

the idea above referred to—that every man sent into the world is sent on a special mission. What the particular mission was, on which Mr Mitchell was sent, we shall not at present determine. But after we have given an outline of the facts of his life, and endeavoured to trace out the moving-springs of his varied doings, we may, perhaps, be able to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion even on this point.

#### I. HIS PARENTAGE AND BIRTH.

Mr Mitchell was born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in England. In none of the papers, now before us, is the precise date of his birth given. But we ascertain from several incidents mentioned, and from comparing them with other dates, that it must have been in 1765. His parents were respectable, though of an humble rank. The family was numerous, but death at an early period made melancholy inroads upon it. Writing to his brother in 1796, Mr Mitchell says: "Six years are now almost elapsed since we, with a number of our relatives, sat down together at dinner. It was upon the first day of the year 1790. If I mistake not our number was then 13; now we are reduced to 9, perhaps 8. One has fallen in war; one was accidentally killed; two died a natural death; one, whether dead or alive, we know not; and we, that are left, are now separated; and perhaps will meet together no more." Mr Mitchell was the eldest of the family, a circumstance which influenced his mind not a little in reference to his duty towards the family.—Of his mother he entertained a high opinion, and felt for her the most affectionate regard. She appears to have been a pious woman, and one who, from the heart, feared the Lord. But the idea he had of his father was different. While he ever speaks of him as a kind and indulgent parent, he almost never fails in his letters to mourn over his want of piety. Several times he tells us that he had no real religion—that he never prayed with his family—never attended public worship—had not even the form of godliness—and was never connected with any denomination of christians. Christian parents can do much for their children; and how grateful should children be when they are favoured with such parents! But when God has a soul to save he can accomplish his purpose irrespective of the instrumentality of parents. Mr Mitchell became a trophy of grace; but it was a holier and a mightier hand than that of an earthly parent that led him in the way everlasting.

#### II. HIS CONVERSION.

Of the boyhood or early life of Mr Mitchell we can find no very particular account. Where he received the elements of education, or to what extent that education reached, we cannot determine. But it would appear that, in so far as reading and writing are concerned, he had received "a competent portion;" for immediately after his conversion, which occurred at an early age, we find him diligently reading his Bible, carefully committing passages to memory, and taking down notes of the books he read and the sermons he heard. Of his moral habits at this time he speaks with the deepest regret and the most contrite repentance. He was guilty of some open and profane sins, and his companions were those who had no fear of God before their eyes. He laments particularly his profanation of the Lord's-day. One interesting act he mentions illustrative of this. It would appear that some of the youths about Newcastle were in the habit of going "a boating" as it is called—taking a sail upon the river. The Sabbath was the day selected for this amusement. With these youths Mr Mitchell associated himself, and seems to have enjoyed the wicked sport with as much glee as any of them. On three different occasions he was nearly drowned, and on one occasion he