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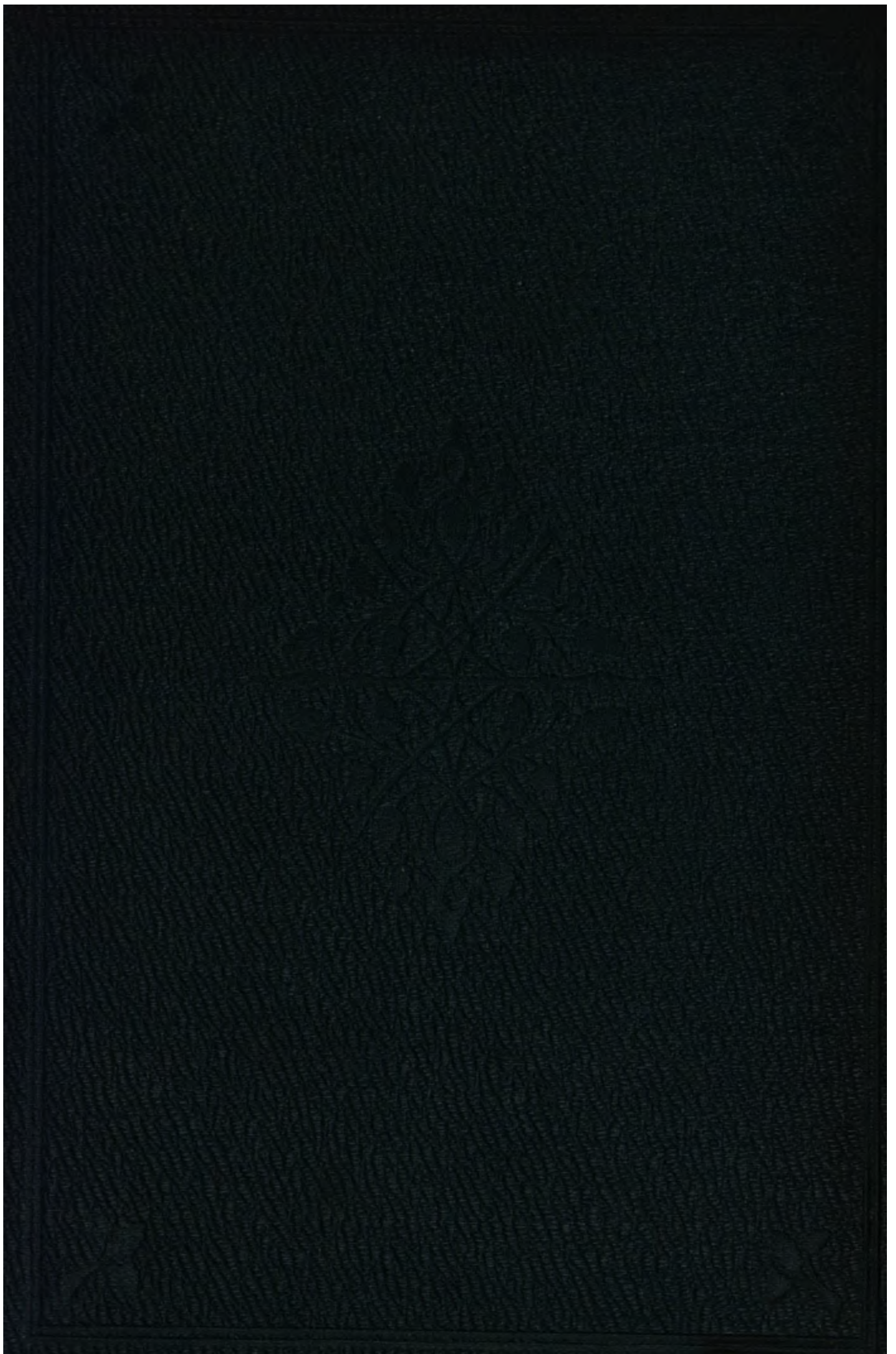
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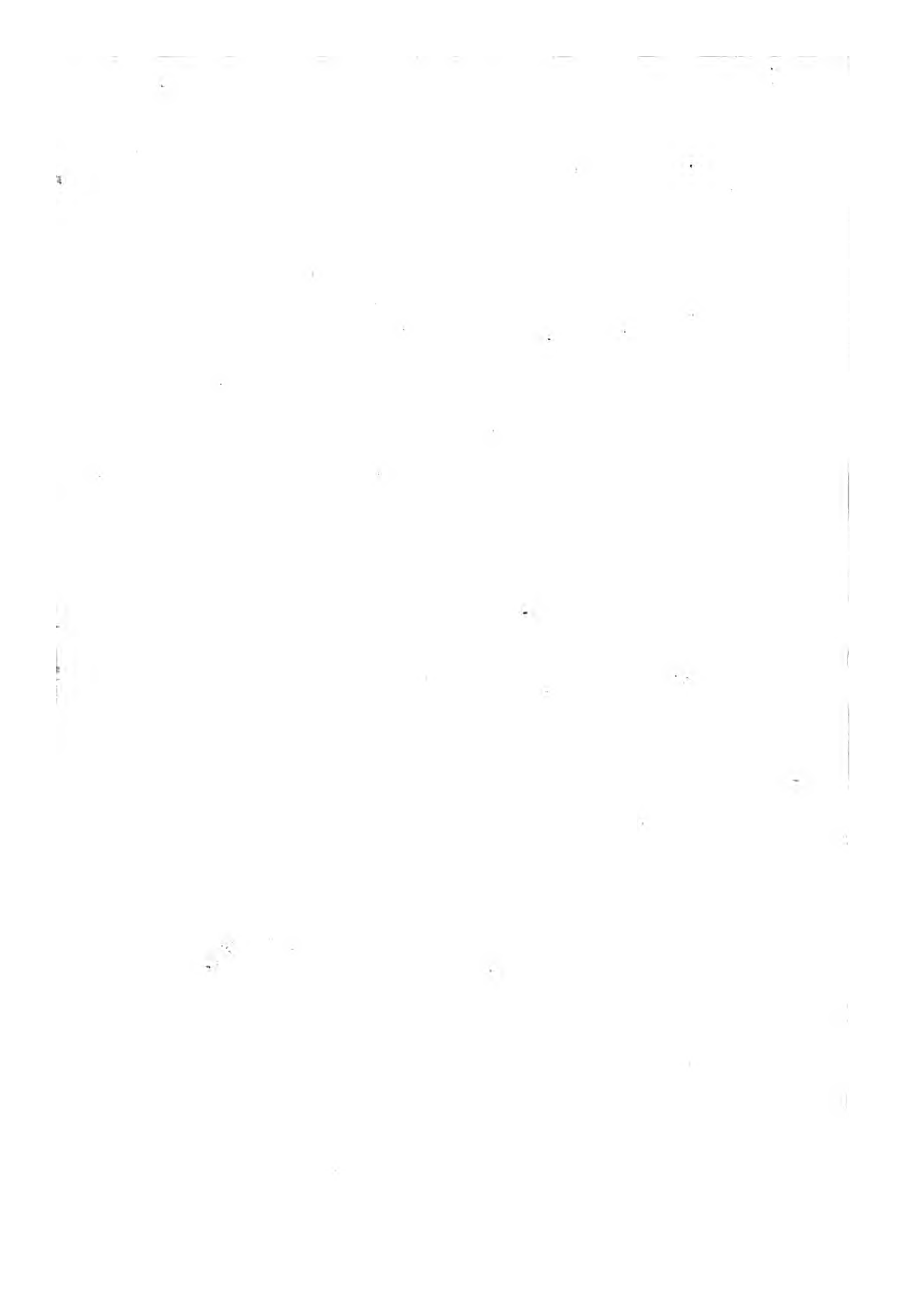
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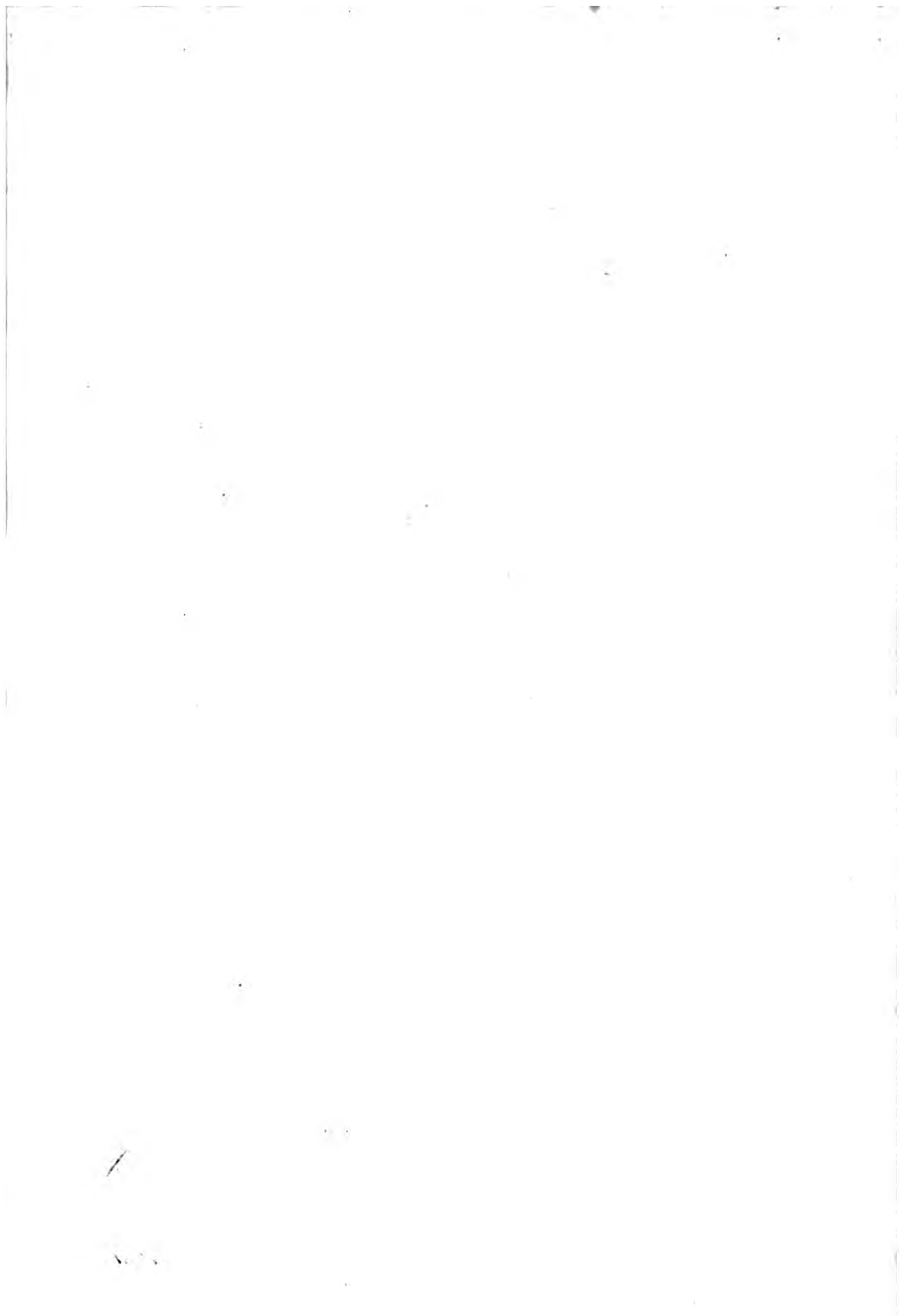




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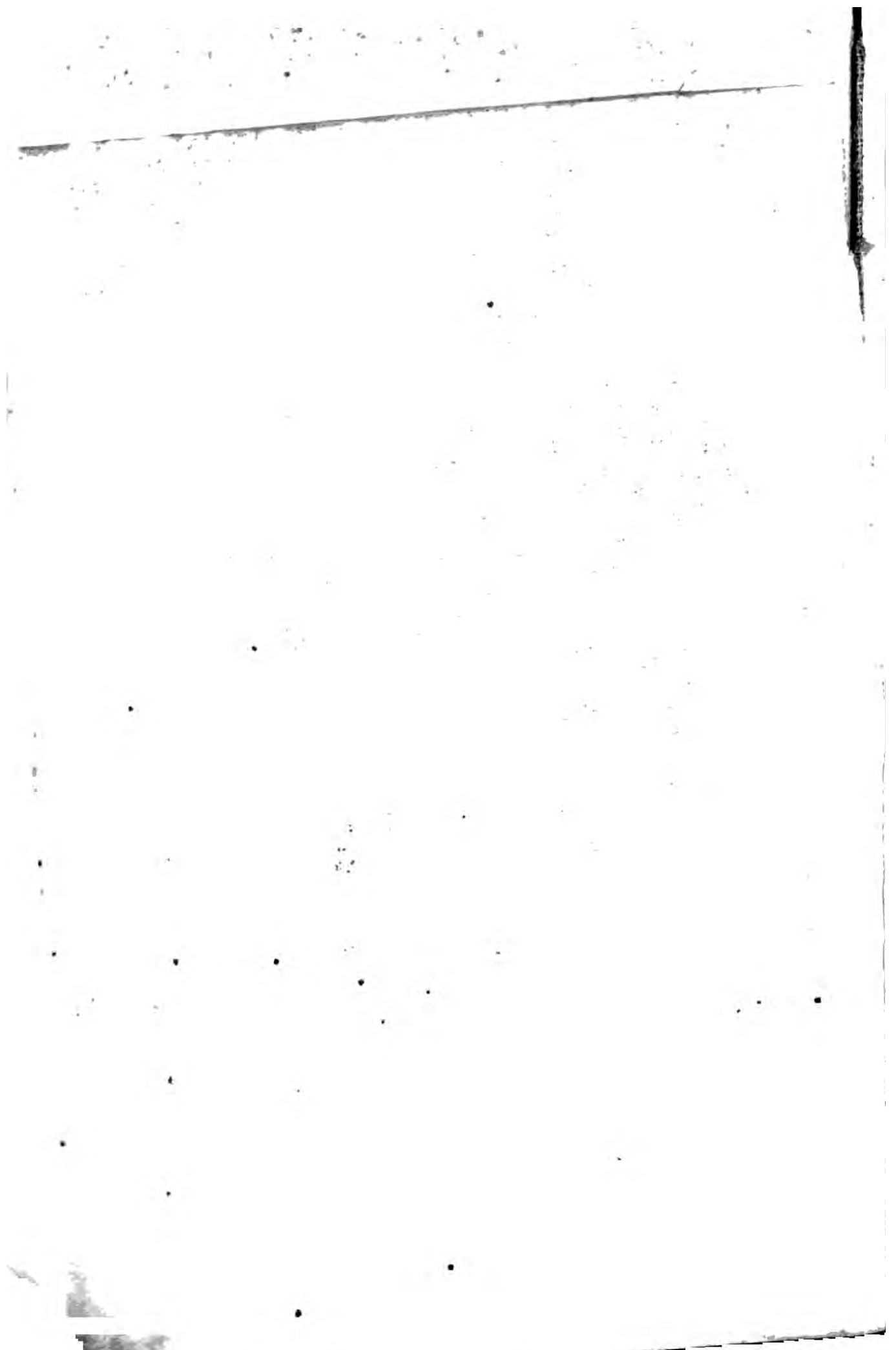






Very Truly Yours
James Blair





The Scottish Evangelist.

THE LIFE AND LABOURS

OF THE

REV. JAMES BLAIR,

OF THE BRIDGE OF ALLAN;

CHIEFLY COMPILED FROM HIS OWN JOURNALS.

TOGETHER WITH

THREE OF HIS DISCOURSES.

MR BLAIR'S MOTTO.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."—PAUL, Eph. iii. 8.

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THE LIFE
OF
THE REV. JAMES BLAIR.

CHAPTER I.

HIS EARLY DAYS, AND RESIDENCE AT SALTCOATS, 1797-1830.

As we are told that "the memory of the righteous is blessed," and that "the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance," it is in harmony with these statements that a record is made and preserved of the Lord's dealings with them; and of the way in which they have served God in their generation. In such memorials we see the grace of God; and others are roused to become followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.

James Blair, who, upwards of thirty years, was honoured to preach to his fellow-men the unsearchable riches of Christ, was born at Cairneyhill, a small village near Dunfermline, September 19, 1797. His father, Mr Thomas Blair, was, at the time of his birth, minister of the Anti-burgher church in that place. His mother, Jane Moncrieff, was a daughter of the Rev. William Moncrieff, of Alloa, professor of

Divinity in the same body, and son of Alexander Moncrieff, of Culfargie, minister of Abernethy; a name honourable in the history of the Secession Church, as one of its four founders; he having, in 1733, joined with Ebenezer Erskine, William Wilson, and James Fisher, in protesting against the abuses of patronage in the Establishment. Mr Moncrieff is still further famous, as being the first Anti-burgher minister—lifting up his protest against what was called the burghess oath.

Thus, sprung from a race of ministers of the gospel, and born in a minister's family, Mr Blair, in his early years, seemed to bid fair to be highly favoured with both a religious and a literary training; and with his native talents, likely to become eminent and happy in the same field with his mother's forefathers. But a succession of dark clouds overcast the household sky. The family consisted of another brother, William, who died in England in 1857, and three sisters, two of whom still survive. And it is worthy of note, to the praise of God, that the whole of them became pious. The first dark cloud was the early death of their beloved mother, who was taken away when the children were all very young, James being only five years old. His only recollection of her was her praying earnestly on her knees with her children. She is remembered as a woman of great piety, who took part in a weekly village prayer-meeting which she regularly attended. She died Dec. 21, 1802, and

her remains lie in Cairneyhill churchyard. The next dark cloud was his father's second marriage, which became a source of unhappiness to both father and children, and is said to have become the occasion of his withdrawal from the ministry. He afterwards taught a school in Ardrossan, where he died, Sept. 8, 1820, and where his remains are interred. Mr Blair's family have often heard him say that he always wished he could have inherited his father's knowledge. But he affords another illustration of the truth, that while knowledge is power, knowledge is not everything. The want of that power which knowledge should exert on its possessor, occasioned the unhappiness of his family, and the neglect of their education. To the son, who afterwards saw and prized the value of learning, this was a source of lamentation.

Of Mr Blair's early history, and of the way by which he was led to the truth of Jesus, our materials are but scanty, as he himself has left no record of this period of his life. It seems that, in consequence of the uncomfortableness of home, he had early to provide for himself. Accordingly, after a very moderate schooling, he went to learn muslin weaving—an occupation which in those days was much more respected and profitable than now. Early aware of his loss from a neglected education, he began to improve himself, and usually had a book before him while at his work, studying hard all the time—so

that he was almost entirely self-taught, and another example of the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. His mind became early impressed with the worth of godliness. One of his sisters remembers him saying to her, while yet a boy, "Oh, if I could say, the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me!" During his apprenticeship, such were his leanings towards religion, that he used to meet with others for prayer—an exercise in which it is said that, even at this time, he greatly excelled. At what time, and by what means he was led to live in Ardrossan, in Ayrshire, we know not. Here he became for some years a member of the congregation of Mr Ellis, of Saltcoats. He also joined a religious fellowship meeting, one of the members of which—Mr James Anderson, of Gourock—still lives, having a distinct recollection of Mr Blair's consistent walk and conversation at this early period.

In 1819, the year before his father's death, Mr Blair married Martha Reid, one of the daughters of his employer, Mr Robert Reid. By her he had a family of six sons and two daughters, five of whom still survive. One son, an interesting youth, died while the family was resident in the town of Ayr. Two others died in infancy.

Mr Reid was a zealous Baptist, who was wont to travel on Lord's-days, summer and winter, all the way from Ardrossan to Paisley, to worship with his brethren. Mr Blair being daily in his

society, and his mind bent on the pursuit of truth wherever it might lead him, his attention was thus providentially turned to the question of believers' immersion and the New Testament constitution of a Christian church. He told one of his sisters that he had many conversations on these matters with Mr Ellis. But gaining no satisfaction from the minister, who had no scripture on his side, he himself says that, after much thought and many struggles, he was led to adopt Baptist views. One of his wife's sisters, still alive, says she was present at his baptism, which took place on Lord's-day morning, February 24, 1822, in a rivulet, or milldam, about a mile above Ardrossan. As it was well known that he had formerly endeavoured most strenuously to vindicate infant sprinkling, it was feared there would be an uproar; accordingly Mr Reid thought it proper to have a few constables at the place. The ordinance was administered by Mr William Holmes, pastor of the little Baptist church in Saltcoats. Although the morning was exceedingly wet, and the hour as early as seven or eight o'clock, there was a great crowd present, and amongst others, a number of infidels from the surrounding country. When Mr Holmes saw so many people, he, contrary to intention, delivered an address on baptism. The constables were not needed. The utmost attention was given, and the greatest decorum prevailed. After the baptism, the people dispersed quietly; and one of the ring-

leaders of the infidel party was heard to say, that if there was anything in Christianity, it was to be found here.

Mr Anderson, his old associate in the fellowship-meeting, says that, when he left the Presbyterians, he wrote a letter to the church of which he had been a member, stating his reasons for withdrawing, and setting forth the worldly constitution and condition of the church. With this letter Mr Ellis was much offended, and read it to the kirk session. When Mr Blair became a Baptist, his example and zeal led many others to think; and the alarm of his old friends increased inquiry after the truth. Mr Ellis preached a number of discourses in order to vindicate infant sprinkling, which were attended by such multitudes that—his own church being too small—the parish church was thrown open for the occasion. The Baptists in the neighbourhood attended these discourses, and many persons were brought to decide against infant sprinkling, seeing no authority for it in the word of God.

About this time, Mr Blair exchanged his old occupation for that of a teacher; and having opened a school in Ardrossan, he taught it with great success. It cost him, however, no small toil; for, in consequence of the unfinished character of his early education, he often had to study hard, till far on in the morning, in order to keep a-head of the advanced scholars. Soon after his baptism, he was requested

to go to the island of Arran, to teach a school in the village of Corrie. Here, also, he began to seek after the salvation of his fellow-men by public efforts. In order to this great end, he taught a Sabbath-school, and also preached every Sabbath morning in the school-house, and occasionally in the evenings at Brodick and other districts of the island. Returning from Arran, he opened a school, first in Kilwinning, and afterwards in Saltcoats, near his former abode, with still greater success than before. At this time, also, he generally preached once every Lord's-day in the Baptist church at Saltcoats.

At length, one of the pastors having removed, Mr Blair was called by the church to the pastoral office, and was ordained March 13th, 1829. In this new position he laboured with great zeal and enthusiasm, teaching his school, feeding the flock of Christ, and preaching the glorious gospel, both within and out of doors, in the surrounding country. At this early period, we find him also taking an interest in the Temperance movement, which was just beginning its glorious work in the land. This we learn from a letter addressed to him by Mr Robert Smith, of Glasgow, dated Sept. 22, 1830, in reply to one of Mr Blair's, dated 18th, requesting his sentiments on the subject. At this time, also, we find his mind beginning to plan some schemes for the advancement of the Baptist churches in the land, and for the extension of primitive Christianity. Among his papers we find a copy

of a letter addressed to some of his brethren, dated Saltcoats, Nov. 29th, 1832, in which he proposes a plan among the churches for the publication and circulation of monthly tracts on such subjects as, "The scriptural qualifications of a minister of Christ; The nature and use of a Christian church; Who alone are fit to be members of the church of Christ; The love of the brethren in practice; The discipline of the church; Every man his brother's keeper; Unscriptural marriages; Baptism, &c." The plan, we believe, was never carried into effect. The coldness and disunion of the churches were more than a match for the writer's zeal.

Mr Blair beginning to feel hampered with his school, from its being a hinderance to entire and extensive devotedness to the great work which he so much loved, and realizing more and more the truth of our Saviour's words, that "no man can serve two masters," resolved to apply to the Home Mission. The copy of his letter before us being interesting from its autobiographical character, we give entire.

SALTCOATS, *Sept.* 16, 1834.

"DEAR SIR,—I address you as Secretary to the Baptist Home Missionary Society for Scotland. You may see my name on the list of the committee for Saltcoats. I have the honour to be pastor of the Baptist church here. Our number is 42; none of us wealthy; most of us poor. I receive about £7 per annum

from the church, which I understand is to make up for my Wednesday vacation of the school. I labour in teaching for almost all my support—my own and my family's. We are seven in number. For about eight months in the year I have been accustomed generally to labour in the evening at my business. During the summer months, when I have no evening class, I have, for three summers past, spent a considerable portion of my time in the evenings in holding meetings in private houses, where from 12 to 30 persons have received religious instruction. During the summer just ending, I kept up a regular meeting in Saltcoats, every Tuesday evening, attended by about 20 persons; one every Thursday evening in the adjoining villages of Ardrossan and Stevenston alternately; sometimes in the fields in the former place, and always in the latter when the weather permitted. Our own church meeting is held on Wednesday evening. I have kept up sermon on the streets of Saltcoats and Stevenston, and one in the school-house of Ardrossan, every Sabbath evening during the summer. I have confined my labours wholly to Stevenston of late, on Sabbath evenings, because I have met with peculiar encouragement there, having been heard generally through the summer by about 200, and have seen and heard of very favourable results, or, I should rather say, symptoms. Since the nights got short, and chilly, we have procured the Mason lodge; and I intend to keep up regular

meetings during the winter. As I am not in circumstances to sacrifice any part of my family income, however willingly I might do so, I have been obliged, by convictions of duty, and the representations of some of my friends, to sacrifice my feelings to consistency by giving up all my week-night meetings, and commencing my evening classes. I did so with the less regret, as I still hoped to be able to keep up my Sabbath evenings' very hopeful work. But I feel already that I have too much in hand. Last Sabbath evening I spoke with much oppression, and even to-night (Tuesday), am still feeling its effects. I now fear that I cannot go on at Stevenston; and yet I cannot think of giving up. Will the society assist me? I have no wish for money, but to enable me to live and act honestly. If the society would appoint me a sum, I would reduce my school labours and anxieties in proportion, and devote my time and energies to calling sinners to repentance. I have been long most anxious to be devoted wholly, or as much as possible, to the preaching of the everlasting gospel to my perishing fellow-sinners; and I am getting every day more and more so, as I see the prime of my days advancing and passing, being now thirty-seven years on the 19th inst. I am very well situated for doing good. Saltcoats has a population of about 3800; Ardrossan, $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile off, 646; Stevenston, about one mile off, I think, about 1200 or 1400. Were I enabled to hire a horse now and then, I might visit the towns of Kil-

winning, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles off; Dalry, 6 miles; and West Kilbride, 5 miles off. For information concerning me, &c., I refer you to Mr H. D. Dickie, in your own neighbourhood, and Mr Barclay of Irvine in mine. I feel at having said so much in the first person to you, but it appeared to me unavoidable in the circumstances. I hope you will excuse it. Begging your advice, sympathy, and prompt attention. I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely in the truth—JAMES BLAIR.”

What immediate answer Mr Blair received from Mr Haldane, the Secretary, we know not; but, as we shall again see, he did not enter as an agent of the Society till June, 1836. Meanwhile he not only continued but extended his labours to other places more distant. The earliest record of his preaching tours, found in his own writing, begins with February, 1835, reaching to February, 1836. This he calls “J. Blair’s Memorandum Book.” It is chiefly taken up with a note of the several places where he preached, and his texts; and discloses a singular custom which he had at this time, not merely of telling the people when he intended to preach to them again, but also the text he meant to take. Thus the very first entry, “1835, February 3, Tuesday, preached at Kilwinning, from Matthew xvi. 24, ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,’ &c.; promised to return on that night fortnight, and speak from Luke xix. 10, ‘The Son of man came to seek

and to save that which is lost.” Almost all his entries are of a like kind; although sometimes he notes “no text specified.” In the same way we find him generally once a fortnight preaching in Dalry, Kilbride, and Stevenston. We find him also at Irvine,—“Sabbath, February 15, preached in Mr Barclay’s chapel, Irvine, from Acts xiii. 40, 41, ‘Beware,’ &c.; collection for the benefit of Translations in India.” This we note more particularly, as bringing to view his acquaintance and friendship with a good and worthy minister of Jesus Christ, whose name will long be highly esteemed in the churches where he was known. We find Mr Blair, in his devoted evangelistic spirit, extending his labours still farther to the important town of Kilmarnock, and visiting the Baptist church there on two several Lord’s-days—July 28, and August 16—exhorting in the forenoon, preaching in the Masons’ hall in the afternoon, and on the latter occasion at the Cross in the evening. In the midst of these notes of preaching stations and texts, there is one memorandum of a different kind, intimating the anxiety of his mind about the state of the churches in the land. “October, Tuesday evening, throng with manuscript about S. B. churches’ practice,” &c. Whether this paper ever saw the light, we have not heard. We find Mr Blair also visiting some of the churches in Glasgow. He notes—“Glasgow, 2d Sabbath of February, 1836, preached in George Street

chapel in the forenoon, from John x. 9, 'I am the door,' &c. In the afternoon in Portland Street, from Luke xv. 2, 'This man receiveth sinners.' And in the evening, same place, from 1 Peter iii. 18, 'Christ once suffered for sins,' &c. Collection for Baptist Home Missions."

CHAPTER II.

HIS EVANGELISTIC LABOURS AS AGENT OF THE BAPTIST HOME
MISSION OF SCOTLAND, AROUND SALTCOATS, 1836, 1837.

ABOUT this time, Mr Blair, in accordance with his application, received an appointment to labour in the service of the Home Society ; not removing him from his present sphere, but enabling him to extend his labours in all the region round about the town of his habitation. Accordingly he entered upon this new range of preaching in June, 1836. This new era in his life and labours must have been a season of great rejoicing to his ardent soul, longing as he did to be wholly engaged in the glorious work of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. From this time he began to keep a more extended detail of his labours. His journals are full of interesting memorials of his preaching tours ; and now and then we have a record

of his communings with God and his own soul. As of all kinds of biography we have a decided preference for a man's memoirs of himself, we shall leave Mr Blair, with these journals, as much as possible, to tell his own story. The first entry expresses the feelings of his warm heart on the morning of the day when he became an agent of the Society.

*“Tuesday, 1st June, 1836.—*This morning commences my agreement with the Baptist Home Missionary Society. I have been led to devote it to fasting, and prayer, and searching the Scriptures till 11 o'clock ; the state of my health, and other circumstances of a painful nature, not permitting any longer continuance in these exercises unbrokenly to-day. I have been led this morning and enabled to devote myself anew, in soul, body and spirit, to my God and Saviour, and to declare my readiness of spirit and desire to take up the cross every day, and to follow my dear Redeemer through good report with pleasure, and through bad report with resignation, or to blood or death if he sees meet. I seek his grace, presence and guidance for the discharge of all these duties. I desire not to be proud of any of these feelings and sentiments, but I bless God for putting them into such a heart as mine. ‘To me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.’ I was a sinner above all others that I knew in my circumstances ; and I ‘thank Christ Jesus my

Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry,' who was before such a vile and degraded sinner; 'but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' I feel very grateful to the Saviour, who gave me favour in the sight of the Committee of the Society. I feel gratitude and respect towards these servants of the Saviour for the way in which they entertained my case, judging of it so kindly towards me, and so mercifully towards my fellow sinners around me. May the Lord bless them, and do them all the good they need. And oh, may he make me humble, and of an understanding heart, and give me understanding in all things, and fill me with that wisdom which is necessary in winning souls. And to his name be all the glory—Amen."

After this dedication of himself to the Lord and to his new kind of work, we find him, week after week, traversing through various towns and villages of Ayrshire, and returning to spend the Lord's-day with the church in Saltcoats, of which he was pastor.

"*Thursday, 2d.*—Rode to Kilbride." After visiting in some of the cottages, conversing with the people, and in some cases reading two pages of "The Sinner's Friend," he says, "Got the meeting proclaimed, and

preached in the principal street to about seventy people, from Galatians iii. 10, 13; my first missionary sermon as the servant of a missionary society. May my glorious, and blessed, and dear Master own the word, and show his approval thereof; and to his name be all the honour."

"*Monday, 6th.*—Set off about 11 A.M. for Beith. Soon subjected to heavy rain. Called at Moorlaght for shelter—was kindly received, and asked to take sowans and milk with the mistress, servant man and maid. Did so. Considered the whole as my master's doing. Having finished, I took out 'The Sinner's Friend,' said, I would read a page or two while they finished dinner. Did so; and commented on what was said, and directed them to the only salvation. I omitted to notice, that before this incident, I had an opportunity of directing a boy in a milk cart to the Saviour. Having cleared up a good deal, pursued my journey to Dalry; rested half an hour in John Anderson's, who agreed to follow me to Beith, as he could not go for an hour. I said, I could not ask so much; but if he did I would come to Dalry to-night again with him. On the road to Beith, I had a long conversation with a labourer from Troon, seeking work, and directed him to the nature of true religion. He was well informed, but wanted the key to saving knowledge. He said he had been working in a squad of forty, twenty-five of whom were Catholics. His decided opinion was, that the

Catholics were more sincere in their religion than the Protestants, but, at the same time, more immoral in their conduct; that he was convinced, from what he had heard from them in drink and passion, that it was a principle in their heart, that to kill a Protestant was to do God service. I got some excellent acquaintance in Beith—had but a small audience in-doors—night very unfavourable—way cleared for visiting again—some reason to expect to succeed better next time. Returned to Dalry amidst a good deal of wind and rain.”

“*Tuesday.*—Caused sermon to be intimated in Dalry for the dinner-hour at ‘the Grey Stane.’”—After detailing several visits, there is one which we insert, both as a specimen of the shrewd Scotch cottager, and of Mr Blair’s excellent and successful management in such cases—“Called on William Macdougall. He stated objections to my work; ‘so many different ways in religion; improper season for serious addresses, as the people wished to spend their meal hours in diversion.’ Answered, ‘God has laid down but one way, and every man for himself should try to understand it. Most denominations would answer Job’s question, chap. xxv. 4, the same way. My great object was to make men understand, and when they did, my advice about church government, &c., was, “With all honesty examine, and with full conviction act in obedience to the Saviour.” As to improper times, a time was coming when no man

would think so. If six should attend seriously, I was well repaid, or if one should go and think, "I am a poor sinner, lost, unless saved by Christ," and is led to repent and turn to God, I am a thousand times or ten thousand times repaid.' 'Your motives are good; I never understood them before.' 'Yes, these views uphold me, and lead me to persevere amidst all the laughter and reproach I meet with. Those who do not understand my views may call me mad, as they did Paul; but I am just like a man who knows that in a certain place a treasure is to be found, while his neighbours know it not. They call him a fool for searching so diligently there; but is he to stop for that?' Answer. 'No; you must be a happy man, Mr Blair.' 'I acknowledge it, although I do not boast of it. I never was happier in my life. You have drawn me into explanations, which, I hope, you will use aright.' 'If anybody speaks to me, I'll be able to tell them what I could not do before.' All the above took place before a stranger man and two young women who were serving beside Macdougals daughters. He said when I was leaving, he would likely be to hear; and I saw him there. Preached from Luke xiv. 23, to an audience of nearly 100 adults, and a great number of youths. Immediately after, I went off for Kilwinning, and preached at eight in Mr Barclay's chapel to a few, from Eph. ii. 1. Then went to a temperance meeting in the parish school house, accompanying my brethren who were hearing

me; and heard a speech from Mr Hugh Goudie, an old scholar of mine, a hopeful youth."

The next Lord's-day, we find Mr Blair on a visit to Glasgow, regarding which, he says—"Sabbath, 12th.—Preached in Brae church, from 2 Cor. vii. 10. Afternoon, in Portland Street, presided at the Supper, and lectured from Heb. viii. on the New Covenant. brother Maclaren being at Aberdeen. Evening, Mr Mackintosh and I being both present, preached in Portland Street, for the Mission. Mr M. from Heb. iv. 7. I followed him, from 1 Tim. i. 15."

On the following Wednesday, we find him at home again, at his own church meeting, and on Thursday and Friday at his beloved itinerating work, preaching both at noon and at night, at Little Dubs, Dundonald, Auld Rome, and Dreghorn. At Dundonald, where he had about 100 adults, he says, "Many came smiling, none went away so. I think the Lord was there. Many invitations back, and expressions of approval. To the Lord be all the glory." At Dreghorn, where he had about 50 persons at a threshing-mill; after preaching, "Mr Dunlop, jun., would take nothing for my pony's corn, and told me to call at any time and get a bite for my beast of what he had to give. He said a number were prejudiced; but if I should come back I would get a great audience. I then rode home, and arrived betwixt 11 and 12."

Next week we find him in another direction, preaching at Stevenston Loan, at Greenock, on the

steam-boat quay, to from 400 to 600 people ; at Kilmalcolm, Kilbarchan and Johnstone; and then, on Lord's-day, back to his own church, and preaching in the evening at Ardrossan, at the back of the Tontine, to about 120. This week he is at Kilbride, Millport in the isle of Cumbray, Saltcoats, Kilwinning, and Stevenston, preaching every evening.

The following week he visits his old quarters in the isle of Arran, preaching at Corrie, Brodick, Shiddock, and Dugar ; at noon and evening, on braes, and in barns, and school-rooms. *Thursday, July 7*, he says—“Worship in the morning. A few neighbours in. Visited Elisabeth Brown, administered consolation, instruction, and exhortation, and prayed. Set out for Brodick near 12 o'clock. Had a scene before reaching James Currie's house that made a most solemn impression upon my mind. A great flock of sheep were moving away from the neighbourhood of a farm at the foot of the opposite hill. They were bleating and uttering a great variety of doleful sounds. They seemed to be going slowly, mournfully, and unwillingly ; some of them going on as if in dire despair, others turning, trying to recover their former place, but carried back with the current. All seemed as if leaving something which they held dear, and could never recover. Their movements and doleful lamentations brought before my mind most sensibly the departure of the wicked, at the day of judgment, from the fountain of light and of life into the blackness of darkness for ever.”

“At James Currie’s I came up with a gentleman and lady going to Brodick. We walked together to the other side of the hill. We had some interesting conversation about the proper way of preaching the gospel. I said, we had a pattern which all ought to follow—a model which was before the eyes of all; that which set aside all arguments. This was manifest from the following illustration. If the fishermen in Brodick should hold a meeting to consult about the best kind of net for their purpose, we can easily fancy that a good deal of reasoning would take place, and a great variety of opinions might be uttered. One might say, I consider that twine of four plies is the best; another, that it was too much; that three ply twine was more yielding; another might give it as his opinion that a piece of a certain size was best for retaining a certain kind of fish; and a fourth might be of a different opinion. But suppose a fifth to stand up and say, ‘Your reasonings and opinions require to be brought to the test of experience. Where we can appeal to that standard, we can set aside all philosophizing on any subject. This I can happily do on this subject. Here is a sort of net which has been proved, and has suited the purpose for which it was intended vastly better than any other that has ever been tried, having actually caught fish in great quantities. Therefore, instead of wasting time and energy in trying to prove what might be most suitable, let us go and study this, and en-

deavour to construct our nets as like it as possible.' Models of this sort of preaching we have in the scriptures, particularly in the 2d and 3d chapters of Acts, where specimens of sermons are given that were very effectual, being the instruments of converting thousands.

"My travelling companions and I got very friendly. They asked me if I was of the Church? I said, 'No, if I understood their meaning; but that, in another sense, and that the strictly proper sense, I did certainly think so.' 'Was I of the Secession?' 'No; I was far away from what most reckoned the right way. I was a Baptist.' They did not seem to undervalue me on that account. On my saying that if I thought the evening would be favourable I would stay and have sermon in Brodick to-night, they wished I would, and they would come and hear, and would be happy to see me at their lodgings to tea, if I stayed when I came to Brodick. I found Mrs Burns at Mrs Croker's, and she wished very much that I would stay and get dinner there. I then went and got the school-house engaged, and published sermon. Went to Alexander Fullerton's to tea; and my new acquaintances introduced themselves to me as Mr and Mrs Austin of Glasgow. Went to the school-house; very wet, very few; 1 Tim. i. 15—'Faithful saying.' Those present seemed gratified."

"*Friday, 8th.*—Taken by Mrs Burns to visit an old man, Dugald Gray. Found him lying in poor circum-

stances, in his son's barn. Gratified with his resignation, contentment, and humility of spirit. Thought him an heir of glory, and said some things to encourage him to contemplate a speedy deliverance from all present poverty and evil, which he seemed to relish much. He asked an interest in my prayers. When I reciprocated his request, he broke out into complaints of his unworthiness, but acknowledged, when suggested to him, that he had a worth in the Saviour."

Having thus spent from Monday to Friday in the island, going about doing good, he was again home and with the church on Lord's-day, and the following week at his usual travels through Ayrshire, preaching at Stevenston, Beith, Dalry, and Kilwinning, and also visiting the people at their cottages. A number of incidents noted by him in his journal are too interesting to be omitted, notwithstanding our wish to study brevity.

"*Monday, 11th.*—After breakfast, heavy rain ; read and studied for two hours. At half-past twelve set out for Beith. At half-way, heavy rain ; thought of shelter ; asked the Saviour's direction ; went into the house of a widow of a smith. They were going to dinner, and the youths offering to begin without any grace, I said, as they were all young folks, if they liked I would be their chaplain. They assented. I proceeded, and directed their attention to the Author of all their mercies. I rose to go to the entry during their repast, but was immediately requested to take

a little barley and milk. I went to the door, but was twice again solicited to come in and take a plate of barley and milk, and at any rate to come in. I yielded, and blessed the Lord for an unexpected dinner, or, at least, what was made to serve for it. Meantime, a poor invalid came into the kitchen, with a blanket round him, a labourer who had got both arms broken eight months before. He was brother-in-law to the widow. I spoke of his affliction, its design and tendency, and left with him a tract to read, and tell me his opinion of it when I returned to-morrow. He took it thankfully. I went on to Beith. Called on Mr William Clark, merchant. He was not sure of me, but, after a little conversation, agreed to provide a hall for me in case it should continue wet. I took tea with James Hamilton, a Relief elder, who, with his wife, went to hear me. An audience of from 20 to 30."

"*Tuesday, 12th.*—Called on Mr Clark after breakfast. His conversation was spiritual, and very enlightened as to religion. He seems a person of very considerable Christian attainment. He promised to try to procure for me a good place for meeting, free of expense, and said he would be glad to see me when I came back. Went on towards Dalry; conversed with an old woman who seemed to be seeking her meat. She talked away very freely; spoke of the wickedness of Beith for Sabbath-breaking and drinking, and spoke readily of being a great sinner herself.

But when I joined her in her self-condemnation, she seemed very ill pleased, because I did not make similar confessions ; and different times did she put the question — ‘But are ye not as great a sinner?’ On asking what was to become of her, she said she had a merciful God to deal with. On asking her how he could be merciful and just, she replied, ‘She didna ken, and that she didna meddle wi’ these things.’ I had just got her told that she could only be justified by believing on the Son of God, whom he had sent, when she said she had to go up here, and left me. I went on to the smith’s, and saw the man with the broken arms. He said he had read the tract, and liked it very well, and spoke interestedly of the attention of the minister, and said there was none of them of that sort here. He had not been a member of any church before the accident, but went regularly to Mr Johnstone of Dalry. Spoke to him of the way the mason, in the tract, tried to find peace, and of the way he did find it ; directed him to the Bible, and repeated a number of passages containing the gospel, showing the necessity of its saving reception by the sinner, and its blessed effects upon him. He said, ‘Are not all the scriptures as good as these, at least, all the New Testament?’ I said, the whole scriptures were precious, and all excellent in their connection, but there were some parts which contained the grand principles of a sinner’s return to God, and that these were the first in importance to

him, and that, after he got acquainted with these, he would then value the whole in their order. I offered him the 'Dairyman's Daughter' to read, which he accepted. I then went on to Dalry, preached to about 30 near 'the Grey Stane,' from 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. Preached in the evening on Kilwinning Green, from John v. 25."

"*Thursday, 21st July.*—Went for Kilmarnock by van at eight o'clock morning. Conversed with a man breaking stones on the road about twelve miles from Kilmarnock. He replied that if he did not know the Saviour it was a pity of him. I remarked that that was true; and that if he knew him all would ultimately be well with him. Going on my road, a girl came up to me in the habit of a servant, about seventeen years of age. She told me she did not know anything about the way to be saved. I showed her God's plan, and exhorted her to read the scriptures and learn more of the Saviour, which she engaged to do. Called on Charles Piper, who said he had no time to aid in getting up a meeting, but that I ought to call on Mr Ward. Did so, and found him ready to every good work. He said he would go and get a meeting up in the square, and stand at my elbow if I would go to his chapel at eight o'clock and preach for him. I consented, on condition that he would give me a collection on some future Sabbath evening for the Baptist Home Missionary Society. After a minute's pause, he said 'I knew better about an

Independent church than to think that he could say he would give, but he would mention the subject and not stand in the way, and he thought it would be done.' We agreed, and a meeting of about 300, young and old, was addressed by me first, from John v. 25; then by Mr Ward for about twenty minutes, following up the same subject. He prayed and pronounced the blessing, and told them I was going to preach in the chapel immediately after. I said I wished a word to the children; that I was much pleased with their behaviour throughout; that they also should hear the voice of the Saviour; that the Saviour when on earth loved little children, and paid them attention, that he drew them to him, laid his hands on their heads and blessed them; which I, at the same time, exemplified on two of the boys near me, the one about nine, and the other seven years of age. I preached in the chapel from 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; and was much pleased to hear from Mr Ward, after sermon, that the two boys whom I saw in a pew by themselves in the middle of the chapel, were, to his certain knowledge, the very two that I had laid my hands upon. May the Lord bless the incident for their eternal good."

"*Friday, 22d.*—At Kilmarnock cross at twenty minutes past two o'clock. A large and very attentive audience—about 200 adults. Great encouragement to return. I said, indeed, that from their numbers and attention I would try to return soon.

Mrs M. thought she had got benefit to her soul. On leaving for Kilwinning, had some conversation by the way with a countryman about the road to Kilwinning. He spoke of his knowing it well. I said it was a pleasant thing to know well the road which we had to travel, but there was one road of vastly greater importance to know than all others."

The next week we find Mr Blair at Dalry, Beith, Kilbirnie, Lochwinnoch, and Kilbarchan, preaching at all these places wherever he could best gather a congregation, and engaging in conversation with people whom he met on the road; ever aiming at the one thing needful—the salvation of their souls. There being a little Baptist church in Kilbarchan, he preached in their meeting house, as it was very wet. On Sabbath he preached in the Baptist meeting house at Kilmalcolm in the afternoon, and at the market-place in the evening, to fully 200.

"*Monday, August 1.*—At Greenock; read a portion of the scriptures on the stair of the custom house, and then invited and pressed the people to go with me to the Seaman's chapel. A porter said, 'A few of us will follow you, Sir.' I said, 'Come away then, and bring all you can with you by the road. I mean to tell the poor how they may become rich, and all how they may escape hell and go to heaven.' About fifty went. Met here with Mr Gilmore from Canada, who had just arrived at Greenock quay the night before. He seems a good, clever, interesting man.

Agreed to try to get up a meeting for him in Saltcoats following week."

The next day Mr Blair went to the Bridge of Weir, where he seems to have had the largest congregations, and the greatest encouragement which he had yet enjoyed in his tours. Accordingly we find him here again and again this month, besides preaching at Kilbarchan, and at Johnstone, a temperance sermon in the Secession meeting house, from Proverbs xx. 1; also at Saltcoats, Stevenston, Ardrossan, Beith, and Kilbirnie. Of his visits to the Bridge of Weir he shall speak for himself.

"*Tuesday, August 2.*—Went to Bridge of Weir; preached at Laigh mill road head to about 600 or 700 people, from 1 Cor. i. 23, 24—'Christ crucified.' Great interest. Seeing so many and such attention, I resolved to visit them again, and accordingly gave out sermon for the same place on Thursday evening. When I returned I heard the following particulars concerning the impressions made by truths stated. One said, 'Somebody has told him about me.' A second, 'That I was fighting at the fair.' A third, 'I thought always he would turn and lay his hand on my head and say, Thou art the man.' One young woman went home and wept. One man said, 'He could not have described his own heart better, and that he thought I knew all the sins he had ever committed.' An old man said when done, 'Oh, I wish that man was here every night.' A seventh

said, 'He would go a mile every night after his work was done, and stand two hours and hear.' Very kindly treated by William Hamilton, and wife and son. *Wednesday, 3.*—At Kilbarchan; about 300, from 1 Tim. i. 15. *Thursday, 4.*—At Bridge of Weir to 700 or 800 people, from John x. 9, 'I am the door.' A most interesting meeting. Much impression apparently. I wait for God's salvation. *Sabbath evening, 14th.*—At a baptism; to about 200 or 300 persons. Mr Laird spoke first, and I followed. Mrs James Beveridge was baptized."

"*Monday, 15th.*—Went for Beith in Big Laght whey cart. Talked to the boy driving about service; said 'I was a servant too, had a good master, good wages, and a great many presents; he needed hands, made his servants know that they were sons after a while; when service is finished, he gives them a mansion, an inheritance; has a book of rules, for entering, and for telling how to behave. Won't you fee? Read the book of directions, and tell me again what you think.' 'Where do you serve?' 'I go through the country serving.' 'Where does your master live?' 'Up yonder,' pointing to heaven. Had a good meeting in Beith, about 300, from Isa. iii. 10, 11, 'Say ye to the righteous.'"

"*Tuesday evening, 16th.*—In Beith, also to about 400 persons, at Crumnock foot, from John x. 9. An apparently serious meeting. May the Lord give them to enter by him the door." After sermon, met

in Mr Clark's with nine young men, all serious, and, except one or two, doing something in the Lord's work. I spoke in the way of encouragement to them to hold meetings in private houses."

On Thursday and Friday he preached in the open air at Kilbirnie, the first day to about 300 or 400, the next to about 600 people. On this he says, "The people seem very desirous to hear in Kilbirnie. May the good Lord open their eyes to the truth as it is in Jesus. A young man in the flax mill said to me, that if I would stay there for a while, he thought I would soon gather a church."

Mr Blair's diligence and delight in preaching seem to have been untiring. On Sabbath we find him preaching at Stevenston, at 8 o'clock in the morning, to about 60 or 70 persons, and then, in the evening, at Dalry cross, to about 500. And on Monday he began a series of meetings, which he continued the whole week, at the Bridge of Weir, where the people came out in great numbers to hear the word at his mouth. He says—

"*Monday evening*, at Bridge of Weir, to about 600 or 700 persons, at Laigh mill road head, from Is. iii. 10, 11, 'Say ye to the righteous.' After sermon, intimated that I would be glad to meet with any person, privately, who wished to talk about the state of the soul. An old man and his son appeared in my room. I asked the young man as to the state of his mind. He did not seem to relish my interro-

gations. The old man said they had come merely to countenance me, as he thought I desired it, and his son had come along with him. He went on to speak of knotty points and controverted ones; particularly he wished me to say what was the cause of reprobation. I answered that I did not talk much about these things. I wanted always to be at more practical and useful conversation. I was a little puzzled to get on with the old man, when in came a man with his wife and three daughters; he who said when last here, 'I thought when he would lay his hand on my head and say, "Thou art the man."' They declared in turn, as called to speak, that they were great sinners, and that they were convinced all they had heard was true. I counselled them to believe the gospel, and engaged to call next day, in the afternoon, at their own house; when the man said he would be at home from the mill, and that his daughters would be sent for. I did call and see them, the second daughter excepted, and advised them to continue in the desires and ways of religion. They said they would."

"*Tuesday evening* to 600 or 800, from John ix. 11, 25, 'A man that is called Jesus.' After sermon, eight or nine females called for conversation. They talked sensibly. Most of them were Sabbath scholars, and said they had been benefited much by a teacher called Simpson, whom they were going to lose, and for which they seemed heartily sorry. I

hope well of a number of them. After the rest went away, a woman, called Elizabeth ——, confessed that she had been a great sinner, and wished some instruction.”

“*Wednesday 24th*, to from 600 to 800, from John v. 25, ‘The hour cometh.’ An interesting meeting. Three women called for conversation. I asked them to come into my room one by one. The first said she saw herself a great sinner, and wished instruction; said she found it hard to sit down at a Communion table and not find the Saviour. I showed her that that was altogether wrong; that she should not go there till she had found the Saviour, and was convinced that she was a converted person. She had told me she was a member with the Burghers. I told her to return, but she did not. The second had little to say about her soul. She had come expecting a number more to be present, and the instruction to be general. The third expected the same, and did not come down at all when she found she was to be received singly. Was at Kilmalcolm this day, and saw Dr S ——; exhorted him to become temperate; and in order to overcome his particular lust, and every other, to begin immediately to believe and obey the gospel. Visited a dying girl; exhorted and prayed.”

“*Thursday evening*, to about 600 or 700. A cold night. From Is. i. 18, ‘Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.’ After sermon, conversed

with ten girls. They said that they had agreed to receive no additional members to their morning meeting unless by the consent of the whole. I explained a little, and approved, and said that was the way we Independents received all our members, by confession and universal satisfaction. They expressed their conviction that ours was the best way."

"*Friday evening*, to about 900, from Prov. i. 24-28, 'Because I have called, and ye refused.' A solemn meeting. An improvement of the week's meetings and subjects. Brother W. Hamilton told me he observed a number, where he stood, in tears. An old man, when I left the chair on which I had stood, took my hand, and said, with great warmth, 'Mercy and peace be with you, Sir.' I took farewell of them for a season, unless they could find accommodation for themselves in the winter nights, and then I would return. Oh that God may save their immortal souls."

The people at the Bridge of Weir were so much taken with his ministrations, that they proposed a subscription for his benefit. But in a copy of a letter written by him, Sept. 7, 1836, to W. Hamilton, he declines any such token.

Having thus devoted a week to the Bridge of Weir, he devoted the next two weeks to Stevenston, preaching and holding prayer meetings there almost every night, his congregations averaging from 50 to 200. On Monday evening, he says, "After sermon, I said to a number of religious friends who came to speak

to me, that I would be happy to retire to some house to pray with them. Seven men and seven women disciples went. All the men but myself joined in prayer. 'Then they who feared the Lord spake one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard.' I was much refreshed and encouraged. I have heard a number speak in the same strain." Of Tuesday evening service, he says, "I think I never was enabled to speak for conviction more, or, perhaps, so clearly and convincingly. The Lord give his word a place in every heart. After the service, a prayer meeting was announced, and all who chose invited to remain. All did so. We said, we distinctly came and preached for their conversion. We believed that except they were converted and became as little children, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven, and, therefore, we were going to pray God that it might be effected in their case."

On Tuesday, Sept. 13, he went to Largs, and there for three days and nights he laboured, preaching on the green at the head of the quay, to congregations averaging from 100 to about 400. On Thursday, at 11 o'clock, to ten poor people at the Beggars' lodge. The most of the next week he devoted in the same way to Kilbride, preaching both at the dinner hour, to from 70 to 100, and also in the evenings. The next fortnight he is preaching every evening at Ardrossan, Stevenston, Saltcoats, Dundonald, and Kilwinning. "*Friday, Oct. 7th.*—Engaged in Saltcoats

with Mr Steane from Camberwell, for the Baptist Mission for East and West Indies.”

After this we find him extending his travels and his preaching to the town of Ayr, which shortly afterwards became his head quarters for about three years. On this first visit he preached daily, from Monday to Friday, both at the dinner hour, when the streets were thronged, and in the evenings. We give his own record.

“*Monday, Oct. 10th.*—In Ayr, in the Independent chapel; about 40, from 1 Tim. i. 15, ‘This is a faithful saying.’”

“*Tuesday, 11th.*—Dinner hour, at the foot of Cross Street, from Rom. viii. 1, ‘No condemnation;’ about 250 or 300. Evening in Wallace Tower school-room; about 70, from John x. 9, ‘I am the door.’”

“*Wednesday, 12th.*—At Prestwick, mid-day, after Mr Rollo. Evening in Newton Council room; about 40 or 50, from Matt. xviii. 3, ‘Except ye be converted.’”

“*Thursday, 13th.*—In Wallace Tower school-room; about 80 or 90 present, from 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, ‘We preach Christ crucified.’ Mr Garrett’s servant heard, went home and wept; slept none all night; spoke with me by her own desire next day. Much affected about her sins. A sailor called upon Mrs Campbell and Mrs Reid next morning to see if they had told me about his character; he wished to see me; resolved to go next night and take his sister. A collier’s wife, from Cross Street, went home very deeply affected.”

“*Friday, 14th.*—A good day. Got up sermon at foot of Cross Street at dinner hour; preached from Luke xiii. 3, ‘Except ye repent.’ About 200 present. A solemn meeting. During the first prayer, a band of musicians belonging to a show came up playing, stopped just beside me, made their proclamation, recommenced playing, and walked off. I continued praying, and besought God to have mercy on them. Evening in Wallace Tower school-room; the largest audience we have had there, about 100, from John ix. 11, ‘A man who is called Jesus;’ also, v. 25, ‘One thing I know.’ A little after reaching home, Mr Garrett came into the room, and said that Marion had got great relief, and seemed to enjoy the gospel, or to that effect. Next morning I conversed with her, and gave her some counsels about the way in which she ought to act in future. I then went down the quay to my sister-in-law’s to converse with her, and in hopes of seeing the sailor. I did not see him, but was much gratified. She seemed much impressed when I conversed with Mrs Alexander, who lay in consumption. She said she felt that she had no religion whatever; acknowledged that she deserved God’s wrath; said she never felt before as she did then about sin, although she had often thought of it; said she had confessed her sins more, and sought forgiveness more since I had come to Ayr, than for a twelvemonth before; said Ayr was an awful place, as bad as Glasgow, the only difference, not so open,

but the worse on that account ; she thought that if she had been beside us at home it would have been better for her."

"*Saturday, 15th.*—In the steamer conversed with the captain about the danger of living and dying in sin ; told him of the only remedy, and urged him to lay hold of it. Talked to the engineer of his hard labour for the meat which perisheth, and advised him to labour for that which endureth to everlasting life ; said, ' This is the word of God, that ye believe on his Son whom he hath sent.' Spoke to Robert Muir, a passenger, of the danger we are all in while living in sin, and the necessity of fleeing to a place of safety. He acknowledged the justice of the remarks. They arose out of his observing that the paddle-box on which we were standing talking was a dangerous place, and our shifting in consequence. I said we stood without fear till our attention was drawn to danger which existed under us, and which threatened our life, though we did not perceive it. Just so with the sinner."

At this time, an attempt was made on the part of some, one at least, of the brethren in the church at Saltcoats to cool Mr Blair's zeal in going about seeking the salvation of souls. One, James Dunlop, finding fault, said, " We could not show mercy to souls ; we could give to bodies, but not to souls. Am I to visit all the poor and needy in the place ?" Mr Blair, bent on the work of itinerating, said, " He

would have to give up all the teaching of the church to him." Mr D. saying, "Not one of them could do it like him," Mr Blair disapproved of it, as designed flattery. It shows how little sympathy he had, and brings out more conspicuously the zeal which glowed in his bosom to preach the word from place to place, and to win souls to the Saviour. Unchecked, if chilled in his evangelistic work, he goes on pursuing his course, as if no interruption had arisen. The two next days after this we find him at Kilmaurs, preaching the one day to about 50, the other to 80 or 90, and the next week back to Ayr, which he had found to be a field of more than ordinary promise. Here he preached daily, from Monday to Friday, besides visiting the people, one day, along with Mr Rollo. In his journal he reports the progress of some before named anxious about salvation. "Spoke with Mrs Reid before sermon. She said she had now got peace, and saw that there was nothing for her from herself, but all from the Saviour, and that by faith in him. I conversed with her, and prayed for her steadfastness."

The week following he spent at Beith, another of his most fruitful fields. On this occasion he visited much among the people, and found a number under awakening, in consequence of his former visit. Besides his visits, he preached twice a day; in the evening to congregations ranging from 80 or 90 to about 200, which was his Friday evening number,

when he says there was "a crowded house, about 20 standing inside, and 10 to 15 outside, besides a number of new seats." We find him also trying to get others to speak to their neighbours as well as himself. On Monday he says, he "had a meeting at the foot of Bellman's close at 7. Caused Mr Clark to speak first. He did so, from Matthew xi. 5, 'To the poor the gospel is preached.' A very sensible discourse of 25 minutes. I followed, about as long, from the next verse, 'Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me.'" So interesting was the work here, that he returned to it again in a fortnight, and had meetings equally large, and found impressions increasingly great. At the close of this visit he says, "On the whole, at Beith, I have been gratified above all other scenes almost; although Bridge of Weir and Ayr have been exceedingly interesting. Surely the Lord was with us this week. Many seem impressed. A general serious feeling exists. I trust the Lord will nourish his own work into perfection in many cases. I have experienced something of Paul's declaration to the Galatians, ch. iv. 15, 'I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.'"

From Monday, Nov. 28, to Friday, Dec. 2, he spent a week at Kilbirnie, preaching daily, rising from 50 or 60, to 150 and 170. On this place he says, "I hope serious impressions were produced by the Lord through means of his word, and I trust, if allowed to

go back, to get more access to the people." After spending the most of the following week at home, part of the time writing on the subject of baptism, he again paid a week's visit to Ayr, from Monday, Dec. 12, to Friday 15, preaching generally twice a day in Mr Mill's school-room, and Wallace Tower school-room. On Friday evening a prayer meeting in Mr Garrett's, at which he spoke from Ps. xxiii. 1-4. Of Mr Blair's Sabbaths during this period, we have taken no note, as he usually spent them with the church in Saltcoats, and in the evening preaching in the neighbourhood. Lord's-day, Dec. 18, is worthy of being specially recorded, as in the evening of that day, he preached at the request of the Temperance society, in Mr Ellis's meeting-house, where for years he had been a member before he became a Baptist. The congregation about 600 or 700. Prov. xx. 1, "Wine is a mocker."

On Lord's-day, 1st Jany., 1837, at Beith, preaching in the Relief meeting house, for the same object, he met with a specimen of bigotry and prejudice which is now rapidly dying away under the influence of a more enlightened and Christian spirit. The congregation, about 700. He says, "was told the pulpit had been promised, and all was prepared and agreeable. But lo, when I went in, I was shown into the desk, and informed that the pulpit had been forbidden that day, but not by the minister. I pity them. May the Lord forgive them." Text, Prov. xx.

1, "Wine is a mocker." The greater part of January he devoted chiefly to Saltcoats and neighbourhood, besides four days preaching at Newmilns.

CHAPTER III.

HIS RESIDENCE IN AYR, 1837-1840.

THE finger of God seemed now to be pointing to Ayr as a better centre of operations than Saltcoats; and the residence of Mr Garrett in that town, an excellent gentleman of the Baptist denomination, afforded an opportunity for laying the foundation of a Baptist church there, which Mr Blair deemed it his duty to embrace. Of the various steps by which he was led to decide on this course, he has left no record in his journals.

Preparations having been made towards the formation of a church in Ayr, on Monday, Feb. 13, we find him travelling thither, and the day following preparing for his removal. He thus records the beginning of the church. "*Feb.* 14, 1837.—On this evening, met in Mr Garrett's parlour, Mr and Mrs Garrett, Mrs Allan, Mr Donnan, Mr Mills, along with myself, to take into consideration the formation of a church of Christ in Ayr on the next Lord's-day; when the following topics, being discussed, were cordially agreed

to. 1st, That the principle on which we should unite, was a mutual conviction of real conversion to God, and of course, that every one added to us should come in on the same principle. 2d, That applicants, when judged quite capable of stating their minds and feelings publicly, should, in order to satisfy the church, make a personal profession before the whole church; but in cases where faith may be judged weak though real, or knowledge limited, or when it would be too great a trial to the feelings, the report of the leader or pastor, and one or two other brethren who have conversed with the individual, will be deemed sufficient; because it seems quite in accordance with the great scripture rule of evidence, "at the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." 3d, That the Scriptures should be regularly read in our church meetings. 4th, That brotherly exhortation shall be encouraged; and as soon as the church shall judge it expedient, a distinct meeting on the Lord's-day for that special purpose shall be appointed; the time of the day to be at the discretion of the church. But it was agreed by all present, that a different hour from those at which the world around are accustomed to come to hear the gospel ought to be preferred. 5th, That we feel it our duty to admit to the Saviour's ordinances in fellowship with us all who may visit us for this purpose, provided they are known to be baptized believers, of Evangelical sentiments. 6th, That the leader may

call any brother to pray in the public worship at such times, and in such circumstances, as prudence may dictate.

Such was Mr Blair's laboriousness, that, after these preliminaries were arranged, we find him preaching the two next evenings at Saltcoats, and back again to Ayr on Friday, to be with the brethren there on Lord's-day. On Monday again at Saltcoats, addressing a temperance meeting, and resigning his office of president of the temperance society there, and preaching twice on Tuesday at Dubbs and Stevenston. On Wednesday, he holds a farewell meeting with his brethren in Saltcoats, in James Anderson's, "Assembled," he says, "to commend me to God, and to seek his blessing on my future endeavours for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, particularly in Ayr. Thrice praise, seven times prayer. I addressed them regarding Christian effort by themselves in Saltcoats, insisting chiefly on the principle of loving our neighbour as ourselves. A meeting at which and with which I felt much gratified, and, I may add, honoured."

On Thursday following, February 23, he removed his family, consisting of his wife and four sons and two daughters, to Ayr. On Lord's-day, 26th, the brethren who had agreed to unite as a church observed the ordinances for the first time. Through the generosity of Mr Garrett, who was a judge in the East India Company's service, Mr Blair was chiefly maintained in

preaching the gospel and labouring in the surrounding country. On Lord's-days, he usually preached three times, and also on Friday evenings in the hall occupied by the church. Once a fortnight, he devoted four days of the week to the towns and villages around, visiting and preaching every evening. Every other week, he laboured in like manner in the streets and closes of Ayr, visiting from door to door, and holding meetings in different parts of the town. Among other places, he was not long before giving a week to his former field at Beith, where again he had cheering congregations, and other tokens of good.

On Monday, April 17th, going to Edinburgh Home Mission meetings, he took a more extensive tour, preaching almost daily on his way. Indeed, with the exception of Saturday, he never seems to have felt satisfied unless he had been preaching or holding some meeting for the good of his fellow-men. Hence he begins his record of this journey with saying—“*Monday, 17th.*—In Glasgow ; did not preach.” In the course of his travels, also, we find him constantly trying, in a happy and easy way, to do good to his fellow-travellers. From Glasgow, he sails to Stirling, by the old water line, the canal—“In track-boat had a most interesting passage, reading to, and conversing with the passengers. At Kirkintilloch, a blind man came in. We contrived to turn him into a medium through which we got the gospel preached

to all who were within hearing, and then made a collection for him, having interrupted the fiddling. We got 1s 4d for him." Spending three days in Stirling, we find him preaching twice each day. The same evening he arrived, at the Athenæum at 7 o'clock, and in a school-room at 8 o'clock, to about 80 or 100. The next day, in Cowan Street, at 12 noon, and in the Meal market in the evening, to about 300. The third day in the Meal market, for prayer and praise, and then, being wet, adjourned to the Independent chapel; about 150. The next day he paid a visit to Cairneyhill, the place of his birth, but did not preach. In the afternoon of Lord's-day, he preached in the Baptist church, Dunfermline, from his favourite text, "I am the door;" and the same evening, in Cairneyhill meeting-house, to about 300, from another of his favourites—"This is a faithful saying." In his record, without a word on the feelings which must have filled his bosom in preaching in his father's old pulpit, he simply has this note—"The carrier said to my sister, at Leith, 'He maist had us a' greeting.'" On Monday, he preached in Dunfermline, in Nether-ton school-room and the Baptist meeting-house. After spending the rest of the week in Edinburgh, at the meetings of the Highland Mission Society, he is back again by next Lord's-day at his work in Ayr.

Friday, May 5th.—He says, "I went this day to Ardrossan, in consequence of a letter the night before, intimating that grandmother was drawing to her end,

and wishing to see me." But although called to see his wife's mother on a sickbed, he must be preaching. Accordingly that same evening he visits one of his old haunts; and preaches in Stevenston Loan to about 150 or 160. The next week he spends three days at Catrine, and preaches on Monday in a school-room to about 70; on Tuesday in the Market place to about 800, and on Wednesday to about 1200 or 1400.

Monday, 22d, preaching in Cross Street, Ayr, to about 150, he had a scene with the like of which street-preachers are more or less frequently annoyed. It was one of the kind which, from personal observation, we know Mr Blair was well skilled in managing. "A most interesting meeting. The Lord surely enlarged my heart, and led me to speak very faithfully and sincerely to the people. I was particularly struck with the cases of two men, colliers, who came up about ten minutes after I had begun. Both, I believe, had been drinking. Both came up laughing. One went from one place to another outside the audience, and attempted to talk to those near him, but finding the people inclined to hear, he walked off. The other took his stand just opposite to my position, and stared me in the face, and laughed or smiled broadly. I felt somewhat annoyed, but went on very solemnly, and the more so on account of his conduct. His face assumed a sober appearance by degrees, until he became one of the

most serious attentive hearers I had. When I pronounced the blessing he made a very low bow, made his way through the crowd, and thanked me, apparently with an overflowing heart, for the discourse. I mean to search him out and call upon him."

The next week he extends his labours to Monkton and Troon, preaching on the street and in school-rooms; and the week after to Mauchline, where, at the cross, he preached one day to about 200, and the next to 300.

Having been called to attend the funeral of his wife's mother, formerly spoken of, he called upon some of his old friends at Ardrossan and Saltcoats, where he had fresh tokens of the esteem and affection of brethren. June 29th, he says—"Before leaving Saltcoats this morning, having called on one of my old members there, he told me that he and a number more were indulging the hope of getting me back again, and were feeling that they had not valued me as they ought to have done when I was with them."

"*Lord's-day, 2d July*, at 8 in the morning, in Ayr, by the river side; from 1200 to 1500; on, 'What is baptism?' I hope the Saviour was glorified by a plain announcement of his own truth. One man, Dr Curl, spoke out, which led me to say, I wanted only a fair hearing and open discussion; that it was a pity to hold any religious observance that would not stand discussion. I had no objection to their discussing their side of the question, or any of their friends,

and would come and hear them too, if time permitted."

Preaching on Monday 10th, in Dundonald, to about 200, from his favourite text, John x. 9, he says, "One of the most impressive discourses ever I preached. I think the Lord, my Master and beloved Saviour, was there." On Tuesday 18th, his friend Mr Garrett being called to leave the country, he says, "This morning held a fast, in reference to brother Garrett's going off for India, on the morning of the 24th. His prayer was very peculiar, and very interesting. May the Lord keep him, and bless him, and bring him safe back to his family and friends."

"*August, Monday, 21st.*—In Ayr; fasted in the morning; sought the Lord for the converting influences of his holy Spirit."

Monday, 28th.—For the first time, he carries the gospel to Maybole, where he spent four days, preaching in different parts of the town—at Well-tree Square, Mrs O'Hara's Corner, School Green, and Gaswork,—to congregations of 200, 400, 500, and 600. Here he found a people eager to hear the word of the Lord. "Marked attention, and a good deal of impression; a number of half-suppressed sobs and moans around me. I was informed of different ones in tears. A number have spoken to me about remaining, or at any rate returning soon, saying 'Our town is just in need of you.' I have been told that all denominations feel that they hear the truth, and

approve. A great number of Catholics being in the place, many of them came to hear. May my great Master be pleased to give his holy Spirit. A person, rather favourable to our views, on account of his relations being Baptists, said we were doing great good, by removing prejudices, and showing, by our preaching, what sort of people Baptists are." Of the fourth day, he says—"A very solemn meeting. People backward to go away. At the conclusion, a number came and seized my hand, and prayed for blessings upon me and my work, and pressed me to return, declaring their need of such labours, and their readiness to provide houses for meeting in, in colder weather. A number seemed much affected again towards the close of the discourse. Poor people! I could weep for them. They want preaching on their streets much, being accessible to all. Many of them are as sheep having no shepherd. They seem to relish plain affectionate preaching very much."

Reviewing his work for the last three months, he says—"49 times out of doors last quarter, in 15 different towns and villages."

"*September, Wednesday, 13th.*—In Kilwinning, Mr Barclay's meeting house, from Ps. lxxiii. 27, about 30. *Thursday, 14th*, in Saltcoats, James Anderson's, about 80 or 100, from Acts xvi. 30, 31, by request." *Friday, 22d*, in Greenock, on the steamboat quay, to about 200 or 300; and Lord's-day and Monday he spent with the Baptist church there.

“*Nov., Saturday, 25th.*—I was called to see a James Macfarlane, who had attended the meeting at Mrs Kean’s, in Ayr, on the 14th. He was dying. He said what he heard had never since been out of his head, and referred to parts of it. He had been long a member of the Establishment, but confessed that he knew nothing of the Saviour. I said, what a pity but he had applied to somebody who would have examined him and sent him to seek after the Saviour instead of taking him in as he was. I preached to him Jesus. About more visits, he said it was long till next week, and it was long till Monday. He asked if I would pray for him at the church. I visited him on Sabbath evening. He could not speak, but seemed to signify that he was looking to Jesus. He died at half past five on Monday morning. I have some hope of meeting him in heaven. Glory to God in the highest.”

Although nearly a year had rolled round since Mr Blair left Saltcoats, his friends there seem not yet to have been reconciled to his departure. One of the Edinburgh pastors wrote to him on the subject, and in his journal, he has recorded his reply, as follows :—
“*Dec. 5th.*—I am sorry that the subject of my leaving Saltcoats should still be matter of lamentation to you or to any of the Lord’s dear people. I think there has been, by far, too much made of that matter in some quarters. I grieve when I hear my friends in Saltcoats lamenting after me as some of them do. I

think the thing itself was of the Lord. But I feel that it has given rise to much that is deeply to be lamented, and for which my conduct was no more to blame than was that of Paul in stirring up the inhabitants of Lystra to offer sacrifice to him. I lament the conduct of the church, stirred up, I believe, and led on almost wholly by the deacons. I have suffered from various quarters in this business. Indeed, my brother, I once would scarcely have thought that so much venom could remain where the sting had been extracted. I feel perfectly satisfied, that whatever any of my brethren might think respecting my decision, and whatever my failings, shortcomings, or sins were in regard to God, I merited from the church only gratitude for the past, for my sincere devotion to their interests, and the most respectful separation from them, seeing I had determined upon it in my own mind. And I do maintain that it is a matter of perpetual regret that they acted as they did. I have hitherto thought it best to commit my way to God, and let him bring it to pass in his own manner."

"*Lord's-day, Dec. 17th.*—In Ayr, baptized Miss M. Sliman to-day at 20 minutes past 12." "*24th.*—Baptized William Sliman."

Among the many towns and villages in Ayrshire, to which Mr Blair carried the glad tidings of salvation, Girvan was one which proved the most productive of saving fruit. At first, being an entire stranger, he

had great difficulties to contend with in gaining an entrance. It was in a severe storm of frost and thick snow. Yet soon a wide and effectual door was opened. In his journal, he gives some interesting details.

January 15, 1838, having preached at Maybole on Monday, he, on Tuesday, the 16th, got to Girvan. "Arrived at 10 o'clock; called upon Mr Austin, baker. He insisted on going for bailie MacIlwraith, who said he did not encourage that people, because they were going through the country, persuading every body to become of their sentiments. I smiled, and said, I would make my own use of it. I then went to two agents, to whom I had introductions from Mr Shaw. They were ready to do anything for me. They got the Town hall, and came to hear, and took an interest. Thus the Lord can provide. Mr Austin offered, notwithstanding his disappointment, to go to the bailies with me to get the hall, and also attended personally." At his meeting in the Town hall, there were only 21. Next day he set about means of making his intended meetings more widely known. "Went to-day and put up some bills, and visited some families, accompanied by Mr Austin, who seemed much gratified." Preached, "in the Charity school-house, about 100 present; very attentive." The next night in the same place, "a little thronger than last night." Such was his beginning at Girvan. More we shall hear again.

Cumnock, Old and New, were also frequently visited

by him. Of his work there, at the close of January and beginning of February, he says, "I have had a very interesting visit. I have had testimonies that the Lord is making me the instrument of much good to his own people, and also, two distinct cases of arousing to activity those who were falling asleep again after convictions. Had an application from Mrs Johnstone."

His next visit to Girvan was in March, when he preached four evenings in succession, and with much greater encouragement than at first. This time he got the Methodist chapel.

"*March 24th, Monday.*—Very tired, walking all the way, but was enabled to preach with interest to myself, and, I understand, profit to others. Introduced, by Hebrews, ch. 1, a most suitable subject, for the town is in great ferment about Socinianism. I mean to endeavour to maintain the dignity of my employer." On Wednesday and Thursday, he also preached in the morning. His evening congregations rose daily in interest, increasing from 240 to 270, 300 and 350, when the place was "perfectly crammed, standing round the windows outside."

"*May 30th, Wednesday.*—Resting, with a view to going to Millport and Greenock, and working hard." Mr Blair's resting day, was the day he was not preaching. On this occasion he did work hard, for we find him preaching even on board the steamboat.

"*Thursday, 31st.*—In the steamer, on deck, to 40, from

‘What think ye of Christ?’ Same evening in Millport, to 100. Friday, in Millport, 120. Lord’s-day, June 3.—In Greenock. Forenoon, Seaman’s chapel; afternoon and evening, Baptist chapel; and then, at a quarter to 8, on the steamboat quay, to 150.” The following week he is also hard at work, almost every evening; at meetings in Glasgow, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, at Hope Street chapel. On this occasion, he met with “Mr Charles Hill Roe, Secretary of the Home Mission for England, a devoted and talented servant of my Lord and his.”

On his next visit to Girvan, this same month, he again had the Methodist chapel, with as large congregations as before, and had some hopeful cases in conversation with him in his room. “Formed a meeting of 37 for religious exertion.” So deep was the impression, that about 20 persons agreed to go about trying to do good to their neighbours, by holding meetings in their houses for reading and conversing on the Scriptures. Indeed, there seemed to be an extensive awakening about the things of God, and to all appearance, numbers of souls were, through the blessing of the Most High, brought to know and love the Saviour.

“*July 27th, Friday.*—Attended brother Barclay’s funeral.” This was the good man, who for many years was pastor of the Baptist church, which met first at Kilwinning, afterwards at Irvine.

Mr Blair again visited Girvan, on Monday, August

13, and preached four days with still greater encouragement and excitement than ever. "Monday, Methodist chapel, 200 ; Tuesday, back of the old kirk, 500 ; Wednesday, Down corner, 700 or 800 ; Thursday, Methodist chapel, 10 minutes past 9 in the morning, a meeting for serious enquirers ; about 50, and spoke on the broad and narrow roads. Baptized three persons about 6 in the morning, and another about 1 p.m. ; in all, two men and two women." Several times after this, in the same year, he again went to Girvan ; but after these baptisms, he never seems to have had congregations so large, although sometimes he got the use of the Secession chapel.

In February, 1839, we find him preaching to the Baptist churches in Newmilns and Kilmarnock, but he says nothing of their number or condition. But, referring to the time of his visit, he says, "A week of extreme cold ; a good deal of snow lying. I have been spared to come home, but a good deal affected by cold. I bless the Lord for enabling me to work so much. May he bless it ; and to his name be all the glory." Detailing the labours of the previous twelve months, he says, "I cannot complain of want of attention wherever I go. In a number of places the fields seem white unto harvest. I feel very happy in my work. I have an increasing confidence that it is the very mind and will of the Lord that his servants should go to and fro, and that knowledge should be increased. In no position do I feel more

assured that I have the approbation of the Saviour, or greater reason to expect his blessing, than when standing at the corner of a street with a number of all classes, and especially the poor, around me, hearkening to the voice of his word, while we compel sinners of all sorts to come in, that his house may be filled. From 1st March, 1838, to the same date, 1839, I have preached in all 429 times; 272 of these missionary; 157 to church meetings; 59 out of doors; and about 24 in different towns and villages; baptized 14. I have been enabled to labour more during last quarter, than any of the preceding ones, having often held two meetings in the same evening. Besides I have attended and conducted several prayer meetings, and often visited and conversed privately; and, with the aid of two ladies, members of the church, on Friday evenings, a class of boys and girls, numbering from 20 to 40. After hearing them repeat a portion of the sacred word, previously appointed, I try to break it down to suit their capacities, and pray for the divine blessing upon it."

The church in Ayr continued slowly, but steadily, to increase during the period of Mr Blair's labours, so that within three years the membership rose from ten to fifty. In April, 1839, he again visited the Baptist church, Dunfermline, on which occasion he delivered a discourse, which was afterwards printed, from John xviii. 36, on the glory and spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ, as contrasted with the old

dispensation. On the 25th of May, this year, Mrs Garrett, the esteemed lady of Mr Garrett, already named, was taken away by the hand of death when her husband was absent in India. This was a painful stroke to Mr Blair and the church in Ayr, as, not only from her rank, but also from her amiableness, generosity, and excellent deportment, she was truly an ornament to the church.

About the same time, the Baptist church in Dunfermline, having heard Mr Blair preach, and being anxious for an evangelist to labour among them, and in the town and neighbourhood, set their minds on him, and wrote him, making proposals. The pastors were Adam Kirk and David Dewar.

We have before us a copy of the letter which he wrote in reply, dated Ayr, June 17, 1839. In this he very plainly and frankly speaks his mind, both about church order and other arrangements necessary to a proper understanding with his brethren, and happiness and success in his work. Among other things he says, "Dear brethren, your much esteemed letter of the 6th came duly to hand. It has been the cause of a good deal of thoughtful and prayerful consideration to me. I am very much pleased with your spirit, and, I trust, very grateful for your attention. I will not hide from you that I am much inclined to forward your praiseworthy efforts, though I had almost entirely given up the idea previous to receiving your last letter. Dunfermline has particu-

lar claims upon my attention, especially when its neighbourhood is connected with it. The very strong wish expressed by you and other friends inclines me to think that the whole matter is of the Lord. Some recent events in the providence of God favour the same idea of the subject. Mrs Garrett, my excellent and beloved sister, and most intimate friend, died on the 25th ult.; and this, as to particular friendship, has left Ayr almost a blank to me. I have little fear of Mr G.'s withdrawing his support, if I were to remain here, yet I would like much to hear from him before any movement take place. I must also consult the Society; I would give up connection with them with reluctance. They have all along used me most kindly and agreeably. They have acted on a principle I would like followed up by you also, if I should come among you. They have never interfered with my movements; never said, Do this, but have only asked, What have you done? I suppose if they saw me getting lazy they would apply the spur to me, and for that, I trust, I would kindly thank any brother. You have never defined to me what my work in the church is intended to be. I should like much that there was some definite understanding beforehand. I am friendly to a plurality of pastors, if scripturally and rationally conducted; but the childishness of the doing everything in turns, or what may be called the time-about system, I have long since deprecated. I believe that the scriptural and

reasonable way is that each should be chiefly engaged in what his brethren judge him best qualified for. As to what our respected brother Dewar mentioned in his private letter, regarding the support of pastors, although my views are just the antipodes of his, yet so long as he wishes to support missionary labour, and others are willing to support church labour, the two can meet sufficiently for practice. As to the addresses of brethren, commonly called exhortation, I am quite agreeable to them occasionally, especially when circumstances call for them, if the individuals are selected, and really possessed of talent; but to allow any one who may think it proper of himself to rise up and waste the precious time of a church, is, in my opinion, neither scriptural nor rational, but an abuse which requires to be corrected. It seems a hopeless task to be engaged in earnest persevering effort to collect a stated congregation, from which to recruit the ranks of believers, through the preaching of the word, and the exhibition of Christ's ordinances, where they shall be required to sit one half of the day, and, perhaps, hear a paper tamely read, and containing, very likely, nothing that is interesting to them as unbelievers, or, as often happens, they have come with souls hungering for the bread of the gospel, and nothing of the kind is offered. Or, it may be, they are scholars; yea, it is very likely, for you know that education is now very common, and they are disgusted with vulgar pronunciation, and ungrammatical

expressions. On this subject we do not speak wisely, when we talk about what Christian brethren should be, or are willing to bear with. The question is, What will thoughtless, unconverted sinners endure? I am decidedly averse to all reading of discourses in the church, unless in some particular case, when the subject is very extraordinary, and then, it should not be called preaching, but a lecture, or dissertation, or essay, on some particular subject. I have no objections to memorandums of passages, or arrangements, and such like; but regular reading I highly disapprove of, as unscriptural and unprofitable. I am favourable, as you know, to the reception of all baptized believers to the fellowship of the church, but am not yet prepared to go farther. I am decidedly against holding fellowship with any Baptist church, as a church, which does not make real conversion to God, to the best of their judgment, the *sine qua non* of their admission. Brother Dewar's letter has led to some of these explanations, and I have entered upon others, because I think it good that we know something considerable of each other's views beforehand. I do not wish it to be understood that I would not yield to, or bear with the church on almost any of these subjects. If we should decidedly differ in sentiment, and if you cannot bear with me on any of them, now is the proper time to speak out. I trust that if we do come together, it will be in the spirit of holy love and zeal for the honour of the

Redeemer, to be fellow-helpers of each other's joy and faith, and not to engage in contention." After enlarging upon money matters, in which our astonishment is his moderation and backwardness, alike creditable to his own humility and unworldliness, and a reproach to the miserable condition and spirit of churches which would offer such a wretched pittance to a servant of Jesus Christ, with so large a family as a wife and six children, he then goes on to a theme on which he is evidently more at home. "My present general rule is to be four nights out of Ayr every second week. Perhaps four or five every third week might do with you. I would not be easily satisfied to think of many towns and villages around, starving for want of the simple gospel, and not having opportunity and ability to visit them occasionally. I am always with the church here at their Friday evening meeting, and teach a class before it enters, in the chapel ; a very hopeful thing for the church. I am also with them every Sabbath, and preach and lecture together three times in the chapel. My large family, and the state of it, I mean as entering into settled situations in life, would incline me, in removing to another sphere of action, to desire that it might be a somewhat permanent one. But the Lord manages these things best. We are but strangers and pilgrims here below. May the Lord keep us and direct us till the end of our journey. Hoping to hear from you soon, I am, dear brethren, sincerely yours,

JAMES BLAIR."

There are some points in this letter, on Scotch Baptist church order, on which we might be tempted to make our observations ; but as biographies should not be platforms of disquisitions, we leave Mr Blair's letter to tell its own tale. From family allusions omitted, we learn that four of his children were beginning to make themselves useful to their parents, three sons learning a business, and his eldest daughter teaching. At this time, Feb. 7th, 1840, his son Robert, at the age of 16, died of consumption. His father, entering the event in the family register, says, "He died in the Lord. We bless and thank the Lord for the whole most improving dispensation."

CHAPTER IV.

HIS RESIDENCE IN DUNFERMLINE, 1840-1844.

ARRANGEMENTS having been completed, Mr Blair, in a week after this, removed with his family from Ayr to Dunfermline. At first, he laboured simply as a preacher in the church, and as an evangelist in the town and neighbourhood. But afterwards the brethren called him to be one of the pastors, which invitation having accepted, he was ordained accordingly. On the morning of his ordination, he thus pours out the breathings of his soul, which he has recorded, as

a renewal of the dedication which he penned, June 1, 1836—

“*September 9th, 1840, quarter-past eight morning.* This being the day on which I am about to be ordained over the church here, I have renewed my personal covenant with my God and Saviour, and express my resolution, through sovereign grace, free, promised grace, to devote myself entirely and unreservedly to the service of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in seeking the good of his people and the salvation of sinners around, as extensively and earnestly as possible. Having read the above declaration of 1st June, 1836, I highly approve of the sentiments, and thus renew my adherence to them, and apply them in as far as they are applicable to present circumstances. May the Lord greatly bless the church here, and bless her office-bearers, and give me much wisdom and discretion; and to his name be all the glory for ever.—
JAMES BLAIR.”

The church with which Mr Blair was thus associated, had a nice little chapel in James' Street. In the course of the year, however, it was deemed duty to begin a distinct effort, and to form a church on different principles and plans, under the pastorate of Mr Blair. Accordingly, about the close of the year 1841, the brethren and sisters of this mind withdrew, and opened a hall in Inglis Street. In his journal book, Mr Blair, without detailing particulars, but evidently labouring under a sense of the weighty re-

sponsibility of his new position, thus pours out his soul before God;—

“1841, *December 14th.*—I do again acknowledge the obligations expressed in other previous journals to be the Lord’s. I voluntarily and for ever give myself to him. I wish, O Lord Jesus my Saviour, to serve thee in the best way possible while in this world. O make me useful to the souls of thy people; and do thou direct and bless me in all efforts for the conversion of my fellow-sinners. In my new system of operation, do thou direct and bless me, and all who are associated with me. O let us all live for eternity; and help us with much simplicity of aim to seek thy glory. And O do thou sanctify the efforts I am about to record in this book; and give me greater things than ever to record, O Lord. O glorify thy own great name; and show thou the power of thine own word, in turning sinners thereby to thyself. I do beseech thee, O God, for thy great name’s sake, to bless thy own word, until the people shall praise thee, O Lord, yea, let all the people praise thee. These things I implore for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, my Saviour. Amen.—JAMES BLAIR.”

On the previous Lord’s-day, 12th, the first day, we suppose, of his opening the hall, he records his texts without remark—“Forenoon, 1 Tim. i. 15; afternoon, Exod. xx. 24, ‘In all places where I record my name I will come unto you and I will bless you.’ Evening, Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16.”

Monday, 13th.—Class from 7 to 8 in Mr Anderson's school; 47 present. The next three days, we find him again at his favourite village preaching in cottages and school-rooms, at Rumbling Well, Townhill and Spittal. Next Lord's-day, the 19th, after recording his forenoon, afternoon, and evening texts, he notes a meeting of those who were associated with him in this new movement—"Twenty-four brethren present. Agreed, Mrs M—— only dissenting, that all our money contributions should be made by collections at the door and the fellowship. Also, A. C. only dissenting, that the Supper should be attended to by the church coming together for that purpose at half-past three, or immediately after the public worship in the afternoon. Brethren Robertson and Black were appointed, for me to consult with, about procuring a minister to be with us at the opening of the church. We have agreed to try Mr Anderson, of Edinburgh, and, failing him, Mr Paterson, of Glasgow. May the Lord give us understanding in all things."

"On the 26th, as Mr Anderson declined coming, the brethren agreed to ask no other at present, but to form ourselves into a church next Lord's-day, and observe the ordinance in the afternoon, as formerly agreed to. As we could not meet on a week-day in our own place, we agreed to devote, as far as each could make it convenient, from 9 to 11 on Thursday morning, to fasting and prayer, with a view to our

union. A meeting to be held with reference to the same object, at half past 12, on Lord's-day, 2d Jan., 1842." This meeting accordingly was held, "twenty-seven present, six being absent. The first question proposed, was, 'Are you all willing to receive one another as brethren, and to enter into church fellowship together, including the six who are absent?' Unanimous. Second, 'Do we agree to give ourselves to God and the Saviour anew, and to one another for his sake, to walk in his ways and to observe his statutes, to walk in love one to another, to care for one another, and be kind to one another?' Unanimous. Brother Robertson proposed, and brother Black seconded, 'That they recognize their old pastor, Mr Blair, as their pastor in their altered circumstances.' Unanimous. At half-past three, thirty sat down and broke bread in remembrance of their Lord—We have sought the Lord, and he always hears."—Amidst a weekly and almost daily memorandum of his labours, he notes, that on Lord's-day, Feb. 27, the church commenced a Sabbath School at four o'clock. Twenty-five came.

As in Ayrshire, so around Dunfermline, Mr Blair carried on village preaching with untiring diligence. In his journal, we have the weekly records of his visits to Spittal, Hillend, Inverkeithing, Gowkhall, Culross, Newmills, Crombie point, Torryburn, Gatesidewhins, Cairneyhill, his birth-place, Netherton, Pittencrief, Aberdour, Castleblair,

Kinross, Milnathort. So devoted was he to this work, that when any hinderance occurred, he marks it as an occasion of grief. For example, in August, 1842, he has this note, "This week, interruption to meetings has taken place from the extraordinary excitement occasioned by the people rising up against those manufacturers who have been endeavouring to reduce their wages below the table."

His ordinary ministrations in the church were generally in keeping with his travelling discourses, his texts being such as were most likely to bring home the sinner's ruin, and Christ's redemption. It would appear, however, that sometimes he lectured through some of the epistles, as he notes, on Lord's-day, August 14th, 1842, that he had finished with 1 Tim. vi. 17 to the end, having lectured through the whole epistle.

October 17th, Monday, at Ayr, visiting his old friends there, exhorting and praying with brethren. On this same journey, he spent ten days, preaching daily at Greenock, and helping to revive the Baptist church there. On leaving, he says, "Saturday morning, left Greenock, after feeling and witnessing much of the grace of God. May God bless and prosper the church, and fill her pastor with grace and wisdom." 1843, March 19th, he notes, the "first day in Mr Rankine's hall. I bless the Saviour for the accommodation. I trust he will bless us in it, and we shall praise his name."

“*May 11th, Thursday.*—Went to Leith to meet with dear Mr Garrett. Friday, 12th, at half past twelve, got on board the Royal Victoria at Leith, and saluted him. On Saturday, breakfasted and dined with him at his lodgings.” Such is his brief allusion to his old friend’s return from India.

“*June 5th, Monday.*—Travelled to Cupar. Tuesday, with brother Johnstone, to St Andrews, and heard him preach in the evening. Wednesday, Ordination of brother T. P. Henderson; had intercourse with brethren Thomson, Mackenzie, and Stobie. Thursday, preached from Heb. viii. 10–12. Friday, travelled home by Leith.”

“*July 4th, Tuesday.*—Travelling to Cupar. Wednesday, Association meetings, preached in the evening, Is. lx. 1, ‘Arise, shine, &c.’” We well remember the occasion, and Mr Blair’s sermon. While he was preaching, there was a remarkable storm of lightning and thunder, which tended peculiarly to deepen the impression of his manly appeals to the church to arise and shine.

“*October 3d, Tuesday.*—Studying, &c. Mr R. and some others desirous I should do much less missionary work, and devote more time to reading and study for the church. Inclined to make trial of this, being convinced that I have been rather fully engaged to get all things as well done as they should perhaps be, and also as I feel much need for reading and personal

improvement. May the Lord guide and direct me as he wills and approves. Amen."

For some time after this he much curtailed his village labours, taking generally only one village and one town station in a week. But he was now again getting upon a new line of things. Taking a deep and lively interest in the objects of the Baptist Union, especially its design of preaching in the larger towns, so as eventually to lead to Baptist churches in the most populous parts of Scotland, he threw himself, heart and soul, into the effort. Hence we find him, on Monday, Nov. 4, this same year, setting out on a tour on behalf of funds to Cupar, Dundee, Arbroath, Montrose, and Aberdeen. After detailing something of his preaching and efforts in those places, he says, "*Friday, 15th*, arrived at home safe. How kind is our Lord." Again, "*Dec. 16th, Tuesday*, went to Linlithgow, Falkirk, and Stirling, for the Union." In the spring of 1844, he held a number of revival meetings in his own place of worship, aided by other brethren, but the church meeting only in a hall, there was little attraction and little good done. Some souls, however, will have reason to bless God to all eternity for impressions then received.

CHAPTER V.

EVANGELISTIC TOURS IN ROXBURGHSHIRE, 1844.

IN the summer of the same year Mr Blair was led to undertake, in the service of the Union, a preaching tour, in company with Mr Johnstone, then pastor of the Baptist church in Cupar-Fife. From a sketch of the tour drawn up at the time, and Mr Blair's journal, we compile the following narrative.

Mr Blair notes, "*May 28th, Tuesday, Edinburgh,* in order to meet Mr Johnstone." We met in Edinburgh on the 30th, and that same day took the coach for Jedburgh, where we arrived about 9 in the evening. We had with us a large supply of religious tracts. Our plan was always to preach in the open air, when the weather was favourable; but in case of rain, the first thing we did was to provide a hall to which we might invite the people, should necessity require. We spent five weeks in the towns of Jedburgh, Hawick, Selkirk, Melrose, and Kelso, a Sabbath and several week days in each town. During that period we preached 75 discourses, chiefly in the market places, only 14 times within doors. We circulated after sermons, and at other times, nearly 2000 tracts, and 3000 hand-bills on the doctrines and ordinances of Christianity; and the tracts, especially those on baptism, were received with eagerness by the people.

Jedburgh, May 31st.—We applied to the provost for the town hall to preach in ; he was agreeable ; but, it being also the county hall, he directed us to apply to some of the county authorities, which we did, but without success, on the ground that preaching had not been there before, and that there were already too many sects of religion in the town. We accordingly obtained the Odd Fellows' hall ; but it was only twice occupied for preaching during the seven days we were in the town. Every day we preached in the market place, which is well adapted for the purpose, being a fine open square in the heart of the town. On the week day evenings we always preached twice in succession to the same congregations, which, although not large, were very attentive, and their interest increased daily. On Saturday, June 1st, we visited about twenty families from house to house ; and in the afternoon went into the country, and had two interesting meetings in cottages, reading and expounding the Scriptures, with prayer, and left tracts, besides giving them away to people on the road, with some of whom we had interesting conversations. In the evening both preached in the market place to excellent congregations. Lord's-day was a delightful season ; both preached six times. It was our invariable practice to have preaching out of church hours during the day—first in the morning about half-past nine ; then at noon, in the interval between the forenoon and afternoon services ; then

in the afternoon, close upon the hour of dismissal from the places of worship ; and lastly, two sermons in the evening at six o'clock. By this means we had many hearers, both of town and country people, whom otherwise we could never have reached. On these occasions multitudes surrounded the preachers and listened attentively, especially of the country people, who usually have to while away the hour in standing or walking about. Great quantities of tracts were also by this means circulated among those who would carry them into the country, miles round. But the Sabbath evenings were usually the most delightful and interesting seasons ; for then numbers of the town people assembled with eagerness to hear the strangers, and to hear things which for the most part were new to the greater portion of them. One of the evening sermons on this first Sabbath was preached in the hall to a crowded congregation. On Monday forenoon we went, accompanied by a Baptist friend, to a neighbouring village called Ulston, and at the people's dinner-hour both preached short discourses on the village green, and gave tracts to about thirty persons. In the evening, a delightful season in Jedburgh market-place. On Tuesday we had interesting visits to families who had requested a call, and saw tokens for good of favourable impressions regarding the truth as it is in Jesus, especially on the subject of baptism. On Thursday the town was in a state of excitement, with an annual procession towards

evening. At the close, two sermons were preached to a numerous and attentive throng; and, after the services, two or three came to us for conversation, having seen the unscripturalness of infant sprinkling. In the town there were already six Baptists: these on this occasion met together at the house of one of their number, and united in prayer, and listened to a word of exhortation as to their duty in their present circumstances. On Friday we visited a number of families, and found produced a general excitement and spirit of inquiry after the good old way, and also a feeling of deep interest in our labours. Indeed, it afterwards came out that some had been consulting about the propriety of requesting a longer stay, but through diffidence, did not come forward to express their wishes.

At 6 o'clock in the evening we left for Hawick, about ten miles distant. But a heavy rain, and the tumultuous excitement of the people with a yearly amusement called the Common Riding, prevented the possibility of any good being done, as multitudes were in a state of beastly intoxication. Saturday was much the same; but the services on Lord's-day were very encouraging. Interesting congregations were gathered at the Tower-knowe, morning, noon, afternoon, and evening; and six sermons were preached, and many tracts dispersed. The evening service in particular was truly pleasing; a large assembly manifested great attention and deep interest

by remaining about three hours rivetted to the spot, hearing on the new covenant and on the pearl of great price ; a good feeling was evidently produced. On Monday we visited among the Baptist friends of the town, of whom there are about a dozen. On Tuesday evening, Mr Johnstone, having caught cold, occasioned by exposure to the wind and rain between Jedburgh and Hawick, did not preach ; but next day was able to resume labour. Wednesday and Thursday, on account of rain, we had preaching in the town hall, gratuitously given by the magistrates. The attendance on both occasions was pleasing, but especially the latter, when many had to stand.

Friday, June 14th, we left for Selkirk, about eleven miles distant. The day was cold, windy, and very unfavourable ; however, we went out in the evening to the market-place, and took our stand at Sir Walter Scott's monument, and gathered a company of fine, well-educated children, who answered very correctly the questions put to them from tracts which we had in our hands. A drunkard annoyed us for a little, but so far from doing evil, it turned out for good, as it was the means of gathering a congregation ; and as soon as prayer was begun he walked off, and came near us no more. Mr Blair then preached ; as he also did on Saturday, to a goodly company. Lord's-day was a delightful season, being a pleasing contrast to the two foregoing days,—the weather was fine, and excellent congregations were gathered, especially in

the evening, when one sermon was preached out of doors, and another in the Mason-lodge. In all, six sermons were preached, and many tracts distributed. Monday and Tuesday were very wet, so that the preaching was in-doors; the congregations, however, were very good. - In Selkirk we had two applications for baptism from men connected with the Congregationalists. Both of them gave a full and satisfactory testimony of their conversion to God; and on Wednesday forenoon, after short addresses, with singing and prayer at the water side, in the presence of about twenty, they were buried with their Lord, in a branch of the Ettrick, by Mr Blair. In Selkirk were nine Baptists, most of them members of the church at Galashiels.

In the afternoon we went on to Galashiels, six miles off, and called on the aged pastor and some of the members of the Baptist church there; but as there was to be open air preaching that same evening by others, we went on to Melrose, five miles distant.

Thursday, June 20th, we both preached at the Cross, but the people at first seemed shy of coming near us; and on Friday the evening was unfavourable, so that we had very disheartening work. Roused by the discouraging appearance on the previous evening, we resolved in right earnest to go to work, and if possible, make reparation on Saturday. Within two miles around Melrose are three interesting villages, Darnick, Newstead, and Gattonside. We determined to visit

them with tracts, and invite the people to the meetings, although we had already sent the drummer round to them all. In the forenoon we took each a village apart, going from house to house with tracts; and in the afternoon we both went together to Gattonside. We found many ignorant and prejudiced, and very few came from these villages to the preaching; but the tracts are left a witness to the truth, which may some day tell upon the people: "My word shall not return unto me void." In the evening both of us preached at the Cross to a good congregation. But Lord's-day, as on former occasions, was the crowning day, and long to be remembered. Five sermons were preached, and one address delivered. The congregations were good, and perhaps of a more interesting character than in the other towns; but especially at the last sermon in the evening, when a large addition was made to the hearers by multitudes coming out of their usual places of worship, and who heard about an hour. At the close of the labours of the day several conversed with us, especially on baptism.

On Monday we went to Eckford, a village about half way between Jedburgh and Kelso, where dwelt a disciple, who had resolved to be baptized, and with whom we had previously conversed when at Jedburgh; he was a member of the Independents there. We had intended preaching in the open air, but as the day became very wet, we both spoke the word to a small company in his house; and as it afterwards

became fair, we went to the river Teviot, followed by many of the villagers, and after a short service, in which we both took part, the ordinance was performed by Mr Blair, in the presence of many a wondering spectator, who seemed never to have known or heard of such a thing as Christian baptism being total immersion: the people gazed with amazement.

Having lodged at the village of Heighton all night, we next morning went to Kelso, undoubtedly the finest town in Roxburghshire; but we nowhere had such uphill work as here. Not only was the town-hall refused, but the market-place also was objected to for open air preaching. We reasoned on the authority of the Head of the church, showing his command to go out into the streets and lanes of the cities; but as the only reasonable ground of objection was stopping the thoroughfare, we knew to take care of that, as we had done elsewhere. Through the kindness of the Congregationalists we got the Friends' meeting house, at present occupied by them; and besides the unwillingness of the public authorities, the weather being unfavourable, we preached for several evenings only in the meeting house, but the congregations were very small. Through the day we visited in different parts of the town, leaving tracts, and inviting the people to the preaching, but with very little success, till at length a circumstance occurred which turned the tide in our favour, and opened up for us a wide and, we trust, effectual door.

An American diver was to leap from Kelso bridge into the Tweed. We determined to take advantage of this opportunity of obtaining access to much people. The first night we were rather late of arriving at the spot, from the meeting which we held in-doors. But as multitudes were assembled in the market-place, we went among them, and Mr Blair began to read a tract entitled, "Old Aaron and Young George," when crowds surrounded us, and after a short address we circulated tracts, and invited them to the preaching. The following evening we were sooner on the spot; while Mr Johnstone preached within doors, Mr Blair went to the river side, and before the diving, read and spoke to much people. As soon as it was over he stood on a low wall, and preached. It was an interesting scene; the majestic Tweed rolling by, and the people standing on its banks with attention listening to the words of eternal life. Saturday evening Mr Blair preached in the chapel, and Mr Johnstone out of doors to the multitude assembled again to see the diving. But, as at the other towns, the Lord's-day was by far the most interesting season. The day was beautiful, and we preached six times, twice in the chapel, and four times in the market-place. With the exception of the forenoon service in the chapel, the congregations were large and interesting. The first service in the evening was so crowded that many could not obtain admittance; and we afterwards went to the market-place, and had another discourse.

It was a day long to be remembered. Surely the Lord was with his servants on that day. On Monday morning we left, in order to attend the meetings of the Union at Airdrie.

In the course of our tour we found that besides ignorance and prejudice on the spiritual constitution and the ordinances of the kingdom of Christ, there prevail among our countrymen fearful delusions respecting man's ability and responsibility to believe the gospel, mistakes as to the nature and duty of faith, also a disposition to take false refuge in election and the divine decrees, and to esteem it presumption for one more than another to be sure that his sins are pardoned, and that he is on the way to heaven. Under these and other fatal notions, many of the inhabitants of this favoured land are living and dying, and yet, at the same time, their fears of the future are silenced by their general admission to what are called church privileges. There is need, much need, for a band of holy and devoted men to go through all our towns, preaching in the open air a free salvation, and endeavouring to expose to the view of the people the fearful mistakes in which, alas! they are at present spell-bound.

Returning home on the 1st of July, he observes on the 2d, "At home in peace. Blessed be the Lord my God, who hath counted me worthy, putting me into the ministry, who was before foolish, and stupid, and wicked, and who am yet so unworthy. O may he still use me for his glory."

On Saturday, July 6th, Mr Blair, after the Union meetings at Airdrie, returned alone to his evangelistic work in Roxburghshire, beginning at Kelso, where he had left off.

After preaching thrice on Lord's-day the 7th, he says of the evening meeting, "I do trust the Lord was present to bless. God of salvation, save the people. O deliver them from the snares of Satan, and from their own evil lusts and prejudices. Amen." "Monday, 8th.—Market-place, from Mark xi. 30; seven objections to infant baptism. Three Independents came to me after, evidently much put to. They are trying to get away from water baptism altogether, calling in question whether the baptism in the commission meant water baptism at all. They are evidently hard pushed. They are giving up infant baptism altogether, as quite untenable and absurd. One of them from Selkirk, a traveller, says, he will most decidedly oppose infant baptism in their church, and raise his individual voice against it. Tuesday, 9th.—Market-place, Luke xv. 11-20, prodigal. A most attentive meeting. May the Lord make it effectual for the return of many prodigals to their own Father. Wednesday, 10th.—A large meeting, though a rather cold and showery evening. Marked attention; a deep impression. One says, she saw a number in tears last night. Another, that they have not the gospel preached to them by their town's ministers as they ought to have it at all. We have

it just darkened to us. May God bless his word. The people seem most greedy to hear. *Thursday, 11th.*—I believe that a deep solemn impression has been made on Kelso. O may it be permanent. One told me, last night, that he had heard a number say, that if I would stay among them they would go nowhere else. I will be wherever the Lord pleases. Lord, I am thine; use me for thy glory, and as it shall be most to thy praise. Amen. *Friday, 12th.*—On talking to my landlord and landlady about going off, he remarked that a number had been at him about when I should be back. She said, It is curious that you should be so much respected here; never anybody that came in the same way before you was so. They were always looked down upon and neglected.

Jedburgh.—Preached in the market-place. People very shy; but through God, we so overcame as to get a good influential beginning. A good impression. May the Lord follow it with his rich and effectual blessing. Found dear sisters Crosby and Rutherford well and cheerful, kind and devout. Surely the Lord will hear their prayers, and give great results in this place. Come down in the might of thy power and in the strength of thy grace, O Lord, and save the people. Amen.” *Monday, 15th.*—After noticing that two women came to him wishing baptism, he adds good news from his own house. “I have received a letter this day from Mr Low,

intimating that my dear little daughter, Elizabeth, was unanimously received by the church with reference to baptism and membership, with the single exception of A. B., who thought no one ought to be baptized but men and women. I rejoice at the tidings. Glory to God. He is able to save my other children also. *Thursday, 18th.*—Another woman stated her application for baptism.

Hawick.—Friday, 19th. Arrived about half-past two. Lodged in Mr Turnbull's; preached at Tower knowe at eight. A good audience. *Wednesday, 24th.*—George Niven applied for baptism; said he was fully persuaded by the discourse of last night, and he must obey his Saviour; belonged to the Secession till the revivals, a few years ago; had no right peace or real faith till then; just a working betwixt hope and despair. Ministers preached sometimes one way and sometimes another: at the revivals, he saw that any man who would come to God, through Christ, would be saved. He has been with Mr Monro since. *Thursday, 25th.*—Visited a number of the brethren; conversed and prayed with them. At half-past seven, met in Mr Turnbull's court; explained, particularly, Luke vii. 29, 30, and baptized George Niven. May his baptism redound to the glory of God.

Selkirk.—Friday, 26th. Market-place; good audience for the first. John Young of the gaswork, says, that great excitement existed; that an aged couple had come forward, and that some persons from Burnmill,

three miles up the Yarrow, had said when they passed to church that Lord's-day, we were here before, and heard what was said by Mr Johnstone, they felt, that had it not been the Sacrament, they would have staid with us all day. Lord's-day; three Independents, fine young men, followed me to my room; are at the point of deciding for baptism; have yielded up infant baptism. *Monday, 29th.*—Market-place. The largest meeting we have had in Selkirk; great attention; a deep impression. John Young tells me, that James Walker, mason here, works at Galashiels during the week, that he is one of the oldest members of the Galashiels church, and that the accounts of what he has heard here, have had a powerful effect in leading the church to the favourable state of mind in which they are towards us and our labours. He informed me this morning, that they discussed our visit in the church, and that there was not one against encouraging a visit from me to preach in their town, and that from the reports they have heard, they felt warranted to give the chapel for my use, if I chose to accept of it, and sent me word, that they would be happy to give me all the countenance they could in preaching the gospel. James Young relates, that the accounts from Melrose are most favourable, and that at Darnock, which I visited, the person who has the hall, and was against giving it to the Baptists, had declared that he would now do so freely. James Kiddy, who lives across the Ettrick, is now convinced,

and has requested that I should come out to his house to tea, and try to convince his wife. John Young says, he is far more alive since our visit, and he is now dealing with those unconverted about their souls. He is also arousing the church as much as in him lies. He says, James Brunton wishes now that he had allowed the whole country to witness his baptism.

Tuesday, 30th.—Began in the market-place to contend with shows and exhibitions of different kinds.
Wednesday, 31st.—Took tea this evening at James Kiddy's. His wife told me of both her husband's conversion and her own about six or eight months ago. It was marked and striking; deep convictions, and much concern. James Brunton had a hand in both cases. Her husband told me of an interview with the parish minister, as interesting as anything I ever heard. He took his Bible in his pocket, went to the manse, got the minister in his parlour, and asked him about the new birth. He said it was just a phrase. He turned up John iii. and asked if the Saviour's words were just a phrase. The minister wanted away. He would not allow that, but asked if his congregation had any sense of their sins being forgiven. He said he believed so, as many of them were good-living people. James said, However good-living, he did not think they had. The minister said, I do not know, but they are good-living people. James said, Do you think your own servant man knows what

it is to be born again? Oh yes, John is a well-living man. James says, Well, call him in, and we shall see. No, he would not. James went and got him himself. John said, Nobody could know that he was born again, or had remission of sins. The minister said, What John, do you not know that? I am sure you know that, John. To James he said, You had none of these notions when you got your child baptized. James, No, I trembled for you then when I came into this room as if you had been God; but now I see one far higher, whom I must fear. James, you have surely been at the Lodge (the place where the Independents meet). Yes, I thank God I have been at the Lodge. I might have heard you all my life, and never have seen what I now see. The minister and John both urged him to take it easy, or he would go wrong in the mind. The minister told in several great companies after that, that the hind of Linlaw had been at him, and that he was either drunk or deranged. The minister's servant said to him one day, 'They new lights, I never saw the like o' them; they are sae fu' o' love; they are aye shaking hands as they go out or come in.' 'Aye, take care of them, said he; take care of those who are so full of love.' James Kiddy applied for baptism to-night. He has professed the faith. His wife also is not sure, but she may come forward.

· *August 1st, Thursday.*—At a quarter to five morning, met at the Gas house for the baptism of James

Kiddy. About 100 people present or more. Addressed from the Saviour's baptism first, then from Luke vii. 29, 30. About 11 o'clock, two men, William Turnbull and John Tait, came to call for me. Turnbull wished much for conversation about the non-necessity of water baptism. I stated to him about the baptism of the Spirit, about the apostles' views of the commission, and about Paul's declaration in 1 Cor. i.—such things as seemed to correct his views. Both admitted the fairness of my statements. Tait noticed particularly the views of Paul, and seemed very much satisfied. Turnbull went away declaring he was glad he had come, and only wished he had done so sooner, and said he would duly consider what I had stated. Besides these, he named several others who, by all accounts, seemed to be on the eve of baptism.

Galashiels.—At a quarter to eight, from Acts xvi. 30, 31. A large meeting. The baptists very fond that we should return.

Melrose, Friday, 2d.—Market place; from Luke iv. 18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," &c. A moderate meeting. Fair for the first. *Saturday, 3d.*—Market place; Is. i. 18, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." On Lord's-day he preached at the same place three times; and in the afternoon had a call from three men for conversation. On Monday evening, he preached on nine objections to infant baptism. One applied immediately after, and four others came to his room.

Jedburgh, Tuesday, 6th. — He found some disciples, the fruit of his former visits, waiting to follow their Lord in his holy ordinance of immersion. “At five, baptized H. G. at the water’s edge. She surprised me by falling down on her knees on the bank, and praying that this might be for the glory of God, and that it might be blessed to all present. The Lord be with her and bless her indeed. At a quarter to seven, at the same place in the river Jed, half a mile east of Jedburgh, baptized Mrs R. and M. H. When I went up to them they were on their knees praying in to themselves on the bank, and two or three of the devoted disciples with them. When conducting M. out of the water she said, ‘Let us kneel down and pray here.’ My soul and heart were filled with love and joy. So seemed all the baptized disciples. We met at nine in Miss R.’s work-room for a prayer-meeting. Four sisters and the only brother prayed, and myself twice. I exhorted them from Col. iii. 1, ‘If ye then be risen with Christ,’ &c. The recording angel has the whole in his book of remembrance. I feel that I would gladly travel the breadth of Scotland for such another half-day. This work is living as much in a week as remaining at home is in half-a-year. To the ever blessed Three in One, be glory, honour and praise, for ever and ever. Amen.” *Wednesday, 7th,* he baptized two men in the waters of the Tweed, near Melrose, and had two other applications for baptism, which for the present were delayed.

The following day he returned home to his family and the church, and in the evening spoke at their meeting from these cheering words, Ps. lx. 12, "Through God we shall do valiantly, for he it is who shall tread down our enemies." And on Lord's-day, having been invited by the Union Committee to become their Evangelist, he says, "Intimated my conviction that it was my duty to go into the service of the Saviour in connection with the Union." The church, seeing his devotedness to evangelistic work, seem to have been prepared before for such an intimation; as we find that, in the afternoon of the same day he had information that the church had accepted his resignation. In August and September he spent four Sabbaths in Airdrie, with a view to revive the work of the Lord there. Other six Sabbaths he spent with the church in Dunfermline, previous to bidding them farewell for the evangelistic work of the Union. On Wednesday, October 30th, he says, "Meeting of the church for prayer on my behalf and at my suggestion, proposed by R. Gosman on the preceding Lord's-day. The prayers of the brethren seemed peculiarly fervent and devout. May the Lord hear them to my happy experience, and send down upon the church showers of blessing. And to his glorious name be all the praise. *Thursday, 31st.*—Leave Dunfermline for the work of the Evangelist. Sic Deus voluit."

CHAPTER VI.

HIS EVANGELISTIC LABOURS AS AGENT OF THE SCOTTISH BAPTIST UNION, 1844-1848.

IN his journal from November 1, 1844, the period when he commenced as the Evangelist of the Union, till August, 1845, speaking of the work of an Evangelist, he says—"It is a work to which I have, through grace, devoted all my energies, my whole heart; a line of things which for many years I ardently desired to pursue in my native country, but could never see how it was to be effected, till it pleased God, who doth all things well, himself to open up the way to the very object so much desired, through the Union; and to lead us to it altogether undesignedly on our part, by a course of events ordered and directed, I believe, solely by his own almighty arm. I take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to our great Lord and Master for thus affording us opportunities of general usefulness to our brethren, our kinsmen according to the flesh, opportunities for bringing our fellow-sinners in many places to the knowledge of the truth; for breaking in upon that awfully prevailing formality which has long been conducting its tens of thousands of our countrymen to the regions of woe; and for enlightening some of the sincerely religious portion of the community in the knowledge of primitive institutions, and the constitution and discipline

of the New Testament church, and in the glory and spirituality of Christ's kingdom in the world.

I commenced my labours as the Evangelist of the Union on the 1st of November, in the town of Kelso. Preached that evening in the Friends' meeting house, presently occupied by the Independent church there, to about fifty hearers; again on Sabbath afternoon to about forty hearers; in the evening to a crowded house. Afterwards took a hall in a more central place. The Duke of Roxburgh's shepherd had heard me preach on the prodigal son, called and said that he saw he had been nothing but a prodigal, although long a member of a church. Again he called and applied for baptism. His statement was quite satisfactory, and enquiries made at others correspond with his own statement. He was baptized on Lord's day, the 10th, in the Tweed, before a considerable number of witnesses, who listened attentively to the reasons for our procedure, and behaved with strict propriety, although it was the first such scene which had ever been witnessed in their town. The sensation produced in town and country around was very great. It was the town's talk for a season. On the same Lord's-day, the leader of the Independents in the town, who is a large farmer about four miles off, called and requested me to come and preach in a chapel which he had neatly fitted up for occasional preaching above his barn, and added that he wished to have a conversation regarding baptism. I went on

Wednesday, the 13th, preached and had much conversation about the ordinance of baptism. Next day, both he and his wife were baptized.

I was informed credibly that the excitement raised by our former meetings in July was very great. The people went to our lodgings and enquired about our return, and actually held meetings among themselves for some time, which has made me regret ever since having left them in such a state, and taught me an important lesson regarding our great work, namely, to take care in what circumstances we should again leave any place for another.

On Friday, 15th, I arrived at Jedburgh, 12 miles west, and held a prayer meeting in a sister's there. It was not a good season for my visit. Lectures against Puseyism were engaging the attention of the people, so that my audiences in town were very poor. But in two neighbouring villages I had a number of excellent meetings. On Lord's-day, 17th, the wife of a brother baptized, when brother Johnstone and I first visited that quarter, came five miles and applied for baptism. Having witnessed a good profession, she was buried with her Lord in the river Jed. Tuesday, 19th, baptized two men from different villages, one a disciple for two years, the other for one. Monday, 25th, a young woman, who satisfied all that she was a true convert to Christ, was baptized. After holding many meetings, generally small, prejudice I found weighing very powerfully, I left Jedburgh for

Ancrum, four miles off. Here I spent two days long to be remembered, made many friends, and engaged many prayers from Christians. I found no Baptist in this place.

On Friday, 29th, I arrived at Melrose. I wrought for six days and nights in the town and villages very hopefully, yet amidst abounding prejudices. This, I believe, was heightened by a course of lectures delivered by one of the ministers after our former visit. A woman and two young men from this quarter were afterwards baptized at Galashiels, as results of our visit.

On the 6th of December I went to Galashiels, with the intention of probably returning to Melrose soon. Contrary to expectation, however, I got so much engaged, and the work became so interesting in my hands, that, with the concurrence of all concerned, I remained for nearly four months. I commenced here in the hall of an inn. On Lord's-day, two members of the old Baptist church called at my lodgings, and told me that they had agreed to offer me their chapel on the week evenings, and after four o'clock on Sabbaths. I announced this at a crowded meeting in the hall the same evening; and for six weeks enjoyed the privilege with few interruptions. A number of them tired at the end of that time, and I went and took a hall, and made announcements for the usual church hours on the Lord's-day. My hearers said this was putting them to the test, but

about sixty appeared the first forenoon, and generally continued steadfast to the end. In this town God greatly blessed his word. The first week I had weeping hearers. I had soon much to do privately as well as publicly, persons under deep concern asking me to their houses, or coming to my room. After preaching three times on a Lord's-day, I had sometimes to sit with persons concerned for their salvation till eleven and twelve o'clock, endeavouring to obviate their difficulties and lead them to Jesus. On week evenings, also, we had many enquirers, and generally preached every night or held prayer meetings.

December, 26th.—I had the happiness to baptize one young man, who professed to have been led to decision about his eternal interests by our visit.

January, 9th.—We had the pleasure of burying with their Lord, six happy disciples; one woman, and five men; three heads of families, and three unmarried persons. *17th.*—Four females put on the Lord Jesus Christ by being baptized into his name; two married, and mothers, and two unmarried.

24th.—Four more were baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; one male, and three females. *February, 22d.*—Two

young men put on the Saviour by baptism, rejoicing in the truth. *March, 22d.*—One aged man, one young man, and a young woman were baptized in the waters of the Gala. *23d.*—Another female was immersed, on a profession of her faith, in

the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *28th.*—Seven disciples went down into the water and I baptized them, and they came up *out of* the water, and went on their way rejoicing. Of these, six were males, the other an interesting case of a young woman, the last of a household of four young people who had, one after another, come to the knowledge of the truth, and one by one followed their Saviour into the baptismal stream. *29th.*—Three females devoted themselves to Jesus in baptism. Two of these were a mother and her daughter. The daughter was 14 years of age; had known the truth for about a year and a-half; appeared really to know it well.

Thus we were honoured of God to aid thirty-one disciples, seventeen males, and fourteen females, in putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, in his own blessed, comforting, and solemn ordinance of baptism. And thus lately at Galashiels, as of old in Samaria, when our hearers believed us preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Of the thirty-one baptized at Galashiels, to the best of our knowledge and judgment at the time, after careful investigation, eighteen were savingly converted during our visit—thirteen knew the gospel before, but received light about the ordinances of Christ. We had some good reason to believe also, that eight or ten were brought to the Saviour, who either did

not see it their duty to be baptized, or at any rate, did not apply for it. We had also to reject several cases of application for baptism, on account of not being able to consider them in a proper state for attending to it.

On Lord's-day, March 16th, the brethren first assembled in a church capacity, when nineteen of us commemorated the dying love of our Lord, after the primitive pattern.

Next Lord's-day, 23d, observed the sacred ordinance. On this day also, the church voted several of their number to act as deacons *pro tempore*. Two men and a woman made a public profession of the faith of the gospel, and were unanimously accepted. Next Lord's-day, 30th, our last with the brethren, we had a high day. Thirty-seven baptized believers were present, including three beloved sisters who had come up from Jedburgh, and an esteemed brother from Selkirk. We had holy and happy fellowship one with another, and I trust with God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit. We feel that the recital of these things causes gratitude to God, and hope that the reading of them will produce a kindred feeling in the breast of many a devoted liberal-hearted lover of Jesus in various denominations. And we feel assured, that many prayers will be offered at a throne of grace for the stability of the converts, and the prosperity of this infant cause.

Monday, March 3d, I visited Haymount, preached four evenings in the chapel to good congregations. On Friday morning, baptized a deacon of the Independent church in Kelso, and an elder of one of the Presbyterian churches there. They both reside in the neighbourhood of Haymount.

April 4th, I went to Perth to supply for brother Thomson during his absence in England, collecting for the Union. I generally preached in the chapel, or on the streets, or both, on week evenings. There we also experienced in some measure the goodness of God. Some of his people comforted and edified. Some individuals quickened, and induced to put on the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism. And at least, one interesting case of decided conversion to God.

I then spent about three months in the town of Kinross. Here we enjoyed very interesting meetings. For a number of weeks, we had a meeting in a private house at ten morning, well attended, often from 20 to 30. Another at three, at the other end of the town, attended by from eight to a dozen. In the evening, sometimes in the public hall, and sometimes out of doors, we kept up sermon almost every night. On Sabbath evenings, the meetings presented an interesting spectacle. The hall was uniformly crowded nearly half-an-hour, I was told, before six o'clock. The attention was marked, and this continued till we left. I had for a week the effective aid of a young brother, Walbran, one of brother Johnstone's students.

I was also assisted towards the close by brother Mackay from Galashiels. The confessions of the people that they were edified, comforted, interested, and impressed, were numerous. Many seemed to approve of the views given of the constitution, order, and discipline of a Christian church. The Lord gave testimony to his word in the conversion of at least two persons—very interesting cases—who openly put on the Lord Jesus Christ in baptism. A number of others were very hopefully impressed. Large meetings were addressed also on the streets of Milnathort. One person from this village was also baptized.

We earnestly solicit the effectual fervent prayers of the people of God for his blessing on these efforts, and on those brought to the Saviour by their means. And also for grace and wisdom to the labourers, in the very difficult and trying circumstances in which they are often placed, whilst prosecuting their work amidst the suspicion and opposition of onlookers, and often of the parties with whom they must come into contact, in seeking opportunities and accommodation for spreading abroad the knowledge of the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Baptized altogether, Kelso 5, Jedburgh 7, Hawick 1, Selkirk 3, Melrose 2, Galashiels 31, Perth 1, Kinross 2, total 52. Mr Mackay baptized 1 from Milnathort."

In his journal from Aug. 1845, to Aug. 1846, he says :
“First, I would record publicly my gratitude to God for allowing me, during another year, many opportunities of public usefulness, both in Scotland and England ; and, still counting me faithful, keeping me in the ministry, and still vouchsafing to me, who am less than the least of all saints, this distinguished grace, that I should preach among my fellow-Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

My first duty after our pleasant and very profitable Union meetings at Aberdeen, was to collect for the Union in that city :—it was no unpleasant task. I found the brethren most liberal, notwithstanding their recent great kindness and hospitality to so many strangers as the meetings brought up to their city. I staid over the following Lord’s-day, and addressed them forenoon and afternoon, and introduced the services in the evening for Mr Fuller, who preached and collected for the Baptist Home Mission for England. I left Aberdeen with a deep impression of the good feeling of the brethren there. I was much affected by the kind notice of my sojourn amongst them for ten days, in the evening prayer meeting, by their affectionate pastor.

My next scene of labour, for a time, was Airdrie and neighbourhood. Here our devoted brother Taylor and I had many interesting meetings, which, I hope, will lead to the eternal welfare of a number of souls.

In travelling from Airdrie to Edinburgh by the

track boat, the cabin being full of passengers, at a moment when all was quiet, I said to my fellow-passengers, You seem to be languid, and perhaps wearying. If none of you has any objection, I shall read a portion of a book to you, and it shall be one in which we should all have an equal interest. They signified their assent. I read of John, 14th chapter. I then expounded for 20 or 30 minutes from the first, second, and third verses. They gave earnest heed to the heavenly mansions, and seemed to enter into the spirit of the inquiry, whether they had each secured one. One lady sat with the tear on her cheek ; another, when leaving the boat, took my hand very cordially, and begged to know my name, thanking me much for the address. I have some hope that I may meet one or more at the judgment, who will acknowledge that that half hour was blessed, in leading them to decision about eternal realities. At any rate I shall rejoice to have the blessing of him "who soweth beside all waters."

I then visited Leith, and continued to labour in it for a considerable time, preaching in a hall, and out of doors when the weather would admit. I met here with a number of Baptist friends connected with different churches, who took a deep interest in our missionary efforts, and showed very great attention. We had a number of very interested hearers, but some of them who seemed much so, for a time, disappointed our hopes of fruit. I baptized a young

man of very decided Christian character and piety, who had been brought to God a considerable time before, and had some convictions about believers' baptism, but had read on the other side, and given up thoughts of it, till his attention was drawn to it in our meetings. He was baptized on Lord's-day, 15th Nov., after an address from Acts xxii. 16, "And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized," &c. It was a solemn and refreshing season. I visited a number of poor families, when in this station, conversed with them, and gave tracts. I witnessed a fully lower degree of human wretchedness and destitution here, than I have done in any portion of our country. I believe the misery-making habits of drunkenness to be the principal cause.

I spent the 4th and 5th of November in Linlithgow. Preached first evening at the Cross, though dark, to about 100 hearers. Next evening, preached in the Rechabites' hall, but could not obtain it regularly; made an effort to get the Town hall, but did not succeed, from not having time to prosecute the necessary measures.

Thursday, 6th Nov., visited Falkirk. Found two small parties of Scotch Baptists had united, and was told that they were going on happily; could not obtain their chapel for preaching, because it was occupied for a school; learned that a small English Baptist cause had been commenced, and that a Mr Sowerby, who had been a Methodist preacher, but baptized about 18

months before, was their minister. I was afterwards introduced to him, and conversed with him about meetings in his place of worship to help them on, but it was not convenient, on account of a class which he taught in it, although otherwise he expressed great satisfaction regarding such plans of usefulness.

I went on the same evening to Bathgate. This town appeared to me to be in a state of exhaustion from religious discussion. I believe there is such a thing as completely tiring out the public mind by controversial statements; and while it is right that every man be allowed to state his views to any community, yet, constantly to insist on controverted points for a long period, will generally drive many minds into wild speculations. I left Bathgate, convinced that it was not in a favourable condition for our labour, even although a hall could have been procured, and that the present agitated and divided state of feeling would require time to subside.

I returned to Leith on Saturday morning, and laboured there till Monday, 17th Nov., when I visited Kinross, and held a week's meetings in the hall there. We had a fair attendance, and much kind interest expressed. I visited in Milnathort, and found a good impression from former labours there—numbers reading and thinking about our principles. On the Lord's-day we had most exciting meetings in the hall; one at half-past three, well attended; one at six, literally crammed—the greater number standing. The

subject was, "A Christian church in operation," to the formation and working of which, the audience listened with great attention. A young woman, who had been brought to decision about her state at my former visit, applied for baptism. She was baptized in the chapel at Dunfermline, on the evening of Tuesday, 25th Nov.

Thursday, 27th Nov., journeying to St Andrews, had some profitable conversation with fellow-travellers, particularly regarding the comfort and happiness of those who never require to travel without the presence and care of their heavenly Father; spent ten days with the church here, and preached twelve times.

On the 9th December I had the pleasure of being present at the annual soiree of the church in Inglis Street, Dunfermline, and addressed the Sabbath scholars, teachers, and church, on their various privileges and duties.

Resumed labours on the 14th in Leith, which had been supplied during my absence by the students from brother Johnstone's academy at Newington.

I was present on 1st January, at the ordination of brother Taylor, over the newly-formed church in Glasgow; addressed the church, by previous appointment; have been made glad to hear since of their comfort and prosperity. Remained till Saturday; got a committee of ladies to collect for the Union; engaged to send them collecting cards.

On Thursday, 8th, travelled from Leith to Galashiels ; was in time to attend church meeting ; heard brother Henderson, who had been stationed there for some time, address a very edifying discourse to them ; had a very happy meeting with the brethren ; stayed eight days, and preached to them eight times ; had many good meetings. Sabbath evening, a crowded house, and most interested attention ; baptized one who had been brought to the knowledge of the truth at my former visit, but from some peculiar circumstances had been prevented from coming forward at that time ; was happy to find the brethren generally steadfast in the faith, and happy in the views which they had embraced as the truth of God. May the Lord give them grace to be faithful unto death, that they may at last receive a crown of life.

Friday, 16th, went to Hawick. Preached same evening in Odd Fellow's hall, to about 40 people ; next evening baptized two sisters, who stated that they had been brought to the Saviour through revival meetings in the Relief chapel some years before, that they formerly belonged to the Secession ; had been recently Independents ; had seen baptism at my former visit, and now desired to obey their Saviour in that ordinance. Their account of conversion and statements of doctrine were quite satisfactory. I had much comfort in burying them with their Lord in baptism.

Next day, a man applied for baptism, who was also a member of the Independent church. His

conversion had taken place at revival meetings in Selkirk; he had seen baptism to be right when we visited that town; was present at the baptisms which took place when brother Johnstone and I were labouring in Selkirk, and had viewed that subject favourably ever since; now saw it his duty to follow the Lord in that ordinance. His statements regarding conversion, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, being, in my judgment, quite scriptural, I was happy to aid him in putting on the Lord Jesus in his own sacred appointment.

On Monday evening I baptized two females, who had known the truth for some time, after making a scriptural profession thereof, which could not be gainsayed. Thus, at this visit, five happy converts were immersed. Having preached four times to good audiences, I left Hawick for Jedburgh on the 20th. Here I preached two evenings to good audiences, in Black Bull hall.

Left on Thursday 22d, for England. On the coach to Newcastle it rained for some hours. Nevertheless, through the attention of the sober and intelligent guard, we were very happy and comfortable. Eight gentlemen sat together on the back seats. By interchange of kindly sentiments and good offices, the road and time passed comfortably. At length, we had the gospel introduced in the following way: Gentlemen—"We have come thus far very pleasantly, and have enjoyed much entertaining and edifying

conversation ; and I am sure I speak the sentiments of you all, when I say, we should all be very happy to travel with our guard again ; but there is one subject we have not had directly before us, and yet it is most interesting for every one of us." I then enlarged at some length on the soul and its value, and its only salvation, to the acknowledged gratification of all present, and it may be, to the everlasting profit of some of them.

I was almost universally kindly received in London ; was admitted to the pulpits of many of the brethren—sometimes on the Lord's-days—more generally at their week night meetings, which are well attended, and had liberal contributions brought up after sermon, on behalf of the Union. I feel bound to return them my sincere acknowledgments for their kind brotherly attentions to my object, and to myself, personally.

Sometime after leaving England, I went to Hawick, and laboured with various success. At some of the out-door labours here, I was seriously annoyed by drunkards. I was also informed that I had some hearing who had never heard a sermon from their youth up, and not a few who gave no regular attendance any where.

I spent Lord's-day, 31st May, very happily in the church at Berwick.

On the following day, went to Ayton, a village eight miles from Berwick, on the Edinburgh road. Here are twelve Baptists, who are accustomed to

meet with six more, who reside in Eyemouth, two and a half miles from Ayton, on the sea coast. They have been accustomed to consider themselves as a branch of the church at Berwick, but for some time have met in Ayton, and attended to the Lord's supper on the first day of the week, being presided over by brother Smith, senior. He had invited me to Ayton, and was most attentive about my labours there. I enjoyed fellowship with the brethren, and presided at the Supper for three Sabbaths, which I was induced to remain with them—preaching generally in Ayton, a few times in Eyemouth, once in Reston, and twice in Coldingham. I also visited Dunse, whilst here, being favoured with a conveyance by a kind friend. I saw a brother resident there, who told me, that great prejudice prevailed against out-door preaching, and that it was a difficult place to get attention. I concluded that winter would be the best time to visit it, when in-door meetings are most likely to be attended.

At Ayton we had much interesting work. Our meetings were chiefly out of doors; many attended. Numbers of railway labourers heard from night to night, with marked attention, and some of them came in-doors, on the Lord's-day, to the church meetings. A person, who had a number of labourers under him, told me, that one of his men, who had been very regardless of these matters before, declared before him and his fellow-workmen, that he had

prayed every night since that minister came, and he had never done so in his life before. A woman mentioned to me, that she had never seen her husband so much taken up with anything before; that she used to get him pressed sometimes to family worship before, but now he took delight in it, and was much at his book. I had here three very interesting applicants for baptism. I was enabled to judge of all of them, that they had believed through grace; and therefore, after some interesting preliminary exercises, I immersed them. Here I was informed that a certain functionary was very much displeased at my being in the parish, went and reasoned with the people, and actually made an attack upon my upright and straight-forward landlord—not a member of his church—and charged him with heresy, for keeping a Baptist in his house. He also questioned him, what a near relative of his, a dissenting minister in a neighbouring city, would say to him for it. *Ans.*—“Are you that thin skinned, sir? My relative has a Baptist minister for his neighbour, one of his most intimate friends.” I may here record an illustration of the influence of ministers over ignorant people. A member of a certain body had passed by our meetings on the other side. It happened that a minister of his connection was visiting a relative, who lived within hearing of us. The minister had listened at the window to our discourse, and had expressed his

decided approbation of the sermon. This man, hearing this, became a regular hearer for some time.

The following note is from my journal of Lord's day, 7th June:—Very large audience; most attentive; a railway foreman stood deeply interested—his countenance expressing deep emotions. On Friday night, some of the friends, as well as myself, observed more than one quite overcome. The Lord is certainly with us; good shall surely result; let God be glorified. We had last night a number of the most respectable in the place—elders from both Establishment and Secession, more than one of each. One of the Secession elders heard for a few minutes, first evening, and went away, saying, we were some of the Methodists. My landlord told him I was a Baptist. He changed at once, and has attended every night.

One of those baptized at Ayton, told me that she had profited as to the way of salvation, by reading a book, called the "Way of Life Made Plain;" but she also told me, that the same book set her on thinking about the futility of infant baptism, because it urged on the consideration of those baptized in infancy, and brought up by religious parents, that they were in as dangerous circumstances as others were, or as the heathen, till they embraced the truth as it is in Jesus, for their personal salvation.

Saturday, 27th June, visited Dunbar. On Lord's day, presided in the Baptist church there; preached three times, and baptized a female—the pastor having

gone to the aid of the church in Eyemouth, and to preach in Ayton, where he had good meetings. I continued to preach in the chapel for the following four week evenings. At Dunbar, I met with some excellent brethren. The pastor and brethren are zealous and active, but prejudices seem to run high against their views.

Leaving Dunbar, I reached Haddington on Friday, 3d July. I was directed to the leader of the Methodists to try to obtain their chapel. The good man hesitated; said he could not do it, unless I should obtain the consent of the minister in Dunbar—they having no minister at the time—or that of the superintendent of the district of Edinburgh. I did not think of going through such a process. I obtained the Odd-Fellow's hall, and published for sermons on Lord's-day. I also preached in the Independent chapel at 11 o'clock, and was kindly urged to go there instead of the hall. I preached out of doors five evenings of the following week, in Nungate, a suburb of Haddington. On Friday evening, when intimating meetings for next Lord's-day, a person came forward and said, You may intimate for the Methodist chapel in the evening if you please. I wondered, and said, it had been refused before; but he replied it had been talked over, and could now be got. I then intimated for Nungate at half-past 9 o'clock; for Market Street, middle of the town, at a quarter before 1 o'clock; and in the Methodist chapel

at six o'clock. I also sent the drummer to proclaim these meetings on Saturday. The town officer told the drummer that I should not be allowed to preach in Market Street. He reported this to our brother, who mentioned it to me on Saturday evening, and kindly added, Do you think I should see the acting magistrate for the week about it? I said, I knew the law upon the subject, but it might be as well, as we wished to do all things agreeably. He went. The magistrate said, 'Is it Mr Blair? I heard him in the Nungate the other evening. I think our people may be the better of such preaching.' I went and took a station at the corner of a lane, and proceeded to read and remark on a passage, as a preliminary exercise. I had collected nearly 100 people, when the officer, accompanied by a person with a red neck to his coat, came and stood for some time close to my back. He then interrupted me by saying, that I did wrong in collecting a crowd in the street; that I ought to have a house; that I had a house last Sabbath, and should have one to-day again. I replied, that I was to have a house to-night. He again insisted I should have a house. I replied, that I had the acting magistrate's leave; and, besides, that no man did his duty by merely opening a house, and saying to the people, If you choose to come in, I will preach to you; for God says, 'Go, preach to every creature. Go to the streets and lanes of the city, and urge men to come in.' He said,

he had seen a magistrate at nine o'clock, and could not understand how I had liberty. I said, I did not believe that any magistrate could interfere, if I did not interrupt a thoroughfare. I also told him, I had preached on the streets of many of the towns in Scotland, and had never been interrupted before. He said, he would use no violence, but would see the magistrates on the subject. He left, and I shifted the people a little from the corner, saying, we wished to give as little offence as possible, in the discharge of our duty. I proceeded to pray over the Saviour's own example for out-door preaching, and his commandment to us, and then preached very comfortably to an attentive audience. A brother made inquiry about the officer's authority for interrupting me, and wrote as follows :—'I called on the officer, and found that he had the authority of the magistrate, viz., Mr ——. I called on him; he said, "That he only acted according to a rule they had laid down, viz., That no person be allowed to speak on the streets on any subject." I said, that so long as Mr Blair did not interrupt the passage on the street, the magistrates could not interfere, and had no authority in point of law.' Same evening, we had a good and highly respectable looking meeting in the Methodist chapel. On the two following evenings, I preached at my former station, in Nungate. When on Tuesday evening, I announced my intention of leaving, I was much affected by the numbers who flocked round me,

expressing their regret, and wishing me to remain ; and assuring me, that good was being done. But my arrangements were made for going to Perth, and I could not then draw back. I felt also the kindness of the Methodists in offering me their chapel for the forenoons and evenings of the future Lord's-days, that I might remain.

On my way to Perth, I spent Lord's-day, 10th July, in Kinross. Visited the friends there on Saturday evening and Monday morning, and preached twice in the hall on Lord's-day ; visited also some inquirers in Milnathort on Monday, and was happy to find two persons far advanced in primitive views. One man stated an application for baptism ; he was led to think of these matters by our out-door efforts there last year.

Reached Perth on Monday. Preached in South Street on Tuesday evening to a numerous audience ; have continued the meetings in the same spot every week evening, Saturday excepted, and on Sabbath evenings ; they have been numerously attended. I have had valuable assistance from different labourers, especially the preacher who happens to be with the Independent church here at this time. We have had many railway labourers attending, and have spoken very particularly to their case. May the Lord send his powerful word home to their hearts. It is right to mention, that friends here wished me to come at least two weeks before the annual meet-

ings, very particularly on their account. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified; and to the three in one God, be all glory for ever and ever—Amen.”

In his journal, from Aug. 1846, till Aug. 1847, he says: “I again beg publicly to express my grateful thanks to the great Head of the church for continuing me, in his great mercy, in his service for another year, and affording me some more wonders of grace to record, which he hath been pleased to work through my humble means.

At the meetings of the Union in Perth, in August, 1846, I was appointed to Dundee, to labour in the town and neighbourhood. On the first evening after my arrival, the pastor, two deacons, and a member of the Seagate church, called at my lodgings, and urged me to preach to them on the afternoon of the first Lord’s-day, with which I complied. They afterwards renewed their request, so that I was regularly with them for some time. On Saturday, 12th September, I received a letter from them, inviting me to labour amongst them for six months. To this the Union assented. I went on preaching in the chapel three times every Lord’s-day, and elsewhere during the week—out of doors so long as the weather would permit—then on Tuesday evenings in the chapel, and, on other evenings, in private houses. We had many interesting and hopeful meetings, and many interesting incidents occurred. About the

middle of January I was informed that a young man, whose mother was a member with us, had been seeking for me when I was absent supplying at Perth, and that he was under much concern about his state. I had soon an opportunity of hearing from himself, that he and his father had left hearing in the Seagate some time before my arrival—that they had taken seats in the Independent chapel—that when we began to have evening sermons in the chapel, which was on 4th October, he came to hear—was so far arrested the first evening, as to be induced to return regularly—and soon to attend during the day as well as in the evening. Having heard four lectures in the evenings on the prodigal son, he was brought into deep waters—saw himself to be the very prodigal; could not sleep. Having to go to work about six in the morning, he rose at four to search his Bible, and to cry for mercy. His parents observed his uneasiness. His father spoke to him. He laid open his mind to him, and received some very judicious advice. After conversation with us, and having his mind directed to the Word of God, somewhat particularly, he obtained peace from its pages. I was much pleased at his profession, with the manner in which he read and remarked on various passages, as the ground of his resting on Jesus. Having fully satisfied the church, I rejoiced to baptize him before a goodly number of spectators, amongst whom were a number of his friends and acquaintances.

We went on again rather smoothly for some time, till, on the afternoon of Lord's-day, 28th February, I was led to preach a sermon to the young, of which previous notice had been given, and, on this occasion, a considerable number of young people were assembled. Under the blessing of God this discourse led to the conversion of a number, who, I trust, will praise his name for ever and ever.

Our next applicants were two brothers, sons of a widow, who was a member of the church. From a long family intimacy with the pastor, they expressed a desire that he should baptize them, which he did on Lord's day, 14th March, on which occasion I lectured on the Eunuch's baptism beforehand, and afterwards addressed the audience from—'And, now, why tarriest thou?' &c. These young men decided the same week to make their application, unknown to each other, and were both very much surprised when they came to understand each other's intentions. One of them stated that a series of evening discourses on Isa. lv. 1—3, had been much blessed to him, in bringing him to see the way of salvation clearly and simply. Both of them stated that they had been of late much impressed about the error of waiting, like a piece of dead matter, for some extraordinary movement, and that they had seen and felt the necessity of being aroused and active about their eternal concerns.

The next applicants for baptism were two young

women, and a man of sixty years of age, the father of the first convert. He was brought to the knowledge of the truth when twelve years of age, through an address from a Sabbath school teacher. He was thirty years a member of a Presbyterian church. Fourteen years ago he was pressed out of that fellowship by corrupt communion. He could not express how much he had suffered, in the interim, for want of church privileges, but, with his convictions about baptism, and the disagreeable occurrences he witnessed in churches, he was driven to his wits' end. He came and witnessed his son's baptism, and shortly after, hoping for a better state of things, he came and made application for his own. I experienced a peculiar satisfaction in burying that aged disciple, along with the two young women, with their Lord, on Lord's-day, 4th April. The church, also, were particularly gratified in receiving to their fellowship one who had long heard with them, and walked so consistently as he had done, and who had just recently left off coming to them, and was thus more fully with them than ever. But there was one, an elderly disciple, who had long maintained an orderly and becoming conversation as a member of the church, who was gratified above all—I refer to the wife of this aged disciple, and, of course, the mother of the first convert. I shall not soon forget the gratification I felt at the communion that evening, on seeing her seated betwixt her husband and her son, receiving

the cup from the former, partaking, and handing it to the latter.

Of the young women I must take a little further notice. One of them declared she had been very careless about her soul, till she heard the address to the young. She was then aroused, and could not rest till she found peace at the cross. The other had had frequent convictions in her youth, but was deeply affected by the address to the young, and had just lately come to decision. Their cases were both quite satisfactory to the church.

Our next candidates were two young men. One of these stated, that he had only attended our place for ten weeks ; that he was quite careless before he came to hear with us—had given up going to church altogether—went astray with fellow-workmen—that he was much struck with the address to the young—had given up his foolish companions and evil habits—had laid hold on Jesus, and desired to be numbered with his people. The other was a member of the Free Church. He came and witnessed some of the baptisms, and listened to the addresses—went home and searched his New Testament for proofs for infant baptism. Not finding any, he came, like an honest disciple, and applied to be baptized. He thought on his state, and laid hold on the Saviour at the time when he first connected himself with a Presbyterian church. These were both baptized on the forenoon of Lord's-day, 18th April, when suitable addresses

were given, and a considerable congregation listened attentively.

On the evening of the same day I had two applications, one from a girl of seventeen, and another of nineteen, years of age. The former said she came to hear some weeks ago—was impressed at the baptisms of the two young men who were brothers. For some time she was much impressed always on the Mondays, but it wore off during the week. For some weeks her impressions had been abiding; she thought she had then peace in believing in Jesus—had not been religiously brought up—says she has given her heart to God. The latter has often had religious impressions—has for these few weeks found them stronger than ever. About three weeks ago, she thinks she found peace in believing; she wept about her state, and seemed deeply in earnest—professes faith in Christ as the Son of God—as both God and man—says he died that we might live. Both gave the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, by the power of God, as proofs of the Father's entire satisfaction in the work of his Son. I had conversation with both on the following Tuesday evening, and could with great pleasure, so far as I was personally concerned, have baptized them before I left for England. They were both baptized after I left by Mr Henderson.

There was another young woman, whose appearance, when under the Word, interested me much for some time before I left. I felt pretty certain that

the truth was working on her mind. I was not a little gratified on my return to learn the following particulars concerning her case, viz. :—that she was much affected for a considerable time before I left for England, so much so that she often could not sleep, and rose in the night to search her Bible for consolation—that John iii. 16, ‘God so loved the world,’ &c., and some other passages, were blessed to bring peace to her conscience, and were to her like oil poured out on the agitated waters.

Thus, the Union have some occasion to rejoice, that of the eleven persons added to the church during the year by baptism, nine of them, there is reason to conclude, were given to their agent as his hire, and will be, if they and we remain steadfast, for a crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ. Of the other two, it seems evident that the one was brought to the knowledge, and both to the practice of the Saviour’s blessed institution of baptism, through means of your agent. Besides labouring chiefly in Dundee, we have been enabled to hold forth the word of truth in Arbroath, Carnousty, North and South Ferries, Blairgowrie, &c., sometimes out of doors, and sometimes in doors ; always the former when the weather would permit. Besides those who have actually come forward and professed the truth as it is in Jesus, I was told by the pastor of the church and others of the brethren, of numbers who were under impressions, and likely to come forward ere long. This made me

feel much at leaving them in that interesting condition. But it is said, 'Necessity has no law.' May we not hope that some precious account may be rendered at last of those who were then brought to serious considerations about their eternal concerns.

Dundee and its neighbourhood form an excellent field for missionary effort, and particularly for outdoor labour. I had contemplated a very interesting summer of it, but it has pleased the Lord to order it otherwise, and I desire ever to bow to his will. In outdoor preaching we had always a considerable number of very serious steadfast hearers, but where they have been so much accustomed to it, as in Dundee, the audiences are not likely to be so large. The great mixture of society in such large manufacturing towns, insures also a variety of interruptions, especially to a stranger. At the first I had a number of these to deal with. It may interest friends to know a few of these cases. In Arbroath, before a large audience, a man like a countryman took money and came and presented it to us, which led to some explanation regarding our objects in preaching to them. At Westport, Dundee, a man stood at my elbow, rather respectably dressed, and kept telling me I was preaching lies to the people. I at length turned to him, and told him I believed them to be truths, or I would not preach them to the people. Returning to my subject; I came to speak of John iii. 16, 'God so loved,' &c. Dwelling on the word *whosoever*, I

said it was encouragement for all. I turned to the man and said personally to him, 'It is for you also, sir.' He replied, 'Yes, and it is for you too.' I said, 'Yes, I rejoice that it is for me.' Finding himself noticed individually amongst an increasing and indignant audience, he soon left the ground to us. At the same place, on a Lord's-day morning, a man came and charged us with teaching the people false doctrine, and wished to debate. I insisted he should wait till I had done, as I would not be interrupted till then. He waited on patiently, and at the close demanded a regular debate. I said I would debate with no man on the street, and that no man had a right to come and interrupt me when I had collected an audience. I would, in such cases, preach whatever I thought right—and if any one thought I was wrong, he might, if he choose, collect a meeting for himself, and preach to them what he thought proper. 'Come away,' said his companion to him, 'you are not fit for that gentleman, any way.'

On another Sabbath morning, in the same place, when descanting on the goodness of God, and pointing the audience for proof of it to the corn fields, and the yellow waving wheat, a female's voice calls out, 'An' what do you mak' o' the potatoes, sir.' I went on till it was repeated, and then stopped and turned to the woman and said, 'In the first place, I am very sorry for you; you must be far gone when you, an aged woman, can interrupt publicly the

preaching of the gospel.' This evidently disconcerted her much. I added, 'Since you have called my attention to the potatoes, I will say this much, that, when I look around me and see the drunkenness and other wickedness that stalk through our streets; when I think of the swearing and blasphemy that grate one's ears as we pass along, I cannot wonder that the God who governs such a wicked world, should find it necessary to lay his hand upon the potatoes, in order to show such creatures their complete dependence upon him, and lead them to reflection and repentance. My wonder is that he does not lay his hand on the wheat also.' Being satisfied that I had secured the general approval of my audience, I resumed my address. A young man soon after came and took the woman by the arm, and led her away.

I shall only mention another incident of this nature, which occurred on a week evening at foot of Bonnet Hill, Dundee. Dwelling at some length on the 'living water' which the Saviour set before the woman of Samaria, a young man spoke out, saying, 'You have told us plenty about water now, tell us something about bread.' I allowed him to repeat his request, and then paused and said, 'Well, Sir, I'll tell you about bread. There was one who said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven, which God gave for the life of the world." Now, sir, go home and think on that bread, and know that, unless

you learn to eat it, you must perish for ever.' I suppose he took the first part of the advice, for he left the audience immediately after ; but whether he took the other or not, I suppose we must leave the judgment day to determine.

Before I conclude, I may just mention that I have had the pleasure of supplying the last two Lord's-days at Perth, and have been gratified to see a young man brought to decision about his salvation, through the public preaching of the word, and private conversation. I had the satisfaction of baptizing him into the sacred name, on the Sabbath evening before I left for our meetings, when appropriate addresses were delivered to a very respectable audience. I may also mention that this case was highly satisfactory to the church."

In the midst of his labours at Dundee, Mr Blair was called to endure a heavy bereavement in the loss of his dear wife, who had now been his faithful companion for twenty-eighty years. While taking a note of his work on Lord's-day, April 4th, 1847, he says : "No meetings during the week, feeling very much exhausted, and watching Mrs Blair." Again on the 11th, "During the week engaged with Mrs Blair's very serious illness." At length taken from him, he thus notes her departure to the world of endless joy. "This week taken up peculiarly with the death-bed, death and burial of my dear wife. She died rejoicing in hope, on Tuesday evening, 20th April, 1847, at 8

minutes past 9. 'Requiescit in pace.' She was interred in the Western Cemetery, Perth road, on Saturday 24th, about half-past 12. She lies in hope of a glorious resurrection. Few mothers her equal." The following Lord's-day, Mr Blair preached three times in Seagate church; in the forenoon from Heb. xii. 22, 23; afternoon, John xiv. 1, 2; evening, Isaiah lv. 3, and notes—"A most interesting day. God hath sustained. May he bless."

The following week he set out on a journey to England, on behalf of the Union, visiting Newcastle, Shields, Sunderland, Scarborough, Hull, Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Leicester, Birmingham, Brierly Hill, where his brother William resided, Nottingham, Rochdale, Manchester, and Liverpool, and preaching whenever he had opportunity. Such was his love for preaching, and his zeal for souls, that we find him at Liverpool, preaching at the railway station, from his favourite text, "I am the door;" the next day at the Custom house, and the day following, again at the railway station. Returning to Scotland in July, after preaching in Glasgow, Perth, and Edinburgh, he was appointed to visit Airdrie, in order to strengthen the church, and to revive the Lord's work there. Here he continued to labour with his usual diligence and zeal, from August to January, 1848. The next three months we find him in the south, going as far as Devonshire, after which he devoted other three months to Airdrie.

In Airdrie, he had neither much comfort nor success, as will be seen from his own review of his labours there. The truth is, he was too much of an evangelist to be long at ease in one place. He must, like his Master, be preaching the gospel in other towns also. Meanwhile, the church in Stirling, which had formerly been in two sections, having united into one in March that same year, called him to become their preacher, upon which he resigned his post as evangelist of the Union. The following is his outline of his work at Airdrie:—

“The sphere and nature of my operations being very different from former years, I have not a similar report to present. Being stationed all the time in one place, and having charge of a church, my duties have been more those of the regular pastor than of the evangelist. Having been sent specially to revive and edify the church, I felt it my duty to make my efforts bear particularly on that object. With this view, besides preaching three times on Lord’s-days, I paid particular attention to the Sabbath-school—saw it increased from about 40 to 140, visited it every Sabbath evening when at home, spoke a little to the scholars, and prayed. We also opened a Bible class, on Monday evenings, which was, for some time, numerously attended. Whilst addressing them, there seemed to be frequently very deep impression. A few of them sometimes remained for private conversation. I also kept up a lecture on Thursday evenings in the chapel,

which was, for a season, pretty well attended. When I commenced in Airdrie, being a good deal broken down by a recent tour in England, I did not feel able for out-door preaching, but had two meetings a-week in private houses. Some pleasing occurrences gladdened this service. A young woman waited upon me, and told me she was under great concern about her state. She was a member of the Bible class, and a regular hearer. She found peace some time after, whilst at her work. A young man got his mother to bring him to me for conversation, who stated that he was arrested by his father's prayer in the family for his children. He was induced to seek the Lord, and soon found peace in Jesus. These two were both baptized, and became useful Sabbath-school teachers. A young man, from the neighbourhood of Cumbernauld, came to hear, called and requested baptism. Said he had been quite a legalist till he came to hear with us ; but now saw that he must be justified by faith only. He satisfied us of his knowledge and belief of the truth, and was buried with his Lord in baptism, and added to the number of the disciples. His attention and attendance since have been most exemplary, travelling about six miles every Lord's-day to enjoy the word and ordinances. Besides these, a number of the old members who had left, from various causes, returned. Indeed, the church seemed most happy, and in some degree prosperous, till, in the month of January, I had to leave, to their great

grief, in order to proceed to England. I was re-appointed to Airdrie on my return, and, I am sorry to say, found the church in an adverse state, from which they have not yet recovered. I resided some miles out of town for a portion of the last quarter, and had much pleasure in preaching regularly twice a-week in that district to railway and other labourers. A few of these went constantly from the place where one of the meetings was held to the other, and thus had twice a week the truths of the gospel. We had one meeting in another district, where eight or ten Catholics were lodged in the other end of the house.

In drawing to a close my last report as evangelist of the Union, it may well be supposed that I should have feelings peculiar to such an occasion. I have now been permitted to serve the Union in that capacity for three years and nine months. I must acknowledge that I have done so with much imperfection, yet that it has been with some measure of zeal for God's glory, in the advancement of truth, and the salvation of souls, God knoweth. I bless God, and render to him the praise that it hath not been altogether in vain. In resigning my office, I will magnify it. I hold it honourable and useful, yea, *most* honourable and useful. I know that many, and some of those from whom better things might have been expected, have looked down upon the office. I know that I have been spoken of, even by talented and respected ministers of the gospel, as 'a travelling

preacher, an itinerant, &c., &c.' Jesus and the apostles, especially Paul, were deserving of the same appellations. The time is at hand, when the respectable pastors, who dare not preach Christ crucified to their perishing fellow-sinners out of a regular pulpit, lest it degrade them, will find that the things which are highly esteemed amongst men, are an abomination with God. In conclusion, allow me to add, that I feel very grateful to the Baptist Union, and, above all, to our God and Saviour, for the opportunities I have enjoyed of scattering divine truth through my native land. If I have had any success, I desire to render to Jehovah all the praise. I beg the prayers of my brethren for divine guidance and blessing, in a more limited sphere, better suited to my years and strength. And I beg of the Union to accept of my best wishes and humble prayers for their prosperity and welfare.—Amen."

CHAPTER VII.

HIS SECOND MARRIAGE, AND RESIDENCE AT STIRLING AND
DUNDEE, 1848-1853.

By this time the Lord had directed his attention to another companion. The marriage took place at Bristol, July 21st, 1848, and is thus recorded by himself:—"Friday, 21st.—Counterslip chapel, married

by Mr Crisp to my dear Louisa. It was of the Lord's goodness, and I bless him for it, and will do so for ever—James Blair." After journeying to Chepstow and Ross, and the next day to Durham, they arrived at the Bridge of Allan on Friday the 28th.

With his usual zeal he began his work at Stirling, the next Lord's-day, preaching forenoon and afternoon, from John xx. 11, and Ps. cx. iii. The following week he attended the yearly meetings of the Union, held in Edinburgh, August 1st and 2d, when, having given in his report, and intimated his resignation, in consequence of the call to Stirling, it was resolved unanimously, upon accepting his resignation, "that the Union express their continued affection for himself, and high estimate of his labours while in their service, and trust that, in his new sphere, his usefulness may continue and increase."

After this, we find him, as usual, at his evangelistic work, preaching in the towns and villages around Stirling, such as Bannockburn, Larbert, St Ninians, Dunblane, &c. On the 4th of December, he notes the work of death in his father's family. "*Monday, 4th.*—Cairneyhill; funeral of sister Margaret."

After preaching three times on Lord's-day, March 15th, 1849, he has this interesting note—"I have felt blessed in preaching to-day. Blessed be God. I rejoice in hope of his glory. I wish I could long to depart and to be with Christ. My judgment says—Do so; well you may. My feelings say—I hope it is

not yet God's time. Mary Yule, my servant, was received to-day, unanimously, as a person worthy of baptism and membership."

The church at Stirling being desirous that Mr Blair should now become their pastor, and he having accepted their invitation, they held a prayer meeting on the evening of Lord's-day, May 27th, to recognize the union. Five of the brethren engaged in prayer. Mr Blair says, "I thank God for this meeting. The spirit of it was excellent. The talents displayed very gratifying to me. I desire to renew my personal covenant with my God and Saviour on this occasion. I am resolved through grace to be his devoted servant to the end of this life, and then, in a better state, to all eternity. May the Lord accept of me, a poor sinner, most unworthy, through my blessed and most worthy Saviour, and make use of me to his glory. O may he give testimony to the word of his grace by me, and save many in this town and neighbourhood through means of my poor efforts, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God and not of man. My invaluable motto is still Eph. iii. 8.—James Blair."

"1850, *April 29th, Monday.*—Visited William Thomson, farmer, Black Grange, who is 80 years of age; was quite intimate with my grandfather's family, (Moncrieff of Alloa,) and knew my mother well. He saw the doctor when on his death-bed of fever, caught when visiting in Tullibody. He said

to William, This is a dark park we are going through, but I have got a Scripture to trust to. *Tuesday, 30th.*—Visited Uncle Stark, saw him for a few minutes, enjoyed his blessing. Kindly mentioned the paper he had requested about Ragged schools, and remarked that he was very glad to see the good advices I had given them. On my saying, Shall I have your blessing, dear uncle ; he replied, O I wish you may be much blessed. I said, I trusted the Lord would be with him and greatly bless him, and then bade him farewell, and kissed his hand. I feel much at parting with him. He is the last of his generation ; the only remaining link connecting my dear mother's generation with that of which I form a part. The Lord may be pleased to spare him a little longer. I have no doubts of his going away to glory, come the moment when it may. He said, 'My times are in thy hand.' His daughter Elizabeth says he is altogether calm and resigned."

"*May, Thursday, 23d.*—Left in a gig with my dear wife, and John on horseback, for Aberfoyle, by Gargunock, Ladyland's Inn, Loch Monteith, &c. Arrived at Aberfoyle Inn about half-past two. Hired their droskey for Loch Ard. Went as far as Mr Dick's mansion. Mr D. is tacksman of the shooting and fishing. Saw Sheridan Knowles sitting with Mr Dick before the house. Got back to the inn, and had tea. When ready to start home I was sent for, and found that Iris and his mother had been scheming to

stay all night and go to Loch Conn. I consented, and hired the droskey and went on to Loch Conn. Oh such roads! We left before six, went eight miles, and got home at half-past eight. At Mr Dick's, Mr S. came to the margin of the grounds and talked to us. He said, 'We should have very bad roads. Don't let me detain you.' We really had very bad roads, not at all for invalids. The scenery was very sublime. Much of nature's wildest grandeur. The setting sun rendered the mountain and lake scenery the more sublime. On the way back Mr K. was on the road with a fishing rod in his hand. We had some talk about the works of God, and God in his works. We soon after reached the spot for the echo. We waited twenty minutes and enjoyed it. It is delightful. It is vulgarly called Rob Roy's answers to your questions. The echo is the most perfect I ever heard. We tried again a few yards farther on, and found that the echo was distinctly double. Short sentences, or rather single words, tell best. We slept at Aberfoyle, Bailie Nicol Jarvie's Inn. We left for Callander at ten. At Port Monteith we got the boatman after I rode back fully a mile for him, and saw the island, and examined the ruins of the priory, &c."

From some cause or other, matters became uncomfortable at Stirling; and the church at Dundee, which had before enjoyed the benefit of his labours, while the Union's evangelist, invited him to come and settle among them.

“Lord’s-day, 26th May.—Desired the deacon to inform the church of my invitation to Dundee, and my thinking seriously of accepting.”

“Thursday, 30th.—Larbert Inn. John vi. 27. Attended Dr Stark’s funeral. My only remaining uncle-in-law is gone; the last of his generation. His death has been blessed. May mine be so, through my blessed Saviour.”

“August, Lord’s-day, 4th.—Farewell day to Stirling church. May my God have mercy upon them, and bless them.”

The following Lord’s-day he began his labours in Seagate chapel, Dundee, preaching in the forenoon from the apostle’s words to the Thessalonians, “Brethren, pray for us,” and in the afternoon, “In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.” On the Lord’s-day evening, 25th, a prayer meeting was held by the church to commend him to God, and to receive him as their pastor. “A most agreeable, precious meeting. I never had a more hearty welcome than at conclusion. All seemed to vie in manifestations of good feeling. The prayers whispered by many, whilst they shook and pressed my hand, were interesting in the extreme. May God bless the people, and give me grace to be his instrument in the doing of it. Amen.”

“September, Friday, 6th.—My son Thomas visited us this morning.”

“Thursday, 19th.—My birth-day. I am now fifty-

three. God has spared me beyond the age of many of my fathers. O that my life may be spent to its latest breath in the service of my heavenly Father. Alas! that so little of the past has been devoted to his glory. Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that I have ever had any desire for his glory. It is all of grace. My Saviour and my God. Thou great God, my Saviour, keep me, I beseech thee, by thine Almighty power, through faith unto salvation. Thou hast given me a dearly beloved and lovely wife. I bless thee for her. I was unworthy of such great goodness from thee; but it was thy will to show in my case that the Saviour's words were true—'If any man will forsake houses, lands, wife, or children for my sake, he shall receive an hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come, life everlasting.' Left the church at Dunfermline, when some would have said, I am getting advanced in life; I may not get another situation; my old age may be penury, &c. I left wife and children to advance the cause; and although I thought little of these matters at the time, I cannot help taking a retrospective view, and blessing thee for all the way in which thou hast led me. I have always felt that thou wouldst provide for me. I have not been disappointed. I had resolved to renew my covenant with my God and Saviour, on this my birthday, in my study, but having been in some way kept from it till on horseback, on my way to Invergowrie,

whilst riding out on the Perth road, I solemnly gave myself over to my God, beseeching him to accept of me as his, and to use me for his glory. I felt peculiarly what condescension it was in God to accept of so much worthlessness, and make us in any way worthy through Christ Jesus. I do trust, my God, even my blessed Saviour, will make use of me and my dear Louisa to advance his cause, and save poor sinners, and do good to his church in this place. To him shall be all glory."

In Dundee, Mr Blair, notwithstanding the easy worldly circumstances in which he was now placed, pursued his labours as pastor and preacher, as zealously and laboriously as ever. To give extracts from all the notes which he kept recording his weekly preaching, and expressing his joy in his work, and his delight in the additions made to the church, and especially when they were his own children in the faith, is unnecessary. A sample or two may suffice.

"1851, *January, Tuesday, 28th.*—Bible class, Eccl. v. 2-7; 31 present. I am exceedingly happy with this dear class. Mrs B. was busy in the kitchen with 14 youths when I left for my class. Thanks be to God for such means of doing good." On the occasion of immersing two who had been brought to the Lord through his preaching, he says, "*Feb., Lord's-day, 16th.*—Now, my God and Saviour, I bless thee for real results already from the discourses on my Saviour's beautiful story of the prodigal, and I humbly beg

for many more. To thee be all the glory, as it is altogether due. I am, alas! a sinful man, O God.”

In the autumn of this year we find him in his journal making frequent allusion to the beginning of the complaint, which seems eventually to have been the cause of his death. “*Lord’s-day, Oct. 26th.*—Sorely pained in digestion to-day, which has afflicted me for a number of weeks. May I be enabled to submit and improve. ‘Thy will be done.’ I need correction.” “*Nov. 2d.*—Continue very unwell. Sorely chastised, but I trust not quite unblessed. Lord teach me to improve and submit. Do thou also, in thy mercy, forgive and deliver. Whole weeks bad with pains in stomach. Mrs B. sent in Dr Gibson, who forbids preaching.” Yet for all this we do not find him slackening in his preaching. He loved it too much to be easily persuaded to give up. Yes, he says, “O the privilege to be enabled to direct sinners to the Saviour!”

The year 1851 he closes in these devout and humble strains—“Through the grace, mercy, and long-suffering of my God, I have reached the last evening of another year, and nearly its last minute, being 11.20 p.m. I confess many failures and sins during the year, O my God! and I entreat forgiveness, for the sake of Jesus, my Saviour. I thank thee for a multitude of mercies. I entreat much grace, mercy, and peace, for the ensuing year, if thou art pleased to spare me. Thou hast graciously made me to suffer

bodily pain. O grant me thy rich and effectual blessing thereupon. Thou hast given me severe trials in the church. O Lord, overrule them for thy glory, and her future prosperity, and my best interests! Thou hast spared my beloved wife, and even given her much better health. For these mercies, I do heartily thank and praise thee. For all thy mercies to my children I do thank thee. Also, for thy kindness to my servants. I entreat thy favour to my household for the time coming. I commend to thee all I am, and all I possess. I beseech thee to guide me in the rule and management of all. I beg thy favour to the church, and thy wisdom and strength to manage, and feed, and guide her to thy glory, and Zion's welfare."

In the same spirit he begins the new year:—
"1852, *January, Thursday, 1st.*—Lecture to-day at 12, instead of 8 in the evening; addressed from Ps. cxix. 84, 'How many are the days of thy servant?' This day, my God and Father, I again take thee for my God, and Father, and friend, and portion, and Lord. O be thou ever my God and my guide. O keep me from sin of every sort, in thought, word, and deed. O make me a good under shepherd. O give me many souls for my hire. May my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ever be precious to me, even all my salvation, and all my desire. May the Comforter, my blessed Sanctifier, ever dwell in me richly, and work in me all the fruits of the Spirit. Do thou, a

three in one God, bless my dear wife and family, and manage all my family and all my church concerns, and to thee be glory for ever. Amen.—James Blair.”

In the spring of the year, we find him noting the return of his old complaint ; so that, between this and the uncomfortable state of the church, he saw it his duty to resign the pastorate, and accordingly gave in his resignation on Lord's-day, March 18th. The church considered of it in the afternoon. On Monday, he says, “Mr Low and Mr Brown, deacons, called and gave me minutes of meeting, purporting that the church sympathized with me, but did not accept of my resignation ; agreed I should go from home for a little for health's sake, and see if I was better in a month or so. I said I would think of it, and felt the kindness of the church in the course they had taken.” Ten days after, he set out from home to recruit, visiting the Bridge of Allan, Stirling, and Rothesay, for six weeks. Returning, June 18th, he says,—“By the good hand of God upon us, I am much better in health, and my Louisa and I, and my boy, have been preserved and brought home in safety and peace. But we have found poor Harriet unwell.” After this, he, for some time, continued to preach once on Lord's-days to his church in Seagate.

In his memorandum of his youngest son leaving for Australia, we have a touching picture of his fatherly heart—“*July 14th, Wednesday.*—Saw my dear son, John, on board of the London steamer, *Perth*,

setting out for Australia, to sail from London, on the 20th, by the *Dinapore*. James (his eldest surviving son) sailed by the *Cassipore*, W. Lindsay, same owner. I wept and prayed over John, at half-past five morning, when he was asleep, and kissed and hugged him dearly. It has deeply affected my heart ; but I have commended him to God most sincerely, and trust he will care for him. At a quarter to twelve, when leaving, I took him to the study, caused him to kneel, and knelt beside him, and earnestly prayed for him, and commended him to God and to the word of his grace. My God care for him ! Australia is thy earth as well as Scotland. I trust him wholly to thee.”

In August, September, and October, we find Mr Blair spending about eight weeks in and around Scarborough, Malton, and Hunmanby, and, as usual, preaching wherever he could find an open door. At Malton, the people of the Baptist church “earnestly solicited him to be their minister.”

Returning home to Dundee about the middle of October, we find him still complaining “very unwell,” yet preaching every now and then. The church at Dundee had invited Mr Robert Menzies to succeed Mr Blair ; and, on the 24th, he says—“Very unwell. Preached in the afternoon for Mr Menzies, in Seagate, and presided at the ordinance.”

Although thus relieved from pastoral duties, and now and then very ill, yet such was his love for his

Master's work, that we find him preaching almost every Lord's-day ; sometimes at Mr Reston's, or Mr Johnstone's, or Mr Borwick's, or to his former charge in Seagate, or at the jail, or Forfar, and many other places. Indeed, Mr Blair was a man who could not be idle ; he must be preaching somewhere or other the unsearchable riches of Christ.

At length, Mrs Blair having desired to change their abode to the healthy and beautiful locality of the Bridge of Allan, and the time drawing nigh for them to leave Dundee, their friends, both of the Seagate church and of the town, resolved to honour them on their departure. Accordingly, on the 22d of March, 1853, the church held a soiree, and presented to them a token of their high esteem. In his own memorandum, Mr Blair thus notes it—" *Tuesday, 22d.*—Soiree in Lamb's Saloon Temperance Hotel, treated by Seagate church, when Mrs Blair and myself were presented with a handsome tea set, &c. A most kind meeting." It is pleasing also to notice that on the following Lord's-day he preached twice to the church. On Wednesday, in the next week, the friends of other congregations held another soiree in the same place, presided over by the Provost Thoms, when besides, two bailies and the Dean of Guild, and eight ministers, seven U.P. and one Free church, were present. On this occasion, a copy of Bagster's Comprehensive Bible was presented to Mr Blair, with this inscription, drawn up by Mr

Gilfillan—"Presented to the Rev. James Blair, as a farewell token of the esteem, affection and gratitude entertained for his public spirit, catholic principles, and obliging disposition, by a number of ministers and other friends, who warmly appreciated his society and good offices, and who as sincerely regret the departure of one who was an able minister of the New Testament, a cordial friend, a kind neighbour, and always ready to co-operate in every useful and Christian undertaking." The Provost stated that Mr Blair, since coming to Dundee, had laboured ardently for the good of the community, had been distinguished for public spirit, and zeal for the best interests of humanity; and since demitting his pastoral charge on account of his ill health, he had appeared in the evangelical Protestant pulpits of Dundee with much acceptance, and had thus become, as it were, an embodiment and impersonation of that spirit of Christian union which all so much desired to see, but which no one had the courage to attempt to establish. Members and ministers of the Establishment, of the Free church, of the United Presbyterians, Independent and Baptist bodies, had met that evening to acknowledge this. And he trusted that the moral effect of such a meeting would tend to the advancement of their common Christianity. He could also with pleasure dilate on Mrs Blair's enlarged benevolence, her philanthropic exertions in the cause of slavery, and her ever ready hand to help

in every good work. He, in conclusion, wished Mr and Mrs Blair every blessing when they had exchanged the banks of the Tay, for the sunny slopes of the Ochils.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS RESIDENCE AT THE BRIDGE OF ALLAN—1853—1859.

AT length, in May, 1853, Mr Blair took up his abode in his new house at Viewfield, Bridge of Allan, where, for the last six years of his life, he and his beloved partner lived in comparative retirement while he, as ever, delighted in proclaiming in all the region round about the glad tidings of mercy to dying men. He thus records his settlement:—"On *31st May*, entered our own house, Viewfield. May our use of it be overruled for God's glory and our eternal good. I thank the Lord for the use of it. Amen." Preaching on the following Lord's-day at Stirling among his old friends, he says, "Numbers welcomed me. I was much gratified with the reception I got."

After this, we find from his journal that he preached generally twice every Lord's-day in almost all the towns and villages, and most of the churches round about, and even at great distances from home. He also very often preached to his old friends in the

Baptist church, Stirling, now under the pastorate of Mr Culross. It was as much as ever his joy to be an evangelist, although in a very different capacity, and with very different feelings from those of his earlier days. Not having the responsibility of any pastoral charge, and being able to enjoy all the freedom and independence of a retired country gentleman, he was peculiarly happy and at home in the position which he now occupied. Yet, much as he now delighted in going every where preaching the word, and full of exuberant joy as he now experienced, his cup, which was truly running over, was not one of unmingled sweets. Every now and then his constitutional complaint occasioned him great pain and suffering, to which in his journal he frequently alludes. Thus mingled is the brightest sunshine and the sweetest portion of this vale of life.

September 13th, Tuesday.—He says, “I took tea with Mr and Mrs Gilfillan (of Stirling). Was very ill on coming home. Lay down and committed myself to Jesus in confidence of prayer. Allowed much nearness and realization. Felt he was attending to me, and would manage my disorder. Felt I could suffer anything, and live or die with his direct management. Dear Saviour, forgive me all iniquity, and give me grace never to offend thee more. Thou art God and not mere man, or I could experience nothing but indignation. ‘My Lord and my God.’
Wednesday, 14th.—Much better, but very poorly.

Still glad at last night's interview with my beloved Redeemer. Confined all day."

"*Monday, 19th.*—My fifty-sixth year finished, and fifty-seventh begun. Lord forgive all the numberless sins and iniquities of the past year, and help me to live to thee much more decidedly and closely for all my time to come. I would renew my covenant with thee, O my God and Saviour. I would be wholly thine. I owe thee everything. O take possession of my whole heart, for thou art my God, my Saviour, my portion and my all. Dwell in my heart thou blessed Saviour, my beloved and my friend. O save me from temptation, from everything offensive to thee. Bless my beloved wife. Save all my dear children. O let me hear soon of the conversion of all my sons. I trust I shall have opportunities of praising thee, a three in one Jehovah, for ever and ever. Amen."

Amidst occasional allusions to painful attacks of his old complaint, we find him as busy as ever, preaching and attending meetings on Peace and Slavery—literally "going about doing good."

The opening of the year 1854 is noted by him with his wonted renewal of consecration to God. "*Lord's-day, January 1st.*—Humiliation, thanksgiving and praise exceedingly become me this morning. Spared to another year, and another Lord's-day. Yet in the land of the living, and in the place of hope, having good hope instead of despair. Still enabled to look

to Christ, and to feel that he is altogether lovely ; all my salvation and all my desire. Forgive, O my God, for Jesus' sake, all the sins of my past life, and of the closed year. Give me grace, I beseech thee, to live more decidedly to thee this year, and to avoid all the sins of the past year. I thank thee also for sparing my dear Louisa. Do thou bless her more and more abundantly, for Christ's sake. I thank thee for sparing my dear children. I earnestly pray thee to convert all my sons this year. Bless very richly my dear daughters. I commit my household and all my concerns to thee. Be thou my God, my portion, and my guide for ever. Amen."

As an example of the varied manner in which Mr Blair sought to do good, with pleasure we note the following. "*January 16th.*—Soiree, Bridge of Allan Reading room ; addressed youth on tobacco, a kiss for a blow, and temperance ; on all which told them anecdotes for illustration. *February 3d.*—Menstrae at one o'clock, in Mrs Scotland's ; Rom. iii. 25 ; 10 present. Evening, at seven o'clock in my study, 19 present. Began a meeting in my own house at the suggestion of Mrs Symington. May God bless."

On a visit to Dundee, in the month of March, we find him at the grave of the first Mrs Blair, which he touchingly relates in a letter to his youngest daughter. "*Dundee, March 9th, 1854.*—I visited the cemetery yesterday alone, when mother was engaged about the Anti-slavery meeting. She and I

visited it again to-day. The resting place of your dear mother is beautiful. The two china arbor vitæ at the sides of the stones are very prosperous, and the beautiful yellow and white crocuses, and blue hepatica reminded me of the flourishing state of her immortal spirit. We left, talking of our own decease, and of the scriptures we should like on our gravestones. Mother wants John iii. 16; and I said, I wanted Ephes. iii. 8, and 1 Tim. i. 15, united. May the Lord make us both ready to die, and willing to go at the intimation of his good pleasure."

About six weeks—from April 20 to June 5—Mr and Mrs Blair spent among their friends, visiting various parts of England, where we find him, as usual, preaching wherever a door was opened to him. And on his return, the same around his home.

"*Tuesday, 19th Sept.*—My fifty-seventh birth-day. The Lord has spared me hitherto. I am still enjoying much vigour, and enabled to testify to, and urge the word of God on my fellow-sinners. I am most unworthy of such honour. All is of sovereign, rich, free grace. O for grace to spend the remainder of my days altogether to the praise of my God and Saviour! Fit me, O my God, for bearing and performing all thy will. Permit me to live and die in thy service; and give me to enjoy and serve thee for ever in heaven. Convert, I beseech thee, my sons. Bless and keep my daughters. I bless thee for my dear wife. Keep her as the apple of thine eye. Let my household be to thy praise. Amen."

On his next birth-day, we find him among the lakes of Cumberland, where he spent the greater part of September, 1855. "*Monday, 3d.*—Going off at twelve o'clock to Cumberland lakes. May the Lord keep and guide my dear Louisa and myself. I am sure he knows best, and will do the best for us. I commit myself and all mine to him." At Keswick and Bowness, he met with the Plymouth brethren on Lord's-days, and both heard and preached, and communed with them. Here, also, he had an attack of his trouble. "Have been exceedingly bad with my stomach. The 19th was my 58th birth-day. May all my afflictions and pains, with all the kind dealings of my heavenly Father, be sanctified to his glory in my final salvation. Help me, O Lord Jesus, to renew my covenant effectually. Amen."

Of the year 1856, we find nothing particular to note, but that, as ever, he was preaching and traveling both in Scotland and England, and having repeated attacks of his constitutional complaint.

At the beginning of 1857, he says, "House meetings in Doune, Dunblane, and Menstrae, during the month. Lord forgive my sins, and bless thine own word. I do thank thee for allowing me to preach the glorious gospel of the blessed God another year." After spending the year, as usual, in preaching everywhere, he says, at the close, "My own God and Saviour hath, in his great mercy and abundant long-suffering, brought me again to the end of another

year. O may he give me to feel his goodness in bearing and forgiving. O that he may bestow grace and strength for his service in time to come! I am unworthy of the least of all thy mercies, O Lord. Whatever I enjoy it is of great grace. Help me to live to the glory of thy grace. Deliver and save me, and use me, O my God! I am less than the least of all thy saints, O Lord; yet thou art giving ability and opportunity for thy service in the ministry. O Lord, I record my thanks for bodily and mental powers for thy service. I bow to thee about my health. Fit me more than ever to serve thee effectively. O Lord, give the blessing. May thy holy Spirit work by thy poor servant; and unto thee be all the glory, by my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

On his next birth-day, Sept. 19, 1858, he was at Scarborough, where he was often wont to visit with his dear wife. On this day he has the following thanksgiving memorial—" *Lord's-day, 19th*, at 10.30, heard Dr Evans on Job xxxv. 10, 'None saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?' 1.30—This is my birth-day, being sixty-one years. God has preserved me hitherto. He hath been very long-suffering and gracious. I desire to be wholly his. Lord, say to my soul, Thou art mine. Let me indeed have songs in the night, and also through an everlasting day, from thee. Save me and mine, O my God and Saviour, to the praise of the glory of thy

grace for ever and ever. Amen. At 5 o'clock, on the sands, where Dr Evans preached from Heb. xii. 4, 'Striving against sin.' I followed, from 1 Tim. i. 15, 'This is a faithful saying.' *Wednesday, 22d.*—Travelled home; awfully tried with pain. The Lord brought me and my dear one safe home."

Mr Blair's illness was now becoming more and more serious. In his journal he is continually alluding to it, because of the interruption which it was now occasioning to his much loved work. For example—" *Dec., Lord's-day, 19th.*—Free Church, Bridge of Allan, 1 Chron. iv. 9, 10, Jabez. Exceedingly unwell. Mr F. went for me to Dollar, to Mr Hill's. Thanks to my God for bearing me through. My dear Louisa uncommonly kind and attentive to me in this illness. *Lord's-day, 26th.*—Unwell. Had to give up Mr Macleod's, Free Church, Alloa. The Lord's hand is upon me. May I have grace to improve my afflictions."

The beginning of his last new year, 1859, he thus records—" *Saturday, January 1st.*—May my God have mercy on me this year, and help me to devote my whole self anew to him this year. I am rather better. Was able to go to tea in the Poores' house, given by my dear Louisa to the inmates. Gave addresses and prayers. They were very happy and grateful. The Lord bless them. Visited the lunatics. Much affected with their state. Visited also the hospital."

After this he preached only twice or thrice. The last time, Feb. 27th, was at the Bridge of Allan U. P. Church, from Phil. iii. 8-14. He says, "Had to call to the precentor to get me a tumbler of water. Got Mr Jeffrey, of Glasgow, to take the evening."

The last entry in his journal is just about five weeks before the closing scene. "*March 3d, Thursday.*—Feeling better of severe cold in the chest. Intend going to Aberdeen Hydropathic establishment, Lochhead, to-morrow, with my dear Louisa, who is, I thank God, improving under the water cure." Thus closed his pulpit labours, and his journal records, in both of which he had had much enjoyment for many years. Thus every minister of Jesus Christ must handle his last pen, and preach his last sermon.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.—1859.

FROM Mr Blair's journal, and from the testimony of his bereaved family, it is evident that his health had been far from satisfactory for years; and it seems certain that the disease which carried him off at last had been making sure progress all the while. His dear wife says, that "latterly he had had some severe attacks of dyspepsia, which threatened his life, and from the beginning of the new year, his health failed

perceptibly every week. Having a great fancy for the water treatment, which is usually very efficacious in stomach complaints, he was induced to go to Aberdeen to be under Dr Monro. As a change was every way desirable, he went in excellent spirits, expecting that the treatment which he had pursued previously at home would restore him. His complaint, however, was of such a nature, and had got such a hold of his frame, that it baffled all the means employed. Dr Pirie, Aberdeen, Professor of Anatomy, pronounced it cancer of the stomach. About four weeks before death, he had a most fearful attack of vomiting. This, it was hoped, would be followed by returning health; but the Allwise had otherwise decreed. He was to have done with earth, and be taken to the heavenly mansions." His youngest daughter says, "The night on which he was seized with the attack which commenced his last illness, he had been reclining on his couch, talking very cheerfully. Palpitation came on, and a strange feeling in his head, which he described as dreadful, such as he had never had before. He rose to leave the room, but when he reached the stair, calling on his dear wife, who was following him, after collecting his books, &c. When she got to him, she found him lying quite insensible. Being carried into the drawing room and laid on the floor, he struggled to get up, and vomited blood and dark matter. When able to speak, he repeated those lines—

‘For strangers into life we come,
And dying is but going home.’

When raised up, he said, ‘I am a dying man,’ and asked for some hymns to be repeated. After a time he was able to be carried up stairs on a couch. The doctor did not think he would survive that night; but he was spared for nearly four weeks more. During his illness, his chief concern seemed to be, how this attack, if he was spared to recover, would affect his preaching; a question which he put to the doctor. He did not seem to think death so near, as he spoke of getting home in a week or so. But, notwithstanding all the means employed, he could receive no nourishment. Thursday before his death he seemed better than usual, and, for the first time since the attack, he fed himself. But that evening, he was seized with spasms, causing the most intense agony, for about two hours. His cries were heard over the whole house. Several times in his agony he cried to God to pity him and take him in mercy to himself. Prompt measures were taken to allay the pain, and at last he got relief; but that season of agony had wrought a great change.” His youngest daughter having again returned on Friday to see him, says, “she asked him how he felt in the prospect of death. He said, ‘They will tell you; I am not able.’ On being left alone with him, he said, ‘I’ll be away in a few hours now, Elizabeth.’ He then tried to tell me something connected with his worldly affairs, but

fearing that he had not strength, from his difficulty of speaking, I said, 'Oh never mind that, father.' In a short time after, I said, 'Have you no message for me to give to the rest?' After being asked twice, he said, with great difficulty, 'I just wish you all to meet me in glory.' Being fatigued with my journey, I went to bed about ten o'clock, thinking that he would still survive some days. But I could not sleep, it was so distressing to hear him in constant restlessness. He suffered a great deal all night. Several times he lifted up his hands, and stretching them out, and looking up, said, 'Glory, glory; the innumerable company.' As the nurse thought he might live a day or two, if he took no worse turn, I again left the room about five o'clock, but was not long away when I was told that my father was asking for me. I hurried into the room, but he did not seem worse. About half-past six the doctor came in, and said, 'How are you this morning, Mr Blair?' He looked at him, and replied, 'I am going home, doctor; I am going to glory.' Once he turned round to his dear wife and me, and said, 'Weep not for me.' I said, 'No, dear father, but for ourselves, for you are going home.' He replied, 'Aye.' He was perfectly sensible to the last, and seemed conscious of every change which passed within. Once he said, 'I am the man who have seen affliction.' We tried to repeat some appropriate scriptures. Sometimes he began one, and one of us finished it. Such as,

‘Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil.’ ‘I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.’ Once, when difficulty of breathing came on, he said, ‘There is the death rattle.’ He tried to grasp something, and said ‘O I cannot feel now,’ and in a broken voice, ‘I cannot speak now.’ In a minute or two, on his wife’s asking if he had any pain now, he said, ‘No; peace, peace.’ His hard breathing ceased. He opened his eyes which had been shut, and looking up, they seemed to increase to an unnatural size, and beamed with such unearthly lustre that we felt obliged to withdraw our gaze for a moment. It seemed as if his whole soul were beaming in his eyes.” His beloved wife herself says, “The splendour of his dying eye I shall never forget. It glistened with the radiance of heaven. I fully believe that, like Stephen, he saw the heavens opened, and Jesus sitting at the right hand of God. Pollok’s lines are beautifully descriptive of the scene—

‘The angel of the covenant

Was come, and, faithful to his promise, stood
 Prepared to walk with him through death’s dark vale.
 And now his eyes grew bright, and brighter still,
 Too bright for ours to look upon, suffused
 With many tears, and closed without a cloud.
 They set as sets the morning star, which goes
 Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides,
 Obscured, among the tempests of the sky,
 But melts away into the light of heaven.’

He breathed his last as calmly and peacefully as a child going to sleep on the bosom of its mother.”

This was Saturday, April 9, 1859, at half-past seven in the morning. The following week Mr Blair's remains were conveyed to Dundee, where, in the western cemetery, he was interred beside his first wife.

To these memoirs, little need be added in way of summary. Mr Blair neither wrote nor printed much. The only pieces known to us are, 'A lecture on the glory and spiritual nature of the kingdom of Christ,' printed at Dunfermline, 1839; also, "a Course of five lectures on Christian baptism," pp. 60, 12mo, Dunfermline, 1841—a very excellent compend of the baptismal question, well worthy of being reprinted; also, two or three small tracts which he printed at Dundee, containing appeals to the careless.

Of Mr Blair's character the above memoir is ample testimony. A man's life is his character. At the same time, a few particulars may not be uninteresting.

His kindness and liberality to the poor were very great; not merely when he was in affluence, but when struggling with a small income and a large family. His youngest daughter says, "Many people think that ministers turn their attention to the ministry for the sake of gain, but it was not so with my father. I have often heard my mother say that it made a great change for the worse in their circumstances. One extraordinary feature in his character was generosity. Even when he had so little that it does not appear possible to keep a family on it, and keep up the respectable appearance which a minister requires

to do, yet he was constantly ministering to the wants of others. Once in Saltcoats, on my mother's receiving a new-year's present from a lady, a member of the church, my father said, 'Now, my dear, there are many of our members never tasting anything of this kind,' on which he took and divided it into so many parts, and without leaving almost any for his own family, sent it to different poor ones of his flock. Again, between the year 1840 and 1843, he received, from a kind friend abroad, a large sum of money, which was intended for his own use, with this addition, that if he knew of any deserving person who was in want, he might give part of it away. However, my father did not spend one farthing of it on his family or himself, but relieved the needy with it, and this at a time when he had only £70 a year. I often think that he received the reward of his constant liberality even in this world." The first Mrs Blair used to say that he would tell her he could not stand the poverty he met with without supplying their wants as far as he could. The result was, he would often give what his family should have got.

Latterly he was enabled to benefit the poor in another way equally important. He became a devoted homeopathist, and acquired considerable medical skill. He had set times for the distribution of medicine in different towns and villages, such as Stirling, Doune, Dunblane, and Tillicoultry. One of his patients in this last town had obtained a cure so remarkable

that he sent a letter regarding it to the Clackmannanshire Advertiser, in which he says, "Having been afflicted above 20 years with stomach complaint, and tried all doctors I fell in with in all parts of the country, and paid every attention to walk up to their instructions, I could find no relief, till I went to Mr Blair, Bridge of Allan. Now I have a much better stomach and much better health than ever I expected to have. When I went to Mr Blair first, had I been worth a hundred pounds, I would have given them with a smile to any one who would have cured me. The poor who are not able to pay anything are as kindly treated as the rich and noble."

His anxiety for the salvation of his children was very great, and this he manifested both in prayer and conversation. His eldest daughter says, "that when a child she used to wonder what he did so often on his knees." It is pleasing to notice him following the example of his departed mother, whom he lost when a child of five years. His youngest daughter says, "My earliest recollection of him is that in his study he used to take my youngest brother and myself, and place us, one at each side of his arm chair, himself in the middle, and pray over us and for us, and each of the family. I remember being sorry when we grew too big to get our heads under the arms of his chair. He was a very tender-hearted, affectionate father, but at the same time did not fail to punish very severely any fault in us." Alluding

to his dying message to his children, "I just wish you all to meet me in glory," she says, "He did not leave it to the last to endeavour to bring his children to the Saviour. He never engaged in prayer at the family altar without mentioning the children, and he never wrote to any of us without urging us to repent and cleave to the Saviour."

Enthusiasm in preaching was clearly his ruling passion, from the earliest period of his ministry to his latest days. Of his early days his eldest daughter says, that "her father's ministrations were not confined to the pulpit, or to public preaching on the streets; but wherever he met with his fellow-creatures, in the trains, or steamers, or by the wayside, he was always ready to exhort them to flee from the wrath to come. Many a time in Ayr he set forth, taking me with him, with Bible in hand, and commenced to give out a psalm, and sing, with no audience but the stones, till one after another came and listened with deep attention." Of his later days, when living in happy independence, his youngest daughter bears the like pleasing testimony. She says, "He seemed to fear much that this would draw his mind from his duties. Again and again has he put the question to me, 'Elizabeth, do you think I preach as faithfully and earnestly as I used to do?' I could only reply in the affirmative. Often have I driven with him a few miles into the country, and on coming to a village he would say, 'Now you take this side, and I will

take the other, and tell the people to meet me in this place in half an hour or so.' It might be at a bridge, or in a cottage. By this means he generally got up a very good meeting, though at mid-day, when most of the people were out working, and then he would give a short address. In every place he was made welcome, and invited back. He seemed always peculiarly happy after being so engaged. I have often heard him say, he did not care for life, but to do his Master's work."

"They cannot die whose spirits here
 Were one, with Christ their living head.
 They cannot die,
 Though the time-wasted sepulchre
 In which their vestiges are laid,
 Crumbled in dust may lie.

They are not dead whose ashes fill
 That melancholy house of clay.
 They are not dead—
 They live in brighter glory still
 Than ever cheered their heavenly way,
 Full beaming round their head."

BOWRING.

CHAPTER X.

REMINISCENCES OF MR BLAIR, BY MR CULROSS OF STIRLING.

I AM sorry I cannot supply any reminiscences of Mr Blair that would likely prove interesting ; nor can I attempt an estimate of his character. The most that I can do, is to name some of the things I saw in him with my own eyes, which seem to me the worthiest of record. In the even tenor of his way during his latter years, when alone I knew him, there was not much to surprise. A very quiet course it was, of constant labours and kind deeds. The poor, the sick, those that were out of the way, all shared his solicitude. Many, I daresay, if placed in similar circumstances, having abundance of this world's good, and living in a beautiful neighbourhood, would have sought ease and personal enjoyment. It was not so with Mr Blair ; he was a voluntary and earnest worker in his Master's service to the last ; in labours as abundant almost as if he had been the settled pastor of a church ; and he seemed to carry the words in his heart : " Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Whatever cause appeared to him to be for the honour of God and the temporal or spiritual good of his fellow-men, he was ready, if need were, to give his personal service to ; he " coveted," I have heard him say more than once, " to walk after him who went about

doing good." Believing that God had called him by his grace to labour in the kingdom of his Son, he did not loiter or seek his ease. Down almost to the close of his life he was engaged, in various labours, to the utmost of his strength, and sometimes even beyond it. The lengthening shadows that fell on his path, with failing vigour and almost constant suffering, brought no gloom over his mind. He saw death approaching, and at no great distance, and resolved that, through God's grace, it should find him at his post.

It seemed to me that the character of an Evangelist was his chiefest admiration; and I believe that in his closing years he aimed at being himself practically one, carrying in the glad tidings wherever he found an open door. I thought he had much of the spirit, requisite in the humblest village pastor, as well as in the man whose work is among the openly and evidently ungodly, expressed in that cluster of parables in Luke, ch. xv., declaring the seeking and the receiving love of God. The world was in his eyes a perishing world, and its help in God only. The leading aim of his preaching was the salvation of sinners. There was no text from which he preached more frequently than that unutterably touching story of the Prodigal. The audience to whom for the most part he addressed himself were the thoughtless. I have observed over and over again, on the occasions when I have been a listener to him, that he seemed aware almost exclusively

of their presence, and that the sermon, whatever the text might be, was moulded accordingly. I recollect, the last time I heard him preach, the earnestness, almost vehemence, with which he expostulated with those of his hearers who had long listened to the gospel without obeying it, and who were making the very mercy of God a pillow on which their impenitence might sleep. I do not remember his ever making any enquiry of me to elicit whether he had given satisfaction to his audience. I have heard him thanked very cordially for his excellent sermon, but he never showed special pleasure at this; while, to be told that any of his hearers had been aroused, or guided, or had received spiritual benefit, seemed to give him the greatest delight. He used to say that his most useful sermons were those which had been most prayerfully prepared, and delivered under a sense of personal insufficiency and worthlessness.

He had none of the intellectual arrogance which leads some men to build each his little Babel, whose top should reach unto heaven; and the "graceless intellectualism" which hides the cross from the eyes of perishing sinners, and puts the thoughts of man in the place of the thoughts of God, was his special abhorrence. He stuck to the old ways; the prominent points of his theology being "man's ruin by sin, redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the holy Spirit." The cross was kept in the forefront, and it might very well have been his motto

as a Christian soldier, "*In this conquer.*" He held it to be his business, as truly as it was that of the apostle Paul, to know nothing among men, save Jesus Christ and him crucified; he believed *that* to be the subject, however common-place or old-fashioned it might be deemed, which should form the staple of the Christian preacher's ministrations, and which is the power of God unto salvation; and judged that in unfolding, in illustrating, in commending, in applying it, there is room and scope for all the noblest powers with which the loftiest human mind has been endowed. It was not the enforcing of morality, or the comforting of mourners, or the guiding of the perplexed, or the edifying of believers, so much as the preaching of the cross, in which he delighted, and to which his strength was given. And I am satisfied that whatever of vitality and power his ministrations had, they owed, under God, to the prominence he gave to the doctrine of the cross.

I ever found his conversation out of the pulpit in keeping with his preaching in it. It was evident, from personal intercourse, that what he said on the Sabbath day was just what he felt all the week round. No one who knew the manner of his week-day talk could suspect him of feigning, in the pulpit, an interest in the conversion of sinners, to which, out of it, he was a stranger.

One of the thoughts which, in his latter years, increasingly occupied his mind, was that of the more

practical union of Christian men of all denominations. Hence, though a very firm Baptist, rather than confine his labours to a single pulpit, he wished to spread them over his whole neighbourhood, knowing men only as Christians. He used to say, I think, wisely, that the first essential to Christian union is that you have Christian men to unite; that you cannot attain the thing by a mere fusion of societies or denominations, but by the children of God, born of the Spirit, being gathered together in mutual confidence; and consequently, that the shortest road to Christian union is increasing purity of church fellowship.

I only add, that one of the finest features of his character, as it seemed to me, was this—that he could postpone all merely personal considerations to the honour of his Master. What natural temperament would have made him strongly shrink from doing, he would do, if he thought it his duty to Christ, quietly crucifying his own feelings. I have seen enough to satisfy me that he could have let his honour be laid in the dust, if that would serve the cause of mercy, and truth, and righteousness.

MR BLAIR'S DISCOURSES.

I.—THE DOORS. JOHN x. 9.

II.—THE PRODIGAL SON. LUKE xv.

III.—THE NEW COVENANT. HEB. viii. 10-12.

THE three Discourses here printed were favourites with their author. It was his design to have published them himself, but, for some reason unknown to us, this was not done. The discourse on the Doors was blessed to the conversion of the first Mrs Blair, when he laboured in Saltcoats. He often preached it, wherever he went, and it was always valued as a faithful exposure of many personal delusions hindering people from building upon Christ. The parable of the Prodigal Son was a constant theme of discourse. He took great delight in it, as affording a wonderful picture of the sinner's condition, and of the lovingkindness of the Almighty to the poorest, most degraded penitent. He preached it in three discourses, but here it is abridged and condensed into one. A scriptural exposition of the New Covenant, such as he has given, he deemed of the greatest importance, to set Christians right on the true character of a New Testament church, and the opposition of infant baptism to the principles of the New Covenant. All the three he had preached for many years, in the course of his évangelistic labours. They afford a very fair specimen of Mr Blair's preaching, in plain, faithful, practical dealing with the souls of men.

DISCOURSE I.
THE DOORS.

PREFACE

WRITTEN BY MR BLAIR, IN 1845, WHEN HE DESIGNED TO PRINT
THIS DISCOURSE.

AT a time when the learned, the wise, and the good, are pouring their publications into the church and the world, it may be demanded, with great plausibility, what an humble individual such as I has to do in the field? A brief statement of facts, connected with this discourse, forms my apology.

More than ten years ago, when for some time I had felt a strong desire for the revival of the church and the conversion of sinners, I went to the pulpit one afternoon very moderately prepared, I thought, on the passage, "I am the door, &c.;" for I had then the burden of a numerous week-day school, as well as my Sabbath labours. I had been directed, however, to think over some simple figurative illustrations. I had not gone on far till I was taken by surprise at the deep impression which seemed to prevail over the whole congregation. To the best of my knowledge, there was not an eye unsuffused with tears. Surely the Spirit of the Lord moved on the face of the waters, and affected every heart with the truth.

The results corresponded. Shortly after, all the hearers in our little congregation, with a few special exceptions, put on the Saviour. That day, one, very

dear to the preacher, entered in by the door—confessed the Saviour that evening—and hastened to a public profession of his name.

No one will wonder, after what has been stated, that this discourse should have become very dear to me; nor that, in the missionary labours in which I have since been extensively engaged, in most of the towns in Ayrshire, and more recently in those of the west of Fife, then in the south of Scotland, and on collecting tours through England, I should have frequently used it. The consequence has been, that numbers, in different places, have profited by it. A few, to the preacher's personal knowledge, in different towns, have entered in by the door. Some have been brought from a false profession and a delusive peace, to a simple reliance on the only Saviour and his great salvation. In a number of places, it has been delivered twice to satisfy what seemed to be a general desire amongst the hearers.

With these facts before him, the preacher has sometimes thought that what hath been often blessed when spoken, might be used by the holy Spirit if read. Under these impressions, he, for the first time, attempts to commit it to writing. It is hoped that no reader will attribute the effort to presumption, as if there had been no good reason from without, or apart from his own judgment, for warranting the attempt.

The author's earnest desire and prayer is, that God may be glorified by the publication of it, in the salvation of many of his own countrymen, to the particular circumstances of whom, many of the remarks and illustrations are peculiarly adapted.

THE DOORS.

JOHN X. 9.

“I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.”

WHEN our Lord used the figure of a door in this passage, it appears that he had before the eye of his mind another of his own illustrations, used on a different occasion. He seems to have been viewing the world as a great broad road leading to destruction, and all its inhabitants walking therein, without a single opening on either side by which any traveller might escape. In these dreadful circumstances, when human aid was vain, and created knowledge and power knew no alternative, he opens a passage, and stands forth as an entrance to it, on the side of the great way, by which every weary, alarmed traveller might escape the dreadful dangers of that soul-destroying road.

The first mention of this door struck the prince of the great road with terrible alarm. He cannot bear the thought of losing a single individual of those multitudes who are at present his willing servants, and whom he anxiously desires to be his slaves for ever. He feared much that, if this single opening were made, by which his people might escape from him, many might be induced to embrace it. And no wonder; for, by the mere certain anticipation of this door's existence, no small number had already rejected this prince's authority, declined his yoke, pronounced him a usurper, and had been delivered from

his power, through extraordinary communications from its great Author, who delivered them by this glorious plan before it was yet executed, because he viewed the engagement to perform as equal to the performance itself. If his interests thus suffered by the intimation of the design, he justly reasoned that it might tend to his total destruction if the design were actually executed, and the door really set up on the margin of his dominions, and seen from every part of the great way; and, especially, if means were used to attract the attention of the heedless passengers in that direction. Taking this correct view of the subject, he sets himself, in dead earnest, to subvert the design of the great Architect. His first effort was to injure the material, and render it unfit for its purpose. Foiled in this effort, and perceiving that this door would be erected in spite of him, he is dreadfully mortified and enraged. Not being easily induced to abandon any project, he determined to put forth all his artifice and low cunning in a contemptible species of deception. After much plotting and scheming, he came to the plausible determination, that he would place a number of doors on the side-paths of the great way, to which he would attach bye-paths, such as might be suitable for the object which he had in view. These doors he resolved to form so as to suit the peculiar cases of particular individuals. These bye-paths or side-ways, he resolved, should all terminate, after a few turnings and windings, either in the great way itself again, or in the same gulf in which it ended, being the grand entrance to his infernal dominions.

You wish to be made acquainted with these doors, in order that you may not be deceived by them to your ruin.

I must warn you that they are very numerous, and that I can only point out a few of the most prominent, and, especially, those by which the prince of the great road manages chiefly to deceive our neighbours and countrymen to their everlasting ruin.

First—FALSE DOORS.

1.—*The door of Mere Convictions.*

Paul says, regarding the wicked one, "We are not ignorant of his devices." No Christian, and, more particularly, no Christian minister, should be ignorant of his plans and operations. He is continually on the alert lest any of his subjects should set aside his authority, and desert his standard. This leads him to exercise the greatest watchfulness. On this account, he is a regular church-goer, and a constant attendant upon prayer-meetings. He does not know the heart as God does; but he is astonishingly sagacious in judging of its condition. He observes the countenance, he watches the eye, he attends minutely to every external manifestation. When he perceives any poor sinner taking thought, and cannot get him to desist, he turns round and becomes preacher, and says to him, "Well! it's all right. You have done well to feel serious. Your concern has placed you in a very different state from that you were in before, when you took no thought." How often do poor sinners, now-a-days, commit the old fault of our race, and believe the devil rather than God, and so remain stationary when they ought to advance, saying, "Surely all is well," when nothing is well with them. My dear hearer, how is it with you? Admit the question as from a friend, as from one

who feels a deep interest in your eternal well-being. If you find that you have rested in mere feelings about your eternal state, let the spell be broken, let the delusion vanish for ever.

2.—*The door of Good Resolutions.*

Many cannot be induced to rest in mere convictions. They feel that they must, at least, have the design to reform; and then, although they are weak, God will surely accept the will for the deed. This is a state of mind which the enemy of souls will encourage. "Well, just resolve to amend, but you will not need to be very careful about carrying it farther. Surely good resolutions themselves will not be unacceptable to him who knows the heart; and you can even appeal to himself, when you commit any evil act, that he knows how contrary it is to your intentions, and that it is surely not you, but the evil principle within you, that has perpetrated the deed. Thus many a poor deluded creature goes on resolving and sinning, and sinning and resolving, till endless ruin ensues; and then his airy dreams of acceptance for good intentions fly away like the cloud of the morning. Think, my fellow-sinner, whether this is your case. If so, cease from putting confidence in good resolutions any longer, and enter in immediately by the only true door.

3.—*The door of False Repentance.*

There are numbers who cannot be persuaded to rest in mere convictions or resolutions. They have read or heard that, "except they repent, they must all perish." Therefore, they cannot rest without this attainment. They must

grieve for their great sins, and bewail their flagrant errors. So long as this is all, the prince of the broad way has no objection that they indulge in it. Nay, his tact is to help them on. "O yes," you may hear him say, "just be very sorry for your sins, and then surely all will be well. You will not, then, be like those regardless ones who go on recklessly, and refuse all consideration. You will then be very different from what you were before." Thus Satan tempts, and thus they please themselves that their danger is over, not considering that the sorrow they speak of is no repentance at all; that it is not even godly sorrow, which, though not repentance itself, yet worketh it out. Theirs is only the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. Consider, dear hearer, whether this is the state of your religious expectations; and, if it is, immediately renounce all trust in such a false refuge, and begin to exercise that genuine repentance which will induce you to turn away from sin, from all sin, with something like instinctive abhorrence.

4.—*The door of Partial Amendment.*

Satan meets with some more difficult to satisfy than others, and adapts his proposals to their different states of mind. Many cannot be satisfied with mere concern about their state. Others cannot think it enough only to have good intentions. A third class will not be persuaded that false repentance, which consists in repenting and sinning again as often as temptations are renewed, is sufficient for a ground of confidence. Well then, whispers the arch enemy, if you will have amendment, leave off that great evil, or those gross vices which have been chiefly troubling

your conscience, and become a reformed character, and then you will surely be safe. Yes, says the sinner, I will make a determined effort, and then I shall surely be safe. It seems quite in accordance with scripture, that even in cases which turn out well, the sinner's greatest sins should trouble him first and most. The thief on the cross says, "and we, indeed, justly," referring to his own and his fellow-sufferer's flagrant transgressions. And Paul speaks most feelingly of his being before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. These being disposed of to the pacification of the sinner's conscience, in any way but God's way, place him in more dangerous circumstances than before, and render the roaring lion more certain of his prey. Thus he has encouraged many a drunkard to become sober, many a debauchee to drop his licentiousness, and many a quarrelsome person to follow peaceable ways. Reflect, O sinner, whether Satan is thus deceiving you. If so, hasten from his grasp, and rest not till complete conversion, consisting in turning from all sin to God, by his Son, Jesus Christ, is your sure attainment.

5.—*The door of Quietness and Sobriety.*

Of the travellers in the great road, the classes are numerous and the varieties great. Some of them, though most rebellious against the authority of God, most unjust as to his claims, and exceedingly offensive to him, are, nevertheless, harmless towards their fellows, and even kindly towards their neighbours, and will interfere with no one who will let them alone. If such are led, by any means, to serious consideration, then Satan will suggest, that surely they have little reason to fear; that they have

always been quiet, sober persons ; that, if they have not done a great deal of good, they have, at least, not committed much evil ; that, if they be lost, many a one may be frightened. Thus, many of this class are deceived to their ruin. I have often been grieved at heart, when inquiring after the religious character of individuals, to be answered in the following manner—"O ! such a person is a sober man ; or such another is a quiet woman." Just as if there were not quiet and sober paths to hell, as well as riotous and drunken ones. Fellow-sinner, if this is thy door, hasten out of it for thy life, and begin to trust for salvation to the righteousness of another. Till then, thy danger is as great as the brawler and the debauchee.

6.—*The door of Comparative Goodness.*

We read of a class, who, "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." Many of Satan's subjects are constitutionally kind and generous. They have what is familiarly termed, "a good heart," on the same principle that many of the lower animals have much milder and pleasanter dispositions than others. There is not one particle of religious merit in their constitutional benevolence. It does not derive its origin from any desire for God's glory ; nor is it at all under the guidance of principle in its operation. There is no reason to think that kind actions of this nature are one whit more acceptable to God as religious services, even although rendered to his own people, than that of the dogs which came and kindly licked the sores of Lazarus ; or of the ravens which brought food to relieve the hunger of Elijah. When any of this class get alarmed

by such truths as those now stated, and begin to inquire after some sure word of prophecy, to which, they now suppose, it would be well to take heed, how artfully does the prince of the great way insinuate that the case is very different with them from those who have never almost, in all their life-time, performed a kind office to any one—“Yours,” says he, “has been quite a life of good actions. Can conduct like yours ever be condemned? Take my word for it, you must be safe. You ought to learn to think those preachers mere fanatics, who decry good works. A good life, say what they will, must make a good end.” Satan here touches a chord in the human breast, which is almost sure to yield a ready vibration. How consonant are such reasonings to unrenewed humanity. Hence, we find those who have not been taught of God to distinguish betwixt good works wrought in order to obtain salvation, and those wrought because we have obtained it, rising up with indignation against every effort to show the futility of all the good works of unconverted men to recommend them to the favour of their Creator. Think not, then, I beseech you, of your being better than others, as if that placed you in circumstances more eligible for heaven, or at all fitted you for standing uncondemned in the judgment. No amount of benevolent actions can atone for your awful neglect of God, or for your many positive breaches of his holy law. If these actions afford you peace, it is false, it is of Satan. Arouse yourself, and seek a more substantial foundation on which to build for eternity.

7.—*The door of False Hope in God's General Mercy.*

Many a troubled soul has taken refuge here, and obtained some measure of ease in his sins. The arch-deceiver says, "You can never be wrong, surely, in trusting to that of which the Bible speaks so fully, and in which the God of the Bible glories. Does he not call himself, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.' You see how ready he is to forgive every kind of infirmity in his creatures; how tender he is towards their weaknesses. Why, then, should you be at all afraid? You have his own word for it; and why should you be so weak as to allow yourself to be troubled at the representations of men, who terrify people that they may turn their fears to their own account. Just indulge the weaknesses of your nature, and cast yourselves upon God's mercy, which is always greater than that of your fellow-creatures, and there can be no fear of you." Oh, how greedily many a sinner has drunk in all this specious reasoning, and tried to think himself secure enough in Satan's interpretation of God's revealed compassion for guilty men. The more truth there is connected with any misrepresentation the more dangerous it is. This is just the case here. That God is merciful beyond all conception, is a glorious reality. His mercy in long-suffering and forbearance filleth the whole earth, and hath been largely enjoyed by every guilty wretch of the human race. Believers themselves are monuments of it. But for it, they should long ago have lifted up their eyes in hell, being in torments. But that God is merciful to forgive sin, in the way that Satan would represent him, and in the way in which sinful men

often indulge the hope of pardon, originated with him who has been a liar from the beginning. Satan will not readily bring forward the last clause of the passage which we have quoted, namely, "And that he will by no means clear the guilty," meaning the impenitent and unbelieving. Jehovah will not forgive a gospel-hearer without repentance toward God and faith in the atoning blood of his Son. He must be just while he justifies the ungodly, and he can be so in no other way but through Jesus. Let none venture for one moment to trust for pardon of any of his sins to the mercy of God out of Christ. Neither let any one presume that God's mercy can flow to him through Christ, till he believes on him, and puts his confidence in the work which he finished on Calvary.

8.—*The door of Legal Righteousness.*

This door has proved to be everywhere exceedingly conducive to the interests of the prince of the great way. By none of his deceptions has he succeeded so universally. He finds it suitable to all ranks and conditions, to all nations and climes. The reason is obvious. It accords with the very nature of our race. It is agreeable to our original constitution. We were formed for maintaining our moral standing with our Creator by keeping his law; and it appears as if every sinner who is brought to think of a restoration to it, naturally turns to works. But it seems more especially to take with the wise in their own conceit. This feeling is fostered by the great seducer. "Yes," he will say, "that is the rational way to be saved, and to be blessed. Away with superstitions about sacrifice and atonement. All you hear

advanced concerning that is but ignorant cant. Have nothing to do with any religion that is unphilosophical. At best, it is only suited for the vulgar. Every well-informed man can understand that the keeping of the law is religion indeed. But the idea of being saved without any respect to your own personal goodness and obedience, by merely believing in the virtue and obedience, sufferings and death, of another, may please the vulgar, but is too gross and irrational to be received by the thinking, reading, intelligent classes of the people." Satan is an arch deceiver. He is well acquainted with his harp. His fingers are intimate with the strings. He knows full well how to strike the notes that will captivate his bewitched listeners. How many has he charmed to their eternal ruin by his deceitful tunes. He knows well that, through his infernal agency, the old road of works has been shut up from the beginning; and that he who can control him, and all his hosts, placed a flaming sword, which turns every way, to prevent an entrance. How long is he who was a liar from the beginning, and the deceiver of our race, to be believed rather than God? My dear friends, open your eyes immediately, and look at that flaming sword of fire, and cease this moment and for ever from seeking salvation by your own efforts after righteousness. Look at these cherubim beside it, and let them prevent despair. They are the sure emblems of mercy to guilty man. Let no false reasoning, then, no allurements whatever, induce you to seek salvation in any way but by mercy. But, Oh! be most careful to understand how mercy can flow to a sinner without tarnishing the divine perfections, or marring your own perceptions of his glorious justice and spotless righteousness.

9.—*The door of Religious Profession.*

This is one by which Satan does immense execution, wherever religion has been long established and generally practised. But what we have chiefly to do with is, that it prevails exceedingly in ruining the souls of our own countrymen. What a fearful amount of mere profession exists among ourselves. It requires quite different temptations to suit some minds from those which will suffice for others. Hence the reason why Satan must have so many doors. Some will not be satisfied with any of the former eight. They have heard so much about religion, and about attending to ordinances, that nothing short of this will do for them. "Well, then," whispers the evil one, "just go and have a profession. Attend church regularly if you will, and also go regularly to the Lord's table, and then you will surely feel that all is well." For, be it observed, that Satan does not care how like a religious man any of his servants may be, if he is not in reality one. Many of his best servants are as like true Christians as ever a counterfeit coin was like a genuine one; and those, you know, have often deceived the best judges. Satan manages to turn such characters to excellent account for the interests of his kingdom. He stirs them up to aid and abet his own schemes in the churches of Christ. He hangs them on as drags upon the wheels of the gospel chariot. You may often know them by their being, as has been remarked, "clear, but cold, like a frosty morning." Often, at a fitting season, he will bring them out in their true colours, to the consternation of true disciples, and the unbounded exultation of the world.

But a multitude of this class are also poor, ignorant,

deluded creatures, led astray through erroneous teaching. They are instructed that, when they become grown-up youth, they ought to go and take the vows upon themselves, by becoming full members of the church. In doing so, they are not led to the cross, but past the cross; and ten to one if ever they find it again. Becoming members of churches without entering in by Christ the door, they are like the Pharisees' proselytes, ten-fold more the children of the devil than before. The reason of this is obvious. They have now got a name to live. They attend to religious ordinances; their pastor and their associates call them Christians; and this forms a shield with which they parry all the thrusts of the sword of the Spirit, and in which they receive every arrow of conviction from his bow.

Beloved hearer, are you one of these? I beseech you to admit the question, and answer it to God. If you are, your case is a dangerous one; but I rejoice that it is not desperate. Many, in the same condition, have retraced their steps, and found the true Door, when plied by such truths and warnings as those to which you now listen. But, Oh! I beseech you, lose no time. Around you the shades of night may be beginning to thicken, even of that long dark night which shall be succeeded by no morning. If it overtake you while within any door of Satan, the thick darkness which may be felt will effectually hinder you from finding your way out, or perceiving a safe and sure way of escape. You are then undone! undone for ever!

I devoutly wish that all my fellow Christians, of every name, in our beloved country, and especially my brethren in the ministry, of all denominations, were sufficiently alive

to the dreadful evils of corrupt communion. To contemplate crowds of poor deluded creatures, possessing no spiritual discernment, pressing to the sacred supper of the Lord, under some false impression of its being necessary to their salvation, or because others do so, and it would be a disgrace to be without it, and thus eating and drinking damnation to themselves, is painful in the extreme. The present awful and alarming sin is not all. The fact that it is hardening them in unbelief, and imposing a mighty obstacle to their ever being converted, is exceedingly distressing. The sin of this offence is impressively pointed out by its punishment. The apostle Paul, in dealing with the Corinthians about unworthy communicating, says, "For this cause many are weakly and sickly among you, and many sleep (or are dead)." Why such striking and awful punishments for this crime in the days of miracles, but to stand as a beacon to all generations, that the Lord will not hold him guiltless who profanes this sacred ordinance. Let all, therefore, tremble to approach that table till they have first come as humbled, wretched, naked sinners, to the great Master of it, for a wedding garment, lest he come in an hour when they think not, and render them speechless, and have them bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

If such are the alarming circumstances of those who commit this sin, what, my brethren, must be the guilt of those who connive at it, and aid them in the commission? A solemn responsibility rests upon those to whom are committed the keys of the kingdom of heaven. This is especially the case with all pastors; for to them it belongs

to examine first, and to introduce only those for the acceptance of the church whom they have judged worthy. But every member of any communion has also his responsibilities. He is bound to observe that every individual who is admitted or retained in church fellowship with him is a person properly qualified. The reasoning of some professors on this subject, namely—"If I be right myself, I have nothing to do with others," is too like that of Cain: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" God will, nevertheless, press on such the question—"Where is thy brother?"

But methinks many are ready now to exclaim, If there is such a number of wrong doors, and only one that is right, how are we to distinguish the true door of salvation? The question is vastly important, and merits the most careful consideration.

Second.—THE ONLY TRUE DOOR.

In the setting up of this door, the great Architect exercised infinite wisdom and mercy. The reason that so many mistake is, that they are not disposed to accept of the true door, with all the accompanying conditions of entrance. They feel a passage by some of the other doors much more easy at the time, and try to think them sufficient for their case.

1. The first distinguishing mark of this door which I shall point out is, that the door-posts and lintel are sprinkled with blood. Now, there is no blood about any of Satan's doors; therefore, if you are trusting to anything for deliverance from the broad way to destruction, without an immediate reference to blood, you are unquestion-

ably in by one of Satan's doors. Thus any man may judge whether he is deceived by Satan, or whether he has entered by the true door. Does your confidence, my dear fellow-sinner, lie wholly in the finished work of Jesus? Are you trusting wholly for your cleansing from all the guilt and pollution of sin to the blood of God's slain Lamb? Are you conscious of possessing true repentance, because you absolutely hate all sin in your heart? While conscious of the real dignity of your being, are you humbled to the very dust for your transgressions?

2. The great Architect of this door intended that it should be most conspicuous and attractive; and therefore he placed it on a lofty eminence, that all the travellers on the great way might observe it. Witness the whole Jewish polity raising a platform for it—higher and higher by every new miracle wrought among that people—till it was sufficiently exalted to be seen from all the ends of the earth.

3. In order, also, the more to attract attention to it, he fixed a sign-board upon it, giving to all the travellers in the great way the freest possible invitation to enter. Let us pause for a little, and read a portion of this sign. You see it on the side of the great way, yonder.

(1.) "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Many signs invite to ruin; this to health, and comfort, and joy. Many signs invite to entertainments for which the participants must pay dearly; this offers all refreshments, "without money and without price." Here is drink for the thirsty, and food for the hungry.

You are invited to buy, to be sure; but it cannot mean giving any equivalent for the rich provision, but only parting with those things which hinder the reception and enjoyment of them.

(2.) Read again, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." This is an extraordinary sign, inviting so freely all sorts of characters. The wicked—those openly regardless characters, whose gross sinfulness all acknowledge, and who, even themselves, are not backward to acknowledge it; also, the man whose sin lies chiefly in his unrighteous thoughts, who plots iniquity upon his bed, and silently meditates how he may defraud his neighbour unperceived—these may enter by this door, and receive the forgiveness of all their sins.

(3.) Look again, and read—"Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." To whom, in this weary world, is this not applicable? Who labours not, or is not heavy laden, with some one or other of the many heavy toils and troubles which are the consequences of sin? Whatever you be, hearer, entering by this door alone can truly deliver you, and bring you solid lasting rest. Surely, then, you ought to give good attention to this sign, and determine, whatever others do, that you will immediately enter in.

(4.) Contemplate one other portion of this sign, which, although last, is not least—"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Are you not astonished

and overpowered by the grace and love of this representation? Ministries of all grades—from the highest to the lowest, from the most noble to the meanest, from the infinite and eternal Spirit to the neighbour who hath heard for himself—all are engaged, earnestly inviting your entrance. The authoritative voice of the Spirit, the winning accents of the bride, and the persuasive arguments of him who reasons from experience, are all employed to arrest the attention of the traveller in the great road, and to prevail upon him to enter and be saved.

Is it possible, then, that any will remain without? Alas! how few, comparatively, have complied with the kind and exostulating invitations! How few have believed the report! The backwardness of the travellers in the great way has induced the Architect of the door to take other and more determined measures to arrest their attention. He has placed porters around the door, and ordered them to call aloud to the passers-by to stop, and read, and consider this sign. And he hath commanded them to reason with the passengers individually, or in companies of two or three, or twenty or a thousand, just as they find opportunity. He hath directed them to warn, and entreat, and exhort, and rebuke. He hath instructed them to deal kindly, and faithfully, and particularly, and personally, and perseveringly. Tell them, says he, with deep feeling and much earnestness, of their sin, of their folly, of their rebelliousness, and of their awful danger. Tell them of the deceit and malignity of the prince of the great road. Remind them most seriously of its awful end—a gulf of liquid fire, into which they must plunge if they continue to refuse warning. Show them also, with the most serious

concern for their safety, that the road is full of trap-doors, on which thousands have planted their last footsteps ere they were aware, and have sunk into the awful gulf in a moment, to rise no more for ever. Tell them that, in that world of woe to which they are hastening, "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" Show them also, how cruel and wicked it is to slight my love, and despise my mercy, to refuse my salvation, to treat my highest, and noblest, and best gift with contempt, while they live by my bounty, are sustained by my goodness, and are wholly dependent upon my long-suffering. Nevertheless, assure them that I am yet willing to save, and will yet forgive them all, if they will but enter in.

Hearer, have you entered in? Or are you still in the great road to destruction? I beseech you remain not one hour longer. Now is the time to make your escape. Is not this the day, the very hour of salvation? O, then, harden not your heart, nor listen to the arch-deceiver, suggesting to you that it may do at another time. "In an hour when ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Therefore immediately enter in, and then shall you be always ready.

When this discourse was first delivered, a person in whose soul's welfare the preacher had long taken a deep interest, said to him immediately after, "I now see the door, and I am resolved to enter immediately. She did so, and found rest and peace. On mentioning this circumstance, after delivering the same discourse in a town forty miles distant from the former, a woman sought me out next visit, and said, "Sir, I could not help coming to tell you that I heard you on 'the Door' at your last visit;

and when you mentioned about the woman, I said to myself, 'And what more her than me?' I went home and committed myself to the Lord, and found what I had been earnestly seeking for four years, and had betaken myself to a false profession of religion to obtain, but in vain."

4. "If any man enter in he shall be saved." Saved immediately from the curse of the law, and from the frown of Jehovah. Saved immediately from the condemnation, and from the reigning power of indwelling sin. Saved from all that is awful in death, and from all that is dreadful in eternity. You shall also enter immediately into the favour of God, and the friendship of heaven; and you shall become at once an heir to a glorious inheritance in the heavenly Canaan.

It may be proper to state, without any figure, what entering in by Christ Jesus, the true door, is. It presupposes the sinner to have seen and felt his guilty perishing state—his lost and ruined condition—that he perceives his own utter helplessness, and that, if saved at all, it must be in some way out of himself. It is understood that he has become acquainted with the love of God in giving his only begotten Son to die for sinners, and with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in becoming the substitute of the guilty in law, and answering for them all the demands of justice, to the entire satisfaction of Jehovah the Judge, as is most satisfactorily proved by the resurrection of the Saviour from the dead, and his ascension to glory. With these truths clearly before his mind, the true penitent enters in by the door Christ and is saved, by fully crediting the glad tidings, by considering them worthy of his entire confidence, by really trust-

ing to Immanuel his eternal all, by counting him all his salvation and all his desire; by taking up his cross and following him, through good and through bad report; being determined to be for him, and to be his in prosperity and in adversity, in life and in death; and thus passing on through the journey of human life, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

5. But this is not all, for it is added, "and he shall go in and out, and find pasture." This cannot mean in the upper sanctuary, for one of its characteristics is, that "they shall go no more out." We are obliged, therefore, to interpret it to mean the fold of Christ below—into which none is to enter otherwise than through Christ the door. Those who have entered by the door into the church of Christ, find pasture in the assemblies of the saints. The apostles' doctrine, and the fellowship, and the breaking of bread and the prayers, being blessed of God, and watered by his Spirit, are to them rich pastures, ever green, on which their souls feed and are refreshed. But so long as they are in this sublunary state, they must go down from the mount of ordinances, and mingle with the world, and do the business of daily life, that they may live honestly in the sight of all men, and be individually lights to those around them who are yet in darkness. They long for the returning season, saying to one another, "Let us go up to the house of God." And thus "they go in and out and find pasture," until they reach that blessed fold where they shall dwell for ever with the Lord, and where the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water, and where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

LUKE XV.

OPPOSITION to the gospel has always attended its advancement. Never has this been more fully verified than in the instance before us. Jesus is just where, from the design of his mission, we might have expected him to be—seated in the midst of publicans and sinners, and engaged most kindly in teaching them the way of salvation. But in this he was opposed by two classes, the Pharisees and Scribes, who murmured, saying—“This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” They despised open and gross sinners, and would have nothing to do with them; and they thought if this was a true prophet he would act as they did. This opposition drew forth from the lips of the blessed Jesus three of the most beautiful portions of his teaching, which have remained for the encouragement of poor sinners in all ages, and in every place where the gospel of the kingdom hath been preached.

Your attention is directed to the third parable, a portion of the Saviour's teaching that seems exceedingly well calculated to comfort the sinner, and induce him to return to his heavenly Father. Various interpretations are given by commentators of this interesting parable. Some think

that it refers to the Jews and Gentiles—the oldest son representing the Jews, and the younger the Gentiles—and that it means the objection made by the Jews to the Gentiles receiving the gospel. We are constrained to differ entirely from this view. We ought, unquestionably, to interpret the parable in the circumstances which gave rise to it. These had nothing to do with Jews or Gentiles as such. The circumstances were simply that publicans and sinners, of a gross, open, and notorious character, had gathered around Jesus, and that crowds of self-righteous were opposed to this, and found fault with Jesus for receiving and teaching them.

Now, I understand what may be called the machinery of the parable, thus:—That the certain man, of whom the Saviour speaks, represents Jehovah, the Father; that the two sons represent the whole family of man—every human being who has reached the years of accountability. The elder son has reference to a class who will not take with their true condition—who pretend to be what they are not—whom the Saviour wishes to convince of their sin and folly. We are all represented by the younger son, that is to say, every one here is a prodigal. There is no difference, in this respect, between any in this house, but one, and that is, that we trust many here are returned prodigals; but we have reason to conclude that the great proportion of those present are prodigals still in the far country. The people of God are just younger sons, who, by the mercy and grace of God, have returned to their heavenly Father. Those who are yet unreturned, are still in the far country, and require to return to their heavenly Father, and ought to do so immediately.

Let us now look to the character of this younger son, as given by the Saviour in the parable.

1. "The younger son said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living." Now, my hearers, this is an account of what you did. You said, in a sense, to your great Creator, your Father in heaven, as soon as you were capable of thinking or acting, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." And your Father in heaven allowed you to take your portion, and gave you the use of what you longed for. This portion is the good things of which providence may have seen meet to make you stewards. What have you been doing with these? Just what this young man is represented as doing. You have been saying, "Our tongues are our own, and, in the same way, everything else is ours. We will do with them what we please; no one has a right to call us to account; for who is Lord over us?"

2. "Not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." You gathered all together—you left nothing behind. You went away into a far country, and took everything with you; all that God had committed to you, or that you had usurped authority over. You left nothing to his service, nothing to his glory; you gathered all, and went away into a far country.

To some, speaking of going into a far country from God may seem unexplainable. There are different senses

of far and near. In point of locality, it is impossible to go far from God. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there : if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there shall thy hand lead me." It is impossible, in this sense, to go far from God. But there is another very important sense, in which God's creatures have gone far from him—morally and spiritually. This may be familiarly illustrated in many inhabitants of your own town. Some live in the same street, and frequently under the same roof, who are, in a variety of respects, very far from each other. Some are very rich, and others very poor, who are living in close proximity, and who are yet very far from each other. Some are very honest and upright, and others the opposite, who are living in the same vicinity. These are very far from each other. Some are very moral, fulfilling all the duties of life in the most exemplary manner, while persons next door are most immoral ;—what an immense distance between these two ! Once more,—you have some very religious people in your town ; and, living just beside them, and under the same roof, you have the most irreligious individuals in the place. These are at an immense distance from each other. In all these respects, how far are sinners from God. He is infinitely righteous and good, and they are absolutely unrighteous and ungodly. And what are they doing in the far country ? They are wasting their substance in riotous living. Wasting ; giving away without adequate return. What have you been doing with the good things of the present life that God has given you ? What have you been

doing, O sinner, in the far country? Did you only waste your substance? No; this is not all. You laid it out so as to "treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and perdition of ungodly men." Now this is thy condition, O hearer! it is what thou art precisely.

3. "When he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want." This is a true representation of the poor sinner. He has reserved nothing. I have often thought this is just like the poor emigrant, who has collected everything that he could, in his native country. He goes away to the country of his adoption, and there pays out every farthing in trying to make himself comfortable; when he is seized with what emigrants well understand—home-sickness; and he cries, "Oh! if I could just get home again; there is no place like home." He is in earnest to be home, and he looks around him in every way; but he has nothing to take him home. No; he had gathered all, and now he has spent all; and he says, "I would give all the world, if I had it, to be home. I find, now, if ever I get home to the dear place again, it will be wholly through the kindness and exertions of another." Now, thus is it with thee, thou spiritual wanderer. Thou hast spent all; thou hast nothing to pay thy passage home. And what is to become of thee? Is there any who will be so kind, so gracious, as to help thee home? I rejoice to know there is; and I rejoice that you may know there is One who will pay all expenses—One who will give all the necessary directions, and will take you safely home, if you agree to be wholly indebted to him for safety.

“There arose a mighty famine in the land.” Ah! that far country from God. It is a land of famine, of troubles, and of trials, of sinfulness, and of deaths. It is a land where no inhabitant is at peace, and where no inhabitant enjoys true satisfaction of soul. You know it, my hearers. You have not been exempt from the consequences of your sins, of wandering from God; and therefore, you feel the fallen and wretched condition of your race.

This young man “began to be in want.” The respectable man has a good deal about him that he can make use of, and is not a beggar at once. But the poor prodigal has nothing. Poor man! the first day of famine is a day of trouble to him;—he begins at once to be in want. Thus it is with every Manasseh among the sons of men, when he comes among the thorns; when he begins to feel the reality of his circumstances, he is at once in want.

Now, my dear friends, what do you say this young man should have done? Tell me what you think. Were not most of you saying in your hearts, he should just have gone home to his father? But you observe he did not; and it is the last thing which a prodigal thinks of doing. What would take him home to his father—to the father he has wronged—to the mother who has shown such kindness to him during all his infancy and youth? I have often been struck with the backwardness of a youth to go home in the circumstances described, and also of the sinner to return to God.

I have met with a striking story, well calculated to illustrate this. A youth, born of very religious parents, lived somewhere betwixt Liverpool and Hull. He was the child of many prayers. It was the fond hope of his parents that they

were so training him up that he would fear God, and be the stay of their old age. He went on very hopefully till he reached fourteen, an age at which youths have too much conceit, and too much aptitude to think themselves wiser than their guardians. I counsel young people, for I was once young like you, once thoughtless and conceited, as, I fear, many of them are ; and I know now, and can look back on my judgments then as absolute folly. I beseech young people to bethink themselves, to know that they form most stupid judgments, even about the things of this life ; and that they ought to take counsel of those who are older than themselves, and that they should often converse with their parents about those matters in which they are called to judge, and defer to their judgment. Well, this young man met with infidel companions, who soon undermined his principles. This led to evil conduct, and he got absolutely regardless ; he could not bear the rules and government of the parental roof, and therefore, he determined to leave it. He broke into his father's little drawer, stole about £15 of his hard earnings laid up for a rainy day, ran away to the next port, went to sea as an apprentice, and lived in all the fulness of wickedness that he could practise. His apprenticeship ending, he had to go to another port to inquire for a new situation, passed within a very little of his native village, never thought it worth while to inquire if his parents still lived. No ; he was not in a state of mind for that. He found a vessel, was rated as a man on board, was not long there till he was challenged for swearing, was told he would be fined if he went on in that way, cursed, and said he did not care. He went on this way till the Lord's-day came, was solicited to go down to

the cabin to hear sermon and engage in worship. No; he swore that he left his father's house for things of that sort, and that he would not be subject to it here. He went on in this regardless manner till the vessel arrived at America, and determined that he would never set foot in that vessel again. But, my friends, though "man's heart deviseth his way, the Lord directeth his steps." What was it that followed this young man? Who was it that cared for him? The prayers of his pious parents followed him; and God, who is the hearer and answerer of prayer, heard their cry. His providence watches over their ungodly child, and God can bring him to a right mind in his own way. This young man could not obtain another vessel; providence hedged his path, and he was constrained to go on board the same vessel again. On Sabbath, he was again solicited to join in worship. He went, I cannot tell how, but he went; and he never needed to be asked again. He soon declared that the sermon he had heard was all to him. He soon became a new creature in Christ Jesus; and, during his voyage home, in conversation with the pious captain, he manifested that the truth had taken hold of his heart, and that now he had returned home to his heavenly Father. Now, what do you think he did first? This is another striking illustration of the point I am endeavouring to establish. Having obtained leave, he, as soon as he got on shore, hied away to his native village. He reached it in the dusk of the evening, and then actually trembled with fear that he might find no parents there. What, said he, if I have brought their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? Just at that moment, some one passed on the road. He

asked him did such an one live at the other end of the village? The reply was in the affirmative. He hastened, and reached the door of his native cot; he heard a sound, put his ears to the door—his old parent was engaged in prayer, and was praying earnestly for his long lost son, that God would have mercy on him, and bring him home in his right mind. The youth could bear no longer; he burst open the door, and fell into the arms of his parents! You can better imagine the scene than I can describe it. How strikingly does this story illustrate what is brought out here in the Saviour's description of the prodigal. He "began to be in want," but would not go home.

4. "And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." You ask, perhaps, who this citizen in the far country is? Why, my friends, a great variety of these citizens exist. I will just give you two or three specimens.

In the first place, many who become in some measure awakened to their true condition as wanderers from God, and feel in perplexity, instead of returning home, say—"Oh! how is it that I am so troubled with this conscience of mine? I thought I had got over my youthful impressions of religion, of judgment, and of eternity, long ago; but they trouble me still. I see numbers of my acquaintances who have no such feelings, yet are happy. I wish I was like them; they seem quite regardless. I will try to be like them." And so the youth goes and joins them, and gets over his thoughts and feelings through their influence. Oh, my friends! I know there are many who deny these things altogether; they

don't admit that there is any truth in them, and those who would be like them join themselves to citizen infidelity. They endeavour to put away all thought of the Bible, and all religious impressions. They endeavour to quiet their consciences by the influence of citizen infidelity, and to think that, in a little time, they will be as if they had never been. Thus they often endeavour to persuade their own souls, but in vain.

There is one other citizen whom I will name. I am sorry to say that there are too many of his sort in our native land, and that so many go and unite themselves to him. And, of all others, this citizen sends his votaries into the fields to feed swine. I refer to intoxicating drink. How many have drowned all sense and thought in the intoxicating cup! What wretches they became, absolutely the most wretched of fallen human nature. They, above all others, are sent into the fields of their employer to feed swine. The feeding of swine is an illustration here used by the Saviour with great effect among the Jews. Swine were unclean animals, and those who fed them were regarded as being degraded exceedingly.

5. "He would fain have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him." How far this young man has sunk! Consider from whence he came. What was he originally? He was the son of a gentleman, who had an inheritance to divide between his children. But here he is, poor man, in his wanderings and in his transgressions, with all his substance spent in the far country. Here he is reduced to the sad alternative of being fain to fill his belly with husks, food given up by

man, and assigned to the use of the lower animals. "No man gave unto him." No man could give him that which would deliver him or satisfy his hunger. But, blessed be God, we can point to our fellow prodigals in their miseries where they may obtain deliverance. We can say to them, "Behold the Lamb of God, who beareth away the sins of the world." We can tell them how to go to Calvary for deliverance and safety. Though no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him, we can show him where he may obtain mercy and salvation, and where he will be welcomed.

6. "And when he came to himself." Why did this young man remain so long away from his father's house? Why did he continue so long in the far country? Why did he remain in so much misery, when he might have been delivered, when he might have enjoyed great comfort? Will you tell me how it was that he remained not only in wickedness and rebellion against his parent, but that he remained in such misery, when he might have bettered his condition? The answer is clearly implied in the words—"When he came to himself." That is to say, the man was beside himself. This is the reason why he remained so long away. The Bible often speaks of sinners as fools. It says—"Madness is in their hearts while they live, and in a moment they go down to the grave." What can be more like madness than to remain in wretchedness when there is an inheritance and much enjoyment set before him? What this young man did, every sinner is doing still. But there is a turning point in this young man's history. "He came to himself." Many an hour of

misery that young man had endured; and from bad to worse he had gone; deeper and deeper in wretchedness he had sunk, and yet he seemed to regard it not, till one day "he came to himself." Now, my dear hearer, will you allow me to press a question on you—Whether this has formed any portion of the history of your mind? Many in our country have a great deal of religion, and of mental workings, of which this forms no part. I beseech you to see how it is with you. This, my friends, is the same doctrine which Jesus often taught elsewhere. "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again." Mark that, "Ye *must* be born." Marvel not, dear hearers, that we say unto you, You must come to yourselves, or your religion is but nothing. If any have religion that did not begin in the way here described, bethink yourselves; have done with it. We don't want you to be without religion, but we want you to get the right religion, even now. This is a most important point, and we must be careful that it be presented to you in a scriptural manner.

7. What are the evidences of a man's coming to himself, or what takes place when a man comes to himself? I wish to lead your attention to a few observations, taken from the context here, in order that the question may be answered.

In the first place, when a man comes to himself, he comes to a deep conviction of his wretchedness, of his

sinfulness, and of his worthlessness. This is fully borne out by the following expressions—"I have sinned," "I perish with hunger," "I am no more worthy." This man's wretchedness, sinfulness, and worthlessness, stand out clearly and distinctly before him in the hour when he came to himself. Judge yourselves, then, my friends; for, if not, depend on it, the Author of this instruction will judge righteous judgment on you at last. Judge then, yourselves, in time, and be careful that your judgment agrees with his. Have you ever come, then, my hearers, to a deep sense of your worthlessness, so that you could say with this man—I am persuaded of my sinful and wretched condition, that I am far from God, that I perish with spiritual hunger? Have you ever had a deep sense of your sinfulness, not merely uttering the words, but feeling them in your heart, "I have sinned—I have sinned?" I beseech of you to see whether or not you have felt your worthlessness like this man, that you deserve nothing from God but his wrath and indignation, that you are less than the least of all his mercies, and that, while he is crowning you with his temporal mercies, you are altogether and utterly unworthy of them. Well, if you conscientiously feel these things, then there is one good reason for concluding that, like this young man, of whom the Saviour speaks, you have come to yourself.

Again, when this young man came to himself, he said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father." I don't know a harder thing to attempt than to get a sinner to say to God from his heart, "My

Father." I don't mean that you could not utter the words, but you cannot pronounce them with this feeling, "Jehovah, my Father." When God speaks to the sinner who is very far from him, he says—"How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee an inheritance?" Do you mark the answer. Jehovah puts words, simple and glorious words, a sublime answer, into the mouth of every sinner who comes to him—"Thou shalt cry unto me, My Father, and shalt no more depart from me." Is not that simple? Oh, it is glorious! Just in your heart say, "Thou art my Father. I deplore exceedingly I ever left thee, ever offended thee; and I come back to thee, my Father."

One thing more, dear friends. When a man comes to himself, he does something more than that yet. There is another, and it is a very distinct and special thing. He resolves—"I will arise and go to my Father. I will stay here no longer in this far country. I cannot continue to live any longer in the commission of sin. I can go on no more in the ways of iniquity. I can tabernacle no longer in the congregation of the dead." Is this any part of your history, my dear hearers? Did your religion begin with this—"I will arise and go to my Father?" Oh! these are delightful words. Methinks I could for ever repeat them. No poor sinner of the race of Adam ever came to himself without resolving thus. Have you done this, my beloved fellow-sinner? Oh! have you said, "I will arise and go to my Father?"

But, my dear friends, I beseech you to remember here, that there is something more necessary than resolution. What would have become of this young man, if he had

remained feeding the swine in the far country? With all those feelings, and those resolutions, what would have become of him? Why, you answer, he would have perished in the far country. Yes; there is no hesitation about that; and I suppose it is scarcely new to hear that the road to hell is paved with good resolutions. The poet, long ago, said, "Man resolves, and re-resolves, and dies the same." This man resolved. If he had not done more, it was all over with him. I have no doubt that many go a great length, and yet never put that resolution into execution. It was not so with this young man, "And when he arose, he came to his father." If you ever wish to be delivered from your sins, my hearers, go direct to God. Many have tried to return, just like this poor wanderer, but they have not come all the way. "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me." To stop short of coming home to God, is to stop short of everything that is valuable. This young man "arose, and came to his father."

8. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Here we have a representation of an old patriarch, sitting, according to Eastern custom, on his house-top, and, perhaps, thinking of his son who had left him so long ago. Dear friends, have any of you a prodigal son? It is quite possible. Did you ever attempt to say, "He is not my son?" Did you disregard him? No; he is still your son. You wish he would come home; it would rejoice your heart of hearts; and you would place him in the bosom of the family, if he were

in that state of mind that you could do so with safety. Oh, how glad you would be to see him! I ask you, who put this feeling in your hearts? Oh! it was the Great Parent himself, and there is no imperfection in him. I don't know a passage like this for setting the sinner right about God; and I don't know anything that the devil has succeeded more fully in, than in getting those estranged from God to think hardly of their Creator. When this old man looks, and looks more earnestly, he sees something in the distance. "Ah! what if that should turn out to be my prodigal son;" and he looks intently in that direction. He sees something moving on to him; it becomes more distinct, and he says, "That is not unlike my long-lost son," and he keeps his eye fixed; and then he cries, "Oh! I believe it is just my long-lost son;" and he forgets all his paternal dignity, comes down from the house-top, forgets his age, and runs, and meets him; and it is his son, and he falls on his neck, and kisses him! My friends, never forget this is the view which the Son of God gives of Jehovah the Father, and this is a display of the feelings of his soul when a sinner comes home to him by Calvary. He hastens to meet him, and rejoices over him.

9. What is the conduct of the son? His father has shown him mercy, but he cannot forget himself. Turn your attention for a moment to his confession, how he breaks out after all this tenderness. "The son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." After he was assured of his father's forgiveness, he still expresses his penitence. "I have sinned against heaven,

and I have sinned in thy sight ; I can hide nothing from thee. I deserve no place in thy family." Mark, dear friends, how this young man is interrupted. He is going to say, no doubt, as he had resolved to say—"Make me as one of thy servants," but he does not get time. The father does as if he had said—"No more of this, my son. I am satisfied with the genuineness of thy repentance ; I rejoice in thy return ; I rejoice to regard thee as a son."

10. "And the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him ; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." This robe which the father ordered his servants to bring was never intended for servants ; very distinct intimation that, although he had been a prodigal, he was a returned one, and that he should sit at the table and appear among the children. "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." This suggests that he returned in a state of great destitution. In a spiritual point of view, some say he returned in the rags of his own righteousness. Such was the condition of this prodigal son. That also, believers, was your condition when you came back to God. The servants were not only to bring forth the best robe, but also to put it on him. Now, this is precisely what every sinner must allow to be done when he comes home to God. There is always an effort to use his own righteousness—a desire that, if he is to be indebted to Christ, he must also be indebted to himself for something. Here is a robe, very far excelling all others. If you have this robe, you have something exceedingly valuable. This is a robe far exceeding the value

of silver and gold. This robe is the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may pride yourselves on your robes, but, in a little, they get soiled and wasted. Get this robe, for it never gets old; it requires no purifying; it is as new at the end of life as when you received it. It is a robe that will go with you when you die. It is a dress in which you will rejoice to appear in your better country. It is a robe in which you will be enabled to attend the greatest assembly that ever was, or shall be, held on earth—an assembly to which you have got an invitation—an invitation you will not be permitted to refuse. That will be a great assembly. Multitudes shall be there; but one thing concerns us more than that, and it is, that you and I are certain to be there. A great number will have this robe, and all who have it will hear a divine voice saying, "Come up hither, and take the place on my right hand." Again, all who have it not shall take their place on the left hand of the Great President of that assembly. If you have not this robe, you will meet the irresistible doom of being cast into everlasting fire. Be not longer without this robe. Be sure that you are clothed from head to foot in the righteousness of the Son of God, and that you are fitted for this great assembly.

"Put a ring on his hand." This ring denotes very important truth. We find rings often spoken of; and, when we compare scripture with scripture, it seems to intimate that God makes his prodigals rich though they come home poor. We are informed, in the Old Testament, that rings were given to persons appointed to office. When Joseph was appointed to authority by Pharaoh, he put his ring on his finger. And when Haman was in his

power, Ahasuerus gave him his signet ring; and when Mordecai succeeded him in office and favour, the ring that Ahasuerus took from Haman he gave to Mordecai; and when Mordecai wrote letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces, he sealed them with the king's ring. By this, then, in the parable, the Lord Jesus meant to show that when any prodigal came home, he was not only welcomed, but honoured with the seal, and marked as a son for ever. When you are returned prodigals you get this ring. There is another use of it. It is given by the bridegroom to the bride in the day of espousals. She puts it upon a conspicuous place, and views it as his pledge of attachment, and assurance of faithfulness. And how often does she look upon it in her future life, and how often are her affections drawn out to him who gave it. When God puts it on the finger of his long-lost son when he returns, it is not only the mark of his good pleasure, and the comfort of his being received into his Father's household, but, according to another figure used in the New Testament, the Church being the bride of the Redeemer, this ring is put on the hand of every member of the Church. It is a pledge of Christ's kindness, and reminds the bride of the day of her espousals.

“And shoes on his feet.” You will see, in returning home, how exceedingly wretched this poor prodigal was. He is bare-footed. How low must he have fallen, and how wretched must he have become! But he cannot be in his father's house in this state. He must have shoes for his feet. There is a portion of scripture, in reference to the Ephesian church, which tends to explain this. “Have your feet shod with the preparation of

the gospel of peace." When Christ calls a prodigal home, he makes him strong in the knowledge of the truth. He fits him for the discharge of all the duties of his condition as a son and member of his Father's household, by having him shod as well as adorned. When a poor sinner comes home to God, he is not allowed to be idle. Shoes are for going forth to the discharge of active duties. And it never was the intention of Christ to keep his people idle. It is his intention that they should work in his vineyard—that they should become soldiers of the cross, to take their place by his standard, and go forth to long marches, and be earnest in the ways and work of the Lord.

Now he is come home, he will not be allowed to hunger. "Bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry." This is very much in keeping with the manners and customs of the Jews; and this we should not lose sight of, in endeavouring to explain the teaching of the New Testament. Among the Jews, there was no rejoicing without eating and drinking; and Christ brings this into his illustration. Let us enjoy the great principles of a sinner's salvation. Let us look at them with interest. Let us exercise faith on the Son of God, and let us do so with great joy. If there is one man in this world with more occasion to be happy than another, that man is the true Christian—the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ—he who has returned to his heavenly Father, and whose iniquities are all blotted out. Who is to be happy if such a man is not? The reason is assigned—"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

Consider well whether you are a returned prodigal, or

still in a state of alienation from your heavenly Father. During these lectures, I have met with some who said, "That was just my case. I confess to the character, and that I deserve nothing; but it is quite clear if ever I get home, I must be taken home. I must depend upon another for everything about it." Well, if you are that length, why not go the whole length? We bring it before you, that you may see your own condition, and your duty and privilege to return to your heavenly Father, who longs to receive you. Can you doubt his willingness? It seems almost impossible that any man should allow a doubt to creep into his mind of God's willingness to receive him, and, therefore, not venture to come. Jehovah repels the idea; for hear him saying—"I have no pleasure in the death of the sinner—of him that dieth—but that he should turn to me and live. Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?"

DISCOURSE III.

THE NEW COVENANT.

HEB. viii. 10-12.

“I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”

THE object of the epistle to the Hebrews is to turn the Jews from a blind and superstitious attachment to Moses and his institutions, to Christ and his appointments. The writer's penetrating eye, guided by the all-discerning Spirit, clearly perceived that the Jews interpreted Moses too literally, that they lost the substance through admiration of the shadow, that they neglected the spirit of their institutions whilst often over-zealous for their forms. Of this he well knew the awful consequences, and therefore, sets himself to the work of correction, like one alive to the results.

He contrasts Moses and Christ. He shows that the former was only a servant, the latter a son; the former unworthy of any divine honours, the latter appointed by the Eternal Father to receive the worship of all the holy angels. He shows that, although angels ministered at the

giving of the law, under the gospel dispensation they are appointed the servants of the meanest subjects of Messiah's reign. He argues that, if the requirements and sanctions of the old system, as spoken by angels, were enforced with the strictness of severity, how much more would those of the new, as spoken at first by the Lord himself, then confirmed by his personal attendants, and to which, also, Jehovah bore testimony, by signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghost.

The apostle then enters upon the priesthood of Jesus, maintains its perfection, contrasts it with that of Aaron and his descendants, and pronounces it to be after a very different order—the order of Melchisedec.

The Jewish converts to Christianity retained much of the spirit of their countrymen. They went through all the churches of the Gentiles, endeavouring to persuade them to mingle Moses and Christ. They infused into them a leaven which appears never to have been purged out. It manifested itself, in course of time, in gross forms of worldliness, and the amalgamation of church and state. It still pervades, to a very considerable extent, the churches of the Reformation in our own land. Many of these, for example, hold and teach, although Gentiles, that their carnal seed are the children of Abraham, and heirs of the promises. I beg of all such to answer the following questions, or rather to listen to the holy Ghost answering them, from the third chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. Who alone are the children of Abraham under the Christian dispensation? “Know ye that they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” Who are those that, under the reign of the Messiah, are blessed in

the same manner as Abraham? "They who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." How did these Galatians become the children of God? "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Who forms the only seed of Abraham that has, or can have, respect to Gentiles equally with Jews? "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one; and to thy seed, which is Christ." How can any Gentile become, in any sense, the seed of Abraham, and an heir of the covenant of promise? It is evident that it cannot be by any fleshly, but must be by a spiritual connection. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Is every distinction formed, and maintained under the Jewish dispensation, betwixt Jew and Gentile, freeman and slave, male and female, completely swept away under the Christian dispensation? "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

These were hard lessons for the Jew to learn. And it is painful to observe, that they seem still too difficult for many professors of religion among the Gentiles. The Jews were dreadfully averse to the giving up of what they deemed the great privilege of having a right to all religious ordinances merely on account of their carnal descent; a privilege which they enjoyed fully, and that by God's own appointment under the law. This is strikingly exemplified in the case of the Pharisees and Sadducees who came out to John's baptism. John addressed them in terms of great severity. He refused to baptize them till they gave proofs of a decided change of mind. He

directed them to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." He instructed them that he had come to usher in a dispensation which refused its ordinances to those who sought them on the ground of carnal descent. "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father." Nothing but personal, vital religion is of any avail with Jesus. "Now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Who, then, may contravene what John thus early taught as one of the fundamental principles of the Christian religion?

We have this contrast betwixt the Old and New dispensations strikingly illustrated in 2 Cor. iii. The New Testament people are styled, "The epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart." The apostle contrasts the two testaments thus, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." He calls the one "the ministration of death, written and engraven on stones;" and the other, "the ministration of the spirit." He declares the Jewish to be "the ministration of condemnation," and the Christian dispensation to be "the ministration of righteousness."

With such clear and decided proofs before our eyes, who can do otherwise than discern that Christianity has brought with it an immense change in the nature and constitution of the divine economy and worship: that to argue from the state of the Jewish church to that of the Christian church with reference to a right to institutions,

or privileges, or membership, is exceedingly dangerous: that to represent the church to be the same in all ages, except with the most distinct and minute explanations of what is meant, or perhaps, when the proper meaning of the church on earth is considered, to do so at all, is a mere figment, calculated to mislead the unwary.

We proceed now to consider the embodiment of New Testament principles, which Jehovah first recorded on the page of prophecy by Jeremiah, in the 31st chapter of his book, verses 33 and 34, under the designation of a New covenant. It will be found that every particular of it corresponds with all the introductory observations and passages to which we have already directed attention. It exactly suited the apostle's design to quote it and apply it as he does. In doing so he has rendered essential service to the church in all generations. He puts beyond a doubt to what it refers. He places it in its true position. He shows that it immediately succeeded the Jewish polity; that it came into operation when the first Christian church was formed; that it is precisely the divine constitution of every church of Christ; that, therefore, it is the true standard by which to try every body of professed worshippers in any country, and in every age, during the Messiah's reign.

It will be proper, in order to make this abundantly clear, to examine the context.

The apostle having contrasted the priesthood of Christ with Aaron's, goes on to say, "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises; for if that first covenant had been fault-

less, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith," (or according to Macknight, "For finding fault, he saith to them.") He then quotes from Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord." Then follows the covenant itself. This clearly determines the old covenant to mean the religious constitution of the Jews. Therefore, the new covenant which was to succeed it, must mean the religious constitution of the Christian church. This new covenant must have come into operation as soon as the Jewish was set aside; for we cannot conceive of the church of God existing without a divine constitution. We do not find any intermediate one instituted; therefore, there is no alternative but to admit this to have been the disposition of things on which the first Christian church was formed, and the only true basis of all the genuine churches which have existed, or at present exist, throughout the world.

But lest this should not be sufficiently clear to any mind, let us glance at a few verses following the statement of the covenant:—Verse 13.—"In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." Now, what was decaying, and waxing old, and was ready to

vanish away when the apostle was writing but the Jewish state of worship? It had served its end, and received its accomplishment when Jesus died, and it was destined to be abolished by violence in a few succeeding years.—Chapter ix.—“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.”

The real position of the new covenant is placed beyond all controversy. It is unquestionably the grand summary of the principles of the church of Christ in this world. It lays down the conditions of its membership, and describes the state and privileges of all its genuine members. It is of vast importance, therefore, that we should understand and apply its various compartments.

They are the following :—

1.—“I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts.”

It is impossible to understand this covenant aright, unless we consider every particular of it with direct reference to the contrast, instituted by the holy Spirit, betwixt the Old Testament dispensation and the New. It is necessary here, to call to mind, that every Jew by natural birth was a fully privileged member of the old covenant, as well as every proselyte from the Gentiles, together with all his children. Therefore, although we rejoice that a few of every generation of the Jews enjoyed the blessings mentioned in the clause under consideration, yet it is manifest that it was not essential to membership, for we know that a great proportion of that people were the very opposite of this description. The contrast here evidently is, that the Jews, as a people, had God's laws written and engraven

on stones, but it was no part of that covenant to communicate the disposition to love and obey them. Had this been the case, then every real member of the covenant must have enjoyed this holy feeling.

On the contrary, every one who is a member of the Christian church, according to the appointment of her head, is a person who not only enjoys God's written laws for his guidance, but possesses, also, the disposition to love and obey them. God has bestowed upon him a new heart, and has put a right spirit within him. It is his meat to do the will of his God.

It is a precious truth, that David and many others enjoyed this glorious privilege ; but it was not in virtue of their being members of the old covenant ; for the most carnal and wicked Jew, if not ceremonially unclean, was as fully a member of the covenant as they. The covenant, or dispensation, was designed to embrace the whole nation of the Jews. As a nation, they were bound to obey God, who was their civil head and lawgiver ; in a similar manner as the Romans were bound to keep the laws of their state, or suffer the punishment attached to the breach of them. The Romans could not communicate to their people a disposition to love and obey their laws. Neither did God do so to the carnal Jews. Now, God acknowledges no people on earth as his peculiar people but such as have his laws in their heart, and determine, through his grace, to walk in his ways and to keep his statutes and judgments. These he consecrates to himself. Their hearts he prepares. In them he puts his Spirit. They love his law, and practice his precepts diligently. They are not confined to any earthly kingdom.

Wherever they dwell, they belong to Christ's kingdom, and no others are acknowledged by him as his subjects. It is the duty of all his servants and people on earth to learn to distinguish betwixt those whom he acknowledges and those whom he does not, that they may receive none as church members whom he is sure to reject at last. The practice, alas, too common, of receiving improper persons, is of fatal consequence to their souls. They are given a name to live when they are dead. They are flattered by those who ought to be labouring for their conversion, that all is well, when, as yet, all is ill with them. Thousands have thus been blindfolded to the precipice of destruction without perceiving their danger, till in hell they have lifted up their eyes, being in torment.

2.—“I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.”

The language here is exactly similar to that spoken to the carnal Israel; but from its position, we are bound to understand the meaning to be very different; for God himself pronounced it “a better covenant, established upon better promises;” “a new covenant, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers.” It is our duty, therefore, to trace the divinely designed contrast. God was the God of the carnal seed of Abraham, as having entered into covenant with them, and constituted them a peculiar people to himself, distinct from all the other nations of the world, bestowing upon them his institutions and laws, blessing them with a revelation of his will, through them bringing the Messiah into the world, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and

in the royal line of David, as was particularly foretold. God's great design was to manifest his character by miracles, and signs, and wonders, and extraordinary providences, and by prophecies and their fulfilment, and especially to develop his divinely glorious scheme of redemption to the whole race of man. For these purposes, he required a peculiar nation, distinct from all others. In order to this, instead of choosing any already existing nation, he called one man to leave his relations and become a solitary wanderer in a peculiar country, and through him, formed a nation to himself, and gave them a country to dwell in, by the wonderful exertion of his own almighty arm. Through them, he determined to lay a basement of eternal truth in our wretched world, which neither men nor devils might be able to destroy. This he effected when he brought in the first begotten into the world, and when he raised him from the dead. This completed the machinery of the Old Testament dispensation, and for ever did away all fleshly distinctions of men, either as nations, or families, or individuals. Now, God knows no man after the flesh, and neither ought his people. Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, in tracing his carnal descent, and marking the prophecies concerning his coming, yet now, henceforth, in the application of his finished work, we must know him thus no more. Now, religion, in all its blessings, bears an equal aspect to the whole human family. It knows no human, no earthly distinction. It acknowledges no carnal descent. It is equally free to men of every nation, tongue, kindred, and colour. It is as ready to bless and to save the children of the Hindoo, or the Mohammedan, or the

barbarian of the desert, as those of the Christian. Religion has no need now of a fleshly seed. Sectarian systems may demand them to keep up their numbers; but this is only corrupting true religion. The carnal seed by which God now operates for the glory of his kingdom, is the whole family of man. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every creature.*"

God's peculiar people now are those, and those only, of any nation, who have embraced the gospel, by believing on his Son. To these he is a God, and they are his people in a far higher sense than the relation which he sustained to the carnal seed of Abraham, or that in which they stood to him. I need only add, that he is their God spiritually, savingly and eternally; and that they are his spiritual people, saved with an everlasting salvation, and destined to enjoy the heavenly Canaan for ever and ever.

It may be necessary to remind the reader here, that we have been contemplating the Jews as a whole people with reference to their national covenant, but have not forgotten that many of them so improved their external privileges by the divine blessing, as to become members of the spiritual and saving covenant, which was then shadowed out, but is now firmly established.

3.—"And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."

This is a compartment of the New covenant which has been very much misunderstood and misapplied. Nothing is more common than to hear it used, particularly in prayer, with special reference to the millennium. The

great impropriety of this will appear, if you take into consideration, that no one clause in the covenant can have reference to the future, or to the millennium, more than another. Every clause must refer to the same period, and to the same object, namely, the Christian church. This is a distinct portion of the New or Christian covenant, and, therefore, must be a part of the description of every Christian church that has ever existed, or ever will exist in any generation of our race during Christ's reign. Its being expressed in the future tense, is no argument against this view, for this is equally the case with all the compartments of the covenant. The reason is, that the passage in the Hebrews is a quotation from Jeremiah, in whose day its commencement was future by about six centuries. In Paul's day not one of these blessings was future any more than now, or than it will be in the middle of the millennial age. The millennium will not alter one of these principles, but will consist in a glorious, and devoutly to be desired extension of them all. The meaning of the passage is to be found by contrasting it with the Old covenant.

Now we find that a multitude of the members of the Old covenant did not know the Lord. In Elijah's time, seven thousand men were reserved as true worshippers, out of the thousands of Israel. In every generation those ignorant of God abounded. Yet they were Jews, therefore in the covenant, the neighbours and brethren of those who possessed this knowledge. In every age we have reason to believe there was a number of the latter. Now these required to teach the others to "know the Lord." In the New covenant this is quite altered, for no

one is to be accounted a member of God's covenant, or of Christ's church, but upon the principle that he "knows the Lord." Therefore, no man in a spiritually formed church needs to teach his neighbour or his brother to "know the Lord," for they all know him, from the least to the greatest of them; at least, this is the principle on which they have admitted one another, to the best of their mutual judgment. This was prophesied of Christ and his times, and he himself uses it and applies it: "All thy children shall be taught of God."

What can those mean who apply it to the millennium? Do they ever expect a time, this side of the last judgment, when the church will not require to teach the world to "know the Lord?" Though the knowledge of the Lord will be much more general in the millennium, yea, though all were to know him, does any man suppose that children will not be ignorant of God, just as they are now, and so require to be taught to know the Lord? I do not think any one supposes this. Then why pray for a state of things which we do not believe is destined to exist? Let all, therefore, take the proper scriptural view of this interesting passage, and cease to misapply it in all time coming. And let all examine carefully whether the churches to which they have attached themselves will bear the application, or whether they are not rather founded on the principles of the Jewish covenant, requiring the spiritual portion of them to teach the carnal to "know the Lord." Let it be understood that least and greatest in this passage refer to mental, not physical capacity. The Saviour explained it when he says of John, "He that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is

greater than he." In every Christian church there are some of small mental talents and some of greater, but the least that is admitted there is to "know the Lord."

4.—"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

This is a blessed compartment of the New covenant, suitable to our sinful condition, and encouraging to all who have laid hold on that covenant and yet feel that they are never wholly free from unrighteousness, sin and iniquity in the present life. But how is this a better covenant? and how are these better promises? In answer to this, we must take into consideration that there were transgressions for which the old covenant made no ceremonial provision, such as murder, adultery, and presumptuous sins: for these, no sacrifice or atonement was appointed. To this, Paul is understood to refer, when he preached the gospel in the synagogues of Antioch, and endeavoured to impress on the minds of his countrymen the superiority of the gospel to the Jewish state of things. "And by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Thus, under the new dispensation, God makes no reservation; he is merciful to all the transgressions of his people, of whatever kind. The sacrifice provided reaches crimes of the greatest guilt. The fountain opened in the house of David washes out sins of the deepest dye. "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Thus we see how Jehovah declares, with peculiar emphasis, under the new dispensation, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness."

As to the second portion of this verse, namely, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," it is rich in meaning; but that meaning has been often misunderstood; and this misunderstanding has given rise to much uneasiness to many of the people of God. Many have supposed that God literally forgets the sins of his people when he forgives them; and that, as they are taught to pray for forgiveness from God, as they forgive those who offend them, find it exceedingly difficult, yea, impossible, literally to forget as well as to forgive: they are thus rendered very unhappy. Now all this arises from misapprehending the truth taught in the passage. No Christian is required to forget literally the offences committed against him. It is questionable if this be possible to an intelligent being. Perhaps the best way to determine the signification is to turn to chap. x. At verse 17, this passage is repeated, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" then the apostle adds, "Now, where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." Then the idea intended to be conveyed by forgetting sin under the new covenant is clearly illustrated by the contrast noticed by the apostle in verses 3 and 4, "But in these sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." Here then, we see distinctly the meaning of this portion of the glorious covenant which we enjoy. God's law is fully magnified, and his justice is completely satisfied. The constant repetition of old covenant sacrifices clearly demonstrated that they were altogether ineffectual for these great purposes. It constantly proclaimed the great truth, that

an atonement of infinitely greater value was demanded. Their frequent recurrence was designed for an expression of the offerer's faith in the sufferings and death of the true Messiah, and thus proved a constant remembrancer of sins and of the necessity of the great atonement to forgiveness. And as all these sacrifices were of God's special appointment, they were, on his part, a calling to remembrance of the sins of his people, and a strong expression of the fact that he had not yet received any satisfaction to his justice on their account.

Now, since the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is altogether different. God is constantly proclaiming his entire satisfaction in the atonement of his Son. He is perpetually announcing a full pardon to every human being who can be induced to accept the boon, without any intimation that he requires any more propitiation than was rendered by his own beloved Son, when, in our nature and as our substitute, he "bore away the sin of the world." On the contrary, he repeatedly declares himself well pleased in the perfect righteousness of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of which he gave the fullest assurance unto all men, in that he raised him from the dead. Now, Jehovah will no more call up to remembrance, as crimes yet unatoned for, or matters unsettled, the sins of those who have laid hold of Christ's righteousness. Their accounts are all discharged, their crimes are blotted out for ever with the blood of Jesus.

This shows in what sense Jehovah forgets the sins and iniquities of those who have come and confessed them all to him, and sought forgiveness for Jesus' sake.

It also points out to us the principles on which believers

are required to forgive. When any offender acknowledges his offence to us, professes repentance which we have reason to think genuine, and wishes our forgiveness, he has afforded us all the satisfaction which the Scriptures teach us to require, and we are bound to forgive fully and freely. When this is done, we cannot help recollecting that the injury was committed, nor is the mere remembering of it sinful. But if we brood over it, or ever allow it to fret our minds as an unsettled matter, we act unlike God, and place an obstacle in the way of our enjoying a sense of his pardoning mercy.

We have thus endeavoured, by the guidance, we trust, of the holy Spirit, to give a scriptural view of the New covenant. We shall offer a few practical reflections.

1st.—What a blessed dispensation of divine grace do Christians enjoy. Well may we adopt the language of the psalmist: “The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and the inheritance we have got excelleth in beauty.” Our worship does not consist chiefly in burdensome ceremonies;—it is the homage of a willing heart. We delight in God’s law after the inner man. Our highest satisfaction is the finished work of Jesus. Our greatest pleasure is the doing of his will. Our comfort and our heart’s delight is to meditate on God’s testimonies; for he hath “put them into our minds, and written them on our hearts.”

2d.—It is clear from this statement of the principles of the New Testament church, that none can be a member thereof without spiritual and saving knowledge. “They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest.” This

excludes all unconverted persons. Indeed, the whole tenor of the covenant is to the same effect. All must know the grand truths which relate to the salvation of the soul. And it must not be merely a catechetical acquaintance with these truths; but an experimental knowledge, amounting to an approval of them, and a rejoicing in them as a perfect ground of confidence for eternal salvation. To admit any one to church privileges without examining for this saving knowledge, and taking all proper means to ascertain whether it exists, is sinning against the clear light of revelation, and is sure to corrupt the church of Christ, and to prove ruinous to souls.

3d.—It is evident from this new covenant, that whatever may be God's will regarding infants, it is not his will that they should be members of his New Testament church.

They must grow up, and learn to "know the Lord," ere this can take place. They must first have God's laws put into their minds, and written on their hearts. They must also have their sins forgiven through a believing application to the blood of Jesus, before they can be members of this covenant. We have spoken of God's will regarding infants.—His will concerning them is not only most just, but also most gracious. There is every reason to think that all infants have made up to them in the second Adam what they lost in the first; and therefore, if they die without actual transgression, they are safe for ever. But this covenant has no reference to them whatever, but to those only who are spared to the years of accountability, and are capable of maintaining the kingdom of Jesus Christ in this world by a public

profession of his truth. To baptize infants therefore, as in any sense members of the New Testament church, is certainly contrary to revealed truth and to the mind of the Spirit regarding the new covenant. It consists with the Jewish covenant, which embraces the whole carnal seed of Abraham, as well as his spiritual seed; but it has no countenance from the new covenant, and is quite opposed to its genius and spirit. Christ's institution of baptism, in Matt. xxviii. 19, and in Mark xvi. 16, perfectly accords with this covenant. In the first passage he says, "Teach them (margin, make them disciples) and baptize them;" and in the second he places believing before baptism, saying, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

4th.—We see from this covenant what manner of persons Christians are.

True Christians are not perfect, but they are decidedly changed. They are saints or holy ones. The fundamental principles of holiness are laid in their hearts. Their duty is to make progress. The commandment is, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." And we are assured, that, however much religion of any other description we may think we have, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

True Christians are also righteous; constituted righteous in Christ by faith. They are also endowed with righteous principles. God's righteous law is put into their minds and written on their hearts. God's spirit is imparted to them to incline them to obey. They practice, therefore, what is just and good.

True Christians are a pardoned people. They are

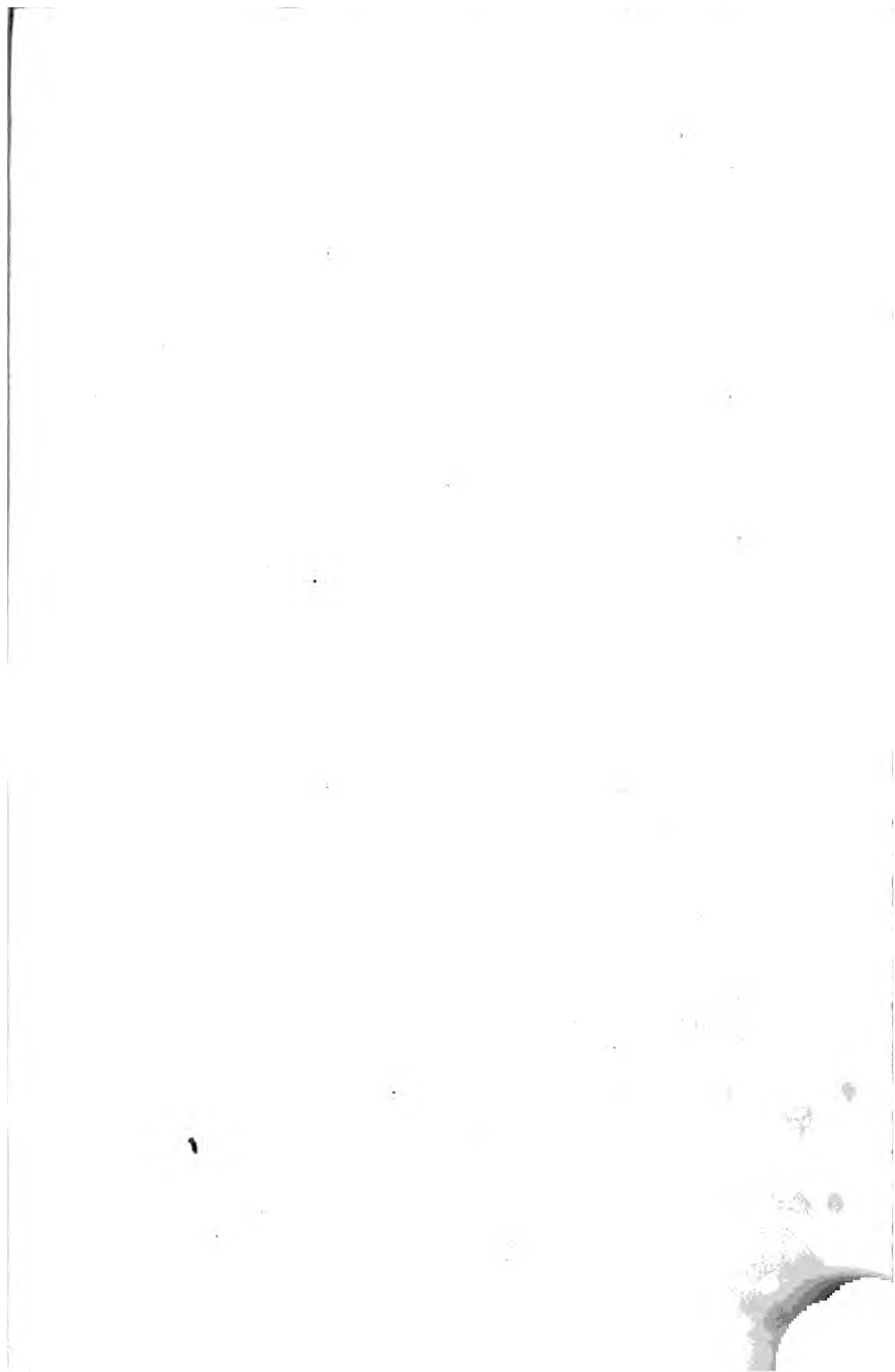
freely and fully forgiven. Of this they enjoy a prevailing consciousness. It is a gross misrepresentation of our Heavenly Father, to say that he confers such an unspeakable blessing on any of his children, and hides it from their knowledge and enjoyment. "He is merciful to his people's unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities he remembers no more."

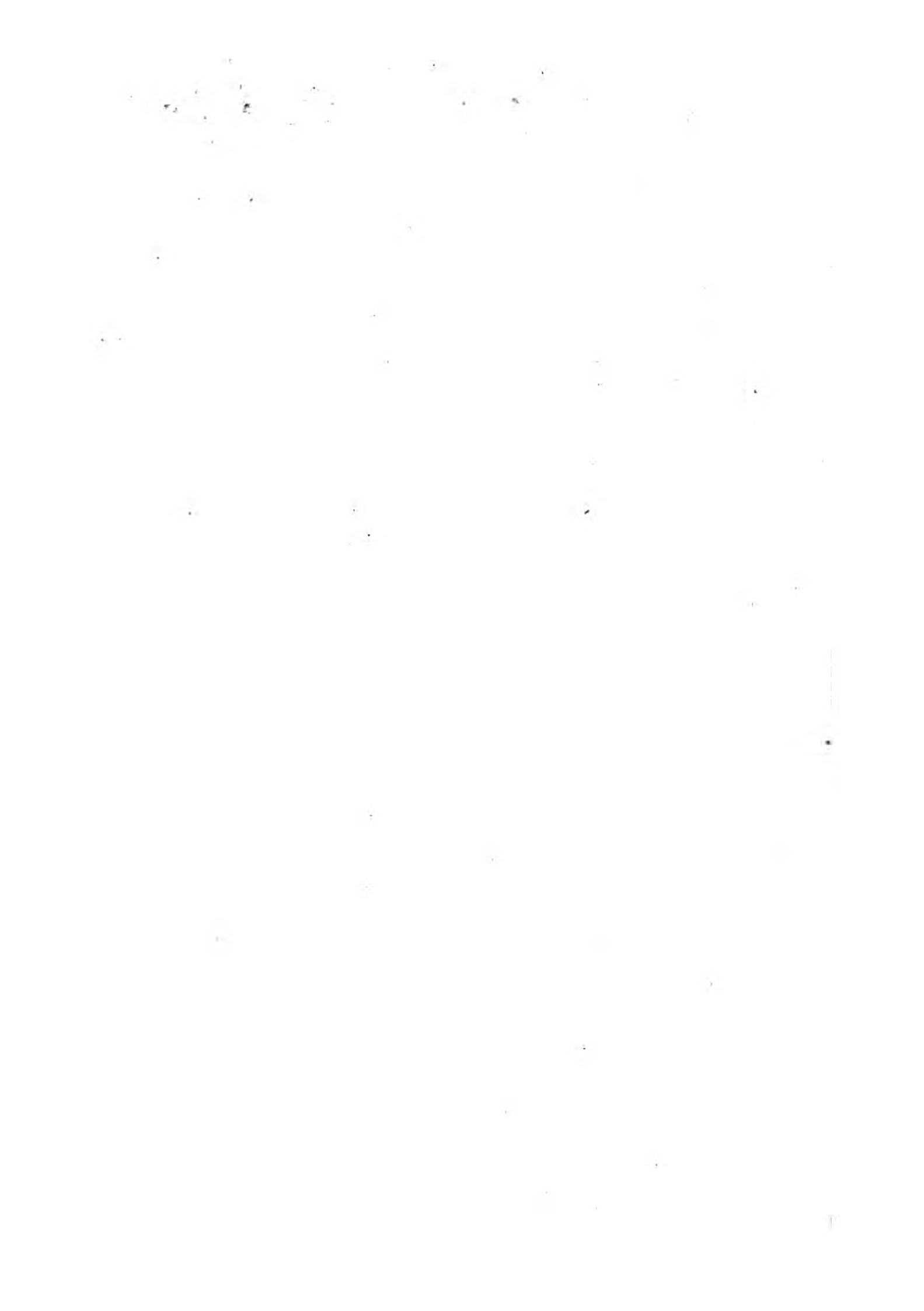
True Christians are a safe people, for Jehovah is to them a God. The God who made the world, who created the heavens, who upholds and governs heaven and earth; the God who gave his Son to die for a lost world is the Christian's God. The God who hath all riches and honours, both temporal and spiritual, both in time and eternity, at his disposal, is the Christian's God. Who would not be a Christian? Let the world proclaim his goodness, and rejoice in his redeeming, forgiving love.

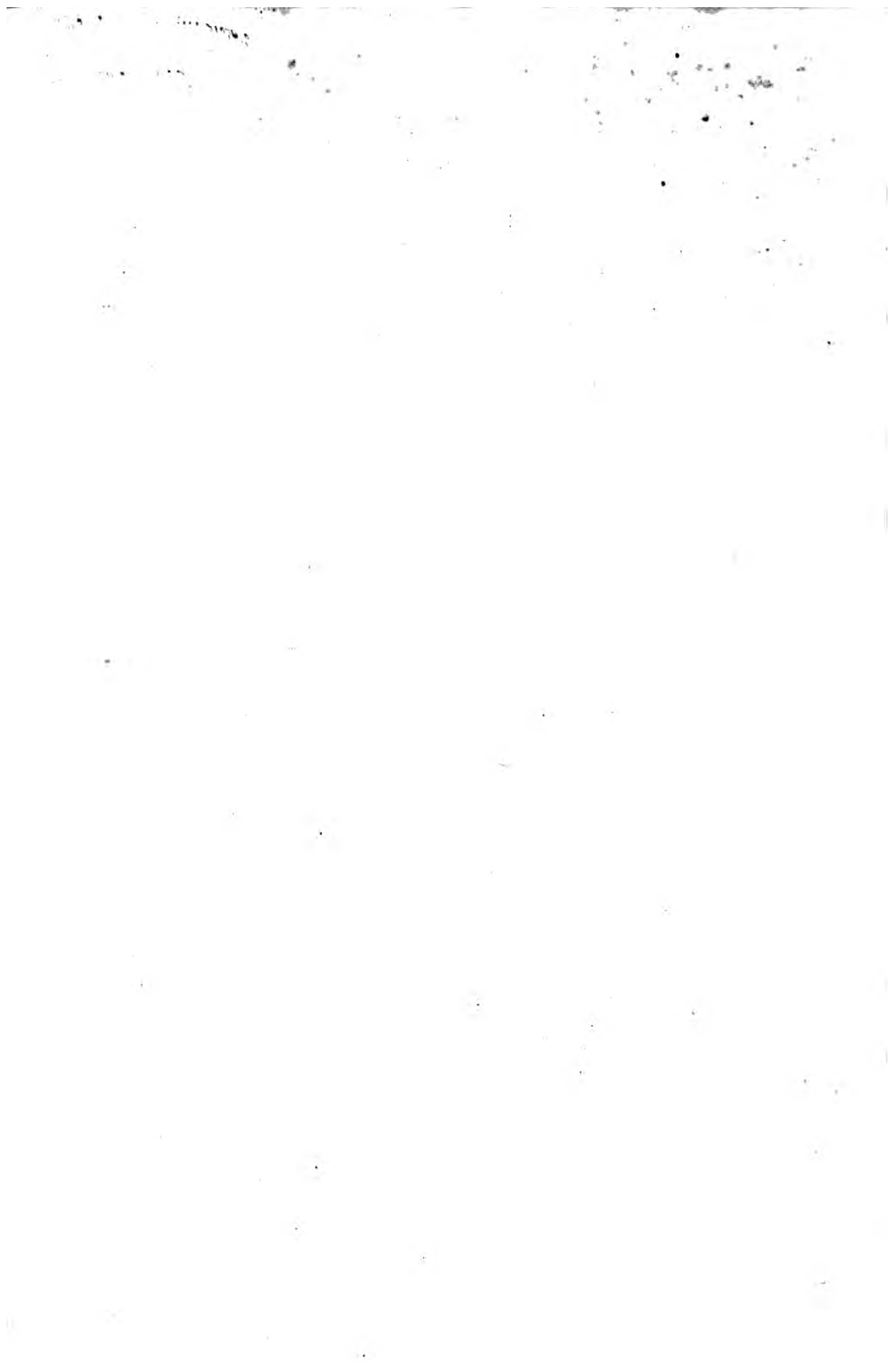
INDEX OF CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|--|------|
| CHAPTER I. | |
| Mr Blair's Early Days, and Residence at Saltcoats, 1797-1836, | 3 |
| CHAPTER II. | |
| His Evangelistic Labours as Agent of the Baptist Home Mission of Scotland, around Saltcoats, 1836, 1837, | 15 |
| CHAPTER III. | |
| His Residence in Ayr, 1837-1840, | 44 |
| CHAPTER IV. | |
| His Residence in Dunfermline, 1840-1844, | 65 |
| CHAPTER V. | |
| Evangelistic Tours in Roxburghshire, 1844, | 73 |
| CHAPTER VI. | |
| His Evangelistic Labours as Agent of the Scottish Baptist Union, 1844-1848, | 92 |
| CHAPTER VII. | |
| His Second Marriage, and Residence at Stirling and Dundee, 1848-1853, | 131 |
| CHAPTER VIII. | |
| His Residence at the Bridge of Allan, 1853-1859, | 145 |

| | Page |
|---|------|
| CHAPTER IX. | |
| His Last Illness and Death, 1859, | 153 |
| CHAPTER X. | |
| Reminiscences of Mr Blair, by Mr Culross of Stirling, . . . | 163 |
| <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 10px auto;"/> | |
| DISCOURSE I. | |
| The Doors—John x. 9, | 171 |
| DISCOURSE II. | |
| The Prodigal Son—Luke xv., | 195 |
| DISCOURSE III. | |
| The New Covenant—Heb. viii. 10-12, | 217 |









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