

so much depend on external circumstances, as upon the proper direction of our own minds. I ascribe my lifelessness to the state of my health, which has been poorly for some time past. Indeed, I have never been so well since I came to Mr. Down, where I still remain. This is perhaps owing to too close confinement, for except the school, which I was obliged to attend, I visited none all last winter. The spring, however, now advancing, "in whose green days reviving sickness lifts her languid head," shall lead me forth "to join the general smile of nature."

I believe that during the last six months, I have made more progress in the study of Divinity, than I did during all my former life. The Bible is now my only text book—all human systems are discarded.—By a close examination of the scriptures my views are greatly changed, so much, indeed, that I am doubtful if I can act consistently in remaining any longer in connexion with the Anti-burghers. If they would exercise that candour, towards those who cannot think exactly on some points as they do, which they now profess to exercise, I could have no objection to them; but to profess liberality of sentiment, and at the same time to impose their views upon others, carries a contradiction in the very face of it. It may promote hypocrisy and superstition; but truth must suffer. I have been led into this way of thinking from the conduct of the Synod, which met at Glasgow in August last. They manifested in many respects a very intolerant spirit, especially in the case of Mr. Imrie of Kinkell. He has preached none for some months past in consequence of a recommendation from the Presbytery of Perth. It is greatly feared that he will be deposed at the next meeting of Synod. If this should be the case, it will perhaps do more harm to the Secession Church than the Old Light has done. Toward these brethren the Synod showed an uncommon degree of lenity and forbearance. They were resolved that the separation, if it did take place, would be entirely on their side.

"The Old Lights are very zealous in propagating their doctrines. They have collected the standard of their new party in several congregations already, and are attempting to break the peace and unity of others. We have had Messrs. Aiken and McAlister, preaching in Glasgow, and old Mr. Turnbull has exercised his gifts two or three times. I believe, however, that they will obtain no footing here. That their design is more to gain a party, than to propagate truth, will appear from an anecdote of our late Professor, which I shall now tell you. About two years ago he wrote a letter to Mr. James Aird, telling him that although he might have some scruples about the old Testimony,* yet he and his brethren would overlook these, and take him upon trials immediately, if he would come and join them. He might also expect to get a settlement in one of the principal towns of Scotland, so soon as licensed; which would by no means be the case, if he continued with the Synod's party. How unlike Mr. Bruce!!! To this letter Mr. Aird returned a most complete answer, which mortified him not a little.

Our quondam friend and companion, Mr. Easton, is dead. The Secession Church may mourn the loss, for he was truly an ornament to any society. The comfortable assurance however, that although one event happeneth to the righteous and the wicked while in this world, yet that the souls of the former are taken away from the evils of time, and made possessors of the glories of eternity, instead of making us sorrow immoderately, as those who have no hope, should turn our sorrow into joy, and our sighs and tears into songs of praise and triumph. You and I, if the scriptures are the word of God, shall meet our dear deceased friend, in due time, without the painful prospect of another separation. In the meantime let us comfort one another with the words of eternal truth. Nothing more is necessary to our deriving consolation from them, but that we believe them. I may also inform you of the death of my sister. * * *

"Mr. M. has been preaching for some time. He does very well in the pulpit, but I am afraid that he still continues the same unsteady man, when out of it. I do not think that he inclines to undertake a mission to America—at any rate it will be mere necessity with him if he do. I think it better not to go at all, than be forced. He had a letter two or three weeks ago from Mr. Bullions,

* The immediate cause of the separation was the adoption, by the Synod, of a new Testimony.