

ing the mending of my clothes and some other things, which could not be delayed. However I hope that I shall have more money, if my school enlarge, for though my income at present is very small, yet I make it a point not to contract debt.

I intend to come east in summer, and likely just before the sitting of the Divinity Hall, to which I will go on my returning, since it is on the way.

*February 24.*

I have no particular news at present, only that trade is very good and still growing better, and provisions are very reasonable at present, and prices seem to be a little on the decline. (After mentioning the prices of provisions, lodging, &c., the letter proceeds.) I am now only attending the Natural Philosophy, having given up attending the Moral Philosophy, because I did not know how I could get the Professor paid. I do not however judge the attending it very necessary or very advantageous. Nor can it be very safe for young persons, because there is no possibility of making it and Scripture morality to agree, nor can I see how the Burghers or Antiburghers can consistently allow their students to attend it, for by doing so they not only countenance, but lend their aid to the maintaining and propagating of doctrines directly opposite to their own principles, nay, what is worse they support and encourage the propagation of principles, entirely subversive of all revealed religion. Indeed for my own part the attending of it was a matter of hesitation with me for some time before I gave up attending, which along with the circumstance above mentioned, prevailed upon me to give it up."

We feel it necessary to advert more at large to a point referred to on the above letter, viz., the pecuniary difficulties, which beset his path. Many young men in our own country find the want of means a serious obstacle in the way of obtaining a classical education, but we are persuaded that but few of them know anything of the toils and privations to which many young men in Scotland and their friends submit for this purpose. The difficulties in Mr. Gordon's way were more than ordinarily severe. During the greater part of the time at which he was prosecuting his studies, the French revolutionary war was raging—and part of the time trade was in consequence in a state of stagnation,—for two seasons previous to the date of the above letter, harvests had failed, provisions were at famine prices, and much distress prevailed among the common people of Scotland. Though the above letter indicates a more hopeful state of things, both from the condition of trade and the prospects of his school, yet the same difficulties to a greater or less extent followed him through his whole course as a student. It may not be inappropriate to give a few extracts from letters of his friends on this. Writing on the 21st of December, 1802, one of his brothers says: "We are persuaded that your money by this time must be near an end, and had it not been that we have been very short since you left us, we could have sent some in this parcel, but owing to that we are obliged to wait till we hear from you." In another letter a few days later he says, "I have got one pound scraped together with some difficulty, (having at this time got no assistance from my brothers,) which I have sent you." "In the same letter speaking of a proposal to go to Carreston from Whitburn, and dissuading him from it he says, "We do not think that your hopes of getting money are well founded, and all the pressing demands in Arbroath are but trifling, so that if you were coming home, and being very careful, you might soon settle them."