But the saying of inspiration, "A man's heart deviseth his way but the Lord directeth his steps," was in this case strikingly illustrated. In returning to Nova Scotia, finding the navigation on the coast for the season closed, he must needs go through Richibucto, where the spirit of commerce had collected a considerable number of Presbyterians. They had been visited by the Rev George Burns, D. D., then of St. John, N. B., yet they were "as sheep wanting a shepherd." They had been supplied by another licentiate of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, one too who then and since has proved an acceptable minister of the New Testament, and they were about giving him a call when Mr McLean arrived and preached *one Sabbath*; and such was the impressio produced that the call intended for another was unanimously given to him. In the meantime, the people of Restigouche not having shown the same alacrity, he felt it his duty to accept.

III. HIS PASTORAL LABORS.

His Pastoral labors in the congregation commenced in May, 1826.* On the 3rd day of July following he was married to Miss Sophia, daughter of the late Mr Jonathan Blanchard of Pictou, and sister of his particular Academical friend and associate, the late Jotham Blanchard, Esquire, Counsellor at Law, and subsequently M. P. for the then undivided County of Halifax. In "the plighted partner of his future life" he found a person of great amiableness of disposition, and one who, whether in prosperity or in adversity, was while he lived his devoted companion. The union was one of much enjoyment. But they also experienced the truth of the Saviour's declaration, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Besides trials to be hereafter referred to, it may be mentioned here that he was called to suffer the loss of his eldest daughter, Sarah, who died September 14th, 1828, aged 15 months. He was enabled to say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

To his pastoral labors he now devoted himself with all the ardour of a naturally ardent nature, "constrained by the love of Christ." His flock was scattered over a wide extent of country, yet he cheerfully undertook the toil of frequently visiting them, although in some instances it was necessary to travel distances of twenty or even thirty miles over an almost trackless desert. Yet at the same time he was a diligent student, and being possessed of excellent natural talents his pulpit exhibitions were of the first order and excited the highest admiration. It is to be lamented that his sermons were written in shorthand, and are thus at present inaccessible, as from them a much higher selection might be made than what has yet been published.— This I affirm from the recollection of hearing him preach from the following texts,—Isa. xxxiv. 16, Rom. x. 17, John xix. 30, Isa. v. 4, and Luke xii. 50. But as has been stated by Mr Murdoch, "his pre-eminence arose from a

* He was ordained at East River, Pictou, in 1825, prior to his departure on his New Brunswick mission. He commenced his pastoral work in Richibucto as stated above in May 1826, but his induction did not take place till the 19th of August of the same year.

deep toned piety, which gave solemnity and impressiveness to all his ministrations." His published sermons show good, yet by no means extraordinary powers of mind, but his written publications can give no idea of the impressions which his delivery of them produced upon the minds of his hearers.— At times his earnest appeals thrilled every soul, while at others his tenderness and pathos melted the stoutest to tears.* It falls to the lot of few public speakers to exercise such entire control over the feelings of his audience as he did. Oftentimes "the heart of the people was moved as the trees of the wood were moved by the wind."

The field which he cultivated had never been systematically cultivated, and much prudence was necessary to amalgamate the heterogeneous materials with which, as in most congregations in new countries, he had to do.— That prudence he possessed in an eminent degree; and while he rigidly maintained the order and discipline of the Church, perhaps none similarly situated was ever more successful in conciliating the good will of all.

The community was one devoted to lumbering. This employment usually gathers the most reckless characters, while their mode of life tends to produce a disregard of all religious obligation, and he found its usual accompaniments, profanity, intemperance and Sabbath breaking, prevalent among a large portion of the community. Against these and other sins of the time he not only lifted up his voice like a trumpet in his public service, but he embraced every opportunity for words of admonition and reproof in private.— On the streets or in places of public business, when his ear was assailed by the voice of profanity, or his eye beheld the reeling of the drunkard or the desecration of the Sabbath, often has he stopped to address words of reproof to the guilty, so solemn that the boldest were awed, and yet so kind as to win their esteem. By such efforts a marked outward reformation in the community was produced during the course of his ministry.†

As a pastor he was ever forward in advancing the spiritual interests of his charge, "in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity," while he attended diligently to pastoral visitation, and to the introduction of Sabbath Schools as auxiliary to parental training. During the seven brief years of his ministrations his congregation received a powerful impulse in the knowledge of "sound doctrine," which alone can produce "the things which are lovely, honest, and of good report," in the outward duties of life, by teaching men "to live soberly, righteously and godly."

When he entered as pastor upon his duties, he found intemperance fearfully prevalent in that vicinity. The home of the farmer, the stores, ship-yards, rafts and lodges of the lumbermen, were all too much familiarized with the direful influences of strong drink; and while it was universally considered an exhibition of generosity to invite others to drink, and a decided evidence of meanness not to do so in social or business intercourse, he found himself

* A Scotchman in New Brunswick, not now a member of our Church, remarked to the writer of this note that the only two preachers he ever heard, either in this country or the old, who could move him to tears were Dr McGregor and Mr McLean.

† The following incident, which took place only a few months ago, will show the difficulty of being faithful in such a community. A Free Church minister visiting that Province, and preaching in a place, the inhabitants of which were given to lumbering, felt it his duty to reprove the prevailing sins. But the result was that he was refused the use of the Church on the following Sabbath, although we believe it was built as a Presbyterian place of worship.

in an unpleasant position. Much of his subsistence depended on the good will of those who either sold or used this enemy to human peace.

On duty and its difficulties he took a careful look, and with a moral heroism, not often in these days equalled, and seldom excelled, he undertook to grapple with intemperance, and if possible to mitigate the sufferings of those around him. It must here be remembered that at that period Pre-
 lacy, as the State religion, had more influence in New Brunswick than in Nova Scotia; that all who were not within its pale were viewed with comparative contempt by those in power, that, for example, none but an Episcopal clergyman or a Squire could solemnize marriage, that Episcopalians were almost exclusively in the magistracy, and above all, that not a little of the usual and necessary revenue of the County arose from the licenses granted to retailers of strong drink. For a dissenter, then, to appear before the associated magistracy of the County, and to deliver such a discourse on the danger of the drunkard, and on the criminality of those who manufacture him, simply by the authority of Christ, in a Court House and on a week-day was an undertaking on behalf of the cause of temperance requiring more moral heroism than a hundred of those efforts which temperance lecturers now make; sometimes by the desecration of the Sabbath, and under a tax of licence or ninepence a head from their hearers for admission. They thus frequently derive profit from their labors, while he ran the risk of a powerful opposition, if not of the loss there of sustenance for his family. Another circumstance which occurred at the moment added to his difficulties. A friend belonging to the Bench of Magistrates had promised to introduce him to the Court and request for him a hearing. But on Mr McLean's repairing to the place where he had engaged to meet him, he found that his friend's courage had failed, nor did he make his appearance that day. So that Mr M. had to go alone. Literally, "no man stood by him." Yet he could not think of turning back, and so far from encountering open opposition, he was instrumental in arousing some from their lethargy and danger, and found that "When a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." He lifted up his voice like a trumpet, and showed to his fellow subjects their sin and their duty. His sermon was not a mere threadbare lecture: but an exhibition of the authority of the law of God, and when he "reasoned of temperance and judgment to come," it was not merely a "moral suasion" appeal about the good of the creature, and a matter of pecuniary interest to the County funds. It was all this, and also an earnest exhibition of the manner in which Temperance ought always to be presented, a presentation of the guilt and danger before God, of the traffic in liquid poison. At "the request of a number of those who heard it delivered" his sermon was published. It has not only contributed much to awaken attention, and to give an impulse to the cause of temperance in the surrounding country; but it was probably the first contribution, through the press, to this salutary reform in the British Provinces.* As we shall subsequently see, he continued during life his zeal in the Temperance cause, as subservient to the spread of pure and undefiled religion. The result was that no licenses were granted during that year.

* We hope to republish this discourse in a future number, as the subject is a prominent one in our own day, when this and other countries are agitated on the subject of the prohibition of the traffic in intoxicating drinks, and when the duty of those in authority in reference to it is so freely discussed.

IV. OTHER MINISTERIAL LABORS.

While his labors were abundant among his own flock, who esteemed "him highly in love for his work's sake," his occasional ministrations were highly prized as an "ambassador of Christ," and he was frequently solicited to preach on particular occasions in other congregations. On the occasion of attending Synod at Pieton, in 1830, by request he delivered a sermon on "the truth and Divine authority of the Scriptures and the importance of knowing their contents," on behalf of the Pieton Sabbath School Society.— This Institution had been founded principally, we believe, through the energy of Dr McGregor, with the view of establishing Sabbath Schools in the Eastern part of the Province. The Institution was for some time in a most useful and efficient condition. It was the means of directing attention to the subject of introducing Sabbath Schools in various sections of the country, and of increasing their efficiency by the importation of suitable books both for libraries and for teaching. It has now ceased to exist, but not until its work was accomplished by Sabbath School instruction becoming a regular part of congregational effort in that part of the country. It was usual to have a sermon preached annually on its behalf, and it was on the occasion of its anniversary that the discourse was delivered. His subject was the evidences of the divine authority of the Scriptures, from which he urged the importance of those means which are being employed for disseminating the knowledge of its contents. One of the arguments used, viz., the argument for the universality of the deluge from the fossils found in all parts of the world, has not been confirmed by modern science, but otherwise the discourse is an admirable exhibition, in a condensed form, of the grounds on which we believe that we follow "no cunningly devised fable" when we regard the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as in truth the word of the living God. The clearness and force of his reasonings, and the earnest practical conclusions to which they are applied, render it worthy of the perusal of the advanced student, as well as fit to edify the private christian.

Besides his labors in his own congregation, and such occasional efforts in others, his spirit was stirred within him "by the destitute condition of the regions beyond." The greater portion of New Brunswick was then missionary ground, and much of it without a road deserving the name, but he undertook long and arduous journeys to carry the glad tidings of salvation to those that "dwelt solitarily in the wood." Of his labors in this respect an idea may be gained by some extracts of a journal laid before the Board of Missions of a tour made in the year 1827 to the Northern parts of that Province:—

"August 16th.—Left Richibucto for Miramichi at 2 o'clock, P. M., on horse back, passed through a continuation of small settlements of French Roman Catholics for six miles, and crossed three rivers or arms of the Bay in the usual mode of ferrying here, which is as follows:—Two wood or log canoes are floated side by side; across the top or gunwales of these, a number of boards are laid, and upon these boards the horse and passenger are stationed till the whole is paddled over, frequently by a Frenchwoman and her child.

"Here at the end of six miles I left my horse, not being able on account of the state of the road to use him farther, and took the woods on foot. Travelled six or seven miles without a house, the greater part of the way through a deep cedar swamp, and arrived at Kouchibouquach river, (a station at which I preach six or seven times annually) at 7 o'clock.

"17th, Friday.—Left Konehibouquich at 7 o'clock, A.M., on horseback. Found that my horse as I proceeded, instead of facilitating my progress, actually in many places greatly impeded it. The country coastwise here for one hundred or one hundred and fifty miles is nearly a dead level, and much of it a mere swamp, in general covered densely with spruce, fir, pine, and cedar, and ill adapted for the purposes of agriculture. Like the last stage of the preceding day's journey my road now consisted merely of a pathway cleared of the wood which once covered it, but yet untouched by a spade. Much of it I was forced to walk, and in much of it my horse wallowed up to the saddle in mud.

"26th, Sabbath.—Unable to procure a horse here or any where in the vicinity, I gave up the idea of reaching Bathurst in time to collect an audience, and sent up an early notice to *New Brandon*, 4 miles distant, a small settlement principally of Wesleyan Methodists from the South of Ireland, that I would preach to them at 11 o'clock. Found them, as far as the notice extended, assembled at the hour and very attentive. Instead of standing in time of prayer they all knelt, and many of them left the house with their cheeks bedewed with tears. The audience was about forty in number, and a few more might have been collected had there been time to give them notice.

"Upon enquiry I found that they had been well supplied with Bibles by the Ladies' Bible Society of Miramichi, and also that they had once organized a Sabbath School among them, but that through mismanagement it had fallen into decay. I endeavoured to show them the importance of such an Institution among them, and urged them strongly to revive it, which they promised to do.

"September, 2nd Sabbath.—Preached to an audience of about one hundred and twenty persons, which is nearly the amount of the Protestant population of Bathurst, as the audience in the Episcopal Church consisted of but nine individuals. Baptized two children and gave notice that I had brought with me a few copies of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, and Brown's First Catechism for children, for sale or gratuitous distribution, and also a few tracts. I also intimated that in consequence of the preachers lately employed by the committee as missionaries, being now all entrusted with the pastoral care of congregations, the committee would be unable to send the Bay any farther supply till the beginning of next summer, when they expected to have two young men out from Scotland, but that when these arrived they might rest assured one of them would immediately be missioned to them and the adjacent settlements. With this information they expressed themselves much pleased. In the evening, by a previous appointment I went up the *Tatagouche* river (distance, three and a half miles) and baptized the six youngest children of Hugh Munro, Esq., the eldest an adult, the remaining five not.

"Bathurst is not, and will not likely for a number of years, be capable of supporting a Presbyterian clergyman. The French population are the most numerous, and they are all here (as in every settlement round the Bay) Roman Catholics. They have a Chapel and resident priest. The exterior of a small Episcopal Church has been nearly completed here, and a person in deacon's orders has been sent on by the Bishop of Nova Scotia to officiate in it; but had we an acceptable Presbyterian clergyman established there, the former would not have an average one dozen hearers. As this side of the Bay has lately been erected in a County called Gloucester, and Bathurst constituted the site for the shire town, there can be little doubt that an Episcopal clergyman will be continued here, however small his audience. The Presbyterian population are able, and would I think be willing, to remunerate the committee for a preacher's labors one-fourth of the year. Many of them anxiously look for some arrangement of this kind. They have yet done nothing towards erecting a Church, and probably will not, till they have some prospect of a permanent supply of preaching.

"8th, Saturday.—Arrived at Restigouche in time for breakfast, and was very cordially received at the house of Robert Ferguson, Esq., where the missionaries sent hither generally lodge.

"9th, Sabbath.—Preached two sermons, as usual to a very attentive audience of about one hundred and fifty persons. Here let me record the goodness of God,

and say, thus far hath he helped me. After being confined in bed in sickness the greater part of Saturday and Sabbath morning, and having feared that I would be unable to prosecute my mission farther, I was enabled to go through the labors of the day with greater ease, and to return from the pulpit less exhausted, than I have sometimes done when in my usual health. After sermon intimated that I would preach in the same place on the Wednesday following at 3 o'clock, and on the following Sabbath at 11. Also that I had a few Catechisms and Tracts for distribution.

"10th, Monday.—Disposed of about one dozen Catechisms and distributed a number of Tracts, but was forced, on account of my limited supply, to send those who applied away in every instance with fewer than they solicited. Here, and at Bathurst, copies of the Confession of Faith were frequently called for, but I had none to give.

"12th, Wednesday.—Preached at 3 o'clock to an audience of seventy or eighty persons (the day was blustry and wet), and conversed with a few individuals who applied for baptism for their children. Distributed a few Tracts.

"13th, Thursday.—Spent a considerable portion of the day in conversation with parents who called to solicit baptism for their children.

"14th, Friday.—Distributed a few more Catechisms and Tracts.

"16th, Sabbath.—Preached two sermons to an audience of one hundred and sixty-five persons, and baptized seven children; of the above number of hearers, many came either on foot through the woods, or in canoes and boats, fifteen, eighteen, and twenty miles, to the place of worship, and numbers of them left home on Saturday. Besides these also some attended who could not get within the doors, the house being small and crowded, and not being able to stand without, on account of a drenching rain, were forced to return home without hearing any of the services of the day.

"New Richmond, Sept. 20th, Thursday.—Preached at 12 o'clock in a private house to an audience of about forty-five persons, and intimated that I intended again to preach to them on the following Sabbath.

"23rd, Sabbath.—Preached two sermons to a very attentive audience of seventy-six persons, chiefly from the West of Argyleshire (Scotland). This is nearly or quite the amount of the Protestant population of the settlement, as there were few indeed absent within ten miles of the place of worship. Numbers during the time of divine service were melted in tears, and all after the assembly was dismissed seemed reluctant to leave the place, where it is to be hoped, some at least had enjoyed an interview with God their chiefest joy. A recollection seemed to be awakened among them generally of the time when they went up together, Sabbath after Sabbath, to the sanctuary of God, and encompassed his holy altar in the land of their fathers. And the parting effusion of every heart, as they returned to their homes, seemed to be, "Oh! that we could thus enjoy the public ordinances of divine grace every week, our other privations in this wilderness would be comparatively easily borne."*

In these missionary excursions his ministrations were deeply impressive, and his personal intercourse greatly endeared him to the scattered sheep of the desert. Over a large extent of country, indeed over the whole Northern portions of New Brunswick and the Canada side of the Bay Chaleur, his memory is still fondly cherished.

While speaking of Mr McLean's labors beyond his own congregation it may be added that, while he was a firm Presbyterian, and while he was the farthest from countenancing anything like laxity in regard to religious prin-

* The above extracts from his journal were originally published in the report of the "Glasgow Society for promoting the interests of Religion and liberal Education among the Settlers of the North American Provinces." We give them here as they are the only fragments of his journal which we possess.

ciples and practice, he was at the same time eminent for his christian liberality and catholic spirit. His intercourse with persons of different religious sentiments was mild and conciliating, and he was more frequently invited into other pulpits than those of the body with which he was immediately connected. Thus, while respected for the manly avowal of his principles, he won the esteem, and we may say affection, of a large circle of christians of other names.

Having referred to Mr McLean's labors in the cause of temperance, it may be added that he took an active part in every project for alleviating human misery and promoting the welfare of society. He loved the prosperity of Zion, and into the support of those institutions which were designed to promote it he threw himself with his characteristic ardour. Sabbath Schools and Bible and Missionary Societies engrossed much of his attention, and commanded his most vigorous support.

V. ILL HEALTH.

Mr McLEAN's constitution was never very robust, and his habits of study early became close and arduous. While pursuing his theological studies, previous to receiving license, he was compelled, on account of the state of his health, to relax his exertions: and such severe mental and bodily exertions were too much for him to sustain. The effects of them were marked with anxiety by his affectionate partner and discussed with concern among his intimate friends; and often was he admonished that the course he was pursuing would soon destroy his usefulness by cutting short his life. Willing however to spend and be spent in the service of his Master, though he valued the warnings of affliction and the admonitions of friendship, he postponed them: all to the impressions which he entertained of his solemn duties. He continued to tax all his energies till, on the 6th of August, 1830, he was prostrated by a copious and repeated hemorrhage of the lungs. He had on the previous Sabbath (assisted by the Rev David Roy of Pieton) dispensed the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to his Church, and, accustomed as he was on such occasions to labour as in agony for the edification of others, he appears to have taxed his physical energies beyond the power of endurance. His life was then despaired of, and, while on him medical skill appeared for a time to be expended in vain, at intervals of ease he delighted to speak of the things of his heavenly Father's kingdom. As his strength became partially recovered, to those around him, he literally spake "as a dying man to dying men," and deep and impressive were the lessons of instruction which he communicated.

At this time his people were often long without their sanctuary privileges, and, among others, I then visited him and preached to them three Sabbaths in December. As an inmate of his house, I then had the opportunity of observing "what manner of man" he was, as husband, parent, pastor and neighbour. From the observations there made, and the memoranda taken then and during a week which I spent with him in March 1832, and from several years of general acquaintance with him, I am now enabled at a distance of nearly twenty years to state, in the absence of any autobiography or diary of his own, so many facts illustrative of his character.

VI. TRAVELS FOR HEALTH.

He so far recovered by January 1st, 1831, as to venture, by the advice of

his physicians, a journey to the Southern States for the restoration of his health, and, leaving the partner of his life and the children of their affection to a covenant keeping God, he proceeded by Halifax, Boston and New York to Savannah. A few items from his letters to his wife, written on this journey, will prove interesting to the reader. Having left Halifax on the 9th of January he writes from Boston on the 15th, "Dr Sterling (of Halifax) says my chest is too contracted to allow my lungs ample room to play, and that therefore I will always be subject to a renewed attack of the debility in the chest, which I now experience, if I am not careful of myself." "I never saw the hand of God so clearly directing my ways, and preserving me from harm, as I have done since I last left home." This he mentions in relation to the exposure of his health upon the journey and voyage, and especially in being hindered from going, as he at first intended, to Bermuda.— Referring to the mercies received on the way he says, "I pray and trust that God will be as kind to you and our dear children. Commit yourself and them and me to him daily, and he will preserve us and make all our trials and afflictions issue in a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." Writing from Boston on the 29th January he says, "I have every reason to believe that I will never again stand either confinement or bodily labour as heretofore. As to this I wish to say, God's will be done. I know that he is doing all this in great mercy to my soul, and should I complain? Oh that he may make me to profit by his dealings with me. Without the influences of his Spirit to quicken, my heart will remain under all his fatherly corrections as hard as the nether millstone." "I was out at Cambridge visiting the College there. It is the best endowed Seminary in the United States, but now, alas! Unitarian from top to bottom, a deadly fountain poisoning with its streams the whole land." "The general style of preaching here is not as good as I anticipated. In the New England States there are few Presbyterians. I have not yet met with a minister of this persuasion. They abound from New York southward. I would again commit you and our dear little ones and household to God, whom I entreat daily to direct all our steps and to permit us shortly to meet again in the land of the living." On the 21st February, writing from New York mentioning to her the improvement of his health, and having as yet received no letters from home, he says, "When God is thus kindly preserving and restoring me I feel exceedingly anxious to know that he is equally kind to you and to our little babes." "There is what is called 'an extensive revival' going on in this city. I have been endeavouring to observe its nature and watch its progress, but have been able to learn little of its true nature. I hear the ministers preaching and lecturing, and exhorting and praying, to pretty full houses, three or four or half-a-dozen times a week, if I choose to attend; but in what state the minds of the hearers are I have no chance of knowing. The preaching is not satisfactory to me. Excitement is more aimed at than instruction. Numbers of the most faithful and talented ministers of the city stand aloof and refuse to co-operate in the services. Upon the whole I regard revivals, as spoken of here, less favourably than I once did. The preaching in these States generally is not to my mind. There are many however here whose preaching is excellent. In the meantime I commit you all to the care of him who keeps Israel." From New York he reached Savannah after the short passage of four days; and, when nearly three weeks there, on the 18th of March he, after detailing to Mrs McLean the improve-

ment of his health, says, "I wish, I long much to hasten back to the place where alone I feel at rest in the present world, and to share with you the labours and cares of domestic concerns, and to partake of the sweets of domestic joys. In all my wanderings the language of my heart is, 'there is no place like home, home, sweet home.' The present condition and prospects of the congregation are also subjects which occasion me considerable anxiety." Having heard nothing from home since he left, he says, "I wish I could just hear that you are all in good health, and that the congregation is supplied and the Sabbath Schools prospering; I would be comparatively contented in the mean time." "You will expect some account of Savannah. It is a very pretty city, regularly laid out and well planted with trees of various kinds, some of which retain their leaf all winter. There are seven or eight clergymen of different denominations here, and I hope a good deal of religion." In this city of the balmy South he not only found his strength returning, but he also encountered a new type of human degradation and wretchedness. Until he landed in Savannah he had never seen a slave.—His attention however was soon called to the subject in a manner fitted to excite the commiseration of a mind deeply imbued with human sympathy.—On surveying the city, and in front of the Exchange, he was accosted by human beings, negroes and mulattoes, begging of him, who they had supposed to be a purchaser, not to separate them as families. "Please, Massa, buy *her*. Please, Massa, buy us all; don't part us," and other earnest requests of a similar nature were poured into his astonished ear. His spirits sank within him, and the varied beauties of the city were lost in the scene. On inquiry he learned that they were the effects of some bankrupt planter forced under the hammer, and on returning to the spot on his evening's walk he found that its former occupants were removed by their purchasers.

This account, which I had from him in conversation, he in part states to his wife in his letter of the 18th of March, continuing from his last extract, "There is here I hope a good deal of religion. But here is slavery with all its revolting attendants and consequences. The very day I landed here I saw about two hundred and sixty negroes, mulattoes, &c., men, women, children, and infants at the breast, assembled in front of the Exchange and put up at auction and sold like as many cattle. At these sales the husband is recklessly separated from the wife and she from him for ever—children from their parents and from each other. It is by the laws of the State a crime punishable with heavy fines and imprisonment to teach either a slave or a free negro to read or write. They are allowed to hear preaching, and are taught some questions verbally at Sabbath Schools. A free negro coming into the State can be imprisoned and sold. A considerable number of slaves absconded some time ago in South Carolina and concealed themselves in the woods. They were discovered and taken last fall, but twenty-seven of them were shot like as many rabbits in the struggle which they made to secure their liberty. Not long since a man was burnt to death for killing his overseer, who had treated his daughter brutally. I have many a warm argument with the people here about this system, but interest preponderates when opposed to argument however strong."* On the same 18th of March

* It may be necessary to explain that at that time the Abolition excitement had not commenced, and the evils of slavery were freely discussed and admitted even in the Southern States. The course which Mr McLean pursued would at the present moment, in all probability, have caused his summary expulsion from the State.

he says, "I have preached once here without any serious injury, and nothing but medical advice and a fear of the wet easterly weather of April induces me to delay longer here." "May God spare us all to meet and to be mutually a blessing to each other in the land of the living, and above all may our names be written in heaven and may we be kept unto his kingdom and glory."

Finding his health improving, he set his face homeward and reached Boston in April. In writing to Mrs McLean from that city he informs her of his prosperity, and in reference to a call made to him by the congregation of the late Rev J. Thompson, of Miramichi, N. B., he says, "I have written to Miramichi declining the acceptance of their call and directing them to look elsewhere for a pastor." Again, in relation to his health he says, "My looks indicate good health, and all will expect from my appearance that I should enter vigorously upon duty. It must be otherwise." On reading the letters from his wife, which he received in Boston, he writes, "I have endeavoured to thank God with gratitude for his continued goodness exercised towards you all, and for the hope I enjoy of shortly meeting you all again in the land of the living. Oh! that we may be disposed to praise him while we have any being for all his mercy, and oh! that we may be more knit together in the bonds of love, and more helpful to each other than we have ever yet been." "There is what is called an extensive revival in progress in this city at present, but I defer particulars until we meet. It is a time of unparalleled excitement all over the country. I have been exceedingly fortunate as to boarding. My landlady here, and the landlady with whom I lodged in Savannah, are both persons of genuine piety and both kind to me beyond description. The privileges enjoyed by christians in this country are very great; and the piety of many is of a more exalted kind than is usual among us. There is much piety in some of the Episcopal Churches." From these extracts the reader will trace a few traits of his character.

VII. RESUMPTION OF LABORS.

He returned home in May and resumed his pastoral labours. With him "the spirit truly was willing, but the flesh was weak." Many of his people lived by what is usually called lumbering, and some by shipbuilding, while others were endeavouring to reclaim from the forest a small farm. He had no facilities of coach or stean, by which to reach the scattered dwellings of his people, and in many directions in summer a horse was but of little use. The locomotive by which many of his hearers came to their place of worship in the summer was the paddle. For example, on my visit to him above mentioned (in December, 1830) I entered his field of labour at Koulibouquich, and, after preaching there on the 2nd, I on the 3rd crossed the Koulibouquich and North West River, Deigle's Creek and Richibucto Harbour in log canoes. Such labour was enough to undermine the most robust constitution, especially if carried on in such a manner as would satisfy a heart like his, burning with love to the souls of the perishing.

In his pastoral labours, during 1832, he was frequently interrupted by a general feebleness of health and indications of pulmonary consumption. Still he continued to testify repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, earnestly exhorting sinners "to flee from the wrath to come." As to any unusual plan of pastoral labour with the young, or any uncommon

manner of conducting public worship, meetings of Session, or sacramental seasons, he had none; for he was a Pre-byterian, and the four walls of the Church, necessary for her well being, all built upon the chief corner stone, namely, doctrine, government, worship and discipline, were by him, as a sentinel on his watchtower, faithfully guarded. He was an ensample to the flock, pointing to a better world and leading the way.

The privilege of hearing him conduct worship in his family morning and evening, on the visits to him above named during his season of debility, I highly prized, and regard these days as among the most refreshing times of my life. The boldness with which he came to the throne of grace, the subdued emotions of his soul, his solemn and melodious voice, the action and fervor which adorned his morning and evening song of praise, and his profound veneration for the Word of God, were all calculated, under the Holy Spirit, to arouse attention and refresh the soul.

Wherever, during the efficient years of his ministry, he appeared and preached he was heard with earnest attention, especially when the hand of disease was upon him. Tall and commanding in person, with a voice of rich melody and of great compass, with a due attention to personal appearance, and above all having his own soul deeply impressed with the awful realities contained in his message, and its effects for weal or for woe, upon his hearers, his influences on his audiences were unusually great. His instructions were clear, forcible and valuable; but in his impressions upon the soul through the affections were his peculiar characteristics exhibited. Never can I forget some of his solemn appeals to his hearers, and, in one of these, his enunciation of the twenty-second verse of the fiftieth Psalm* was among the most thrilling and impressive intonations of the human voice which ever fell upon my ear.

VIII. HIS DEMISSION.

In the spring of 1833 he was attacked by pleurisy, and from its effects, combined with consumption, he never recovered. In the infant state of the congregation he could not think of being longer chargeable on its bounty when he could no longer perform the duties of his office, and he adopted the resolution to *demit his charge*. This step was the more trying to the feelings of the man, the husband and the father, inasmuch as having devoted himself exclusively to the duties of his office (not so common a course then as now) he had derived from his limited income little more than the means of immediate subsistence for his increasing family. But the conviction of duty prevailed over every other consideration, and with *Jehovah-Jireh* as his maxim, he applied to the Presbytery for a dissolution of the connection between him and his flock. Under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the Presbytery felt that it was their duty, however painful to their feelings, to comply with his request. His demission was accepted and the Rev James Waddell was appointed to intimate the fact to the congregation. The scene that followed we shall give in his words:—

“Seldom has it fallen to my lot to be engaged in so deeply affecting a service as that of publicly announcing to the people the decision of the Church. Proofs of

* “Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.”

very deep interest in his welfare had often already been manifested by them to their minister, and when now they are informed that at his own solicitation he was to be removed, and knew that he was to be removed too to die, sorrow filled their hearts and many of them wept sore. Nor were their effusions of grief the effect of sudden ebullition of feeling or momentary excitement. They left the Church in sadness, and went mourning about the streets. One lady, in particular, to whom he had become very much endeared wept all the way from the Church to her own dwelling, and seemed to be almost inconsolable. Nor has she forgotten since his departure to the land of forgetfulness, to visit his widow and fatherless little ones, though removed to a distance, in the character of a kind and beneficent friend. Indeed, a grateful remembrance of the past has been evinced by many of his former charge, and proofs have not been wanting that his labours among them were not in vain.

"Nor can it be supposed that to a minister, situated as Mr McLean was, possessing peculiarly tender sensibilities, and cherishing ardent affection for his people, the scene to which I have referred could be any thing but painful in the extreme. The deed of Presbytery, in accepting his demission, and the commendation of himself, his family and his flock in prayer by the Moderator, to the care of the Keeper of Israel, deeply affected him even to tears; and when the announcement was to be made to the congregation he summoned all his energies to be present on the occasion. Pale and emaciated, he took a seat among the people to whom he had often joyed to break the bread of life, and with calmness and composure witnessed the pulpit, which had been his officially, occupied by another, whose business it was to tell them that it should be his no more. Though the expression of feeling evinced on the occasion could not but deeply harrow his feelings, he seemed to be quite resigned to the event; and it would have required no great effort of imagination to put into his mouth the language of Paul: "What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?" To me it was exceedingly affecting to see him, when a little relaxed after service, follow with his moistened eyes, from the window of the vestry, the beloved partner of his bosom in a visit to the grave of their first born, and to hear him remark that another trial awaited *her*, when she must be separated from the ashes of the dead. In himself for the time, the emotions of the minister seemed to be sovereign, and to hold in restraint, if not in suspension, every subordinate feeling."

Before quitting the scene of his labours he once more joined with the people of his late charge in partaking of the memorials of the Saviour's death, and thus at the very spot, in which of all others, a Presbyterian clergyman would desire to part with his flock, again to meet them at the judgment seat of Christ, that spot in which all that is solemn in a pastoral relation on this side of the veil of death concentrates, that spot in which to the people of his charge he could say, this day and here, "I call God for a record upon my soul," that "I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God," that "I have known nothing amongst you but Christ and him crucified,—at "the Lord's table" he bade them an affectionate, a solemn and a final farewell. As the Communion was then dispensed by another,* and his strength was reduced to feebleness, he could do but little more than say to the elders of his Church, as did the apostle at Mileus to the elders of the Church of Ephesus (Acts xx. 18, 19, 28), and to his people he could add but little beyond repeating the words of the same address (verses 20, 25, 32), "And when he had thus spoken he prayed with them all, and they all wept sore, sorrowing most of all that they should see his face no more."

* The late Rev R. Douglass, of St Peter's, Prince Edward Island.

IX. LAST DAYS AND DEATH

After his release from the charge of their souls, and when he had enjoyed a season of rest, his health improved a little, and during that summer he removed with his family to Nova Scotia. He was afterwards enabled to preach occasionally, and to deliver a few addresses on temperance. In this cause, as we have seen, he was early enlisted, and to his dying hour he willingly subserved its interests as a handmaid to, but not as a substitute for, religion. After the enterprise had obtained a powerful impulse both in the United States and in Great Britain, and after statistics had been collected extensively on the subject, he again advocated the cause in his native place in the form of an address, which was afterwards published. Whatever may be its merits as a production, it required but very little of that moral heroism which was demanded when he preached on the subject before the magistrates of Richibucto.

For the support of his family he opened a private Academy in Halifax. In this he was successful for two years, until overcome by disease. Having finally to abandon the hope of public usefulness, he removed his family to Pictou, where for several months he lingered under the fell consumption.— My last interview with him was in June, 1836. A spirit of submission characterised his deportment. He knew that it was good for him that he had been afflicted, and while he did not fully understand why God should keep him so long on the earth while his usefulness was gone, and he was "become as a wonder unto many," still, in patience, "he possessed his soul," and "endured as seeing him who is invisible."* From the pen of his friend Patterson I have the following observations illustrative of his character, and affording some knowledge of his views of "the work of the ministry" as surveyed from a death-bed:—

"Mr McLean you know was a hard student. His sermons were the result of much reading and thought. He would not serve God with what cost him nothing. He was willing to spend and be spent in the service of his Master. He did not lose in your estimation by increased acquaintance. There are many persons whose piety appears very warm in public, but, did you know them in private, your good opinion of them would be diminished. It was not so with our friend. The more intimately you became acquainted with him the more highly you would esteem him. His conscientious attention to private duties disclosed the secret of his public usefulness. During the short time that he was spared to minister in holy things the anticipations of his friends were not disappointed. His preaching was of a highly useful and practical kind. But his career was short. His Master, in his mysterious Providence, saw fit soon to call him away from his labours here below. I saw him not long before his lamented death. Deep indeed was the sense which he then felt of the responsibilities of the ministerial office. Earnestly did he endeavour to impress it upon my mind. Oh! that we could always feel it, as in the prospect of eternity."

* "During the last visit which I was privileged to make to him," says the Rev J. Waddell, "after expatiating upon the goodness of God both in matters temporal and spiritual, and giving expression to grateful acknowledgments of his mercies, he wondered what good purpose in divine Providence could be served by his protracted existence, in circumstances in which he feared he was himself reaping little profit, and in which he supposed he could be of no service to others; and then catching himself, he said, 'Ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise.'"

Pretracted as were his sufferings, yet all the days of his appointed time he readily waited until his change came.

He again saw the "sere and yellow leaf" of autumn upon the forest, and felt the chilling blast of winter in its appointed season. With the knell of the dying year around him he found his end drawing near, and waited for the salvation of his Lord. In the promises of the new covenant he found his hope in the final hour, and fell asleep in Jesus on the 20th day of January, 1837, in the 37th year of his age. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." He left a widow, four sons and one daughter, in the care of that God who has said, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me."— Thus, having raised up and used his instrumentality in his vineyard, for a season determined upon by infinite wisdom, the King and Head of the Church again laid him aside, demanded the account of his stewardship, and called him to his reward, while by the whole circle of his acquaintances his death was deeply lamented. "He, being dead, yet speaketh," in the recollections of his hearers who survive, and in the few productions of his pen, which, scattered by the press, convey to the reader a specimen of the powers, natural and cultivated, of his intellect, the earnestness of his soul, his affection for the souls of others, and his zeal for the glory of God in their salvation. Viewed in comparison with the not uncommon length of human life, three-score years and ten, his sun went down at noon, but—

"That life is long which answers life's great end."

To our view he seemed to have "withered in all the leaves of his spring," but no! his branches were already laden with fruit, and he was only *transplanted* to take root in a richer soil, to flourish beneath a fairer sky, and to yield still richer and more abundant fruit to the praise and glory of him "in whom *the whole family in heaven and earth* is named." "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."