

regret the close alliance of great virtues with occasional errors, and which must satisfy even those who have least sympathy with the workings of such a nature as his, that insensibility to his imperfections formed no feature of his character.

The last great public effort of Dr. Thomson was in behalf of the slave population of our West India colonies. In a note to a sermon published in his volume of "Discourses on various Subjects," he had taken up the question of the remedial measures proposed in behalf of that oppressed class of our fellow-subjects, and, with his characteristic frankness, declared himself an advocate for immediate emancipation. The opinion he thus expressed was not the result of sudden impulse, but of a deliberate and well weighed consideration of the subject of compulsory servitude in all its bearings. On the one hand, he looked to the principles of morality and of the Scriptures; and from them he learned that to hold a fellow-creature in bondage is directly to violate the rule which dictates the same treatment of our neighbor as we ourselves have a right to expect from him.—And to the mind of Dr. Thomson it appeared no less a crime to assume a right of property in a man under the tropics, than it would be to transfer that claim to the mother country, and to extend it over those who go out and come in among ourselves.

With the friends of humanity and religion, and it may be added, of true policy, Dr. Thomson was so far cordially united. The only point in which his views differed from those of any of this class, related to the time at which the grand measure of abolition should be carried into effect. He declared for immediate steps with a view to this object. When, therefore, the Directors of the Edinburgh anti-slavery society proposed to hold a meeting in October 1830, and some of them requested Dr. Thomson to attend and address the friends of the institution, he declared his determination, if he attended, to bring forward his own particular views, and to deprecate all half-measures, which he foresaw would be productive of no good. On the day of the meeting, accordingly, Dr. Thomson was present in the assembly room; and after Mr. Jeffrey, now Lord Jeffrey, and some other speakers had addressed the meeting, he craved permission to state the conclusions at which he had arrived. With a power of argument, and an earnestness and elevation of tone which can never be forgotten, he entered on the subject; and, in a brief speech, explained the points in which he differed from the former speakers, as well as those in which he agreed with them. Never was the triumph of truth and eloquence more complete. Before he had concluded, the majority of the meeting was with him: the confidence of the directors of the society in the measures they had come forward to recommend was shaken; and in the rapturous acclamations of a crowded assembly, he had the satisfaction of listening to

the first of those echoes, which Great Britain has since through all her provinces sent back, to the call of justice and religion, in behalf of the injured children of her colonies.

Subsequently to these proceedings, a meeting took place of the friends of immediate abolition, at which Dr. Thomson attended, supported by the directors of the anti-slavery society, who with a few exceptions, had obeyed the general impulse, and entered cordially into his enlarged and energetic views. His appearance on this occasion has been described by a writer of the day, as "a most splendid and varied display of wit, argument, and impressive eloquence." The moral dignity of the subject seemed to have imparted its character to the man and to his eloquence. Never perhaps did he appear more truly great.

Up to the period of his death, Dr. Thomson occupied much of his time in promoting this object, so dear to the friends of freedom and humanity. He may almost be said to have expired while pleading its cause; a worthy termination to the labors of a life, of which love to God, issuing in love to man, had been the governing principle.

For some time before his death, his mind, it is believed, experienced something of a presentiment of the approaching event, which may have been vouchsafed in love, to perfect his preparation for his sudden change. More than once, when urged by the members of his own family to relieve himself of some portion of the burden of affairs which pressed so heavily on him, he replied with affectionate solemnity, "I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." The increasing earnestness, richness, and variety of his prayers, both in private and in public, are also circumstances that struck many, and none more than the writer of these pages.

On the 9th of February, 1831, the day on which he died, he appeared to his family in his usual health. As was his custom, he rose and breakfasted at an early hour. During the devotions of the family, which he conducted as usual, he read the last three psalms, and he concluded the service by a prayer remarked at the time for its spirituality and fervor.—After baptizing a child, he left his house to pay some visits to the sick; and at a later hour he appeared in his place at a meeting of the presbytery of Edinburgh, specially convened for the purpose of ordaining a minister to one of our West India settlements. During his attendance at the presbytery, he displayed his usual interest, and took his usual share in the business of the court. At the close of the meeting, about five in the afternoon he proceeded homeward; and with a friend, who met him by the way, he conversed with animation and cheerfulness till he reached his own door, on the threshold of which, without a struggle or a groan, he suddenly fell, overtaken by that