

life may assume the complete mastery of our feelings, and hurry us onward, with an impetuosity like his own, from field to field of blood-stained renown; but the simple narrative of the toils of some devoted though secluded minister, like Charles of Bala, will, if our souls are disposed aright, teach us more, and that more pleasantly,—will fall upon our hearts, like rain upon the mown grass. If, indeed, our element is agitation and storm, and we prefer the uncontrolled rush of feeling to its mild and chastened flow, we shall dwell on the recitals of remarkable and stirring deeds; if a literary curiosity is our prevalent impulse, we shall find our chief delight in reading of those whose names have been enrolled among the aristocracy of genius; but, if we would have our hearts made better,—while we refuse not their due place to these other sources of enjoyment, we shall repair more frequently, and with a deeper satisfaction, to the calm and soothing pages, which disclose the secrets of a life hid with Christ in God.

Born of pious parents,—at Longridge, in the parish of Stonehouse, in 1780,—Dr. Hamilton was early destined by them for the ministry, and consecrated, we doubt not, by many a prayer. The few things that are recorded of his early years give presage of that ardour of mind, which afterwards constituted so important an element of his usefulness. In the emblematic action of the boy, who,—when his monthly pilgrimage to the quarters of the Edinburgh carrier, for the Evangelical Magazine, was performed on so rainy a day, that he could not read it on his return,—placed the treasure beneath his garments, that it might be nearest his heart,—we discern the early promise of that zeal for God's house which afterwards consumed him.

Intending, from his first entrance on an academic life, to devote himself to the ministry, the subject of this notice transferred into energetic action the remark of Jeremy Taylor, that 'an ignorant minister is an head without an eye, and an evil minister is salt that hath no savour.' He was enthusiastic in the pursuit of every branch of learning; and, when he had only reached the age of eighteen, he commenced a diary, and began to exercise himself in the regular scrutiny and diligent keeping of his own heart.

'The country parson,' it was said long ago by Herbert, 'is full of all knowledge. They say, it is an ill mason that refuseth any stone; and there is no knowledge, but, in a skilful hand, serves either positively as it is, or else to illustrate some other knowledge.' Throughout his life, Dr. Hamilton acted the part of one who knew this truth, and felt it. Not satisfied with the minimum of learning which could bear him safely through his examinations, he walked nearly the entire circle of the sciences. When at College, he attended the classes of Anatomy, Chemistry, and Materia Medica; and, in addition to the easier languages of France and Italy, he acquired the German, at a time when it was but little studied. Lighter and pleasanter pursuits were not overlooked. He had a keen relish for sacred poetry; his mind was early stored with it; and he spoke much to himself in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Even after he was fixed down to the constant and weighty duties of a parochial charge, his application was unabated. Let our readers mark the task which the man of forty-one prescribes to himself, and which, as we learn from a subsequent entry, was very nearly fulfilled.