

Impressed with the prevailing religious destitution around, he determined on a trip to fatherland, to try to awaken in the breasts of British Christians an interest on behalf of Canada, and induce, if possible, some ministers to emigrate thither. In the fall of 1829, he bade his friends and family adieu, and started for Britain. When leaving he said: "Should I never return, bear in mind I go on behalf of the spiritual interests of Canada." Arrived in Montreal, the purpose of his trip was warmly espoused by Ebenezer Muir, Esq., who gave Mr. Edwards a letter to Mr. Gilmour of Aberdeen, and desired him to use all means to induce him to come to Canada.

Late in the season he embarked in a timber ship, and after a tedious voyage, landed at Greenock, and was soon in Edinburgh. The Messrs. Haldane strengthened his purpose with regard to Mr. Gilmour, and took a deep interest in the object of his mission. In due time Aberdeen was visited, and an immediate call paid to Mr. Gilmour. That gentleman and family had just finished breakfast, when a stranger was announced, who, on entering, made short work of his business. Handing Mr. Muir a letter, he said: "I have a message for you from Montreal, and you must go there to preach the gospel." Mr. Gilmour laughed at the proposal. No minister ever got so sudden or unceremonious a call, and he might be pardoned for treating it with apparent levity. The call, however, was soon backed by an inward irresistible conviction that duty pointed his way to Canada, and to Canada he decided to go. It was painful to part from a church gathered by his own labor, and in which he was deeply revered, to encounter the perils of a long voyage, and go forth, on his own responsibility, to an untried sphere, where nearly all were to him strangers. Mr. Gilmour was not a man to consult long with flesh and blood. Paying his own way, notwithstanding the liberal offer of Mr. Muir to provide for the expense of the voyage, he steered for the new world, and reached Montreal in safety, on the seventh of September, 1830. Twenty-two years before, this gentleman, then a sailor boy, sailed from the port of that city, but, when nearing his native land, a French

privateer made all on board prisoners, and he was forced to taste one of the bitter fruits of war, in the shape of several years of prison life. It was there, however, that the eyes of his understanding were opened, and spiritual light poured into his soul. There, too, lessons of experience were received which were helpful to him in after life, when he became the honored instrument of turning multitudes from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Very many of his fellow prisoners shared the inward transformation he experienced, and among the officers, both of the naval and civil service, were men who preached effectively the truth they had once despised.

Released from prison, Mr. Gilmour, after a time, had the desire of his heart gratified by entering upon a course of study, preparatory to preaching the gospel. Subsequently we find him settled over a growing church in Aberdeen. From that church he separates, and begins his labors in Canada at Montreal, in Brock's school, on the 11th day of the month in which he landed. There he began a cause that has reached large and still enlarging proportions, and proved himself a blessing to many still living to testify how unblamably he behaved himself and labored, seeking not his own, but their good. The missionary spirit of Mr. Gilmour was not bounded by city limits. He passed to regions beyond; and proclaimed, through much of Canada, the gospel of the grace of God. Multitudes own him as their spiritual father, and it is not easy to estimate the extent of his usefulness both in Eastern and Western Canada. Before he removed permanently to Peterboro, the Ottawa valley enjoyed much of his labors, and many within its precincts were converted under his preaching. Clarence was especially favored, and thus the efforts used to bring Mr. Gilmour to Canada, were repaid in abundant measure.

Mr. Edwards visited much of England and Scotland, making widely known the claims of Canada. In London he was supplied with a large stock of tracts from the Religious Tract Society, for distribution in Canada. In Scotland he was successful in inducing another minister to emigrate.