

MEMOIR OF THE REV. JAMES MCDOWALL.

I.—HIS BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.

It has been remarked, we think by Cowper, that with some men God's dealings in providence are, all, after one unvarying type of seeming severity. In the life we are here about to sketch that remark seems verified. Mr. McDowall might indeed have often said, that God was setting him as a mark for his arrows. If the life of every christian, carries in it, however humble it may have been some useful lessons, the lessons of the following life lie, it will be seen in the meekness and patience with which its heavy trials were borne, and in the spiritual fruit they, in the end, produced. And should you, kind reader, feel, at times, faint and out worn in this life's pilgrimage, the example here set may help to teach you similar patience, and to teach you also how true it is, "that grief shows us truth as night brings out the stars."

The late Rev. James McDowall was born, in 1826, a soldier's son. His father Robert McDowall, a native of Johnstone near Glasgow, served for fifteen years in the first or Royal Regiment of Dragoons commanded, at that time, by Lord Somerset. From the ranks, step by step he rose to the position of a non-commissioned officer when in 1835, in consequence of disablement by chronic rheumatism he was discharged with a pension. The description given of him in the army papers, as a man "five feet nine inches in height, with dark hair, hazel eyes, and dark complexion," might answer in each particular for his son James. The discharged soldier, with his wife and three children, returned to his native village where lived his father and brothers, all of them, we understand, men of talent, enterprise, and force of character. Soon thereafter death entered the little family circle; and one after another was smitten down till none remained but the eldest child, the subject of our memoir. The memory of this sore bereavement was undoubtedly present to him many years thereafter when he penned the following words:—

"There are conditions of human life, and suffering when one calamity follows hard upon another: when loss follows loss: woe follows woe: when our means of subsistence gradually decline, and we are left but as poor beggars in the world. And sometimes in addition to this, one dear friend is taken away and