

Edward Donnelly
The diary of Thomas Houston of Knockbracken in 1828-1832.

Source: The Banner of Truth, 1989.

<https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/diary-thomas-houston-knockbracken>

In the early 1800s the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland was enjoying a period of considerable expansion. The Covenanters, as they were and are still known as, had formed a number of new congregations and had been enjoying, for the first time in over a century, the services of a plentiful supply of ministers. Their theology was thoroughly Reformed and each congregation was divided into a number of 'societies', or fellowship meetings, in which spiritual life was nurtured and strengthened. Following their Scottish ancestors, great stress was laid upon the duty of the nation to acknowledge the kingship of Christ, an obligation enshrined and recognised in the covenants of the mid-17th century. Future prospects were encouraging and the people were praying that the Lord would raise up for the church a new generation of leaders. Chief among these was a young man who was to stand at the forefront of the Covenanting witness for over fifty years.

Thomas Houston was born at Donegore on 12th October, 1804 and spent most of his early life in the congregation of Cullybackey. He was ordained to the pastorate of Knockbracken, County Down, in April 1828 and remained in that charge for a period of 54 years until his death in 1882. His intellectual and literary abilities were early recognised when the Synod invited him, while still a young man, to publish and circulate a magazine for the benefit of the church. The first edition of The Covenanter appeared in December 1830. An outstanding preacher and pastor, he was appointed the first Professor of Exegetical and Pastoral Theology and Ecclesiastical History when the denomination established its own theological college in 1854.

Dr Houston was a gifted writer and published a number of works, the best-known of which are The Intercession of Christ, The Dominion and Glory of the Redeemer, A Treatise on the Lord's Supper and a series of shorter writings which were published in 1876 in a four-volume set entitled Works Doctrinal and Practical of Thomas Houston D.D. Although almost unobtainable today, these books contain a great deal of valuable material, both theologically profound and warmly devotional. He was one of the best-known of the Covenanting ministers and his memory is still honoured. Knockbracken, the congregation which he pastored, still exists, much smaller now, but in a strategic position on the outskirts of Belfast.

It was therefore with a considerable degree of excitement that I received, some time ago, a small leather-covered notebook filled with his spidery handwriting. It was

Houston's diary, previously undiscovered, for the years 1828 to 1832. On opening it, to quote Keats:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken.

Here was the record of the spiritual experience of a young minister of 24, later to become an eminent figure in the church. To read this journal, deeply personal, written with transparent honesty in the presence of his God, was to be moved, humbled and encouraged and I hope that the publication of the following selections, about a quarter of the whole, will bring similar blessing to a wider audience.

An ordinary pastor, involved in the regular duties of the ministry, he reflects his daily life and work. His temperament is scrupulous, at times over-sensitive, perhaps due in part to uncertain health. We in the late 20th century would not, and should not, express ourselves in quite the same way. Yet his spiritual kinship with us is manifest. He is deeply in earnest about his calling to preach the gospel. He applies to himself the Scripture which he has delivered to others. His great concern is to know – God and to become more like him. In this hurried, superficial age we can learn from such a man. But the following excerpts allow Thomas Houston to speak for himself.

A Diary of God's Dealings and Providences with a Most Unworthy Sinner
April 8th, 1828.

For a considerable period I have been resolved on keeping a register of the dealings and providences of my Heavenly Father towards me, but, what through want of what I considered a fit opportunity, and through what was, I fear, a greater cause, spiritual sloth, I have hitherto neglected it. When I first began to think of this subject, various objections appeared to me to lie against diary writing altogether. It would give room for spiritual pride: it led persons to measure themselves by themselves: and as it is not easy to determine between the motions of the spirit and the natural workings of the unrenewed conscience or the artifices of the Deceiver, there is a danger of forming incorrect judgments. These and other reasons kept me a length of time from determining for the thing. Of late I have got over these objections entirely, and am now of the opinion that such a record may be of much service to an individual to furnish him with matter for prayer and self-examination, and to be a monument to God's faithfulness.

In commencing this diary, I have chosen the date of my ordination to the work of the ministry, and pastoral charge of the Reformed Presbyterian congregation of Knockbracken. This is to me the most solemn, the most interesting event of my life. The day of death cannot be surrounded with a more impressive scenery. Reflect on it a moment. How awful the charge! Who would not stagger under the weight of its

responsibility? A minister of the gospel is to watch for the souls of others, 'as they that must give account' (Hebrews 13:17). He is to preach that gospel by which he himself and those that hear him shall be judged. As an ambassador, he must negotiate with rebellious, guilty men, holding out the offers of peace and pardon to them in such a manner as that he may advance the honour of his Saviour, and, if he be unsuccessful, that he at least deliver his own soul. Contemplating such an undertaking, may we not exclaim with the apostle of the Gentiles: 'Who is sufficient for these things?' Lord! let thy grace be made sufficient for me. Let thy strength be perfected in my weakness!

From an early period, I was led to desire the office of the ministry, I trust, from a sincere desire to be instrumental in the salvation of fellow sinners. On 25th December, 1826 this desire was partly fulfilled by my being licensed by the presbytery to preach the gospel. After having been employed in this work in various places, a call was presented to me from the congregation of Knockbracken in Belfast, on the evening of August 28th, 1827, for the accepting of which I hope I had direction from the church's glorious Head. Having given in to the presbytery second trials (October 10th), and supplied regularly at Knockbracken afterwards, Tuesday, 8th April, 1828 was appointed as the day of ordination. On that occasion, amidst much weakness, I was enabled to give myself to the Lord and the service of the church, and I trust this dedication, imperfect though it was, was graciously accepted.

My solemn engagement was entered into under several discouraging circumstances. The brethren in the meeting, who ordained me, were not cordial in the work, and the congregation was in a broken, dispirited condition: besides, their character was that they had been a stubborn, perverse people. Some of these things perhaps weighed on my mind at the time, and, combining with my own corruptions, prevented me from having as much spiritual enjoyment on the occasion as I would have desired. Yet were even these things of use to me, and in looking back I can see in them the gracious finger of God. They brought me under the necessity of looking for help above man, even to him who made the heavens and earth, and while they impressed me with a sense of my own weakness and insufficiency, they endeared to me the blessed assurance: 'My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness' (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Sabbath Evening, December 14th, 1828.

It is an evidence of a bad state of affairs with a person in relation to temporal things when he is backward to look into his books, or to examine his accounts. The distance of time since the last entry in this diary would, I fear, say that I have not been thriving in spiritual things. A fortnight of the span allotted me on earth has fled away. What have I been doing the while? What advances have I made in the divine life, in my preparations for the judgment? These are momentous inquiries and much do I fear that I can return to them no satisfactory answer. Cleanse me, O Lord, from secret faults! Sometimes, if I be not deceiving myself, I have a taste of God's graciousness, and I

think I feel the unchangeable Redeemer precious to me. At others, corruption obtains a melancholy ascendancy and all seems lost. What coldness and formality in duty! What want of zeal for the glory of God! What absence of sensibility even in relation to my own personal concerns! Revive and quicken me, O Lord! Thy power alone can overcome the malignity of my heart, can free me from carnality, can make me spiritually minded.

Thursday Evening, December 18th.

Today I was employed in catechising the young, and afterwards in sessional business. It is sweet to obey the commands of the Redeemer (though how imperfect is the obedience!) and, through love to him, to feed his lambs. What unspeakable honour does the Exalted One, who has the government upon his shoulders, confer on us in associating us with himself in the rule of his house!

Sabbath Evening, December 21st.

Yesterday I had an interview with Dr Rowan, of New York, who has been sent to these countries to recommend the American Institution formed for affording an asylum for Jews professing Christianity. Dr R. appears to be a very worthy man, and to support as such the character of a Christian minister. I trust the plan will succeed. My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

December 25th.

I attended a meeting of presbytery today. Rev. Mr. Henry preached from Matthew 5:14, 15, 16: 'Let your light so shine.' It was a good missionary discourse. The melancholy case of G C spread a gloom over the minds of all the members. I was deeply affected with this case. What will become of the Covenanting interest in Belfast! But why this despair? Cannot the glorious King of Zion make the most untoward circumstances redound to his praise, and contribute to promote the welfare of his church? It is sweet to reflect, amid every calamity, that the King of Zion reigns to all generations (Psalm 146) and that his love to his church is unchangeable.

Sabbath, December 28th.

I preached today at Knockbracken on Hebrews 9:15-23: 'Without shedding of blood', etc. How amazingly rich the provision of ransoming mercy! How precious the blood of the Lamb! Oh! that I, and my little flock, and everyone that this day heard me, may be sprinkled with this peace-speaking blood! Let none of us, good Lord, be found by our impenitency trampling it under foot, or counting it an unholy thing.

In the afternoon I preached on Philippians 2:16: 'Holding forth the word of life!' May those that heard, with the unworthy speaker, be given the 'Word of life' as a principle dwelling and growing in their hearts, and may they be enabled to comply with the solemn admonition of the Spirit in the text.

Wednesday Evening, December 31.

Now another year is on the point of vanishing for ever. It is a solemn thought that I am a year nearer death and the judgment. The God who is full of mercy and compassion has dealt with me as with the barren fig tree. He has spared me another year, and has been employing on me the means of cultivation. Oh! that mine may not be the doom of the fig tree. Thou only, that knowest the end from the beginning, knowest whether I shall ever see in time the return of another closing year. Shouldst thou spare me, Oh! enable me to be more devoted to thy service, to be more spiritually minded, to enjoy the invaluable blessings of redemption than hitherto. And shouldst thou remove me hence, before the lapse of another year, Oh! grant that whenever and in whatever manner the messenger Death may come, I may be found ready. May to me to live be Christ and to die again!

I have been reading, of late, Dr Owen on The Person and Glory of Christ. I have not met with any book containing more exalted views than a few of the last chapters of the first part of this volume contain. Often has it brought me to ask myself 'Am I a Christian at all?' and it has afforded me many new and glorious views of the person and work of my dear Redeemer.

I have experienced much delight in studying the early part of Milner's History of the Church of Christ. The memoirs of eminent Christians in the first ages are a most valuable part of that truly excellent work.

Sabbath Evening, February 1st.

Thursday was our day of Fasting, appointed by the Synod. I directed the people in the duty by an exposition of Revelation 3:1-6, the epistle to Sardis. It is to me an awful thought that it is of the Angel (Minister) of the church that the Redeemer primarily declares: 'I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead'. When a church is in a decayed state, it will generally be found that there is the absence of spirituality from its ministers. They are either, in reality, spiritually dead, or are in a slumbering, indolent condition. Oh, that such may not be my state. Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy word! My earnest desire is that I and this people may be found here walking with undefiled garments, and at last walking with the glorified Redeemer in white.

Sabbath Evening, February 8th.

During the last week I visited several persons in affliction. Two cases much affected me, the one of an aged woman who is tottering on the brink of the grave and who is, I have reason to fear, yet unconvinced of sin. May the divine Spirit, the all-quickenning agent, enlighten her! The other, a person who is in the last stage of consumption, had once been a sensible Covenanter, but had relinquished his profession, fallen into sins of drunkenness and uncleanness and had been the occasion of sin to his children. It is hard to bring conviction home to the hearts of those that speculatively know the truth. I spoke to him of the fullness of the great salvation. He did not express anything that

would lead me to see that he had a good hope in the prospect of death. He quoted, with an expression of despair, 'bones full of the sins of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust'. I find that I can only commit him to him that is mighty to save. May he be delivered from the wrath to come! Let not, O Lord, the sins and errors of my youth be remembered. O save me, for thy mercy's sake!

Thursday Evening, February 12th.

I have been reading, these past days, the life of Mr. Whitefield. He was, no doubt, a burning and a shining light. Oh! for a portion of such a spirit, such fervent devotedness to the service of my dear Redeemer. What high delight will it be to meet with such a saint in the upper world in my Father's house, and to hold converse with him on the preciousness of redeeming love, when we shall draw draughts of bliss from the fountain of life! But I recall my thoughts. Let this be ever the hope that will animate me: 'I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness: So shall we ever be with the Lord!'

March 12th, Thursday Evening.

This day I attended the funeral of Dr Young, Professor of Moral Philosophy, Belfast College. He died rather suddenly, aged 47. He was a man of profound talent and extensive erudition and, I trust, a believer in the crucified Redeemer. That is the grand point. Philosophy! How little canst thou do to support the mind amidst the trials of life. How useless is thine aid to reconcile us to the darkness of the grave, or to prepare us for the eternal state! May I be in that state in which, living or dying, I shall be the Lord's! Oh to be found here living a life of faith on the Redeemer: and to be able to say, on good grounds, 'He loved me and gave himself for me! And when I come to die, let the experience of the 8th chapter of Romans be mine: 'I am persuaded' etc.

Being at Dundonald (Tuesday 10th), I examined and admitted to church membership James and Elizabeth Woods, the first fruits of my feeble labours in that quarter. May they be of the sheep of the Redeemer's flock, and may he himself, by his Spirit, minister to them that nourishment without which all my instructions will be vain! My earnest desire is that there may be added to the Church daily such as should be saved.

Friday morning, March 27th. On Board the Britannia Steam Packet.

Seeing it to be my duty to accede to the request of the Directors of the Missionary Society, I am thus far on my way to visit the Society in Liverpool.

The determination to go, and the preparation for the journey, subjected me to various exercises of mind. My little flock became dearer to me as I had the prospect brought before me of being absent from them for a season. On last Sabbath I set before them the 'Advantage of walking by faith' (Hebrews. 11:2) and the security in times of trial of having a shelter in the chambers of the covenant (Isaiah 26:20, 21). There I desired to leave them. Oh! that every one of them may be found in that strong place of

defence! Thou, the great watchman of Israel, wilt keep them. May the Shepherd of the flock preserve them and me in safety, and at last give us the crown of glory that fadeth not away!

How great is the loving kindness of the Lord, how surpassing great his goodness! Yesterday, from over exertion previous to my setting out, and from the effect of the vessel's tossing, I felt unusual debility, and, as is a usual device of the great enemy, various doubts and fears were flung across my mind. I might never reach the place of my destination. When there, I might be confined by sickness. I had not heard from any of the Society lately and this might be altogether a useless journey. There might be no door opened for my preaching the gospel. These thoughts perplexed me sadly, till at last that consolatory declaration was brought home to my mind: 'The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.' This dispelled my fears and strengthened me in the midst of weakness. I slept, I waked, for the Lord sustained me, and this morning I have felt in comfortable circumstances. Lord, what am I that I should be so favoured! May I henceforth live less to myself, and more to the glory and service of him that died for me and rose again!

Yesterday evening and this morning, from beholding the Lord's wonders in the deep, I was much engaged in meditating on the power of Jehovah. What a comfortable thought to a believer, how awful to the unregenerate sinner! That power which wields the elements, that can control the waves of the ocean, can surely change this vile heart, and can completely transform it after the image of holiness! There would I rest. Give me thus to know, O Lord, the 'exceeding greatness of thy mighty power' (Ephesians 1:19).

Sabbath Evening, Liverpool, March 29th.

I commend unto thee, O my Saviour, the feeble service I have this day rendered thee. Let thy atoning blood remove all its imperfections, and let it come up with acceptance before the mercy seat through thy mediation and intercession!

Letters I had sent announcing my intention of coming had miscarried and had never reached the people. My visit was thus altogether unexpected. Oh! that divine power were to accompany it. The Society has lost, by removals, several of its most active members, and the state of our cause here appears lower than in any former time. Why has the Lord thus a controversy with us? I fear we have not been sufficiently prayerful. We embraced not the opportunity that appeared favourable, and it is perhaps gone for ever. What an instruction does this give to the members of the church and to individuals, that we should hear when God calls, that we should give all diligence.

Mr. McElwain, an elder of Mr. Gamble's, who had been in England for some time on business, was present today. It is a strange way in which God leads his people. Neither of us could have had the smallest thought of meeting here: he of hearing a

Covenanting minister in Liverpool, or I of preaching thus to an elder of the church.
May we, after a few more wanderings, meet in heaven!
Tuesday Evening, March 31st.

I preached this evening in the Welsh Calvinistic Chapel in Pall Mall. The text was Romans 3:31: 'Faith the principle of all evangelical obedience.' The congregation was large and attentive. I feel an interest in these people. They are simple in their manners, and pious. They are the descendants of the followers of Whitefield, and have maintained among them, since his time, an undeviating adherence to the doctrines of grace. May my feeble ministrations be blessed to their edification and establishment in the truth!

Thursday, April 2nd.

I breakfasted this morning at Mr. Murray's, Hope Street, and met with Rev A Wilson of the Scotch Church, Rodney Street. He is a frank, interesting man, fond of speculation on theological subjects, but apparently alive to the necessity of pointed and practical preaching.

He is a disciple of Advocate Erskine's and, with a high veneration for Edward Irving, has adopted some of his views, particularly that the Son of God in his incarnation took fallen human nature into personal union with his divine. Is it not said, though he was made flesh, he was made only in 'the likeness of sinful flesh' (Romans 8:3)? Either I do not understand Irving's view, or it appears to me very unscriptural. Mr. W. in the course of conversation said that Mr. Irving held entirely the sentiments of Covenanters respecting the duty of the magistrate to promote, with all his influence and authority, true religion. Before parting with Mr. W, I spoke of the necessity of practical preaching and the danger of perplexing our congregations with speculating on points of divinity. I was happy to find he entered into my views. I sincerely hope he may be found a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

Liverpool, Wednesday, April 8th.

A year of my ministry at Knockbracken has terminated. On this day 12 months the most solemn transaction of my life took place. I then entered into engagements, I trust not in my own strength, to be a faithful labourer in the Redeemer's vineyard, and was, by the imposition of the hands of the presbytery, set apart to the work of the ministry.

I had proposed some time ago to set apart this day as a day devoted to the service of the Lord, and especially as a time for confessing ministerial unfaithfulness, praising God for the mercies experienced and seeking his guidance for the time to come.

After seeking the assistance of the divine Spirit, I essayed examining myself on the following points in reference to my ministerial work, and, after much reflection, I came to the conclusions and resolutions noted below:

What were my views in entering on the ministry?

I did not make it a matter of sufficient consideration, yet cannot say that I was actuated by any worldly motives. I have to complain chiefly of a kind of insensibility which keeps me from feeling the importance of sacred things: no fasting: little prayer. O Lord, revive and quicken me for thy name's sake.

Was I single-hearted in the dedication of myself to the Lord?

I think I can say, in some measure, I was, though I am sensible that there is much imperfection here too.

In preaching the Word, have I been careful to make diligent preparation for the pulpit? Have I maintained a constant dependence on divine influence and has there, when preaching the gospel, rested on my mind an impression of the importance of the work? What has been my conduct afterwards?

Though I have been wonderfully and graciously supported, and would desire to acknowledge it to the praise of God's glorious grace, I have much to be forgiven on this point. I have allowed other engagements to dissipate my mind. I have left off preparation till too late in the week. I have not thought sufficiently on the matter of the discourses before beginning to write.

I fear that my petitions for supernatural aid have been formal, sometimes totally neglected. I have leaned too much on my own understanding. I have thought by my own representations and arguments that I could persuade men. How often have I entered the pulpit without the impression of the truth and been therefore cold and lifeless. When it was felt, I have spoken boldly, as I ought to speak. I have much reason to complain that the truths I utter dwell not on my heart. I am often lukewarm and indolent afterwards. What is the cause? Not meditating on the truths I speak, not 'rooted and grounded in love'. Oh! this carnal heart.

In visiting, have I preached from house to house?

I fear I have not dealt pointedly enough with the consciences of those to whom I minister. Some families have been much neglected. How can I give account for them?

In ruling, as in Romans 12:8, have I ruled with diligence in sessions and has my conduct in presbyteries and synods been such as becomes an ambassador for Christ? Regarding the church of Christ in general, what have I done to heal the breaches and promote uniformity and peace? Have I given 'the Lord no rest, etc.' (Isaiah 62:6, 7)?

I have much cause of thanksgiving here. Though most inexperienced, I have been guided hitherto through difficulties in safety. Forgive, O Lord, wherein in any case I have been influenced by a lesser motive than ardent zeal for thy glory.

I can only say that the interests of Zion are dear to my heart. I have been trying a little to excite a missionary spirit. I fear however that I have not been sufficiently earnest in prayer for the good of the church. Oh! that the time to favour Zion might speedily come! I should be more concerned, more active. He is no true denizen of Zion that does not seek her good above his chief joy.

What is the state of the congregation, the young, the neighbourhood?

In it are some men of prayer. A few, I fear, are careless, and others not entirely circumspect. There have been five deaths, four adults and a child. I hope all died in peace. The young are beginning to be seriously impressed. All need exciting to more activity, spiritually. One has fallen grievously, another has been excluded for frequently dancing. On the whole, the prospects are such as to make us joy with trembling. Establish thou the work of our hands. Establish them O Lord!

The neighbourhood is dark and sunk in ignorance.

Is Christ in me, or am I reprobate? (2 Corinthians 13:5)

I have reason to hope I can say, 'My Beloved is mine and I am his': The evidences:

I would desire to make his righteousness my sole ground of dependence.

I hope I can say that he is precious to me.

I love his people.

I desire more and more conformity to his image. I love his Second Coming.

I acquiesce in the method of salvation provided. I say of the covenant, 'It is all my salvation and all my desire', 'What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?'

Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

Resolutions:

To seek more divine guidance and assistance.

To be at more pains to prepare for preaching the gospel, meditating on what to speak, feeding myself upon it.

To watch more diligently afterwards.

In the congregation to deal more pointedly with individuals. Let me always bear in mind that I watch for the souls of others as one that must give account.

I require to visit more strictly, to inspect the state of the neighbourhood, to attempt some exercises of preaching or catechising in various places.

These resolutions I would form in the strength of promised grace, and I pray that thou, O God of my life, would enable me to live in the diligent discharge of them.

Friday, May 22nd.

I have been engaged these two weeks in visiting the families of the congregation. I find this a most useful exercise. Is it not that about which the apostle speaks when he talks of preaching 'from house to house' (Acts 20:20)? My earnest desire is that, by these ministrations, many may be warned and invited and led to the Saviour, and many may be built up and edified in their most holy faith.

June 4th, Thursday.

I have been reading, for some time past, the 4th volume of Milner's History of the Church of Christ. The author does ample justice to the character of Luther. Such a book was wanted after the manner in which this eminent reformer was treated by Mosheim, Robertson and other historians unworthy of the name of Protestants. The reason of such apathy is to be found, no doubt, in this, that these writers themselves knew little of experimental religion, and were consequently unable to estimate the motives or appreciate the exertions of men who felt on their hearts the constraining power of the gospel. Luther was unquestionably a 'burning and shining light'. I admire greatly his intrepidity and decision, his disregard of the censure or opinions of men, and his deep reverence for the authority of the sacred scriptures, in prosecuting his labours. Generations yet unborn will have occasion to bless the Lord that he raised up Luther. He had his defects, as what man is there that liveth and sinneth not? I find several things in his opinions of which I cannot approve, and something in his temper and disposition, particularly in his disputes with his fellows of the Reformation, which is not conformed to the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Yet, after all, there is perhaps none other of the reformers who, if placed in Luther's circumstances, would have effected so much. What cannot the grace of God enable men to do!

Monday, June 15th.

Yesterday was the Preparation Sabbath, previous to the dispensation of the ordinance of the supper with us.

Lecture: Hebrews 13:1-9. Text: Matthew 28:5: 'Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified':

I bless my gracious God, I was enabled to exhibit the richness of divine grace and something of the excellency of the unchangeable Redeemer. In prayer I felt comfort in casting my burden on the Lord, and, thanks be to his name, I was given something of the persuasion that he would sustain me and my people. Be thou, O Lord, the breaker up of the way before us. Let thy presence go with us.

In the evening, at half past 7 o'clock, died Margaret Mawhinney, child of Surgeon Mawhinney. At her early age she gave some evidences of grace, and death was to her, I trust, gain.

Thursday, June 18th (Day of Humiliation).

This was the day of humiliation with us. I preached in the forenoon on Mark 14:72: 'And when he thought thereon, he wept.' How often have I denied my Lord and Master. Oh! that I may be led into the exercises of genuine repentance, and, as I reflect on my numerous acts of departure from God, may I be brought to sorrow after a godly sort!

In the afternoon Rev J Dick preached from Deuteronomy 5:29: 'Oh that there were such an heart in them', etc. In a forcible manner he established the point that 'religion, if it be real, has its seat in the heart, and that, if the heart is not engaged in the service of God, there is no religion.' In the close he illustrated the importance and advantage of parental religious instruction. How often have I been lifeless in the service of God! How many times, while I was professedly serving him, have I been setting up my idols within me! 'Oh that there was in me such a heart', etc.

It was gratifying to see the appearance of the congregation today. The audience was even larger than it usually is on the Sabbath, and all were deeply attentive. I trust there were many real mourners in Zion in our assembly this day.

Friday, June 19th.

My heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. I find that, while preparing for the solemn services of the Sabbath, and meditating on the great work before me, my thoughts are wandering and my affections vile. Such things are designed perhaps to keep me humble and to make me long more and more for deliverance from a burden of sin. 'O wretched man that I am', etc. I was yet allowed some access to God in prayer. 'Trust God, for I shall praise him yet, his countenance is mine aid.'

Saturday, June 20th.

This morning I examined young persons and others seeking admission to the membership of the church and proposing to communicate for the first time. On Thursday morning 12 young persons were admitted. I have felt the solemnity of this work. These persons can only rightly be admitted on giving evidence of being gracious subjects, and, in this degenerate day of the church, how difficult is it to find

among the hearers of the Word such evidence as is completely satisfactory. Furthermore, they are an addition to the flock to which the Holy Ghost has made me an overseer, and I must watch for their souls as one that must give account to God. My fervent prayer, when thinking on these things, has been that there may be added to the church such only as shall be saved.

In the forenoon Rev Wm J Stavely preached from 1 Corinthians 11:28: 'Let a man examine', etc. The discourse was plain and practical and the application pointed. One reason which he gave why communicants should essay the work of self-examination was striking and solemn: 'God will examine us: Frequently during the delivery of the discourse was I led to prefer the Psalmist's request: 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting' (Psalm 139:23, 24).
Sabbath, June 21st (Communion Sabbath).

In the morning I was considerably depressed in spirits from the appearance of the day being unusually wet, and from a view of the magnitude of the work which lay before me. In prayer, I felt my fears in some measure dissipated, and had some confidence in casting my burden on the Lord.

I commenced the services in the House with a morning meditation on Psalms 43:3, 4: 'O send out thy light and thy truth', etc. The psalm explained was 27:1-7. The action sermon was from Zephaniah 3:16, 17: 'In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not: and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.'

The subject was great and commanding, and I trust I experienced something of that inward strength with which Jehovah mightily strengthens his people in handling it. What an amazing consideration is the everlasting, unchangeable, distinguishing love of God! How overwhelming the view of our Father's condescension that manifests him resting with eternal complacency in doing good to vile, apostate rebels such as we are! The house was filled to excess, and the large multitude sat, fixed in mute and motionless attention, as the gospel was preached. Oh! that it might be found in the records that shall be unfolded in the Great Day that a word of power came home to the hearts of many while they listened to the discourse!

Mr. Dick fenced the Tables and Mr. Stavely and he delivered addresses at the 2nd and 3rd. I trust I was enabled, from the heart, to renew my personal covenant with the Lord at his table; and to give myself and my people over to him in an everlasting covenant never to be dissolved. One declaration was exceedingly comfortable to me: 'I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect' (Genesis 17:1). I saw that in having God for my portion, I had enough, all that I could desire, exceeding abundantly

above all I could ask or think. Every other object appeared to recede from my view. I hope that I could in reality then say: 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire beside thee' (Psalm 73:25). The command indeed appeared of difficult performance. But yet, in the strength of him whom I took as my portion, I felt drawn to enter on its performance, and my greatest desire was that I might be brought to the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

In the evening Mr. Stavely preached in the open air from John 21:17: 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee!' A large number of attentive hearers remained till the conclusion. My earnest desire is that, many days hence, this Communion Sabbath may be remembered as a time of refreshing and reviving sent from the right hand of the Most High.

Monday, June 22nd.

Today Mr. Dick preached in the forenoon from Hebrews 13:13: 'Let us go forth therefore', etc. It was a most powerful and impressive discourse. Mr. Stavely, in the afternoon, preached a discourse full of comfort and consolation from 2 Timothy 1:12: 'For I know whom I have believed', etc. I dismissed the people with a word of exhortation from Deuteronomy 32:46, 47: 'Set your hearts', etc.

Reflections:

Lord! thou hast been favourable to thy beloved land. Thou hast, with a mighty hand, recalled the captivity of Jacob.

Under what weighty obligations am I laid by this renewed act of divine goodness to live not to myself but to him that died for me and rose again?

It is only known to him, who knows the end from the beginning, whether I and this people shall ever be permitted together to ascend another mount of Communion in this world. The impression on my own mind is that my day of labour shall be short. If we are again permitted to rejoice together in such a scene, may we be found to have lived up to our solemn engagements in the interval; and if any of us are removed, may we be admitted to everlasting and uninterrupted communion with God in Heaven!

We now take our departure again for the wilderness. Let thy presence, O God of Israel, go with us, and may we always act in the world under the deep impression of the mercies we have received and the vows we have renewed in this ordinance.

Sabbath, June 28th, 1829.

I preached at Knockbracken in the afternoon from John 17:11: 'Holy Father', etc. It was exceedingly supporting to commit myself and people, when after a solemn

occasion going again into a world of temptation, into the keeping of a God reconciled in Christ Jesus. What a wondrous consideration is union to Christ! Of all the subjects of gospel revelation, this is one of the most mysteriously gracious. Oh! that I may be one with the glorious Head of the Church, and with all believers in him, as the Father and the Son are one!

Saturday, June 11th.

On the preceding day I travelled to Ballymoney, and today attended at Rev Mr. Stavelly's, Kilraughts, it being the Saturday preparatory to the dispensation of the communion of the Lord's Supper there.

My respected friend preached in the forenoon an excellent discourse from John 5:2-10: 'Cure of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda', and I preached in the afternoon from Hebrews 9:13, 14: 'Christ's blood cleansing the conscience from dead works and fitting for the service of the Living God.' The congregation was very large. The pastor in the evening distributed about 487 tokens of visible fellowship to persons who came forward to receive them. It is delightful to contemplate the increase and prosperity of the church. May there be many spiritual worshippers among this people!

Sabbath, 12th July (Kilraughts Communion Sabbath).

This was externally a calm and serene day. An immense assembly convened at an early hour in the burying ground adjoining the house of worship. Every object was fitted for producing solemn thoughts. The heath reminded one of the days of our fathers' sufferings, when Scotland's martyrs assembled on their native mountains and glens to give thanks to God's name, and to Israel's testimony. The silent dead that lay slumbering beneath, the wide, clear expanse of the heaven stretched out as a canopy above, the morning of the weekly rest, the day when the Saviour rose and completed the evidence of his victory, and showed forth his power to save, and especially the solemnity of the Communion Sabbath, all combined to add interest to the scene and to render it one of the most hallowed and endearing that may be looked for on this side the grave.

Ballymena, Tuesday, 14th July (Meeting of Synod).

The entire proceedings of Synod this year afforded me much gratification. I think there was evidence given on the part of many of the members of being influenced by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God and the good of the church. I have much cause of grateful thanksgiving manifested towards myself in particular. I was concerned in one or two cases which necessarily brought me into collision with the opinions of ministers much my seniors in the Synod, and yet I was conducted safely through them. I trust I behaved in a Christian spirit and manifested Christian meekness in managing them. I dare not impute any part of the success to my own prudence or skill. It was of thy kindness and tender mercy, O Lord, that such a result was brought about! One thing I ought to record to the praise of Jehovah's faithfulness. He, my

precious God, led me to resign, in prayer, the ordering of the case into his hands. I was enabled to say to him, 'Do as seemeth thee good; only if these matters go against me, grant me full resignation to thy disposal'. Leading me thus to deny myself my own understanding, he then, above my expectations and infinitely beyond my deserving, granted me all that my heart would have. May the remembrance of this lead me, in time future, to place unreserved confidence in him!

The Synod closed its proceedings at 12 o'clock on Friday afternoon. It was altogether to me an interesting season. I think I was able to discern some signs of the Lord's intention to arise and favour his Zion, in the zeal and spirit manifested by the rulers of the church. May such signs be rendered still more and more apparent, and may the time to favour Zion, the set time of divine appointment, speedily come!

Tuesday, July 28th.

Today the anniversary of the Rathfriland Juvenile Society was held in Mr. Tate's Meeting House. I spoke on the 'Signs of the Times'. It is pleasing to see the young professing an interest in the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. I was much gratified to have my young friends, Messrs S. and M., present. They are, I hope, young men of sincere piety, who will one day be active and zealous labourers in the Redeemer's vineyard. Their addresses were practical and impressive. Oh! that I might always feel deeply affected about the perishing heathen, and about the condition of thousands in lands nominally Christian, who are living without God and without hope in the world. It is a tremendous thought that under heaven or among men there is no other name given for salvation but that of Jesus, and yet vast multitudes know him not, and many who in words acknowledge him, in works deny him. Oh! that men may, everywhere, be turned from darkness to light, and be delivered from the bondage of Satan into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Thursday Evening, August 27th 1829.

I preached at Dundonald on Titus 3:5, 6: 'Not by works of righteousness', etc. What a glorious consideration! Salvation is, in all its parts, the fruit of God's distinguishing mercy. There is provision in the washing of regeneration and in the renewing work of the Holy Spirit for the cleansing away of my sin, and for conforming me wholly to the divine likeness. May I obtain these blessings: 'Wash thou me, and I shall be whiter than snow', 'Uphold me with thy free spirit.'

I have seen several sick persons this week, one young person in the last stage of consumption and an aged woman near the end of her pilgrimage. I have also heard of the death of Mrs. R, one of my flock. She has been long unwell, and was rather disturbed in mind for a considerable period before her departure. I hope her latter end was peace. The divine Spirit could work even on the waves of a troubled mind. I trust he brought her, by his powerful leading, to the haven of eternal rest. May I learn, from these instances of mortality, to prepare for my own departure, and Oh! my Saviour and

my God, grant that whensoever the messenger of death comes, I may, through thy mercy, obtain an abundant entrance into thine everlasting kingdom!

This is the eve of the holy Sabbath. How pleasing the thought of again assembling with those with whom we expect to spend an eternity of joy, in the courts of the earthly sanctuary! How peculiarly delightful the hope of being taken by the hand of the ever merciful Redeemer into his house of prayer, and made joyous there! I would desire to leave behind me, this night, all earthly thoughts. Oh! that I may be sanctified against the morrow. I am called, as a minister in the sanctuary, to very solemn service. It is my calling to stand between the living and the dead, to declare the whole counsel of God, to warn every man, to comfort the mourners in Zion. Sanctity of heart and life is specially needed for such ministration. Only 'the pure in heart shall see God'. Oh! that I may have created within me a clean heart, and renewed within me a right spirit. When preaching the Word to perishing sinners, may I be constrained by the Saviour's love. May I be enlightened by the divine Spirit, and Oh! that my feeble instrumentality might be accompanied by the working of the Spirit, that sinners might be converted and the saints built up and edified!

On the coming morn, many eyes will be looking to the Redeemer, many hearts panting after him. Lord! let the light of thy favour shine on thy people, make them exceeding glad with the light of thy countenance and satisfy the poor of thy people with bread.

Tuesday Morning, September 15th.

One great reason why we are so much entangled with the world, and why we suffer so many defeats, I have been thinking, is to be found in the circumstance that we are not given to meditate frequently on the person and work of the Saviour, and that we are not coming daily to draw out of his fulness. Hence we are of low comfort, our wheels move heavily in duty and we wander in noonday as in darkness. It was never designed that we should obtain strong consolation in any other way than by daily 'looking unto Jesus, and never do any arrive at the full assurance of hope but by 'giving all diligence' (Hebrews 6:11). May I live in the constant remembrance of these things, and Oh! that, by the divine Spirit, I may be enabled to 'keep myself in the love of God', and to continue in patient waiting for the Lord!

Yesterday, two years expired since I began to minister to the congregation over which the Holy Ghost has made me overseer, after accepting their call. On the first Sabbath of October 1827, I preached to them my first discourse from Exodus 23:20: 'Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared'. May I still have the fulfilment of this gracious promise! I know nothing of the path that is before me. Whether it be long or short, whether smooth or difficult, is only known to him who knows the end from the beginning, and to whom the issues from death do belong. I rejoice in committing all the interest I have in these things into his hands, who is excellent in counsel and wonderful in working.

But, O gracious God!, deny me not this one request: Send thine Angel, the Angel of the Covenant, with me, to keep me in the way and bring me to the place thou hast prepared. When I would wander, may he restrain me. When in darkness, may he enlighten, and at length may he perfect that which concerneth me, and introduce me into those mansions which he hath gone to prepare for his people!

Knockbracken, 17th November (Tuesday).

On the evening of Thursday last, I preached in the new School House, Ballymacashon, Killinchy, on John 1:14: 'And the Word was made flesh', etc. The audience was large and attentive. I am much concerned about this neighbourhood. It is the scene of the labours of the godly Livingstone, but now the candlestick is visibly removed from its place. Return, O Lord, with thy departed glory, and recall the captivity of Zion with a mighty hand.

Monday, March 22nd, 1830.

I returned to town this evening and heard Dr McLeod from New York preach in Berry Street Meeting House, a collection sermon for the 'American Society for ameliorating the condition of the Jews'. His subject was Genesis 49:10: 'Shiloh — unto him shall the gathering', etc. The Doctor chiefly dwelt on this, that 'the Saviour is a fit moral centre for the gathering together of the whole redeemed family in himself. He manifested himself throughout a workman that needeth not to be ashamed'. There was an unction of spirituality in all that he said, giving evidence that he had tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious, and that he was living experimentally on the truths which he proclaimed. I returned home after the discourse, comforted and refreshed in spirit by what I had seen and heard of the Lord's goodness to the vilest of sinners this day.

Ballymacarrett, Friday Evening, March 26th.

I have had several opportunities of meeting with Dr McLeod this week. He is an excellent man, indefatigable in his exertions to do good, of much characteristic simplicity of manners and spirituality of mind. On Thursday evening last, we enjoyed from him an eloquent and impressive address, at a meeting held in Rev. I Wilson's and convened in order to form an auxiliary to the 'American Society for ameliorating the condition of the Jews'. This Society was established, and I trust it will be found a means in the hand of the divine Spirit of leading many Christians to take an active interest in the ingathering and spiritual restoration of Israel.

Thursday, April 8th, 1830.

I have been employed in lecturing and examining some Societies of the Congregation. I find the method of conveying instruction by catechetical exercises admirably fitted for the ignorant and those that are out of the way. My own spirit has been refreshed and, I trust, my people benefited by these labours. My earnest desire is, that while the Great Prophet is, through my feeble exertions, giving to this people line upon line,

here a little and there a little, many may be built up and edified in their most holy faith, and the fruit may appear many days hence.

I think I can say I have had some experience of God's love shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit. The time in which I was first impressed with a sense of my lost state by nature, and had a discovery of the excellency of the Saviour, I cannot distinctly recollect. I bless God, I received a religious education, and was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord under the care of godly parents. Some 12 or 13 years ago, I remember the preaching of the Word and the other ordinances of the sanctuary made a deep and I trust a saving impression on my mind. I was led to see the excellency of the Saviour, and the suitableness of his finished salvation to my necessities. But I would draw the conclusion which I have mentioned respecting myself less from the time and circumstances of the change than from what I have experienced since. I speak with much fear and trembling. Oh! that mine may not be the hope of the hypocrite which perisheth. I trust I can say, I have, at times, been enabled to rejoice in God as my portion, and then methinks I could have parted with everything else and felt that I had all, if deprived of every outward friend and every thing that the flesh counts dear. Am I decided? Art thou not the portion of my cup and inheritance, the health of my countenance, yea even mine own God? I have seen, by faith, and admired the divine beauty in the grace of the gospel: and sometimes I have been overpowered with the display of Jehovah's manifold wisdom and with the harmony of my Father's lovely attributes in the wondrous scheme of redemption, and in the manifestation of the amazing provision of God's love in making the discovery to such a poor sinner as I am. In the ordinances I have had some future glimpses of the Saviour's glory; and often as I have beheld the King in the galleries, I have found that his glory dimmed earthly objects and humbled me in the dust. I have then known that there is a reality in communion with God, and have sometimes longed to depart and be with Christ. I trust I am not, in thus speaking, mistaking transitory feelings for the abiding impressions of the divine Spirit. The views which I have mentioned have been, I must confess, often as passing glimpses, and this has frequently led me to stand in doubt of myself. Yet, I hope, I can say in truth: 'Whereas I was blind, now I see': 'O Lord I am thine, O save me'. How shall I praise the Lord because he hath magnified his mercy to me abundantly!

Ballymacarrett, 4th August, 1830.

It is, I perceive, a considerable period since I have made any entry in this diary. I fear that the cause may be found in a sad spiritual indolence to which I am prone, or in ceasing to exercise a constant godly jealousy over myself. This is my besetting sin, and I find it followed by correction from my Father's hand. I become in consequence languid, cold and lifeless in my service, and I am left to walk in darkness and to have no light.

On Tuesday, the 13th July, the Synod of our church held its meeting in Coleraine. Dr McLeod preached at its opening, and he and Mr. W Symington from Scotland, and Mr. Gordon Ewing, a minister of our church from America, were present and took part with us in the deliberations. It was altogether a refreshing season. Much harmony prevailed and several plans were entered upon which would seem to promise, in future, an extensive spread of the cause of truth. With one part of our proceedings I was particularly pleased, and for it I would desire to be made grateful: a considerable portion of an evening meeting was spent by the members in devotional exercises. I had proposed this measure at our first morning's meeting and was much rejoiced to see it taken up. The exercises were refreshing and the effect upon our after proceedings was most salutary. There was obviously less strife and jealousy observable than on former occasions. May this be the beginning of the outpouring on the church of a Spirit of grace and supplication, and the precursor of days of the right hand of the Most High. Ballymacarrett, 27th August, 1830.

I returned today, amid a heavy fall of rain, from preaching in Killinchy. I was there on Wednesday evening, and preached from Psalm 2:12: 'Kiss the Son', etc. What an instance of wondrous condescension that such an exhortation should be tendered to lost sinners! May I be found ever yielding it ready compliance! I have been refreshed in observing the spiritual hungering and thirst that is manifest among this people. They have been destroyed for lack of knowledge, and are in a perishing condition. The most hopeful symptom is that they appear sensible of the insecurity of their former opinions and practices. My earnest desire is that upon them a spirit of grace and supplication should be poured out and that from among them some of the travail of the Redeemer's soul may be gathered into his spiritual kingdom.

On yesterday (Thursday) I travelled through the country and was in the remnant of one of the old woods for which, in former times, this district was renowned, and where, it is not improbable, Livingstone and men of kindred spirit in his day, offered up prayer and praise to God. I thought of what this place had been once, and of the dreariness of its present moral condition. It was a sweet morning. In the wood, I poured out my soul in prayer to my fathers' God, that he would again recall the captivity of Zion; and, I trust, I was enabled to take hold of his covenant promise, that he would yet make this long forsaken land a land married to the Lord, a land delighted in. How would I consider myself honoured, in being made instrumental of bringing sinners to the Saviour, and in raising up again a Covenanted banner for the truth! If I am not worthy, O Lord, send by him whom thou wilt send, but Oh! for thy truth and thy mercies' sake, arise and vindicate thy cause, and deliver the soul of thy turtle. The whole face of the country is lovely and inviting. Everywhere around luxuriant cultivation and splendid mansions meet the eye. But sad and distressing is the moral landscape. No dwelling in which the morning and evening sacrifice is presented to God. Few that have the fear of God before their eyes. Through fulness of bread, their hearts are waxed fat and they are estranged from God. How my bowels of compassion yearn for this people! Oh!

that the Spirit would breathe, with his life-giving influences, on the dry bones and slain that they might live!

Ballymacarrett, 24th November, 1830.

I proposed to the people the plan of a congregational Mission, the design being to make efforts for bringing those that are living in ignorance and sin in the neighbourhood around to the knowledge of the Saviour. It is my earnest desire that we may all be led to see more fully the necessity of such exertions. May this public attempt, beginning with a desire to promote the Redeemer's glory and the advancement of his truth, be accompanied with the blessing that frequently causes the little one to become a thousand and renders the small one a great nation!

Ballymacarrett, February 7th, 1831.

I preached yesterday at Killinchy to an audience large and remarkably attentive. Oh! that there some fruit might spring up from my feeble labours, that the cause of the Covenanted Reformation might in that place be revived and that some of the 'travail of the Saviour's soul' may be gathered in. I have just been reading 'Owen on Spiritual Gifts'. One remark is striking, that 'gifts are taken away when not improved', and that 'a soul sanctified by grace is the only proper soul for gifts to flourish in'. May I enjoy greater communications of sanctifying grace, and may I still, through Christ strengthening me, improve the day of my merciful visitation!

Dublin, 14th March, 1831.

I arrived in this city on Saturday morning, having been graciously preserved by the way, and my mind having been kept in peace and comfort. Yesterday I preached in Union Chapel (Secession) to the congregation of the Rev D Stuart. The subjects were Acts 7:59, 60: 'The death of Stephen', and, in the evening, Isaiah 28:16: 'Christ the Foundation'. I had dreaded that fatigue before and the new situation would disturb me, and hinder me from ministering comfortably to myself or others. Why am I so faithless? Let the remembrance of the Lord's past goodness encourage me ever to trust in him. I was wonderfully supported. I trust the Lord was with me, strengthening me and enabling me to deliver the gospel message with freedom and power. May the Lord bless his precious Word to my own soul and all who heard it!

Ballymacarrett, Wednesday Morning, April 20th.

This morning I have been busied making arrangements for setting out to Scotland to attend the Synod in Edinburgh on the 25th. On considering my own weakness, and the important mission on which I am sent, and seeking direction from my gracious God, I find that I have no strength at all of my own, adequate to the work. My rejoicing is that there is sufficiency enough in my Father's grace. I have committed my way and all that concerns me to God in this matter, and I humbly rely on his guidance, support and blessing. Let me say with Jacob, 'If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way

that I go ... So that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God'.

Loanhead, Saturday ight, April 23rd, 1831.

I arrived here from Edinburgh yesterday morning, after a passage of 20 hours to Glasgow, and a journey from Glasgow to Edinburgh the preceding day. It was the day of Humiliation, preparatory to the administration of the Lord's Supper in the congregation of my dear friend Mr. Anderson.

Well might Moses seek to cultivate much intercourse with God in retirement before undertaking to lead the people through the wilderness. I find that the fatigues of travelling, and the new objects that meet the eye have an unfavourable effect upon the mind, and sadly tend to unfit for holy service. Hence, perhaps, it was ordained of old that persons on a journey should not eat the passover with the rest of the congregation of Israel. I had been distressed with sea-sickness, and had afterwards got cold in travelling, and was very apprehensive of being unable to perform the service expected from me on this solemn occasion. This day, my fears have, in a great measure, been disappointed. I was enabled to proclaim freely the glad tidings of salvation, and I had, I trust, the everlasting arms underneath sustaining me. Oh! to have my deadness and carnality removed and to be brought to entertain a lively sense of Jehovah's kindness and tender mercy to me, the very chief of sinners. Let me now say, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation'.

Edinburgh, 30th April, 1831.

Yesterday evening the sessions of Synod closed and the brethren have separated, perhaps never again thus to meet about the concerns of the church on earth. Much peace and harmony pervaded the deliberations. I bless my gracious Preserver for what I have seen in this place, at this time, of Jerusalem's good. Doubtless there is something to deplore among these rulers in the house of the Lord: but there is much on account of which we should bless God and take courage. My heart is knit to many of the young ministers. They are talented, zealous and devoted, and afford great promise of much fruit to the church in a future day. May they be prepared for trials, and amid them may they be rendered faithful and stedfast to the end!

What a warning and correction have we all received in the case of X...! A man of talent, and for a time of fair promise, becoming immoral and heretical and leading many into fearful delusion. What a curse to the person and others is talent when not sanctified and restrained by divine grace! May this case be a loud warning to others, and may all of us who stand, take heed lest we fall. May we be given faith to enable us to stand!

This has been to me a week of great privileges. On the first day of it, I was permitted to join with dear friends, in the land of my fathers' sepulchres, in commemorating the

Saviour's dying love, and throughout its succeeding days I have been privileged to sit in judgment and enjoy endearing intercourse with brethren who are active and persevering labourers in the Saviour's vineyard. I have not for a length of time been in a worse state of health, yet still my life is preserved and I have abundant cause of thankfulness. Let me consider myself afterwards laid under renewed obligation, while I have being, to give praise to God. May my future life be a thank-offering continually presented through the sacrifice of the great Mediator.

Tuesday, May 31, Ballylane.

On this day I assisted in the ordination of Mr. Sommerville as a missionary for Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, giving the charge after ordination. I was strengthened, I hope, with might from above and enabled in faithfulness to speak as an ambassador of Christ. My own spirit was refreshed.

Sabbath evening, July 10th, 1831.

I have been speaking and thinking something about the awful condition of those that are perishing, without God and without hope in the world. I fear I am not rightly affected on this subject. 600 millions of heathen!, tremendous thought, daily descending to the sides of the pit. One soul is more valuable than ten thousand worlds. Oh! let this matter be often a burden on my spirits. May the church be roused to zeal and prayer for the conversion of the nations. Oh! thou great Lord of the harvest, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, raise up and qualify labourers. Oh! have respect to thy covenant. May thy kingdom speedily come and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!

Ballymacarrett, Sabbath Morning, July 17th, 1831.

Again in the good providence of my Heavenly Father I have been brought to the morn on which my Redeemer rose for the justification of all that were given him to be redeemed from among men. What a wondrous event was the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead! The designs of infinite love were thereby accomplished. The Eternal Father, as the reconciled Judge, gave illustrious proof that all his wrath was appeased and he was well-pleased for his righteousness' sake. The glorious Surety had drunk of the brook of sufferings that runs in the way, and therefore he lifted his head on high. The holy angels viewed with wonder the triumph begun and hailed with joy the risen Lord.

Incalculably exciting too were the consequences resulting from the completed work of the First Begotten from the dead: death destroyed, a new and living way opened up to the Holiest of all, and a convincing testimony afforded that those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. May I be 'risen with Christ', and this day may I be enabled to seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God! Oh! to be this day given, in spirit, to enter within the veil and to see Jesus! Lord! quicken,

strengthen, sanctify me, and may I be brought in the abundance of grace to thy house and filled with the fatness of thy holy place!

Ballymacarrett, 24th August, Wednesday Morning.

Being this week less engaged in travelling among the people, owing to the harvest, than I was some time past, I proposed to spend a few hours this morning in considering my ways and the state of the church, in confessing sin and in seeking direction from God. Especially have I been led to see the 'iniquity of my trespasses' in the breach of solemn covenant engagements, and to lament this sin before God. This is the ground of the Lord's controversy with me and the church and the nation. I have read this morning many passages of the divine Word that speak of this matter and I have been impressed by reading sermons by Mr. Case on the occasion of the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643, wherein, with much plainness and power, he sets forth the sin and danger of covenant breaking. Oh! that the nation were awakened to a sense of guilt in this matter, and that the church were humbled and prepared to enter anew into the bond of the covenant!

Can there be a doubt that individuals and churches and states are bound to avouch the Lord to be their God? Fearful is the ignorance that prevails on this subject in our day. The assurance however rests on no vain words that nations shall yet take God to be their God in covenant, and many people shall go up to Zion with their faces thitherward, and shall join themselves to the Lord. Let us earnestly seek the coming of that day. May the Lord hasten it in His pleasure!

Ballymacarrett, 8th September, 1831.

Today, the King of these nations will be crowned, and many will be anxious to testify to him their affection and loyalty. Let me ever bear faithful allegiance to Messiah the Prince of the kings of the earth. It is cheering sometimes to a desponding spirit to think on the royal inauguration of the Mediator and to reflect that Jesus, my Saviour, has kingly power and authority given him for this purpose, that he may subdue all enemies and command deliverance for his redeemed.

Saturday Evening, March 17th, 1832.

On the eve of another holy Sabbath I am in this place, a monument of the Saviour's sparing mercy and, I trust, a trophy too of his redeeming grace. Weak in body and yet far from having attained that measure of sanctification which constitutes a meetness for glory, I seem to myself to stand upon the brink of a river which separates my past from my future existence. Looking back at the past, I would desire to rest all on that precious declaration: 'I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins' (Isaiah 44:22). Fixing the eye on the future, I would desire to rejoice that my times are wholly in God's hands. I would entertain no undue anxiety. 'This God is my God: He will guide me even unto death.'