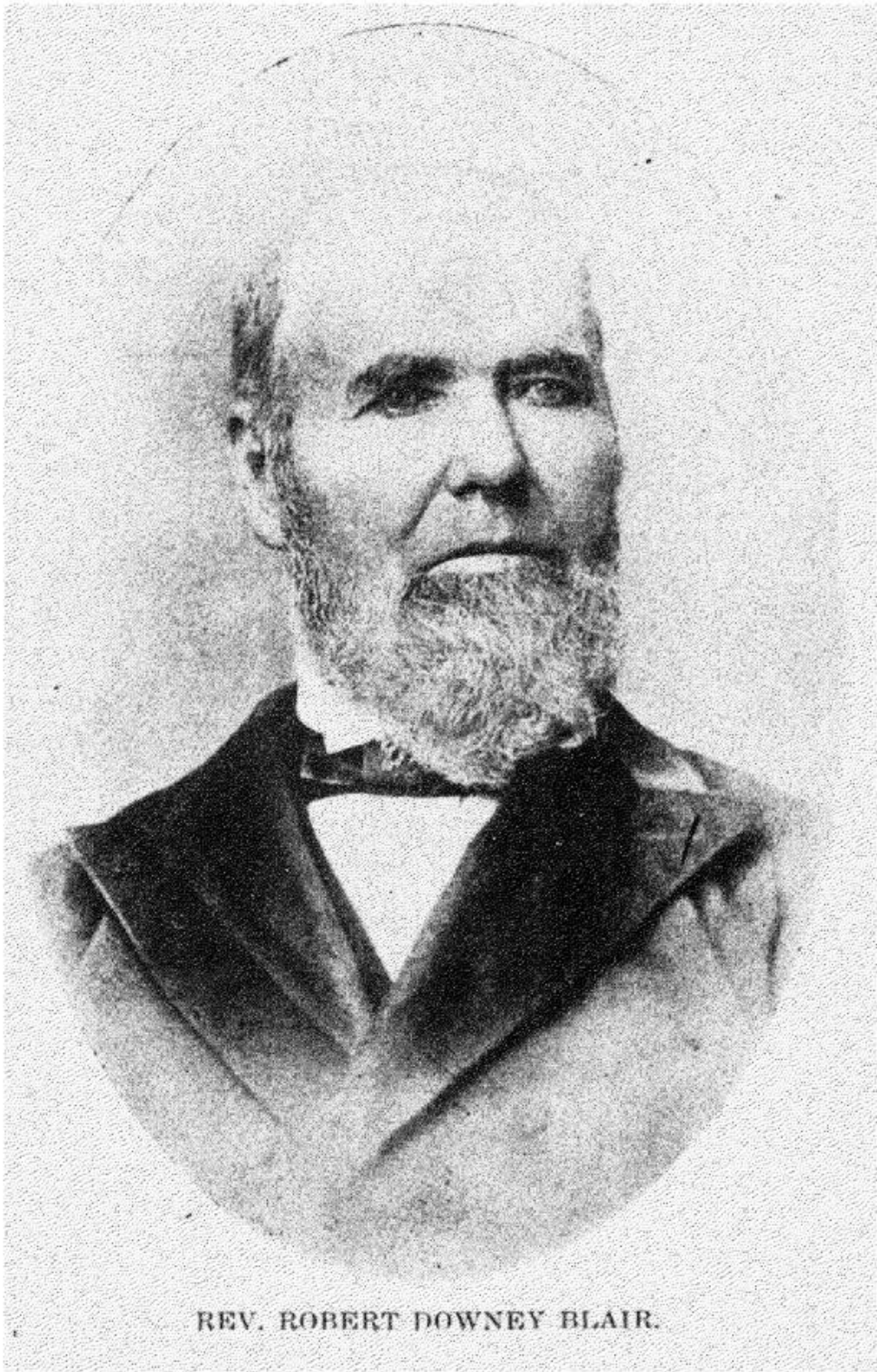




REV. T. N. WILLIAMS.

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REV. ROBERT DOWNEY BLAIR.

**LIFE**

**OF**

**Rev. R. Downey Blair**

**WITH**

**Sketches of His Pastorates and Tributes by Friends Who  
Knew and Loved Him for His Noble Christian  
Character and His Sturdy Type of  
Moral Manhood**

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**BY**

**ONE WHO KNEW AND LOVED HIM**

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**NASHVILLE**

**THE CUMBERLAND PRESS**

**1908**

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## PREFACE.

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The favor with which the many friends of Mr. Blair have kindly received the notice that his biography would appear in book form, and placed before the public, has greatly encouraged the author to prepare a work that would be both interesting and instructive. The frequent inquiries made why his children had not had such a work prepared, together with the calls for information and particulars of his death, and also that of his sons, led to this undertaking.

If asked, "What constitute the most interesting features of this work?" the author would reply, "Clearness and simplicity have been the aim." In the Life of Rev. R. Downey Blair the narrative is based on facts, and not drawn from imagination. Many of our older citizens are acquainted with most of the facts, while the younger have simply heard of them.

The author acknowledges obligations to the various sources of help in preparing this work, especially to Rev. C. K. Taffe, of Louisville, Ky., for the kindness shown in criticising and

adjusting the work. By some it will be much appreciated, by others severely criticised and denounced as inelegant and unrefined, and everything the busy critic can conceive. But the aim of the writer has not been to give offense. On the contrary, every item that might stir up strife or cause hard feelings has been carefully omitted. The author has aimed to make the volume a story of earnest, consecrated effort. It is the tribute of a daughter to her father's memory and she has endeavored to have the narrative well planned and proportioned.

Some of the chapters are devoted to historical sketches of the church in its early struggles, and of Mr. Blair's missionary labors in the mountains of Kentucky. He deserves to be remembered as a faithful worker, as a minister, missionary, teacher and uplifter of humanity. His life may also help display the variety of circumstances under which ministerial and missionary work must be done. All that was good and noble of Mr. Blair, that was available, it is sought to publish in this volume.

Trusting that the book may fall into the hands of some who may deem it worth while to emulate his unselfish example, and knowing that God blesses humble and awkward instru-

mentalities, we beseech him that it may be so in this case; that this little volume may be a blessing to the reader.

To the sacred memory of our Father and Mother this book is tenderly and lovingly dedicated.

THE AUTHOR.



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# Life of R. Downey Blair.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HIS EARLY LIFE.

On the seventh day of October, 1821, Robert Downey Blair was born in Shelby County, Kentucky, of humble parentage. He was the son of William and Jane Blair, who combined the sterling qualities which command the admiration, respect and approval of mankind—good sense, strength of character, sympathy, deep piety;—"diligent in business, serving the Lord." His mother was a virtuous, pious gentlewoman, and one that feared God above many. She looked to the ways of her household, prayed with them daily, and taught them the good knowledge of the Lord betimes. His father, William, was a man who ruled his house in the fear of God and trained up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. No wonder this son Robert found great happiness in having such parentage, humble in the world's estima-

tion, but rich in the things that pertain to faith, righteousness and the world to come.

There can be no doubt that, having been born of such pious parentage, this son was a long way on the road to success. How natural that there should appear in him early inclinations both to learning and piety! He was endowed with very fine natural gifts, and soon in life he learned that if ever he achieved success it must be by his own efforts. "*Per ardua ad alta*" is the familiar motto of the old Romans. "Through difficulties to the heights." How true it is that most of our great men of all ages and climes have toiled through arduous paths to the pinnacle of success! Adversity is the school where rigid rules are enforced, and he who is disobedient and faint of heart will never learn the alphabet of success. With a determined will, tender yet inflexible, Robert D. Blair went to work to overcome the difficulties that lay before him. With a fine physique and a sound mind in a sound body, with a hopeful disposition, he was well equipped to meet the worst of enemies that might dispute his progress.

The earliest records of his ancestry are not available. He did not take credit to himself for their successes, and felt in no way humiliated by

their shortcomings. As pioneers they were a hardy stock, capable of great physical endurance, and of hard, continuous labor. His Puritan ancestors could not have left a more valuable legacy than a deeply imbued religious sentiment. They were among the early settlers of Kentucky, where for almost two hundred years the Blairs have been residents. His mother's family, the Downeys, also possessed a goodly share of Puritan pluck and piety. Robert Downey had every reason to be justly proud in signing his name R. Downey Blair, for both families were types of highly religious enthusiasm and unsullied character.

His parents, William and Jane, were blessed with seven children, two sons and five daughters. The two eldest children were daughters, while Robert Downey was the third child. His father was a cripple and lived on a farm, where the children received their life's training. To give some idea of the hardships through which they passed, in common with their neighbors, in those early days would fill a volume. Church attendance was a rule in the family. The children walked barefoot, carrying their shoes and stockings in hand, putting them on when almost in sight of the church. Frequently they

carried their dinner, and stayed all day, hearing the two sermons and attending the Sunday school. Being engaged in hard work and having to walk several miles to church on Sunday, and being in extreme poverty, they never murmured or complained. All through his life, Mr. Blair looked back with deepest gratitude to this rigid custom, that taught him to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, by attendance upon the worship of the house of God and making use of the outward ordinances. Tedious as the hours passed, still he considered them a blessing because they formed the habit of church attendance.

When Robert was seventeen years old, his father died, thus leaving much of the care and support of the family to devolve upon this eldest son, until his younger brother could share the responsibility. The father possessed his homestead, but had little besides to leave his family, which practically had no means of support. A less courageous heart than his widow's would have been overcome by the dark prospects for the future, yet with undaunted courage, and with a strong faith in God, she faced the battle against poverty.

The advantages of even a common school edu-

cation in those days were very limited. Books were few, and very expensive. A poor boy had a hard struggle to obtain an education, yet R. Downey Blair had the courage, ambition and perseverance to obtain a practical education. He worked on the farm during the spring and summer months, and attended the public schools in the fall and winter. At the age of eighteen he taught school, teaching school and studying while he taught, laboring for many years to gain the equivalent of a college course. He always spoke of those days of hardship with the most tender reference to his brave mother and sisters, who by their self-sacrifice, industry and devotion had enabled him to pursue his studies.

It was an early characteristic of Mr. Blair that when determined to accomplish his purpose he was not easily thwarted, and to keep a promise was one of the first principles his parents taught their children to observe. All through his life he sacredly kept his promises. Often he has been known to have been detained by storm or swollen stream; yet if he had promised to be at home, he would brave the elements, ride far into the night, reaching home in safety but thoroughly drenched. He was determined to obtain an education, but how to procure the necessary



books was a difficult problem. The family library contained less than a dozen books in his early school days: a large family Bible, which contained the family records, the catechism, and a few well-worn testaments. After the children had learned to read, the small testaments were the only available material which they carried with them to school. But even with such a scanty supply of literature, the tender hearted mother permitted no fault-finding or complaining of their lot. "Trust in God," was the brief creed of this Christian mother, and many evidences of the thoroughness with which this lesson was taught to her children were found in their early experiences, as well as in their later lives, all of which were "stepping-stones" to greater possibilities.

This son was thus greatly blessed in having such a mother, who was to him as Lois and Eunice were to Timothy, acquainting him with the Scriptures from his childhood, and commending all of his ways to him who, like an earthly father pitieth his children, would also pity him and cause his face to shine upon him. With such an atmosphere of piety and sweet resignation to God's will, with such a healthy moral home influence, and surrounded by the liv-

ing example of the godly life of his widowed mother, we are not at all surprised to see this young fatherless boy begin to turn his thoughts seriously to the ministry as his life's work, and to build his character upon the "Rock Foundation" without whom all life must be in vain, but in whom we can do all things, for he strengtheneth us. Thus it is seen how the dews of heaven softened his heart by degrees, and from these early experiences, and the lessons learned at his mother's knee, he was constrained to "seek first the kingdom of heaven," knowing that all other things needful should be added.

## CHAPTER II.

## BEGINNING OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

By his early training Mr. Blair was religious, but he had never made an open profession of his religious sentiments. At the age of eighteen he made a public profession of religion, and united with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, under the ministry of the Rev. David Robinson, of precious memory. From the time he accepted Christ his whole life changed, and shortly after his conversion he felt that God had called him to preach the gospel and so deeply was he convinced that he, like Paul, exclaimed, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." His means were inadequate to enable him to enter Cumberland College, but to the brave nothing is difficult.

It was not an unusual occurrence in those early days for many of our ministers to receive their instruction in private families, under some of our older ministers. The first ecclesiastical act of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was to receive a young man under care of presbytery,

and to direct him in his studies, preparatory to ordination to the whole work of the ministry.

The presbyteries were diligent and in earnest in the control of the young men, requiring them to pursue their studies privately; the older ministers rendering valuable assistance, often making their homes a school. In the absence of a college course, the probationer received a practical preparation for his life-work. Frequently the system of private studying ripened into a high grade of scholarship. Rev. Laban Jones, one of our pioneer ministers, gave private instruction in theology to Mr. Blair. He lived in the home of Mr. Jones for several years, and was treated as a member of his family. Here he was a diligent student, studying laboriously early and late, until he felt prepared to preach. He began his preparation for the ministry in the year 1839, and was ordained to the full work of the ministry in 1848. Rev. David Robinson preached the ordination sermon.

In 1852 he was called to take charge of a group of churches as permanent pastor—Bethlehem, Jeffersontown and Pleasant Grove, all in Jefferson County, Kentucky—preaching once a month for each congregation. It was at this time that Mr. Blair purchased a small farm, which

later became his home. A barren little tract, near Pleasant Grove church, was offered at this time, at a moderate price, and he bought it, intending to locate in the country, for the sake of his wife and children. Gradually his interest in his churches increased, until they became the scene of his greatest activities and most lasting work. He lived on this farm more than forty years, preaching for these churches the greater part of the time.

In the early part of Mr. Blair's ministry the question of salary did not interfere with his pastorates. The denomination was young, and its churches few in numbers, as well as in membership. Its ministers were compelled to labor in the face of opposition and many other discouragements. Very little was done in a systematic way, because money was necessary and the people had but little of it. His churches were unable to give him much in the way of salary, hence it became necessary to teach school and work on his farm, when he could do so without interfering with his pastoral duties; and in this way he provided for his family. Pleasant Grove was the weakest of the three churches he served. I don't believe he ever received a salary from that church. He was often asked how much

Pleasant Grove congregation paid him. He would answer, "I never charged the congregation for my services." Some of the wealthier members paid him some money from time to time, we know, but the majority were unable to pay anything. He was always very modest in regard to this matter, realizing it was the wisest course to accept what the membership could give. We will never know in this life how much or how little he received. If his sermons, his counsel and example helped men and women to better lives he was satisfied. It was his chief aim to better humanity. Eternity alone can reveal the vast amount of good he accomplished. No one living ever knew or ever will know the amount of financial aid he gave the worthy poor.

He always called himself a poor man, and indeed he was, in the early part of his ministry. He was a hard student all his life. Early in life he began to purchase such books as he needed and which his small means allowed, and continued to do this almost all his life. So at the time of his death he owned quite a library of good and valuable books. He was a thoroughly self-made man and encouraged other young men to become so.

There were a number of very ambitious young men in his neighborhood, who were unable to obtain a college education, and who earnestly begged Mr. Blair to take the public school, in order to assist them. He not only taught them in the schools, but gave private instructions at night to quite a number of these young men. Most of these became honored Christian citizens, some entering secular professions, and some becoming ministers of the gospel. He was unable financially to aid young men at this time. A young man by name of William Davis, without home or means, but very anxious to obtain an education, asked to be taken to Mr. Blair's home, to attend his school, and receive private instruction at night, offering to work nights and mornings to pay for his schooling. Although it was almost impossible, under the circumstances, to take this extra labor, yet he made the sacrifice, and gave the young man all the assistance in his power. He obtained a fair education without cost, Mr. Blair also furnishing him books. He became a successful business man and reared a family of intelligent children. One of his sons, who was named for Mr. Blair, became a minister of the gospel. Mr. Blair assisted many a young man equally as much as the one just

mentioned, though not in a time when life was a struggle. Large numbers of our best citizens who are living to-day owe much of their success in life to him, for the assistance and encouragement they received at his hands.

Some conversions occur suddenly like that of St. Paul on the road to Damascus, or like the penitent thief on the cross. Again there are those whose conversion is a process of many years' growth. We ought not to lay too much stress, however, upon sudden conversion or our knowing the exact time. With many this is impossible. Who can know when or where or how the Spirit worketh? Who can so soon be aware of the daybreak or the sprouting of seed sown? The work of grace is better known in its effects than in its beginning. The blind man accosted by the Pharisees, who were so critical in examining the recovery of his sight, said, "This and the other I know not concerning it, but this one thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see." So it seems to have been with the subject of this memoir. It was but the sprouting of the good seed sown in early childhood by the hand of pious parents. At last the day of ordination had come, the day when the good seed should begin to bear fruit a hundred fold and



more. Putting men into the ministry is the work of Christ, and, like Timothy, he was thankful that "Christ Jesus our Lord had enabled him, for that he counted him faithful, putting him in the work of Christ."

## CHAPTER III.

## HIS WORK AS A MISSIONARY IN KENTUCKY.

In 1868, after serving the congregations at Jeffersontown, Bethlehem and Pleasant Grove for sixteen years, he believed a change of pastors would be beneficial. Accordingly at the close of the services he tendered his resignation, which was reluctantly accepted. He urged the session to lose no time in employing a pastor. When he took charge of these churches in 1852 his faith in their future prosperity was great. From feeble, struggling churches, with but a small number enrolled as members, they had become self-supporting, and their future prosperity was assured.

Rev. J. B. Madden assumed charge of these congregations after Mr. Blair's resignation, serving a few years. It was in the same year the American Sunday School Union issued a call for missionaries for the United States. Mr. Blair enlisted as a missionary for Kentucky. He labored faithfully throughout the state, but was

always in touch with the work in his churches. It has been said by many that the best and most enduring work of his life was accomplished while he was engaged as a missionary. His work was much harder and required him to be away from his home sometimes two or three months at a time, enduring many hardships and privations, such as only a missionary is acquainted with. His work extended into the rough mountainous districts of the state, where ignorance and vice prevail to an alarming extent.

He organized Sunday schools, supplied them with all necessary literature, distributed books and tracts, lecturing on the importance of Sunday schools and preaching the Word to the destitute in schoolhouses and homes. In many instances the "home" contained but one room. Many were turned from lives of idleness and vice to accept Christ as their portion. His work as a missionary was a revelation. The methods he employed in getting children to attend Sunday school were unique. He always carried with him books and leaflets suited to children, which he distributed. At first these only excited curiosity; but he seldom failed to interest the children, so that they gladly attended his meetings and entered the Sunday schools. Having secured

their attendance, he was equally as earnest in his efforts to retain them. Once on the rolls, he looked after them, visiting their homes, and taking such a warm and practical interest in them that they became devotedly attached to him.

The reports of his successful work in the state were very encouraging, as is indicated in the following extract from a letter to his wife: "The Lord is blessing my labors. I am driven more than I ever was in my life. I have crowded houses wherever I go." He often spoke of the "continued blessing that rested on his work, as a token of God's approval." "No place is so bad, no class so hardened, as to be despaired of," he often said. He sometimes took his daughter with him on his long tours, to sing in his Sunday schools, to help him to attract the children and interest their parents. He wrote monthly reports, or letters, of his work and sent to the Board of Missions of the American Sunday School Union, always, however, keeping a copy of each report, which he filed away, telling one of his daughters they "might find use for them after he had finished his work here." These reports were very interesting, and literally sparkled with gems of religious truth. If published in book form, as we believe was his intention, it

would stand high on the lists of missionary libraries for years to come, and "by it he being dead yet speaketh." The old home was destroyed by fire several years before his death, and as the reports were stored in a closet upstairs, seldom used, they were probably burned.

In all his travels and labors among the worst classes of people I never knew of a single instance where he was injured or molested in any way. The servant of God who goes forth to engage in gospel work is defended by the right hand of his omnipotence. Mr. Blair's Bible was the only weapon he was ever known to carry. He believed in the power of prayer, and sought divine guidance and protection in all his undertakings and journeyings. He prayed believing he would receive that for which he asked, and according to Divine promise, and in the success attending his ministry we are assured that he obtained answer to prayer. The same loving Father will equally bless and protect all who call upon him believing.

After laboring as a missionary for several years, he was compelled to tender his resignation, on account of being needed at home. His wife, who had not been strong for several years, was now in feeble health. The care of their

large family, and looking after the affairs of the farm, were more than she was able to attend to. Hence he very reluctantly gave up the good work which was, as he himself expressed it, "scarcely begun."

Mr. Blair was soon after again called to take charge of the churches he served before engaging as a missionary. These churches, if they did not originate with him, at least received a great impulse from him, for he gave them strength and momentum. It seemed impossible for these churches to secure a minister who could remain more than a few years with them. There had been frequent changes during Mr. Blair's missionary activities, and the congregations gladly welcomed him back. He worked like a general and had a warm place in the hearts of these people, who were among the best friends he ever had, and on whose sympathy he could always count.

His work as a missionary was likewise a means of increasing his knowledge and love and other graces, and thus it abounded to a good account. The sphere may have been too narrow for such a burning and shining light, yet this humble servant of God had such low thought of himself and such high thoughts of his work

and the worth of souls, that he laid out his work himself with as much diligence and vigor here as if he had the oversight of the greatest and most considerable parish in the country. Indeed, the work of a missionary afforded him rare opportunities for sowing seed in desolate places, of expounding the Scriptures to those who seldom heard the blessed truth, and of discoursing familiarly with sinners concerning the things of God, to their mutual edification, and emulating the example of the apostles, who though they had the liberty of public places, yet taught the flock from house to house. Thus he knew better how to preach to them and pray for them, and they to pray for one another.

## CHAPTER IV.

## HIS SECOND CHARGE OF HIS FORMER CHURCHES.

In again assuming pastoral charge of these churches, his work, in many respects, was like that of his first labors among them. It almost seemed that he took up the work where he had left it a few years before. He had, as he expressed it, "higher hopes, and if possible greater faith, than he had when he first took up the work." In being told that many of his members had left the church, and "gone back," he said: "Some have told me that my work in these churches has not lasted; I want to say that I have been all over the state, and in several other states, preaching and working for the cause of my Master, and wherever I have gone I have found the fruits of my work among you. They told me they were converted under my preaching." How many he won to Christ cannot be estimated. When asked if he had any idea how many souls had been led to Christ under his ministry, he answered: "I do not know. I have



never tried to keep a record. But I feel sure there are many whose names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life, who have told me I had led them to Christ."

Mr. Blair resided in the community near the churches he served more than forty years, as we have said, which was a longer period, perhaps, than any minister engaged in active church work, either before or since his residence in Kentucky. His influence was great, and held wrong-doers in check. That community in which the servant of God is permanently located is wonderfully blessed. It is of the greatest importance that country churches have their minister located near their fields of labor, and watching over their flocks, instead of residing in the cities, reaching their appointments by river or rail once or twice a month.

Most of the churches in the country have preaching only once a month. Twelve Sundays out of fifty-two! Is it possible to save a sinful world on this plan? Is it any wonder so many of our young men are visiting the dramshops, and rushing pellmell into drunkards' graves? Is it to be wondered at that it has become the universal fashion for many of them to become experts at the gaming table? Attending church

once a month, and in the gambling dens and barrooms forty Sundays a year! What would become of our flocks and herds if we attended them only once or twice a month? Some will answer, "The Sunday school is watching over and training the young people in the absence of the pastor." In some instances it is, and we admit the Sunday school is doing a grand work; but it is not reaching all.

We wish to call attention to the fact that pastors should be impressed with the church's responsibility for the religious education of children; that family training can no longer be depended on, as we are told it once could. The Sunday school, even at its best, cannot do all that ought to be done. Let pastors locate in the country near their churches, not expecting too much in the way of a salary. The pastor should consider the value of souls as greater than silver and gold. Let him labor with his hands for a while, which will help materially, and we will find that the number of church members will increase, the work of the Sunday schools will be far-reaching, and in time the remuneration will increase also. The founders of our churches were not discouraged by small incomes. Their work was not retarded nor did they seek broader

fields of labor that they might obtain larger salaries. The greatest good to any community or church can be accomplished only by persistent and earnest efforts and permanent pastorates. We believe permanency in a pastorate is perhaps one of the foundation stones which must be laid before much else of permanency can be erected.

The frequent and numerous changes, after Mr. Blair closed his first pastorate, go to show that much more could have been accomplished had the pastors felt a strong inclination to remain and labor amid hardships and discouragements as he did. On the firm foundation he laid in those days, by his tireless and unceasing efforts, the churches exist and flourish at the present day. His last pastorate continued a number of years, but it is not positively known how long. He stated in a letter to his daughter, just after a visit to his old neighborhood in Kentucky: "There are many good people living there yet. I met so many who expressed their pleasure in seeing me, that I almost wished I was back in my old neighborhood. But even if I ever return to Kentucky, I shall not locate on the old farm, nor in that neighborhood. I surely preached there long enough—over forty years. I made

some mistakes, and may make others worse. I never expect warmer friends than I have in Kentucky." Thus we see he spent near half a century working for these churches. Two of them are lasting monuments to his faithful service. When he took pastoral charge of these churches in 1852 they were feeble, struggling congregations. Mr. Blair labored zealously through all those years of hardship and lived to see their future prosperity assured.

Many very pious, worthy families in the country would say of Mr. Blair that they had no friend like-minded who naturally cared for their state and affectionately sympathized with them and in whom they could safely trust. The interests of families generally lay near his heart. As in Egypt there was not a house in which there was not one dead, so there are many families in which not one is alive. We weep over the body from which the soul is departed, and why not rather weep over the soul from which God is departed? So the family interests naturally engaged the attention and prayers of this pious servant of God, and thus he won the affections of those for whom he was so deeply concerned.

## CHAPTER V.

## HIS TEMPERANCE VIEWS.

From the beginning of his ministry, Mr. Blair was a staunch temperance man. He preached on the subject of temperance, and lectured on the subject whenever he had an opportunity. He was an earnest advocate of temperance societies and became a member of the Independent Order of Good Templars soon after its organization. Also when the Murphy movement reached his neighborhood, he connected himself with it. One of the lodges was named "Blair Lodge" as a token of regard for his zeal in the cause of temperance. He attempted a great work for God in his endeavors to reform the inebriate and save the young. He believed that the God who cast out devils of old would do it again if only asked. The bloated face of the blear-eyed drunkard; the want and squalor of the inebriate's family; the helpless, half-starved, long-abused, yet faithful wife and children, with woe in its most terrible form, outlined in every feature, clinging to the besotted brutes to the last: all his efforts

seemed to be concentrated on reforming them. Three of the worst dramshops in the country were located in his precinct. He had ample opportunity to witness the evils of intemperance, and right bravely did he work to rid the community of them. He was not afraid to speak his sentiments plainly, in spite of some threats by one of the whiskey-sellers. It was only a threat after all. It was chiefly through his efforts that local option was carried in his precinct. He lived to see these dramshops closed, and local option in full force. The worst of the three barrooms is to-day an honor instead of a curse to the community, and is conducted by a Christian lady, who sells nothing but groceries, feed and general merchandise, and is prospering in a most creditable way.

Mr. Blair was not only a temperance worker, but was strictly temperate in practice. I never knew him to use any kind of intoxicating drink, nor allow it in his house, except in his wife's very last illness, which was consumption. The physician prescribed cod-liver oil and whiskey, but she was not benefitted by its use, which only served to make him more opposed to its use, even as a medicine. I remember many incidents in regard to his temperance principles, some of

which were very funny: Two of his acquaintances, who were seldom sober and who were "tough characters," happened at his home one day, just as dinner was ready. No amount of temperance talk or lecturing could induce them to reform. Mr Blair invited them out to dinner. As soon as dinner was over he took them in the living room, and called in his four daughters and two eldest sons, had them stand in a row and sing a rousing temperance song, in their very best style. The two old toppers were taken completely by surprise. As soon as the song was finished they exclaimed, "Well done, Brother Blair. You certainly got a hearing this time. Indeed, that was better than any temperance lecture we ever heard. We ought to sign the pledge right here." I am very sorry to say they never signed, though they never annoyed Mr. Blair afterward. They usually called just as dinner was ready and left right after.

He seldom met with a case of infidelity or intemperance he believed to be hopeless. While the family physician was visiting a sick patient at Mr. Blair's house, a man living near came to consult the physician about his eyes, which were "blood-shot." He was, as most people termed him, a hopeless infidel and confirmed

drunkard. While the physician was examining his eyes, one of Mr. Blair's daughters happened in the room and said to her father aside, "Why, his eyes are blood-shot: if he will let whiskey alone he will not need the physician. But he will never do that, father; he is a hopeless case, a lost soul." He answered, "Hush, daughter; there is no one so bad, no class so hardened, but there is some hope." Years after this incident this same man reformed and united with the church. Shortly before his conversion his physician told him he had but a short time to live, as he was in the last stage of consumption. He sent for a minister, who went to him and ministered to his spiritual needs, assuring him there was hope even "at the eleventh hour." To all appearances he received pardon. Not being able to leave his bed, a scald-tub was procured, and he was lifted into it, receiving the ordinance of baptism, after which the Lord's Supper was administered to him. He died in a short time peacefully.

Soon after his death his wife united with the church. Mr. Blair did not live to see this change wrought, but he never lost hope, or an opportunity to speak a word of encouragement. His daughter who remarked, "He is a hopeless case," was living near at the time of his conversion.



## CHAPTER VI.

## CLOSE OF HIS PASTORATE AT PLEASANT GROVE.

At the close of his pastorate at Pleasant Grove I do not believe that there was living when he resigned more than a score of the members who belonged to the church when he took charge. But their children and grandchildren were there. Some, perhaps, were fathers and mothers, who as babes were set apart by him as God's own through baptism, who again stood before him at the marriage altar to be united in the holy bonds of matrimony. And when death claimed them he committed them to their last resting place in the silent city of the dead. He comforted the bereaved and pointed them to the Lamb of God who was every ready to help them bear their sorrows.

He carried a little book or memorandum, in which he had written the number and dates of the marriages he had solemnized, the funerals he had preached, and the names of the sick and dying he had visited in their last hours. Besides

some of his church and temperance work was also recorded in that little book; which shows how near and dear to his heart were all these labors of love.

To-day, as we look back over the many years that have passed since Mr. Blair first entered the pulpit at old Pleasant Grove, that Sabbath morning in 1852, we find there are few left who greeted him on that day. Of the pastors who filled the pulpit of this church previous to his coming, not one is left. Noel, Irvine, Langdon, Jones and Robinson have all gone to their reward, and entered into eternal rest. And of the ruling elders who served the church at that time, all have passed into the great hereafter. As we recount events we feel a deep sense of loneliness, and yet amid these sad memories, the clouds of depression show their silver lining. As I now remember there are to the credit of this church, three ministers of the gospel, a score or more ruling elders and deacons, and many hundreds of useful and earnest, active Christian men and women, who learned the way of life eternal at the feet of these brave ministers.

Mr. Blair had very little patience with showy funerals, or a display of costly flowers, when he was aware they had not been bestowed during

life. "I want no flowers placed on my coffin," he often remarked. "Strew them along my pathway while I am living and can enjoy their beauty and fragrance. If my pathway through life has been strewn with piercing thorns, flowers on my coffin would be but a sham, a mockery."

He was a man of acute and cultivated taste, and every wrong action, whether committed by himself or another, was a source of great pain to him. He placed a high estimate on the possibilities of human life and was a man of the greatest courage and industry. He was not ashamed or afraid to labor with his hands, and like Paul, he could say, "Yea, ye yourselves know these hands have ministered unto my wants," holding up his toil-worn hands toward heaven, while engaged in prayer or preaching. His hearers had ample opportunity to witness those dear familiar hands, which now are bearing "palms of victory," and on his brow a "crown of glory in that beautiful world on high."

He taught that there were other possibilities obtainable than mere money-making, and pleasure-seeking, and other vices. These possibilities have assumed the form of vices in these days, and our ministers and teachers should impress upon their hearers and pupils that a high aim in

life, with a proper amount of ambition, will surely be accomplished.

He was a faithful presbyter, regular in his attendance, and a number of times was a commissioner to the General Assembly. Many of his brethren in the ministry rejoice in the many pleasant memories of him both as man and a Christian minister. One of his most intimate friends said of him: "Praying alone with him, I found him humble as a child before God. Out in the work with him, I found him bold as a lion before men—no hesitation, no shrinking, no timidity, speaking with authority, speaking as an ambassador of the most high God."

A large number of the people attending church in those days, as now, were drawn there to scrutinize, and from curiosity. So they were when they followed Christ to the streets of Jerusalem, or the wilderness; yet many of them found the healing of their souls; but none could detect in Mr. Blair a single motive that was not pure and ennobling.

Each of his children is justly proud of his record, and fondly cherishes his memory. He was tireless in his efforts to aid them in obtaining an education, and to lead honorable Christian lives. While he had no great fortune to bequeath

to his children, he left them what is far better—"A heritage more to be desired than many riches"—a good name, and a record of a long life of faithful service in the gospel ministry.

It seems but a short time since we were an unbroken family, gathered about the family altar, and heard his kind and familiar voice in daily supplication, beseeching God in all the earnestness of his soul to "keep him and his household for his own; to comfort the afflicted, bind up the broken-hearted, lead all men to know and trust in him; for he never yet said to his people 'Seek ye me in vain.'"

Farewell, dear father, brave and true. We sadly miss you as the battle goes on, but we'll not grudge you your well earned rest and promotion. Soon the conflict will be ended with us all; and when the smoke of battle has been driven away by the heavenly breezes, and the clouds of sorrow have rolled away forever, and light and peace have become to us a glorious reality, then, dear father, we shall see you again; but—

Not with cross and armor bowed;  
Not with age and sorrow bent;  
But with saints and angels bowed,  
And with crowns and homage bent.

## CHAPTER VII.

## HIS WAR EXPERIENCES.

The most adventurous part of Mr. Blair's life was during the Civil War. On several occasions he was brought face to face with grave danger. When the armies were camping in the community Mrs. Blair often begged him not to venture out to fill his appointments. But he was fearless, and only in one instance that we remember was he detained. On his way to Bethlehem church, in company with Rev. J. B. Madden, who was to assist him in a protracted meeting at that church, he was compelled to pass along the Bardstown pike, where the Southern soldiers were encamped. They passed a squad of soldiers who were in conversation with a neighbor. He spoke pleasantly to both the ministers. After they had passed, one of the soldiers asked who the men were, and on being told "they are ministers, and on their way to hold a meeting," they enquired whether they were "Northern or Southern men," and were told they were "Northern," but took

no part in politics. Soon after they had passed, and both Mr. Blair and Mr. Madden were in ignorance of the questions as to "their politics," a soldier galloped after them and commanded them to "halt." They were then placed under arrest, and searched, but soon proved they were ministers on their way to their appointment, instead of spies, as the soldiers were led to believe. They were soon released from custody, though not permitted to go on to their appointment, but were allowed to return home.

Mr. Blair always said if it had not been for his good friend and neighbor, Col. George Hancock, to whom they referred them, the soldiers would in all probability have handled them roughly. At that time either the Northern or Southern soldiers frequently camped near Mr. Blair's home. It was all a man's life was worth if a false report reached the soldiers. No matter how little interest he took in politics, some such rumors often brought good men into the greatest dangers.

Mr. Blair's only brother, William A., enlisted in the Southern army. He was crippled when a boy. While cutting corn he accidentally cut his knee, causing the joint water to flow, which caused the joint to become stiff, and which

troubled him all his life, and partly caused his death. Soon after enlisting, he found he was unable to march on foot, or to endure the hardships of war, and was compelled to leave the army and return home. We do not suppose he realized the danger this act would place him in. It was not long till he was missed from the ranks and search was made for him. The officers threatened to shoot him if found. He made his way to his old home, and on hearing the officers were after him, kept in hiding for some time, during which Mr. Blair heard of his brother's trouble for the first time. He went immediately to relieve him and his three sisters. They were living in Shelby County, Kentucky, a distance of forty or fifty miles from Mr. Blair's home. He made arrangements to have his brother sent to his house, at the risk of his own life, as he and everyone knew, and kept him till peace was proclaimed. Immediately after peace was proclaimed, he procured a farm near his own in Jefferson County, took his teams and moved his sisters from Shelby County, at his own expense.

Only a short time after the above incident he was again called to perform another act of a similar nature, though fraught with greater danger,



as the incidents connected with his brother's trouble occurred in Shelby County, Kentucky, while the latter was not over three miles from Mr. Blair's home.

The soldiers, or "guerrillas," threatened the life of Mr. H. W. Bence, one of the charter members and ruling elder in Pleasant Grove Church. We do not now know just what was the cause of this threat; but, like many another similar case, it was most probably a false report that had reached the soldiers. It was certain that no word or act of Mr. Bence's had anything to do with the actions of the soldiers. He took very little interest in politics. There was not a more sincerely devout Christian man in the community than Mr. Bence.

However, he heard of their threat. The first night they were to search his house for him, he was hidden in his attic. It was not likely they would search there for him. When they arrived he could plainly hear them searching his house in every room and closet, up stairs and down, and heard their rough threats to kill him if found. They failed to find him, but he was aware that they intended to continue the search the following night. Accordingly, very early the next day he went to Mr. Blair, and told him the

trouble, and asked for protection in his house till the danger was past. Mr. Blair did not hesitate a moment, but gladly offered him any assistance in his power to give; though both of them were aware that it was at the risk of his own life. He was not molested, neither did the soldiers come near Mr. Blair's house on that occasion, and it is remarkable that they did not. It required the greatest courage to perform an act of that kind in those war times, and Mr. Bence was always after profoundly grateful for this brave act.

A few months after this a band of "guerrillas," as they were called, came to Mr. Blair's house to kill him. A few hours before they arrived, a kind neighbor, Mr. James Logsdon, heard of their intentions, and went immediately and told Mr. Blair. They were not a quarter of a mile away at that moment. He had very little time to act. Whether he was frightened or not we never knew. He appeared as calm and serene as though he were expecting some friends, and went to his wife and told her to prepare the best supper, and plenty of it, that she could get up on such short notice. I do not think he told her of their danger or she would have been too frightened to prepare the supper. Accordingly

the band of men soon arrived. Mr. Blair stabled and fed their horses. There were ten or twelve and perhaps fifteen in the gang. The children thought it was a "big crowd." He then invited them to the house. As soon as supper was ready, he invited them out to supper. A long table had been arranged, and all the good things his wife and daughters could prepare were spread before them. They all sat down, Mr. Blair at the foot of the table. He asked a blessing on the food they were about to partake of, as was his custom, with as much composure as if his family were gathered around the table instead of a band of outlaws and murderers.

As soon as supper was over he led them into the family room, and sat by the fire talking to them in a social way, till they thought it time to go. They thanked him and Mrs. Blair very kindly for their hospitality, and told him they had "come to his house that night with the intention to kill him and rob his house, that they had been told that very day he was a bad, meddling man, and many other false statements which had angered them." They even told him the names of some of the men who had urged them on. And "instead of finding him a bad man, they had never been treated better by any-

one." After leaving Mr. Blair, they told it in the neighborhood, "Mr. Blair is a gentleman in his house. We were treated by him and his family with the greatest kindness."

They did not molest him in the least, or attempt to rob him. Every room was unlocked, every drawer and closet also. Two or three of the band were stationed in the parlor. One of Mr. Blair's daughters had occasion to go into that room for some article, not knowing they were in there. The men were stretched at full length on the floor with their guns in reach. As soon as she entered they jumped to their feet in alarm. She was greatly alarmed, but they did not trouble her. Mr. Blair believed that they thought the officers of the law were after them.

If Mr. Logsdon had not informed him of their coming, he might not have handled them so successfully. I believe he sought Divine aid and guidance in this trying time, as he had sought it all his life, and that His right hand sustained him. He often said he felt sure Mr. Logsdon was instrumental in preserving his life.

Mr. Blair was called to Bethlehem neighborhood to unite a couple in marriage some time after his experience with the "guerrillas." The ceremony was to take place at Mr. Robert Ca-

ruthers' residence. His daughter, Miss Mary, was to be united in marriage to Mr. Tyler Carpenter. After performing the ceremony, all were invited out to the dining-room to partake of a sumptuous wedding supper. There were a large number of invited guests; many of them intended to remain all night. Mr. Blair and his daughter, Miss Bettie, who accompanied him, were urged to remain. But he thought it best to spend the night with Captain Woodsmall, several miles nearer his own home. After arriving at Mr. Woodsmall's they sat some time in conversation. It was nearing bedtime. Mr. Blair was asked to read a chapter and lead in prayer, after which they would retire. Just as they arose from prayer a band of guerrillas stalked in, very soon making known their errand. They had heard Captain Woodsmall had sold a drove of cattle and obtained the money that day, which they wanted, and intended to get. He told them he had no money. They said they "knew better," and at once proceeded to search the house. His daughter, Mrs. Charles Moore, carried a light for them from room to room. Mrs. Woodsmall was a helpless invalid, not able to leave her bed. After searching the other rooms they went to her bed, shoved her from one side to the

other, making a thorough search beneath the mattress and bed clothing, but found no money anywhere. They then tried to frighten the family into telling where the money was concealed, by threats to hang or shoot them, but to no purpose.

They next proceeded to carry out their threat and led the Captain and his son-in-law, Mr. Charles Moore, out into the yard. Also Mr. Blair was led out. They fastened a rope around the Captain's and Mr. Moore's necks, and again demanded them to tell where the money was hidden. This they refused to do. Then they were swung up till Mr. Woodsmall was almost lifeless. They let them down a short time, again demanded the money, which was again refused, and again they were swung up. This was repeated, I believe, three times. Each time they demanded the money, which was as promptly refused. After trying hanging, they then threatened to shoot, and placed the muzzle of a pistol to the Captain's temple; when his daughter, Mrs. Moore, stepped forward, placing herself between them, threw her arm around her father's neck and told them, "You will have to shoot me before you can shoot my father." They finally gave it up without obtaining the money. Mr.

Woodsmall was greatly injured by the rough treatment he received at their hands, and it was feared he could not recover. He was an old man, almost seventy years old, perhaps older. He had purchased the clothing he wished to be buried in, and had wrapped it well, and placed it in a wardrobe. In searching for this money, Mrs. Moore feared they would take the burial suit. They threw it about the shelves, but did not unwrap it. Mr. Blair was not robbed. When being led out of the room, he had the forethought to stoop to "tie his shoe," at the same time slipping his purse and watch under a board. They took his saddle from the barn, however, which was a sad loss to him. It was presented by Mr. John Jean, who made it expressly for Mr. Blair, who preached the funeral sermon of one of Mr. Jean's sons. He valued it very highly on this account. He had Mr. Jean make another as near like it as was possible.

Mr. Blair often spoke of this visit of the guerrillas to Mr. Woodsmall's and of the bravery of Mrs. Moore. She did not scream or weep while they were searching the house, nor while they were hanging her father and husband. She begged very earnestly for their lives. After

they had given up the search, the band told her she "was the bravest woman they had ever seen—in fact an angel." All the while she carried the money in a belt beneath her clothing. Her father and husband would not permit her to give it up under any circumstances.

It is not known why Mr. Blair was led out with Mr. Woodsmall and Mr. Moore, unless the band feared he might slip out and raise an alarm, or perhaps they wanted him to be an eye-witness of the tortures they were to impose on those innocent men. The band repeatedly assured him "we don't intend to hurt you, parson," or "don't be frightened, parson, we are not going to harm you." But if he ever was frightened in his life, he was greatly alarmed on this occasion for his friends—particularly Mr. Woodsmall, on account of his extreme age. Mr. Woodsmall's face was blue when they let him down, and all thought life was extinct. Mr. Blair was powerless to offer any assistance, as he was closely guarded. His daughter, Miss Bettie, was also an eye-witness during most of this cruel treatment. She thought they were going to hang her father also, and it was several years before she recovered from the shock.

Mr. Blair did not let these troubles interfere



with his pastoral duties. He filled his regular appointment at Bethlehem the following month, when these occurrences were still fresh in the minds of most of his audience, and Mr. Woodsmall had not recovered from the shock and injuries received on that memorable night.

At the close of the war, in 1865, a better feeling prevailed among his churches. The fearless independence he showed during the war has always marked his thoughts and actions. It was the bravery of this fearless minister of the gospel that was an element in the history of the building of the church in its early struggles.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HIS HOME LIFE.

In regard to his home life, Mr. Blair was always diligent in the government of his children, and watchful, taking care that they formed no evil habits. He set the example of industry, economy and self-denial. He had a large family, five sons and four daughters. They were taught early in life to read and study the Bible, and to realize that this life is not so bad, and that it is just what we make it. He placed a high estimate on the possibilities of human life. It was his custom all through life to have family worship. Each day he gathered his family about him, read a chapter from the Bible, and offered up a fervent prayer to God to keep him and his household for his own. He realized the need of Divine guidance in bringing up his large family "in the way they should go, so that when they were old they would not depart from it."

Show us a family that has been brought up to read and study the Bible, and has gone to ruin.

Mr. Blair believed every word of the Bible was written by inspiration of God, and taught men to believe it literally, not doubting one passage or another, but accepting it all as a message from God. His sons grew up and entered professions, adorning every sphere in the life they lived. His eldest son became a physician and ruling elder in his church. The second son was educated for the law, and his three younger sons became ministers of the gospel in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. His four daughters went into families where Christ was honored, thus proving that his earnest prayers and endeavors to "train up his children in the way they should go" were not in vain.

In all his estimates of any kind of Christian work he did not make the mistake that is made every day of leaving out the great Head of the universe. "I will be a God to thee and thy seed after thee," was his watch-word. It is not so much what we are at church, as what we are in our families. Religion in the power of it will be family religion. His constant care and prudent endeavor were not only to put away iniquity far from his tabernacle, but that where he dwelt the word of Christ might dwell richly. If he might have no other church yet he would have



REV. J. E. BLAIR.



REV. W. D. BLAIR.



REV. G. A. BLAIR.

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one in his house. Such was his house, and such the vine which God graciously planted by the side of his house. He truly knew that apostasy begins generally at the closet door. Secret prayer is first neglected and carelessly performed, then frequently omitted, and after some time wholly cast off; and then farewell to God and Christ and all religion. "Prayer is the Christian's vital breath," and when the voice of prayer dies within us, then we are breathless in the Christian life and dead to all that is holy, righteous and eternal. Mr. Blair made a practice of closet worship, and abounded in it, not making his family worship an excuse for the neglect of private devotion. Oh, reader, if on reflection you find you are growing careless in the use of this means of grace, then call a halt. You are on a downward path, and ere you know you will find no pleasure in your religion, and leanness will creep into your soul. Reconsecrate your heart and life, and pray for "daily bread," without which we shall perish, for "man doth not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Few parents raise a family with unbroken happiness. The first real calamity that befell Mr. and Mrs. Blair befell them when their second

son, John Robert, was but six years old. By the accidental discharge of a gun, his right limb was shot to pieces, and had to be amputated just below the knee, rendering him a cripple for life. This affliction was a severe trial to these parents. They tried to hide their grief for the little boy's sake, knowing the future of this dear child, if he recovered, must be different from that of the other children. He would be compelled to walk on crutches until he was grown.

On the morning after the accident, Mr. Blair called the other children in another room, and told them, with tears streaming down his cheeks, that their little brother would be a cripple all his life, and that each of them must do all in his power to help him bear his affliction; that he could not be the same little playfellow he was before the accident. Each child promised to do what he could, but was not old enough to realize the seriousness of the situation. For many days and weeks the gloom of death was over the entire household, as well as the whole neighborhood, while the little life hung so feebly in the balance. At last he began to mend, and continued to do so until he grew able to sit up; then to be helped about the room, until a pair of crutches could be made. Imagine the feelings

of these fond parents when they saw their little boy going about on crutches! Their grief was almost unbearable, but they succeeded in concealing it from little John. He bore his affliction bravely. When he became able to go to school, he would not let them take him in the buggy, but wanted to walk with the other children.

Mr. Blair did all in his power to aid him in obtaining an education, and fit him for some profession suited to his affliction. After completing the common school course he sent him to Lincoln, Ill., where he graduated in the literary school, then studied law. After completing his course in law, and receiving his diploma, he was admitted to the bar, practicing several years in Kentucky, until his health failed. Soon after graduation he was married to Miss Lula Edwards, who shared his joys and sorrows for a number of years. To this union three lovely children were born, two sons and a daughter.

Subsequently his health began to fail rapidly; and he was compelled to give up his business and try a change of climate. On being advised by his physicians, he went with his family to Pomona, Cal., hoping to be benefitted; but alas! that dread disease, consumption, had gained a stronghold on his constitution, and no power



could stay its ravages. He died in January, 1898, and was buried in Pomona, near Los Angeles, in that distant land, among strangers, with no kindred near to close his eyes or drop a tear at his grave, save his sorrowing wife and three small children! After erecting a marble slab to mark his grave, his widow and children returned to Lebanon, Ohio, to reside.

Although Mr. Blair had such a hardship put upon him, yet he knew it was God's providence working in its own mysterious way his wonders to perform. He resigned himself sweetly to the affliction sent upon the lad, and tried to reconcile the son to his lot in life. He knew that it was his duty to first acknowledge God in this thing itself, and if he did so he would direct him and guide and bless and cause all things to work together for good.

## CHAPTER IX.

### FICTITIOUS LITERATURE PROHIBITED.

Mr. Blair was not only a temperate man in regard to intoxicating liquors, but was temperate in regard to fictitious literature. Neither the former nor the latter were allowed in his house. If he chanced to see any such reading matter about, he would destroy it immediately. On one occasion, we well remember, some one happened to call, bringing a number of papers; among which were several copies of the *New York Weekly*, which he discovered on the table after the guest had gone. He grabbed them up in a great rage, crushed them with all his force into a crumpled mass, and thrust them into the stove, struck a match and stood watching them till consumed; he then turned around and told his family he never wanted to see another trashy paper in his house. He had always been careful as to the kind of literature his children should have brought before them. His study table was well supplied with the best literature of the day, by

reading which his mind was always fertile for good reading; and from his long practice of "storing away" the best knowledge obtainable, he always possessed a large stock. Novels and other kinds of injurious literature were never seen in his house. He thought "idle reading" was dissipation of the mental powers, and almost as destroying to the soul as habitual intoxication; that the habit, if once formed, was as difficult to reform as drunkenness. It is indulged in by both old and young, and habitual idle-readers soon make such reading the end and aim of their lives. They crave more in quantity, and become less able to distinguish quality. In these days the world is flooded with trashy literature, which can be obtained for almost nothing. Religious books and papers sometimes cost more money than works of fiction. Few families are too poor to obtain a Bible. Many who own Bibles will lay them aside to read some idle tale hour after hour, until the brain becomes stupefied or needlessly excited, by such prolonged mental "tipple."

There was no book Mr. Blair possessed, or that he could obtain, that was so much help and consolation to him as his Bible. He read and studied it constantly. "Its rich truths were ever

new" to him, he always said, though he read it daily for three score and ten or more years. And it was like a mine to him, which he explored for its rich treasures, and like a feast which was spread before him daily, and which he enjoyed, because he formed the habit of reading the Bible and other pure and sacred literature when young.

Form the habit of simple and wholesome eating when young, and we enjoy life more fully than if we had been brought up on horrid compounds. There is not a bird, beast or fish in all the range of being whose digestive powers could stand a tithe of what is heaped upon the human stomach. So with idle reading. Few of the most brilliant human books can stand three readings, but the Bible can stand a thousand, and each time we find some new and sublime thought. It was these rich truths Mr. Blair had obtained from the Bible, that enabled him to preach the gospel of an unlimited atonement so successfully. God abundantly blessed his efforts to lead men to righteousness. Scores of our best citizens have been helped to better and worthier lives by his plain teaching, and earnest and logical preaching, and unselfish example.

Would you not suppose that a pastor about whom clustered such memories would have been

a wonderful influence for good in the community with which he was so long identified? And he had. Old and young, rich and poor, saint and sinner alike, looked upon him with reverence while he was in their midst calling men to righteousness.

He was not a great man as the world calls men great; he did not long for this kind of greatness. He was not fond of show or parade. Though a man of fine intellect, a thoughtful scholar, a real student of the Word of God, he made no effort to impress men with the extent of his knowledge. He simply used it to brighten and strengthen and better them. His influence was deep and powerful in teaching and training, and his example was that of a tried, proven and trusted minister of Jesus Christ. His ministrations have sunken into the hearts and lives of the people he labored among, and will live in the memories of those who trusted him and followed his teaching. Other pulpit lights have flashed like meteors, some of whom may call his work obscure work; but we feel sure that in the day of just reckoning to come, his reward will be greater than that of many a man whose pulpit technics were delivered to provoke the eulogies of their audiences.

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MRS. LUCINDA HALLOWAY BLAIR.

Mr. Blair was a pioneer of the Church, an apostle of the true gospel, and a leader of men in practical righteousness. His familiar voice has been heard in more villages, towns and cities, calling men to righteousness, than that of any other minister of his day. It is remarkable, with such a large family as he had, his wife an invalid for many years, and living on a poor farm, that he could supply his churches with preaching, work for the cause of temperance, and help his children obtain an education; yet he found time for all of these duties, and for which, and the example he set of industry, self-denial, fortitude and Christian forbearance, they should always bless his memory.

His intentions were not always rightly understood, yet we know them to have been just and generous. Safe in his conclusions, and wise in counseling, it was surprising how he could accomplish so much in his field of labor and keep abreast of the times in reading and preparing his sermons. His churches were dear to his heart, and he sacrificed for them as few men have sacrificed.

#### DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

The greatest affliction that ever befell Mr. Blair was visited upon him March 4, 1890, when



his devoted and faithful wife went to her final rest,—she who had stood by him through so many years and shared his joys and sorrows. The shadow fell heavily across his path, and over his heart; but the same Spirit whose everlasting arm sustained him in the past, and the same loving Saviour who walked by his side in trial and in triumph, was with him in this sad hour. Under pious training of earnest Christian parents, she made a public profession of religion and united with the church early in life, and was always faithful and obedient to the call of the church in all of its departments, and a true helpmeet to her husband as a minister's wife.

Mr. Blair's pastoral charges, missionary labors and other activities required him to be from home much of his time; hence the training of their children depended on the mother in a greater degree than was generally supposed. In grave matters she referred them to their father on his return home; but in most cases her voice and hand guided them from early childhood to maturity.

Her health was always delicate; yet her home duties called forth her best energies to action, enkindling the fires in her heart. She did not realize that these grave responsibilities were

largely the cause of her failing health, wearing away her life in silent endurance. But she was soothed and sustained by an unfailing Presence.

She was conscious that her "time to depart and be with God" was drawing near, and expressed a wish that each of her surviving children be at her bedside and witness her departure. Death had no terrors for her. She was preceded to the better world by her two eldest daughters. The first, Mrs. A. E. Johnson, died in August, 1880. This was the first break in the family of nine children. She was survived by her husband, and five small children, none of whom were old enough to fully realize their loss. By her exemplary life and peaceful death she left the impress on all that she was fully prepared to die. Calling her husband to her bedside a few moments before she died, she said she "wanted to go home." He told her she was at home. She answered, "Yes, but the Saviour will take care of us in a better world than this."

Only a few months before Mrs. Blair's death she witnessed the triumphant death of their eldest daughter, Mrs. S. J. Bates, and heard her exclaim, "Wait! Wait! I'll be there directly. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" Then a placid smile

o'erspread her blessed face, and her soul passed out to God! The mother could not shed a tear as she beheld the death of her firstborn; for, as she said, "Jennie and I will not be long separated." This was on the 10th of November, 1889, and on the 4th of March, 1890, not quite four months later, she died as calmly and peacefully as a child lulled to sleep on its mother's bosom, with a sweet smile on her lips, as plain as in life. The same sweet smile was plainly visible, when all looked on that dear face for the last time. She had been a great sufferer for many years, and death to her was but a sweet release from suffering and sorrow. Her life was full of good works, both in her home and in the community in which she lived, and also in the church. Her place was never vacant at church, unless hindered by sickness in her family. She was a life member of the Ladies' Missionary Society.

Her funeral was preached by the Rev. B. D. Cockrell and was largely attended, after which she was tenderly laid to rest in Pennsylvania Run Cemetery, by the side of her daughter. Her grave is marked by a suitable monument, with the following inscription on it:

LUCINDA HOLLOWAY,

*Born October 8, 1828.*

MARRIED TO REV. R. DOWNEY BLAIR, OCTOBER 7, 1847.

*Died March 4, 1890.*

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GOD, WHO REGULATES THE ORBS IN THEIR SPHERES, WIELDS  
THE RED LIGHTNING WITH HIS HAND, "TEMPERS THE WIND TO  
THE SHORN LAMB," WILL TAKE CARE OF MY LUCINDA.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE LATTER PART OF HIS LIFE. SECOND MARRIAGE.

After the death of his wife, Mr. Blair realized his loss was very great; the loss of her who had been such a true and tried helpmeet; who had helped him to bear misfortune and had rejoiced with him in prosperity; and whose earthly pilgrimage was now brought to its close. The home from henceforth would not be brightened by her presence. Now his journeyings along life's pathway were to be lonely indeed.

Yet he also realized that her gain was even greater. She was now at home with her Saviour, forever free from suffering and sorrow. Only a few short years, and he, too, would join the happy throng. Standing by her grave, a year after her death, he said to his daughter who was with him: "I wish I were laid to rest by her side." His loneliness was pathetic.

For some time after her death he was undecided what the future held for him that was worth undertaking. But finally he rallied, and

being of an active disposition, he made arrangements to dispose of the old homestead and visit among his children, until some field of labor was opened in which he could again engage in work for the Master. He paid a visit to his son George, who had charge at that time of the Cumberland Presbyterian church in Eugene City, Oregon. He remained one year with him, preaching for his congregation a part of the time, and assisting other pastors in revival work. He preached at Rich Hill, Mo., during the winter of 1892, greatly strengthening that church. In the fall of 1893 he took charge of the churches at Blue Springs and Bates City, Mo. During his residence in Missouri, he met Miss Ella Thompson, of Centerview, Mo., a most estimable and accomplished lady, and only daughter of Rev. Dr. Thompson, of the Presbyterian Church at Centerview. They were married the 29th of November, 1893, at the residence of the bride's parents, her father performing the ceremony. The *Rich Hill Daily Review* has this very complimentary notice in its columns in regard to this couple: "The bride is an accomplished Christian lady, the organist in the Presbyterian church in Centerview. She is the leader in the Christian Endeavor Society in her church, zealous in

all Christian work, and is universally beloved by her numerous acquaintances wherever she has gone. Rev. Mr. Blair is a forcible preacher, profound in his thinking, and logical in his reasoning; kind and polite to all, kind to the poor, despising not the rich; in fact, speaking evil of no man, with an open hand for the fallen, and a word of sympathy for the distressed; loving the children, honoring the aged. He is indeed a man of God." Of this union one lovely daughter was born to them. Some time after Mr. Blair received and accepted a call to take charge of Corinth church, a country congregation, in the extreme eastern part of Kansas. Soon after entering upon his duties at this place, he purchased a little home near Corinth church, hoping to labor many years in this new field. But alas! how soon our fondest hopes on earth must fade. Four years after his second marriage he was called to "come up higher," to the church triumphant. His voice and pen alike are now silent. His work is finished. His loving wife is so soon a widow. Their lovely babe is bereft of a father when too young to realize her loss or to know a father's loving care. May the God of the fatherless ever sustain her and lead her—



ELIZABETH E. BLAIR.



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“To be His willing hand-maid  
And be taught to know her Lord,  
Whate'er He saith, to do it,  
Obedient to His word.  
For her the Master suffered,  
For her His life was given;  
Lord by that ransom help her  
To meet her father in heaven.”

His death was very sudden, and wholly unexpected by his wife, who had gone three days previously to visit her aged and much afflicted parents in Centerview, Mo. But we believe he realized the approach of the grim reaper. He wrote a letter to his youngest daughter, in Kentucky, the thirteenth of May, 1897, in which he stated he would visit her the following month. He went to Kansas City to mail the letter on that day. Then he wrote her another letter the day after—May 14, in settlement of some business matters, and died on the following day—May 15, 1897.

In his letter of May 13 he stated he was “not feeling well.” He had been suffering for several days with a severe pain in his chest. The day he died he was at work in his small garden, when the pain in his chest became so severe he was obliged to quit work. He went into the house

and lay down, but grew rapidly worse. Realizing that his condition was serious, he arose and went out on the front porch to call some one who might be passing. Fortunately two men soon drove in sight. He was scarcely able to speak, but beckoned to them to come to him. Being able to make them understand he was a very sick man, he wished them to go immediately for a physician, and the other for a neighbor. They did so as quickly as possible, but when they returned he was dead—with no wife or children near him to cheer him in his last moments. After spending a long and useful life in the service of God, and raising a large family, how sad to know he passed from earth before any of his family could reach him and see him close his eyes on earthly scenes! Telegrams were sent to his wife and two sons living nearest. His wife and infant daughter and one son, Rev. Wm. D. Blair, arrived in time to see him laid to rest. His son, Dr. B. H. Blair, of Lebanon, Ohio, arrived the day after the funeral. It was impossible to reach his other sons and daughters.

Mr. Blair said to his son, Wm. D., a few years before he died: "When I die, bury me; don't haul me around on the cars." While his children all earnestly wished his remains brought

to Kentucky and laid to rest by the side of his first wife and daughters, yet his wish was gratified, and he was tenderly laid to rest in the cemetery connected with Corinth church. He had visited this cemetery a year or two previously, and had selected a beautiful lot where he expressed a wish to be buried. A beautiful monument was erected to mark his grave, which has the following inscription on it:

*AT REST.*

FATHER.

R. DOWNEY BLAIR.

BORN IN SHELBY COUNTY, KENTUCKY, OCTOBER 7, 1821.

DIED IN KANSAS, MAY 15, 1897.

Truly a servant in Israel had fallen, so eminent was he for prevalence in prayer, courage in duty, wisdom in affairs, constancy in religion, with a firm adherence to his ministerial vows, and lastly, a contempt of the world with which he did not entangle himself. Let us remember him with thankfulness to that God who gave him to us, and continued him so long to see the church in a better state than he found it, to that God who crowned his labors with success. Many souls there are in heaven, and some on earth, blessing God that ever they saw his face, and

that God continued him in his usefulness to the last. Sensible we must be of the stroke. It is a public loss, a loss to the ministry, a loss to the country in which he was a burning and shining light. Yet we must acquiesce in the divine will.

The treasure was in an earthen vessel, and God was the potter, and the treasure returned to its heavenly home and the earthen vessel turned back to the dust whence it sprang. Instruments must be shifted, cisterns emptied, and the bowl broken at the fountain, but still there is the same supply of grace, mercy, love and pardon in the fountain of the Infinite, in whom we live, move and have our being. We may think the worse of this world, which is much impoverished, and the better of heaven, which is somewhat enriched, by the removal of this good man.

## CHAPTER XI.

### BEAUTIFUL TRIBUTES OF FRIENDS.

A beautiful tribute to Mr. Blair's memory appeared in *The Cumberland Presbyterian* of July 27, 1897, without a signature, but it is believed to have been from the pen of the late Rev. J. C. Gilliam, who was most intimately associated with him in the work of the church in Kentucky. It is a most suitable tribute, and we reproduce it here.

REV. R. DOWNEY BLAIR.

“‘The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart,’ but how different when men of the world pass away. Great demonstrations are usually made over them. Their bodies lie in state, while crowds of men and women rush to see their remains. Eulogistic orations are delivered, in which their valorous deeds are recounted. Costly monuments mark their resting-places, and the most beautiful and expensive flowers are profusely scattered over their graves.

“Worldly honors are not always rightly distributed. The military hero, whose history is written with the blood of the slain, the millionaire, whose vast possessions have been gained at the expense of the poor, die, and the world mourns as though some distinguished philanthropist had fallen. But on the other hand, men noble and Christ-like, who have labored unostentatiously, and without reasonable remuneration, for the betterment of society, fall at their posts of duty, and the world moves on as if nothing unusual had happened.

“The subject of this sketch was not a famous man of the world, not ambitious to gain some eminent position among his brethren, but was content to spend his life in an unpretending manner, preaching the gospel of peace to perishing sinners. It was my privilege to be intimately associated with Brother Blair for a number of years in church work, and it was a pleasure indeed to labor with one so spiritual, courteous and zealous in church work. As a preacher Brother Blair was above the average. His sermons were always carefully prepared, and hence full of food and instruction for the thoughtful hearer. He was not especially emotional, but was logical, argumentative and often wonderful-

ly eloquent in his presentations of gospel truth, and his extensive familiarity with the Bible enabled him to handle it as a master workman would his tools. In his work as a Christian minister he always had the courage of his convictions, and would defend the right, and denounce the wrong, without regard to the effect such a course would have on his personal popularity. Brother Blair was well known, especially in central Kentucky, and his gentlemanly deportment and unstained Christian character gained for him the friendship and confidence of all men.

“He is not, for the Lord has taken him; and while his name may not appear in any great encyclopedia, it will in the book of life, which is far better. His leading characteristics were strong intellect, sound judgment, strict integrity, true to convictions, exemplary in conduct, and eminently loyal to God and his church. He attained and maintained a high place in the esteem and confidence of a multitude of friends and acquaintances, and in addition to all, and greater than all, he succeeded in securing for himself a home in the saints’ everlasting rest, without which all of his successes would have been failures. He has fought life’s battle, finished its



course, kept the faith, and now rests from labor, and his works will follow him. Servant of God, well done! Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."

After the foregoing was written we received from Mr. Blair's estimable widow a short sketch of his life and work in Missouri, and another beautiful tribute to his memory from the pen of his life-long friend, the Rev. J. W. Morrow, which Mrs. Blair wishes published in this biography.

THE LIFE AND LABORS OF THE REV. R. DOWNEY  
BLAIR IN MISSOURI.

BY ELLA THOMPSON BLAIR.

While the labors of the Rev. R. Downey Blair in Missouri did not extend over a lengthy period of time, they were, nevertheless, counted by him as among the fortunate events of his life.

As he himself quaintly expressed it, "Kentucky is a good state in which to be born—Missouri is a good state in which to live"; and in migrating from the one state to the other he brought with him not only that pride of his native state which seems to be the natural inheritance of all the sons of Kentucky, but also

that fineness of feeling, that nobility of character, and that consecration to his chosen calling, which had marked his career in his earlier days.

In the fall of 1892 Mr. Blair drove across the country in his buggy from Louisville, Kentucky, to Butler, Missouri, where his son, Rev. W. D. Blair, then resided.

During that winter he preached at Rich Hill, Mo., strengthening that feeble church, and making many friends there. In the early spring, he was called by business to Kentucky, where he remained much of the summer, returning to Missouri in the fall. In November, 1893, he took charge of the churches at Blue Springs and Bates City, Mo., where he remained for two years. While there he was assisted in a meeting by the Rev. G. P. Baity, of Kansas City, which proved very helpful to the congregation at Blue Springs, giving it new life and energy. In November, 1895, Mr. Blair took charge of the country congregation of Corinth, in the extreme eastern edge of Kansas, remaining with this congregation until his death, May 15, 1897.

His life-long friend and brother minister, the Rev. J. W. Morrow, wrote an article for publication in *The Cumberland Presbyterian*, at that

time, descriptive of the circumstances surrounding his death, than which I can write nothing more touching or pathetic, and it will be found appended at the close of this article. Such as marked by years and months, is Mr. Blair's record in the middle West, but who can measure the influence on other lives with which he came in contact in that short time?

To be intimately acquainted with him, and to listen to his views on various subjects, was a liberal education in itself; but above all to listen to his sermons Sabbath after Sabbath was indeed a benediction. To the close of his life he ever felt, like Paul, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel"; and that Sabbath was counted but lost, whose "low descending sun" had not witnessed at least two public services conducted by him—often, indeed, when the weather and roads permitted, preaching in a country schoolhouse in the afternoon, besides his regular morning and evening services.

In a letter received by me from Rev. Finis King, soon after Mr. Blair's death, is this expression: "He was easily one of the foremost preachers in Lexington (Mo.) Presbytery, in depth of thought, logical reasoning and forceful utterance." In a letter received from a presby-

terial committee—Revs. J. H. Houx, J. Cal Littell and I. W. Whitsett—is the following: “The Presbytery recognize that he as a man was one of the purest in moral character and Christian life, that as a gospel minister he was a man of superior gifts and endowments, and that his intellectual powers and ability as a sermonizer and orator were of a high grade. Faithful in his study, faithful in his pulpit, and faithful in the pastoral care of his people, he served his Master well.”

And now this loving service in behalf of my deceased husband, imperfectly performed, is finished. Should I ask the question, Why was he thus suddenly taken from us? the answer assuredly would be—“His work here was completed”; and should not the laborer be at rest and enter upon his reward?

“So live that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan that moves  
To the pale realms of shade, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
Thou go, not like a quarry slave at night  
Scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave  
Like one that wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

A TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF REV. R. DOWNEY  
BLAIR.

BY REV. J. W. MORROW.

Rev. R. Downey Blair died very suddenly Saturday morning, May 15, 1897, at his beautiful home in Johnson County, Kansas, near the Corinth Cumberland Presbyterian church, a little over three miles southwest of Westport, Mo.

He had just finished an interesting pastorate with his church, laboring with the characteristic zeal and energy of a young man. Brother Blair always had exceptional health, being sick but little until the day he died. In the morning of this day he arose and went about his accustomed duties, working in the garden until nearly 9 o'clock, when he was taken with a severe pain in the chest and went to the house and lay down on the bed. He soon realized his condition to be dangerous, and being alone, he went out on the front porch, that he might give notice to some one passing. Very soon two of his neighbors, Thomas James and Mr. McFerrin, fortunately came along. He made signs for them to come to him, and when they came he said: "I am a very sick man, and cannot last long without relief. I am suffering with a fearful misery in my breast,

and can scarcely breathe. I did not want to die alone; hence I came out on the porch to give notice of my condition." He then arose and went into the house without assistance, and lay down on the bed. Mr. McFerrin then went out in haste to notify the nearest neighbors, and when they were in sight, only a short distance away, Mr. James, who was still with the sufferer, said, "Do you want a doctor?" He said, "Yes, get one as quickly as you can." Mr. James then started at once to Westport for the doctor, leaving the suffering man alone not exceeding five minutes; but alas! when Mr. McFerrin and the friends arrived he was not. His spirit had taken its flight. The whole community was startled, that one who was so prominently and highly esteemed should be so unexpectedly snatched away.

Mrs. Blair was away from home at the time of her husband's death, waiting upon her sick mother at Centerview, Mo. She was immediately notified, and came on the first train, in company with her brother's wife and her father, Rev. Dr. Thompson, a prominent minister in the Presbyterian Church. They arrived the same evening. But what a sad change had been

wrought in the home which she left three days before, bright and cheerful, but which was now filled with the gloom of death!

Mr. Blair's son, Rev. W. D. Blair, arrived next morning. It was decided that the funeral services, conducted by the writer, should take place in Corinth church next day at 3 P.M. Promptly at the hour the church was filled to its utmost capacity. The services were introduced by appropriate singing and reading of the Scriptures. The opening prayer was led by Mrs. Blair's father. Then a short sermon was preached, and when the congregation looked into that familiar face for the last time, the body was conveyed to its last rest-place in the beautiful cemetery connected with Corinth church. Mr. Blair's eldest son, Dr. B. H. Blair, of Lebanon, Ohio, arrived the day after his father was buried.

R. Downey Blair was more than an ordinary man among men, and away above the average among preachers. He was favored with a strong body, was always healthy and robust, and was endowed with a strong and vigorous intellect. He was a close and untiring student of men and things, but more especially of the Bible. He placed a high estimate upon the possibilities of human life, and was a man of great courage,

energy and industry. He was sensibly impressed with the conviction that he was called to preach the gospel, and hence was never as happy as when preaching Christ to his fellow creatures. He was familiar with the teachings of the Scriptures, and he went to the Bible for his sermons. He was a fine doctrinal preacher. His preaching was in the style of the leading evangelical ministers of the early part of this century. He was hard to handle in debate, as many who encountered him in public discussion learned to their sorrow. He was fearless in the statement and defense of truth, a man of iron will in carrying out his plans, never swerving from what he believed to be right. Yet he was tender as a child in his spirit. His heart was full of the milk of human kindness.

A word as to his business transactions. Here is the department in the history of a man in which to study his real character. I am well acquainted with his business record near Louisville, Ky., where he spent most of his life, as also in this country, and I never heard an intimation from anyone that R. D. Blair had ever been unfaithful in his business dealings. How fortunate if every man, and especially every minister, had such a record! He was a chaste man. I



never knew a man whose language was more select and guarded. His son, W. D., giving the key to his life in this regard, told me he never in his life heard his father utter a word improper to be spoken in the presence of the purest women.

His life and conversation were excellent examples of integrity and purity. His domestic relations furnish a fine opportunity to study his character. He was twice married. His domestic affections were uniform and ardent. His regard for his first family was in no sense weakened by the second, nor the second less esteemed than the first. There was a beautiful harmony, like a silver thread, running through his whole domestic life. He had great interest in his children, an interest which he manifested in his untiring efforts to aid them in acquiring an education. He taught school, worked on the farm and did everything in his power that was honorable to secure means to be used in their education, at no time, however, neglecting his engagements to preach. He took great interest in the society of his children, so managing them as to make them his companions. There were nine children by his first marriage, five sons and four daughters. Two daughters are dead. No man has reared a more honorable family, or one more

devoutly pious. Three of his sons are in the ministry, one is a lawyer, and one a physician. There is one bright and beautiful little girl, over two years old, by the last wife. This child was a great comfort to her father in his last days.

*Callao, Missouri.*

## CHAPTER XII.

## DEATH OF HIS SON AND TRIBUTES FROM FRIENDS.

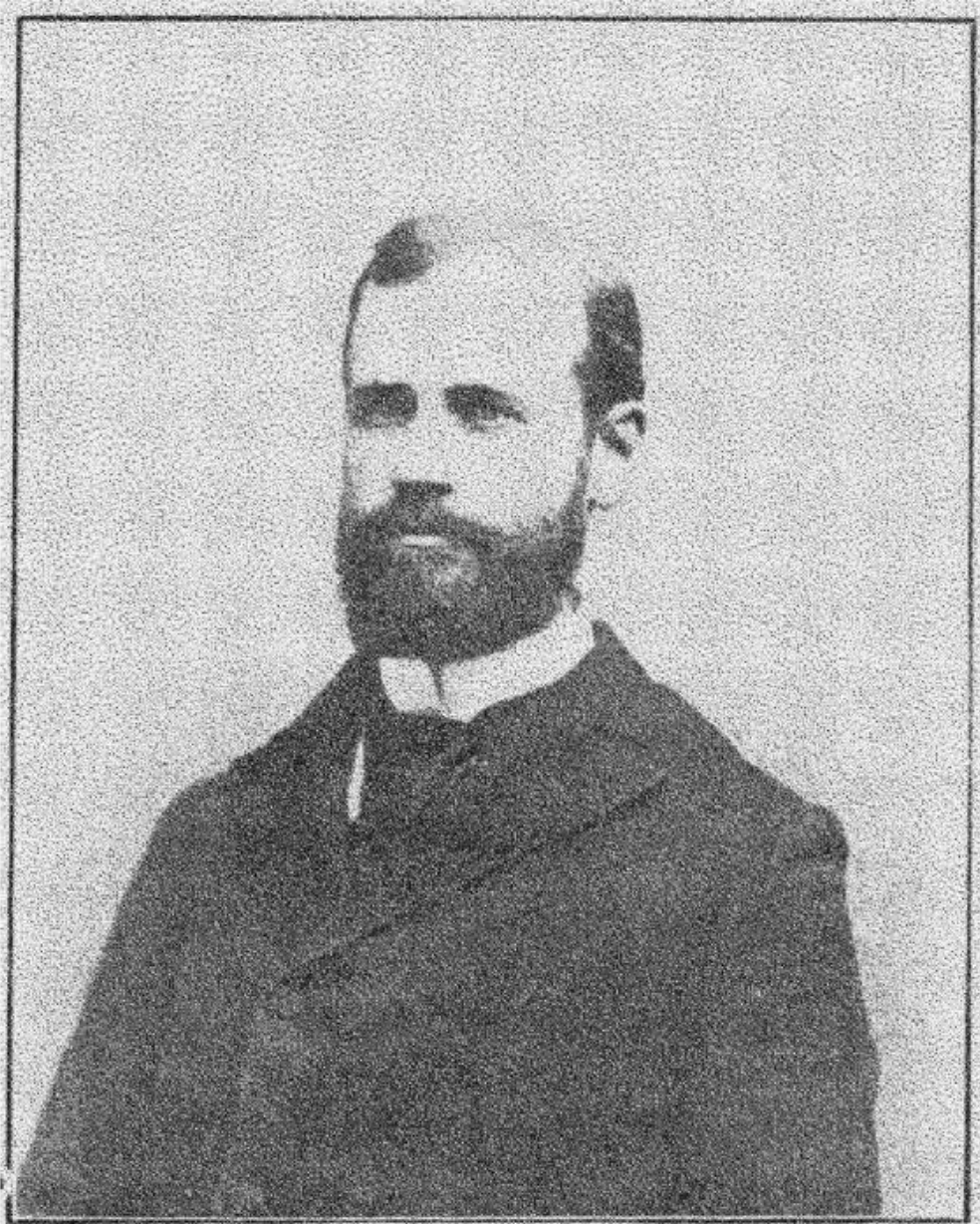
A few months after the death of his father, Wm. D. Blair followed. The shock occasioned by the sudden death of his father, and that of his brother, John R., occurring a short time after their father's death, together with the calls to assist in revival work, and attend to the settlement of his father's property in Missouri, were all to a great extent the cause of his physical break-down; and when his illness came on, his constitution, which was never very robust, was unable to resist the disease, and he sank in a few days. Thus he was taken from his family and pastoral duties in the very midst of his usefulness.

He was a lovely son, brother and pastor. Rev. Finis King wrote a touching and beautiful account of his life work, which we publish in this volume. Also one from the pen of the editor of the Bullitt County, Kentucky, *Pioneer*:

“Rev. Wm. D. Blair was born in Jefferson County, Kentucky, May 23, 1857. He made a public profession of religion in August, 1879, under the preaching of Rev. M. H. Kimberlin, and soon after, being impressed that it was his duty to preach the gospel, he presented himself to and was received by Kentucky Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry, October 1, 1881. He was licensed to preach August 28, 1884, and was ordained August 22, 1885. His education was completed in Cumberland University, and his first charge was the mission church at Henderson, Ky. Afterward he had charge at Bowling Green and Westport, Mo. Subsequently he was called to Butler, Mo., and entered upon his work September 1, 1891, completing it when the Master took him home, February 23, 1898.

“He was married to Miss Fannie Crowder, March 24, 1886. Of this union there were four bright children, two sons and two daughters. The entire community was shocked when his death was announced. For this there were two reasons; First, it was seemingly so sudden. He was sick of pneumonia but six days. Second, all realized that a truly good man had been taken away, and that they were henceforth to walk life’s journey without his personal counsel.

“He was best known in his home, his congregation and presbytery; and in each of these he was greatly beloved. A brother minister writes of him: ‘In the sacred circle of home I ever found him careful of his speech, tender in his sympathies, courteous in his actions and devoutly religious. He was all this in his own and other homes. He was much in my home and I in his, and I ever found the sweetness of the Christ-life in full force in him within this sacred circle. If I were asked to sum up what I believe to be the strong points in this man’s character, I should say: First, his purity. He was one of the purest and cleanest men in his conversation it has ever been my privilege to associate with. He seemed grieved when others would indulge in the use of language which had in it anything vulgar. One as clean in conversation impressed me as one who was pure in heart. Second, he was a man of strong convictions. He sought earnestly to know God’s will, and to discover the right. I often thought he was slow in reaching his conclusions, but when reached they were fixed from what seemed an abiding conviction. So long as he believed a thing was right, he would stand by it. If you desired to change his



REV. W. D. BLAIR.  
Last Picture.

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attitude, the only way was to convince him that some other was better. Third, he was careful of details in all his work. It was this which enabled him out of a small salary to leave his wife a little home. It was this which left his books as presbyterial treasurer in perfect order, so that every cent in his possession was accounted for without difficulty. It was this that made him the careful, loving and prayerful pastor that he was. He kept a little book in which was written the name of every member of his church, so marked as to show how often each had attended services during the year. This indicated that he was a pastor who carried the people on his heart. He left us in the prime of his young manhood, being only thirty-nine years old. It seemed to us that his usefulness had just begun. We are comforted with the belief that in some higher capacity, unknown to us now, he serves in the temple above. Many will thank God here and hereafter that they were permitted to come in contact with him.' "

The foregoing and also the following sketches of Rev. Wm. D. Blair show how highly he was esteemed, both in Missouri and in Kentucky, his native state.



## TRIBUTES TO HIS SON AND BROTHER, ETC.

Rev. Wm. D. Blair died at his home in Butler, Mo., February 23, 1898, in the thirty-ninth year of his age. He was stricken with pneumonia a short time before his death, and his disease soon assumed a dangerous turn, his family and friends realizing that his life could not be spared. The writer never knew a purer, nobler and more lovable man than William D. Blair, and we feel a deep personal loss in his death. His life was well spent, and he leaves behind him a record of which his family and friends can always be proud. Although only thirty-nine years old, Mr. Blair's scholarly attainments, devotion to duty, genial manners, and exceptional purity of character had won for him a high place among the ministers of his adopted state of Missouri.

He was the son of the late Rev. R. Downey Blair, and brother of Dr. B. H. Blair, who was for many years a prominent physician of Bullitt County, Kentucky. "Professor Blair," as he was known to our people, taught school here eighteen years ago, and won the love of all his pupils, and the esteem and friendship of many people of this section, who will hear of his death with sorrow and regret.

After finishing his school here, he attended Cumberland University, at Lebanon, Tenn., where he graduated with honor in 1883. He then entered the ministry of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and was called to the charge of a church in Henderson, Ky., where he remained for several years, winning the love and esteem of his congregation, as well as the admiration of the people of Henderson. He afterward had charge of a church at Bowling Green, Mo., and then was called to the pastorate of the church at Butler, Mo., where he had labored for the past seven years. While at Henderson, Ky., he was married to Miss Fannie Crowder, who for over twelve years was a true helpmeet, sympathizing with him in all his purposes and aspirations. She and four bright and promising children survive him.

During his residence in Butler, by his many noble qualities of head and heart, he won for himself a warm place in the hearts of the people, and his funeral was one of the largest and most impressive ever held in that section. All classes of people turned out to pay their last tribute of respect to the man whom they delighted to honor in life. When his immortal spirit took its untimely flight from the shadows of this world to

the glories of Paradise, it was only to be reclaimed by Almighty God, who had sent it here for an interval, to give the world an example of a man without guile. His mind was too pure to be swayed by prejudice. His heart was too tender to withstand the cry of those in distress, and his character was too noble to engage in the coarser pursuits of life. Hence his choice of the ministry as his life work. He was an ideal minister, because he practiced in his daily life the teachings and precepts of his crucified Saviour.

William D. Blair is dead, but his influence and example will live on. If there is a place on the other shore where the pure in heart dwell in happiness forever, Will D. Blair is there, singing with a band of happy immortals. He has gone from our midst to the realms of eternal glory, and awaits the coming of the loved ones left behind. When his spirit left its mortal frame, the world lost its brightest type of the ideal Christian man. We remember him for his kindness, sympathy and love, and we pause amid the busy scenes of real life, to pay this simple tribute to his memory, to place this laurel upon his new-made grave.

The death of this servant of God in the prime of his young manhood seems to us a mysterious

providence—to be removed from the companion of his bosom, his children bereft of a father's care and tender love. But when the mists have been removed from our eyes, and the smoke of battle has cleared away, we shall know that in that bright clime he serves God in a higher sphere. He has received that welcome plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and has entered unto the joys of his Lord.

It is comforting to us to believe there must be some change wrought by that celestial climate, and by those supernal years; but it is only from loveliness to more loveliness, and from health to more radiant health. All our loved ones in that glorious clime are bettered, for there has never been a death, and all the inhabitants will live on in the great future as long as God, forever at rest from earth's trials and heart-aches.

William D. and his brother, George A. Blair, made a public profession of religion and united with the church at the same time, at Pleasant Grove Cumberland Presbyterian church, near the home of their birth. Both entered the ministry about the same time. As brothers and children in their home life theirs was a beautiful friendship for each other. They worked together, played together, slept together, attended

school together, and kept together in their studies. If one mastered a difficult task before the other, he would either wait or help him, as circumstances permitted. This beautiful friendship lasted through their boyhood days, and was admired by all who knew them. Rarely were they ever known to disagree or quarrel. After entering upon their chosen life work they were called to fields of labor many miles apart, yet the same unflinching friendship lasted to the end.

At this writing, Rev. G. A. Blair is living in San Francisco, Cal., and is doing a grand work for the Master. He has been a great organizer and builder on the walls of Zion, organizing churches in many of the leading cities of the far West, and his work has been very acceptable and substantial. He is a popular minister, as well as beloved by all who have the good fortune to know him. We have known but few pastors who possessed the systematic financial executive ability of Rev. G. A. Blair. In the various cities where he has been called to preach and organize he has been most successful, and it is hoped he may be spared many years of usefulness in the cause of Christ.

The third and youngest of Mr. and Mrs. Blair's "preacher boys," as they called them,

Rev. J. E. Blair, made a public profession of religion in August, 1881, and united with the Pleasant Grove church, and soon after became a candidate for the ministry, and was taken under care of presbytery. After his graduation he was ordained to the full work of the ministry; and, like his father and two "preacher brothers," he has been wonderfully successful as a zealous, consecrated minister of the gospel of our Lord and Master. At present he owns a home, having recently built a new house, located in Newburg, Ore., and is permanent pastor of the church at that place.

Mr. and Mrs. Blair lived to hear each of their three sons preach a number of times, and were gratified to know they adorned their calling.

In concluding these remarks, let us add a word to the two "preacher boys" now living, and actively engaged in the work of saving souls: You are yet young in life. Emulate the example of your father, who was a brave and loyal soldier of the Cross, and who fell in the ranks with the whole "armor of righteousness on." Take his place and follow in his footsteps. Labor as he labored, fearlessly, prayerfully and zealously, preaching the gospel of peace to a sinful world. Speak evil of no man. Stretch forth a helping

hand to the fallen. Sympathize with the afflicted, love the little ones, honor the aged. And when you have finished life's battles, and have been called to join the happy throng in that celestial clime, may it be said of you, as of him, Servants of God, well done. Ye have fought life's battles, finished its course, kept the faith, and will rest from your labors, and your works will follow you.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### TRIBUTE TO REV. J. C. GILLIAM, HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIEND.

Since this biography was begun, the Rev. J. C. Gilliam was called home. He was one of the church's faithful workers in its early struggles, and also one of Mr. Blair's closest friends, having been associated with him in church work for many years. We believe it will be appreciated by hundreds who knew them during their active and useful lives, that we publish the following article in memoriam of Rev. J. C. Gilliam in this volume. It is from the pen of Rev. T. N. Williams, of Louisville, Ky., one of our most earnest and consecrated ministers. It appeared in *The Cumberland Presbyterian* of September 20, 1906.

REV. J. C. GILLIAM.

"On the 24th of June, 1906, the Louisville Presbytery lost its oldest and most beloved minister in the death of the Rev. J. C. Gilliam. For years we had looked to him as our Nestor, and



never did he fail us. He was born and reared in the 'Cumberland country,' lower Kentucky and northern Tennessee. Of humble parentage, he had a noble heritage, in that he was the son of a worthy and devout Christian mother. A notable instance of prayer and its answers occurred in her early life. Her husband was not a Christian, and so the training of her children in Christian morals devolved upon her. She prayed constantly that God would call one of her sons into the ministry, and that the husband might thus be led to Christ. That prayer was answered, when God called four of her sons, John, Marion, Walter and Hiram, to be ministers; and in a meeting held in Logan County, Kentucky, by John and Marion, the father was converted.

"Reared as he was, Brother Gilliam believed in a time and place religion that regenerated a man with such power that he knew when he was converted; and no one that ever heard him preach failed to understand the gospel he preached. He did not wish to preach, even after he felt the call, and married, hoping that the matter would thus be stayed; but being threatened with blindness, he fully consecrated his life to the Master.

“During this period of illness he was in St. Louis, Mo., under a specialist and became associated with Dr. W. B. Farr and Rev. J. Cal Littrell and others. These brethren had a strengthening influence on his life. He began his ministry under the care of Davis Presbytery, in Todd County, Kentucky, where he preached until the spring of 1867, when he moved to Perryville, Ky., and took charge of the church there, and Hebron, near Lawrenceburg.

“After the first year he gave up Hebron and took Bethel, near Perryville. His services at Perryville lasted thirteen years, while he was pastor of the Bethel church for over thirty-six years, and died as its pastor.

“His work in this congregation was a great work, and his power never waned. The membership of the congregation was scattered over two counties, and a part of a third. It is no exaggeration to say that he was a stronger moral force in those counties than any ten other ministers. When he went to Perryville he found the community in the worst possible condition. The saloon power was dominant, and the church people seemed powerless to combat it. At once Brother Gilliam put himself at the head of a temperance crusade. This crusade is part of the

notable history of central Kentucky. Boyle County banished the whiskey business, and from that day there has not been a saloon in the county. The older and substantial citizens of the county attended his funeral in large numbers, and wept as soldiers for their general.

"As a presbyter he was a model. He perhaps missed the meeting of his presbytery twice in his long ministry, and then only because of death on one occasion and sickness on the other. He was a wise counselor and safe in his conclusions, yet more progressive than most young men. It was a constant surprise to the writer how he could attend to the exacting needs of his field, and keep abreast of the times in his study and reading. His study table was covered with the best literature of the day, by reading which he kept young in thought. He passionately loved his Church, and sacrificed for it as few men have.

"Between twelve and fifteen times he was a commissioner to the General Assembly, where he would have had higher recognition but for his reserved disposition, and his desire to advance his brethren's interest before his own.

"An instance of his noble character was exhibited at the last presbytery he was able to at-

tend. Like many of us he sincerely believed that the question of union was prematurely brought forward, and that it would divide the church and run into lawsuits. When the vote was taken, the presbytery voted in favor. Those who opposed wept bitterly, and were inconsolable. Brother Gilliam was granted the floor, and those who heard him say they never heard so grand a speech from any man. Scarcely able to stand, he poured out his heart's desire for his beloved church, and urged that though his views had not been adopted, they all should submit to the voice of the Church through the Assembly. No doubt that speech saved Louisville Presbytery from a bitter division over the union.

“Verily a prince in Israel has fallen, whose modesty and desire to serve God quietly prevented his true ability and worth from being known in a much wider sphere.

“Brother Gilliam's home-life was ideal. Fifty-two years he and his noble wife, who survives him, cheered each other, and were a benediction to all who came into their home. One daughter, Mrs. J. B. Edwards, was the only child. His death was the first break in the home ties. He gently fell asleep, with his family at his bedside.

“T. N. WILLIAMS.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

### HISTORY OF OLD PLEASANT GROVE FROM ITS ORGANIZATION TO PRESENT DAY.

It was on the 20th day of March, 1841, that this historical and beloved church was first organized—over sixty-seven years ago. History gives us graphic descriptions of many deeds of honor, and of the courage and bravery of the fathers who founded our churches, and as we read of them we are thrilled with admiration for these brave ministers of the gospel who labored faithfully to the end of their lives, never pausing to consider a task too hard or a sacrifice too great to be made when the destinies of human souls hung on their efforts.

Pleasant Grove was a plain country church, built in a beautiful grove, and was organized by the Rev. Samuel A. Noel, who was its first pastor. The land on which the church was built was donated to the church by the late Jacob Smyser, Sr., who, with his wife, was among the charter members. Brethren H. W. Bence and

Samuel Bates united with this church at its organization, by profession, and were elected its first ruling elders, each serving in that capacity till his death. It is not known how many charter members there were at this time. This church struggled for many years before much was accomplished in a substantial way. Rev. Samuel Noel endeared himself to the membership by his earnest, consecrated efforts to build up the congregation. His death occurred in November, 1842, before the church was two years old. He was succeeded by the Rev. John Irvine, who also served only a short time, and he was followed by Rev. Wm. Langdon. Rev. Laban Jones next took charge in 1848, remaining four years. After this the Rev. David Robinson preached for this congregation until his death, which occurred in 1852. These frequent pastoral changes greatly retarded the growth of this weak church. It was difficult to secure the services of a pastor who could supply the church for little or no salary.

In 1852, Rev. R. D. Blair took charge. In December, 1863, Mr. Blair was assisted in a revival meeting by the Rev. J. B. Green. This meeting was one of the greatest revivals in the history of this church. Over one hundred mem-

bers were added to the church, chiefly on profession, and the congregation took on new life. Both pastor and people were greatly encouraged and the church was better equipped for future usefulness. The board of ruling elders were earnest, consecrated Christian men, serving the church faithfully in all its departments. In November, 1871, ruling elder Samuel Bates was removed by death, which was a deep loss to the church just at this time, and also to his family and the community in which he lived. He was a kind and affectionate husband and father, and a devout Christian, loyal to his church and all her enterprises, and educated his children, fitting them for future usefulness.

As we pause and look back over those days of hardship and struggling, and their outcome, we are impressed with the feeling that the church has never fully appreciated the zeal and self-sacrifice of its pastor and board of elders. For several years after the death of ruling elder Samuel Bates, this congregation had but two ruling elders. The church was greatly in need of repairs at this time. The building had become dilapidated, and the seats were in a most deplorable condition. A meeting of the session was called and a committee appointed to raise sufficient

funds to repair the building and put in new seats. It was found that it required but a short time to raise the amount needed. The work was begun at once, and completed in a few weeks, the elders and members taking their tools and helping until the work was finished. The old seats were made over, and more comfortable, and were nicely painted. The pulpit, which was built in old times, and had to be reached by climbing several steps, was taken down and a neat one put up and painted. The walls were newly frescoed, and the outside of the church was also painted. Altogether, the dear old church presented a very attractive appearance, such as gave the pastor and membership great pride.

But few country churches were furnished very elaborately in those days. Such luxuries as carpetings and cushioned pews were seldom enjoyed. The church's future prosperity seemed to be permanent. Mr. Blair resigned this pastorate about this time, never again assuming charge; and the church was again subject to frequent changes of its pastors. Of those who followed Mr. Blair we may mention Revs. Silas Perkins, B. F. Patton, S. M. Griffin, J. B. Wagoner, L. D. Ewing, E. E. Bonta and J. B. Oakley, all of whom held short pastorates.



## BUILDING NEW PLEASANT GROVE. PAST AND PRESENT HISTORY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

After the lapse of several years the church was again in need of repairs. The building had become more dilapidated than formerly. It was found that it would be a waste of money and material to attempt to again repair it, and it was considered unsafe to meet in. Accordingly, in the spring of 1897, the Rev. T. N. Williams, who was Synodical Missionary for Kentucky at that time, visited Pleasant Grove and preached at odd times for two years. He saw its needs, and at once set to work directing the forces, with a view to tearing down the old church and erecting a new one. While many solemn and pleasant memories were clustered about this old church, in which hundreds of souls had sought and found peace with their Redeemer, and who were loth to see the building taken down, yet it was deemed wisest to do so, and erect a new church, which should still be called "Pleasant Grove."

The Ladies' Aid Society of this church had been a band of noble and faithful workers for a number of years. They had succeeded in raising money to help in both foreign and home missions, and also in all departments of the church



**REV. T. N. WILLIAMS.**

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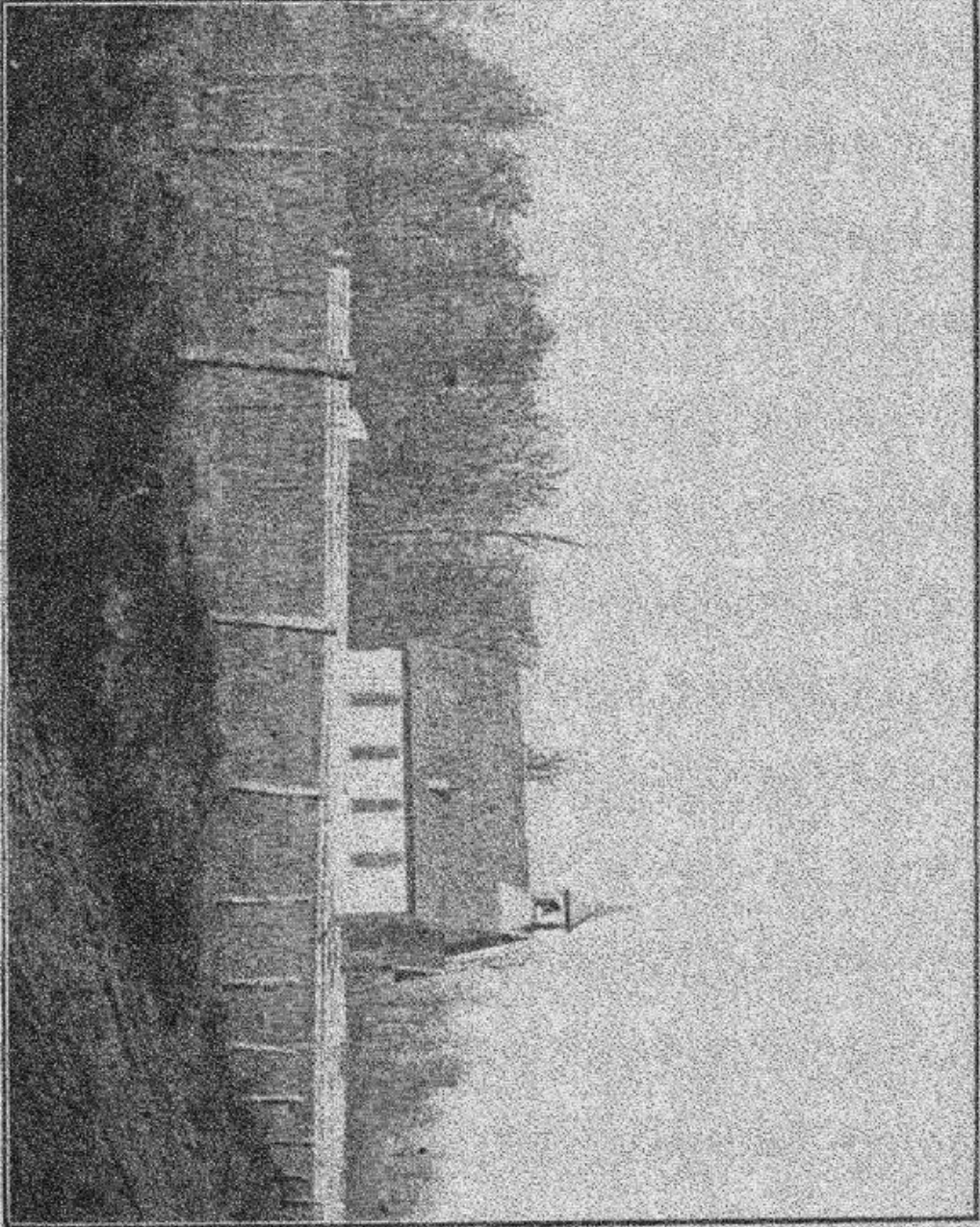
work. As soon as it was understood that a new church was to be built, they decided to purchase the lot in some place more easy of access than the old site. They selected a beautiful lot on the corner of Mr. Jeff Rush's farm, directly on the county road, which they obtained for one hundred dollars for one acre of land.

Accordingly, the work of tearing down old Pleasant Grove church was begun in August, 1897, and work on the new building was commenced at once and pushed to completion as rapidly as circumstances would permit. Brother Williams was the architect who drew the plans and specifications for the new church, which was done free of cost. In many instances the plans for a moderately commodious church cost between twenty-five and thirty dollars. Thus it will be readily seen he saved the membership many dollars in the erection and planning of this church. He advised and directed the whole affair, and economized in the management and cost of material and work, in such a creditable manner that he won for himself the lifelong gratitude and admiration of the entire membership.

Mr. E. M. Hansbrough obtained the contract to build the church, commencing the work in Au-

gust, 1897, and completing it in November of the same year. He is a skilled workman, and gave entire satisfaction in erecting this church, which is a credit to his skill. In putting up the tower he came near losing his life. The ladder on which he was standing slipped, and he was thrown to the roof, striking his chest against a sharp corner, injuring him considerably. He was unable to work for several days. If he had not been caught in his fall by a workman, he would have fallen to the ground, striking on his head, as he was "going down head foremost," a distance of sixty feet, and would have been instantly killed. A lady living opposite saw the accident and thought he was really killed, but he was only stunned, and soon revived.

The new Pleasant Grove church was dedicated November 2, 1897. Services were held both morning and afternoon, and also at night. A sumptuous dinner was prepared by the ladies of the congregation, and spread on the ground. Several hundred partook of the dinner, and pronounced it a marvelous feast of good things. Everybody said the church was a "thing of rare beauty." Ruling Elder H. W. Bence was the only charter member living at the time the new church was dedicated. As before stated, he and



NW PLEASANT GROVE C. P. CHURCH  
November 2, 1897.

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ruling elder Samuel Bates were elected its first ruling elders, at the organization of the church; and it is gratifying to know they served the church in that capacity, side by side, until Mr. Bates was removed from the ranks by death, in 1871, Mr. Bence continuing to serve the congregation until his death, a period of more than sixty-five years. Mr. Bence was an efficient officer, one of the chief pillars of the church during his life, giving liberally of his means toward its support, and always being present at services during his long and honored life, until prevented by the infirmities of old age. He was one of the sweetest singers in the church. His singing was earnest and soul-stirring, being a great help to his pastors, especially in revival work. He was a man of untiring energy and sound judgment, which made him a strong personality in the community in which his life was spent. As a business man he was eminently successful, and established for himself a reputation for honesty and uprightness in his financial dealings with men! and his many virtues were worthy of our emulation.

The Ladies' Aid Society not only paid for the lot on which the new church was built, but paid for its furnishings also. It has beautiful oak



pews, and pulpit stand, with handsome scarf, new Bible, new communion table and cover, and easy chairs for the pulpit, which is a great improvement on the old, straight-back bench which was the only seating the old pulpit had. The aisles and platform are handsomely carpeted. The church has a seating capacity of four hundred, and cost, all told, fourteen hundred dollars. The building and furnishings of the new church are such as to give the pastor and members a just pride and appreciation.

While the church is not in as prosperous condition as its pastor and members might wish, yet they realize much has been accomplished since its organization that is very gratifying. It was dedicated out of debt, and has remained so, and is self-supporting. It has had services once a month regularly since the new church was built. Rev. T. N. Williams continued as pastor for the new church for a short time after its completion. After tendering his resignation, which was reluctantly accepted, the Rev. R. L. Ryall next took charge of the congregation, serving one year. After Rev. R. L. Ryall the Rev. E. W. Graves took charge and is its pastor at the present time. It is earnestly desired that this congregation may be able, in the near future, to



MRS. P. E. BATES,

For a number of years teacher of one of the largest and most appreciative Bible Classes in Pleasant Grove Sunday School and a student of the Real Word.

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erect a parsonage and employ a pastor for all of his time.

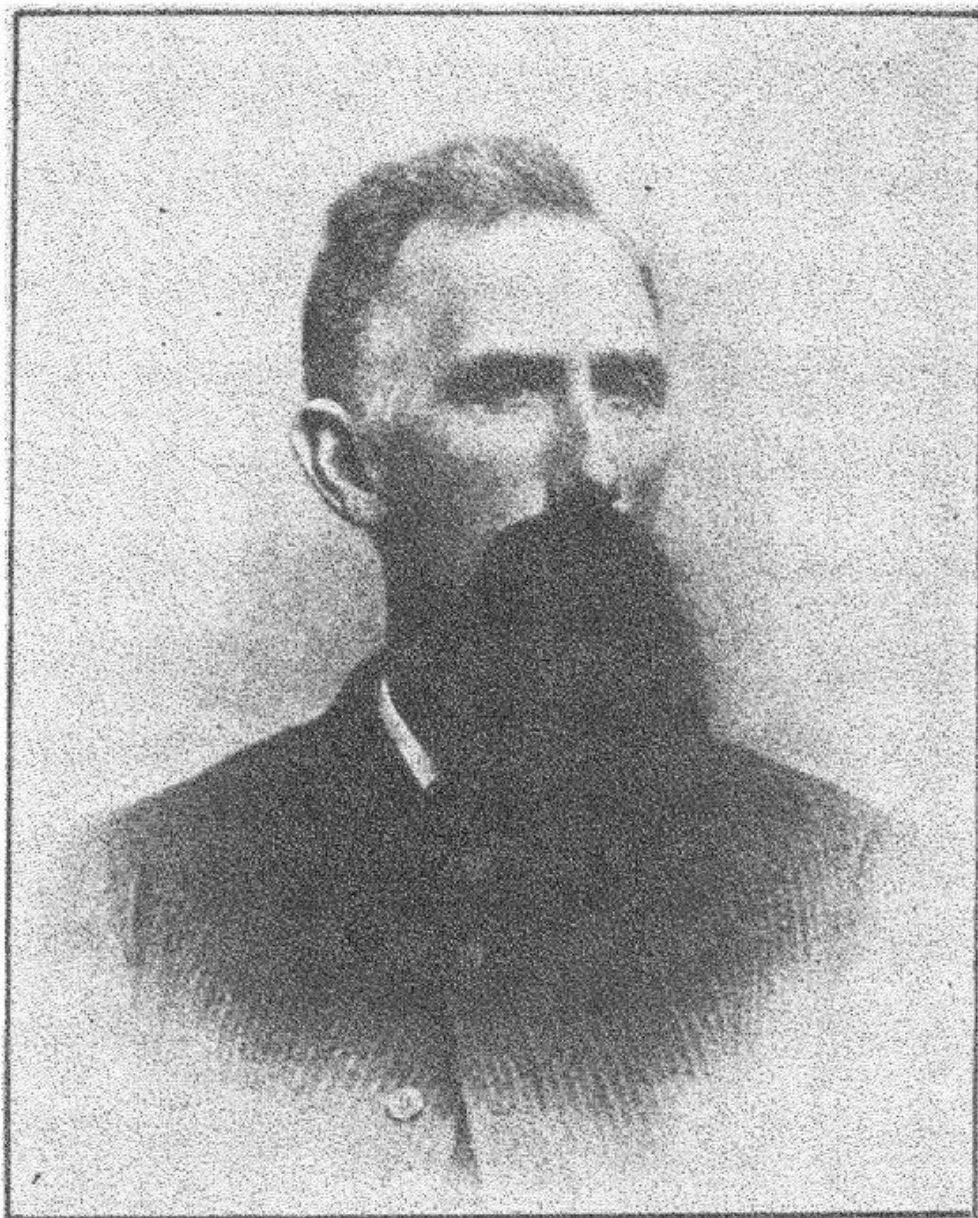
The Pleasant Grove Sunday school has been in a very flourishing condition for many years, and has done a grand work. It has been an all-the-year-round Sunday school for over twenty-five years. No matter how inclement the weather, or how disagreeable the roads, its faithful superintendent and teachers have "gone on duty," and it is remarkable how promptly the children attend in the severest winter weather, many of them living some distance from the church, and having to travel some of the worst country roads.

Much of the present prosperity of this church and Sunday school is due to the untiring efforts of Mr. P. E. Bates and his estimable wife, who have been working zealously for many years, teaching and training the members and the Sunday school. Mr. Bates has been ruling elder and clerk of the session for over thirty years, and superintendent of the Sunday school for more than twenty years. Mrs. Bates is a member of the Christian Church, yet she has labored faithfully along with her husband, in every department of the work in Pleasant Grove church. For a number of year she has taught one of the

most interesting and appreciative Bible classes in this Sunday school. In addition to her work in the church and Sunday school, she has also been closely associated with the Ladies' Aid Society of this church for over twenty years; a portion of that time she was its president and treasurer. In all its affairs she and her husband have manifested deep interest and untiring zeal. Their house has been "the preacher's home" for many years.

The records of Pleasant Grove church show that it has been represented in every general offering called for by our General Assembly for many years and for the same period it has used our own Sunday school literature, and has taken annually several copies of *The Cumberland Presbyterian*. The membership is not large, but as a rule they are a band of strong and united workers.

As we review the interesting and varied history of Pleasant Grove church we are constrained to say that the work has been blessed remarkably, that the community has been bettered infinitely, and men and women, old and young, have felt the influence of this vine which the Lord has planted and which therefore shall never die. "Not by might nor by power, but by



**MR. P. E. BATES,**

Ruling Elder and Clerk of Session in Pleasant Grove congregation for thirty or more years and superintended the Sunday School for over twenty years.

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my Spirit, saith the Lord." And so has this been verified in the history of Pleasant Grove church, and in the lives of all who have come under her influence. To-day the church stands a living monument to the faithful pastors who prayed for her, who lived for her, and who in dying still remembered her. Surely the Book of Life bears record of the noble work done here in the past, and our earnest prayer is that in the future Pleasant Grove church may be instrumental in shaping the lives of the youth of the community, in reminding sinners that the way of the transgressor is hard, and in being a source of comfort and consolation to the hosts of Israel.

"I love Thy kingdom, Lord,  
The house of Thine abode,  
The church our blest Redeemer saved  
With His own precious blood.

"I love Thy church, O God!  
Her walls before Thee stand,  
Dear as the apple of Thine eye,  
And graven on Thy hand.

"For her my tears shall fall,  
For her my prayers ascend,  
To her my cares and toils be given,  
Till toils and cares shall end.



“Beyond my highest joy  
I prize her heavenly ways,  
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,  
Her hymns of love and praise.

“Sure as Thy truth shall last,  
To Zion shall be given  
The brightest glories earth can yield,  
And brighter bliss of heaven.”

Truly this was the song and prayer of Robert Downey Blair for the church he loved, and for which his tears fell and his prayers arose—the church whose heavenly ways he prized above all his highest joy. Though now we have parted with him in a melancholy shower of tears, yet we “sorrow not as those who have no hope” of meeting him again, and being forever with him and all the Saints, and, which is best of all “with the Lord.” Like him we shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. “Being dead he yet speaketh to us,” that he is gone before and is arrived at last into a safe and quiet harbor and is no longer at sea, and over the billows of our life’s tempestuous sea his voice seems to come with this message to me:

"I would not live alway, I ask not to stay  
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er thy way;  
The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here  
Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its cheers.

"Who, who would live alway, away from his God?  
Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,  
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the bright plains  
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns;

"Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,  
Their Savior and brethren transported to greet,  
While the anthems of rapture unceasingly roll,  
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the Soul."

## CHAPTER XV.

## BETHLEHEM CHURCH.

Bethlehem Church, located in Jefferson County, Kentucky, three miles from Fisherville, was organized in 1832, only a few years after the organization of the Pleasant Grove church. The records of this church were lost a few years ago, and the author regrets that so few items pertaining to the early history of this historical church are at command. Revs. Samuel A. Noel, Laban Jones and Samuel Howard supplied this church with preaching for a number of years. Their work was especially blessed. The congregation became one of the strongest and most united in this country. Rev. R. D. Blair took charge of this church in connection with his Pleasant Grove work, preaching once a month for more than thirty years.

The board of ruling elders, most of whom served this church from its organization to the close of Mr. Blair's pastorate, have all gone to their eternal reward. William and Robert Car-



REV. C. K. TAFTE.

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ithers, Thomas Miller, Elisha Walters, James and John Le Master, and others whose names we do not recall, were living lights in this congregation. Their sons and daughters have grown up in it, some of whom hold honored offices, like their fathers and grandfathers.

After Mr. Blair's pastorate there were frequent changes, no minister before or since having served this church as long as he did. Rev. T. N. Williams had charge a few years, and built up the congregation, as well as had some badly needed repairs put on the church. A good work was accomplished by him. After his resignation the church was without a regular pastor for several years. The question of organic union was being agitated throughout the denomination at this time. Bethlehem Cumberland Presbyterian and Plum Creek Presbyterian churches united organically, and on the 23d of September, 1906, a reunion celebration of these churches was held at Bethlehem church. The occasion was a very happy one, and sustained interest, as evidenced by the large and enthusiastic audience present. Rev. T. N. Williams, the former pastor, gave a historical sketch of Bethlehem church (1832-1906), dwelling especially on the work of Revs. Laban Jones, Samuel Noel, Samuel Howard and

R. D. Blair. The writer gave a sketch of the Plum Creek church (1835-1906), rehearsing the labors of Revs. James Hawthorn, H. H. Hopkins, Moses G. Knight, Francis Thornton, D. T. Stuart, J. B. McDonald, G. C. Overstreet and E. W. Elliott. Interesting letters were read from Rev. R. W. Cleland of California, Rev. Richard Valentine, of West Virginia, and Rev. J. P. McMillen, of Georgia, who labored in this field. Reminiscences were given by Messrs. Jno. Rhea and T. J. McKinley, of Cane Run church, and Mr. William Johnson of Beulah church. At the close of the morning service, Mrs. Elliott, by request, unveiled a handsome marble tablet, commemorative of the union of these two churches, when involuntarily the large audience arose and sang "Blest be the tie that binds." During the noon hour a sumptuous luncheon, prepared by the ladies of the congregation, was served on the beautiful church lawn. The male quartet of Beulah church regaled the audience as they had done in the forenoon.

Having surveyed the past, and gathered up its inspiration, the congregation held in the afternoon an impressive service for the election of officers. The present elders are Dr. O. G. Conrad, Mr. Everett Walters and Mr. Frank Carith-

ers. Two new elders were elected, Mr. Frank Dale and Mr. Chester Miller. The following four deacons were chosen: Edward Stallard, John Conn, Howard Smith and Fred Miller. Mrs. Dale was elected church treasurer, and Everett Walters, Dr. Conrad, John Hoke and Frank Dale were chosen trustees. The writer conducted the ordination service, and each elder and deacon received a copy of the Confession of Faith. Thus equipped for aggressive work, the Bethlehem church closed this day a happy and united people, resolved to live worthy of those who have so faithfully served the church in the past, and determined to carry forward the cause of Him who prayed that 'all may be one.'

"E. L. WARREN, D.D."

*Louisville, Ky.*

From *The Cumberland Presbyterian*.

"Mr. Blair's ministry at Bethlehem church was characterized by that same spirit of self-denial which he manifested in his other charges. He always preferred usefulness before his own private satisfaction. He was willing to make trial of anything as one who sought not his own things, but the things of Jesus Christ, to whose service in the work of the ministry he had en-



tirely devoted himself, bending his studies wholly that way. No doubt there were discouragements to be found in his Bethlehem charge, but his thirty years' pastorate at this point are overwhelming evidences of the fact that he knew 'As thy day is, so shall thy strength be,' and 'To him that hath' that is hath and useth what he hath, 'shall be given, and he shall have an abundance.' The salvation of souls was the great theme and object of his life, and the one thing upon which his heart was intent, and to this he subordinated all his other interests.

"Here at Bethlehem he applied himself to a plain and practical way of preaching, as one truly concerned for the souls of those to whom he spoke. The difficulties attending the labors of this field were many and great, but Mr. Blair had been bred in the school of adversity. He had in early years struggled with seemingly insurmountable barriers, which were but stepping stones to greater things; and now he had become inured to obstacles. He had learned in the school of bitter experience that the path of success leads through the fiery furnace of affliction and disappointment. Disappointment after all is His appointment, and if we could look upon life from this optimistic standpoint, how much happier we

would be and how much more we could accomplish for the Master. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." If the minister of the gospel would be a man after God's own heart, he must learn to suffer, to bear and forbear, even as Christ our Master did when he trod life's weary way. Through the discouragements, trials and temptations that come to the pastor, he is learning to sympathize with his sheep who spend their lives sometimes sinning, sometimes repenting, tottering under the burden of sin and sorrow.

"Mr. Blair was very industrious in visiting the sick in the community, instructing them and praying with them, and in this way he would aim at the good not only of those that were sick, but also of their friends and relations that were about him. He preached funeral sermons for all that died, rich and poor, old or young, or little children; for he looked upon such occasions as opportunities of doing good. On such occasions as this, when the hearts of men and women are torn in anguish and grief, the seed of the Word may be most successfully disseminated. When Providence has softened and prepared the ground then is the time to set in the plow of the word. Then the word of God is quick and powerful

and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joint and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' (Heb. 12:4.)

“When he administered the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, he always did it with great solemnity, as it should be done. After endeavoring to instruct his people in his public reading touching the nature of that ordinance, he would discourse personally with all that gave up their names to the Lord in it. How careful and circumspect should the minister of God be, especially in this divine ordinance! He ought to inquire as to the knowledge of the communicants, their experience, and conversion, and ought to oblige them to observe the whole law of Christ and God, touching brotherly admonition in case of scandal and such things of evil report. He ought to remind them of their past sin, for ‘if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.’ And yet he should not fail to have them resolve by the grace of God to walk circumspectly in new obedience, seeing we are encompassed round about with infirmities and temptations. He should instruct the ignorant how by diligent use of God’s means of grace—

reading the Scriptures, prayer and attendance upon the worship of His house—they may be properly qualified to partake of the sacrament.

“What a beautiful and helpful sacrament and ordinance this Lord’s Supper is! In this Christ and all his benefits are exhibited to us. If we are weak, here is bread to strengthen us. If we are sad, here is wine to comfort us. Have we need of pardon? It is here sealed in blood. If we take it by faith, though our sins be as scarlet they shall be as wool. If we have need of forgiveness, more of the spirit of grace, more power against sin, why, here it is for us; for ‘from the fulness that is in Jesus Christ we receive, and grace for grace.’ (John 1:16.) But ‘touch not, taste not, handle not,’ if thou comest with a false, unbelieving, filthy heart. Presume not, if this be your plight, to come any nearer to this sacred ordinance. If you are living in the open and avowed practice of sin, or the omission of any duty for which conscience is upbraiding thee, then leave the gift and go your ways; be reconciled to God, to your brother, and then come. Better to shame ourselves by not coming so near, than to damn ourselves by coming nearer.

“Mr. Blair’s carriage to the people of his congregations was most exemplary, condescending

to the meanest and conversing familiarly with them, bearing with the infirmities of the weak, and like the Apostle Paul, becoming all things to all men. Weak Christians have infirmities. Infirmity supposes life, and all who are alive to God have an inward sense of sin and their own lost condition by reason of it. 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ,' the law both of command and example. Mr. Blair was exceedingly careful not to give offense or occasion of grief to anybody, knowing full well that the wisdom that is from above is first 'pure and peaceable, and gentle, easy to be entreated.' And yet he reproved sharply and faithfully what he saw amiss in any, mourning also for that which he could not mend.

"Many out of neighboring parishes or communities attended upon his ministry, and some came far. This is proof enough of the high esteem in which he was held by all denominations, and to-day we may modestly say that his friends who remember him and his faithful labors are to be found among those of every church and creed. We are all one in Christ; if we love God why should we not love one another? Rising above the petty and insignificant religious quibbles, we are all on the same royal highway to

glory, and in heaven we shall all be one in our acclamations of glory and praise.

“During the thirty years of labor at Bethlehem church, he saw in many the visible fruits of his ministry there, and a new generation sprung up, who ‘knew not Joseph.’ He saw of the travail of his own soul, to the rejoicing of his heart; but with this particular dispensation—that most or all of them died in the Lord before he left the charge. The opportunity he found there of doing good was always appreciated by him, and the length of his days in this particular field is a striking testimony to the efficiency of his labors of love among the brethren of Bethlehem church.

“Three things characterized him here at Bethlehem, as everywhere else: (1) Great piety and devotion, and a strong element of godliness in his conversation. (2) Great industry in the pursuit of useful knowledge, especially that pertaining to the Bible and his ministry. (3) Great self-denial, self-diffidence and self-abasement, yet with fearlessness in the strength of the Lord.

“‘Some men’s sins go before them and some live after.’ So wrote the inspired writer with the pen of inspiration. Too sad and true it is that bad influences are such potent beings. One sin produces another, till finally who can number

the multitude of transgressions? Yea, more, who can check the tide of iniquitous influence as it rolls and surges, gaining strength and velocity at each moment? Once we are caught upon the breakers of sin, it is not long before we are tossed out upon the wild, heaving sea of self-destruction. And sadder ever is the thought that 'we perish not alone in our iniquity.' This world is so constituted that no man liveth to himself or dieth to himself. When we embark upon the tempestuous tide of iniquity we are bound to involuntarily or voluntarily take others with us. Yes, some men's sins do go before them and some live after; and too often the good is interred with their bones.

"But when we think of the labors of Rev. R. Downey Blair we cannot but believe that the good seed he has sown is flourishing and bearing fruit, some tenfold, some an hundredfold. 'He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall hide a multitude of sins,' that is, shall prevent thereby a multitude of sins. Who can number the silent influences for good exerted by a godly pastor during a service of thirty years in any church! How many are the multitude of sins he must have prevented during such a lengthy ministry!

Mr. Blair was a strong tower for good in the community of Bethlehem church. We know that perhaps some good must have been interred with the bones, yet a goodly portion of benign influence still remain with us, for which we are truly grateful, for the ministry of one who found favor in the sight of God and man, one who was a friend to sinner and saint, and who wrestled with God in prayer over the souls of dying men and the interests of his church here upon earth."



## CHAPTER XVI.

## HIS CORRESPONDENCE.

Mr. Blair was very free and candid in his letters to friends. He realized the truth of the statement, "A good letter may perhaps do more good than a good sermon, because the address is more particular and what is written remains." In listening to a pungent and pointed sermon on sin and its several aggravations, the sinner and Christian are each alike prone to think that the message is directed to his neighbor instead of to himself. It is so easy to call to mind the imperfections of Brother Smith and Sister Jones, and to apply the truths of the sermon to their needs, while his lordship "Myself" is, in our own false self-esteem, above reproach and the sins so bitterly denounced. "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us to see ourselves as others see us."

This is the advantage a letter has over a sermon. The person addressed realizes that the message is to him alone, and to a certain extent is enabled to see himself as other see him. A

sermon is often too general and impersonal in its nature; a letter is just the contrary, particular and intensely personal. Every Christian's letters should be "sermonettes," as it were, because through this means much good can be done. A letter will often accomplish what could not be done in other ways. Many a person who would not heed your words of warning and direction will give their attention and time to the perusal of a tactful Christian letter. Through this instrumentality the Apostle Paul kept in touch with the early Christian churches; by this noble means he reproved the early Christians for their sins, sympathized with them in their burdens and trials, and encouraged them because of their faithful works and growth in grace. If Paul saw fit to make such consecrated use of the epistle, why does it not behoove us to reach the souls of our fellow-men by this same method?

Mr. Blair, as in everything else, characterized his letters by a language and expression at once that of a Christian. Would that more of us would so order our walk and conversation, and I might add our correspondence, as becometh Christians. His letters were always written in language pious and heavenly, and seasoned with the salt of grace; and when there was occasion

he would well administer counsels, reproofs or comforts by letter. Like so many persons, he kept very few, if any, copies of his letters, and therefore only specimens of his correspondence can be presented to the reader, inasmuch as to retrieve his communications from the hands into which they had fallen, is by this time well nigh impracticable. In writing these letters he manifests always that warmth of holy affection and zeal, occasionally indulging in a playfulness of expression which served to show how far he was from being gloomy or morose.

The following was addressed to the Farmers' Association, in which he was actively interested, and was written at the time of the organization of the Farmers' Protective Association.

"Dear Sirs and Brethren:

"In consideration of this subject of protection for the farmer, we must be prudent and yet not overwise; rigid and yet not narrow in our views; and above all let us have the spirit of the Master who sought in the best and most peaceable way the good of suffering and oppressed humanity. Let us ever be possessed of a will both tender and inflexible, and an intellect clear and unclouded.

“When we consider the progress of civilization, we see that this Goddess of Progress has divided the pursuits of men into distinct professions, avocations, trades and arts. We have very few, if any, ‘Jack of all Trades’ people, for this age is now one of specialties, and its cardinal motto is ‘Be master of one trade’ instead of a ‘Jack of all and master of none.’ Commercialism rules in every walk of life, and its reign is by far too much of a monopoly. The renaissance has long ago performed its work, and left its indelible stamp upon all life. Religion has gradually been giving away to the secular spirit of commercialism. Literature and art are an insignificant background, while faith is wavering between the skepticism and irreverence of the age

“Yet since this spirit of commercialism has so usurped the place it now occupies, to keep abreast of the times we must study it carefully, in order that we may fortify our religious methods against it.

“As we glance hastily at modern life in one panoramic view, we see that the spirit of organization in every phase of activity is the controlling element. ‘Let all things be done decently and in order’ said the apostle Paul, and now this is the

placard of every enterprising concern. Even in our churches we have pushed organization almost to an extreme, until in many respects we have but the mere outward form of a systematic religion. The church is trying to keep too much abreast of the times, and the fear is that in conforming to modern thought and progress, like Israel of old that desired a king that they might be as other nations, she will ultimately lose her distinctive character and fail of her mission here in the world.

“Each profession, art and trade is organized. We have our trades unions, our fraternal societies, Christian associations, business and various other syndicates. Combines and trusts, labor versus capital are summarizing words. Hence each profession, art, etc., is organized for self-protection. Men meet together to consult how to protect themselves. And why should not the farmers organize to protect themselves and their families from the various organizations? In union is strength, and how true is the motto of Kentucky, our fair state, ‘United we stand, divided we fall.’ When we all pull together, much can be accomplished, but when in a divided way one pulls this way and another that way, the result cannot fail to be disastrous. Let the farmers of

this county organize, so that they may make their calling honorable and more remunerative to its members and thereby refuse to place themselves at the mercy of heartless but avaricious produce dealers.

“As the result of all this kind of self-interest and protection, we have the pork packers’ convention, the merchants’ chamber of commerce, the manufacturers, board of trade, etc., etc. It is a self-evident truth that the farmers feed and clothe the world. If the farmers of the entire country should combine, and agree not to produce any crops for a single given year, what would be the awful result? The heedless world would be brought face to face with the fact that they do not appreciate the true value of the farmer; that too often they underestimate this powerful agency of supplying the world with its food.

“God gave his divine approval and holy sanction to this the first of all earthly callings or occupations ‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread,’ and ever since this primal curse was imposed upon man in the Garden of Eden, the sons of the soil have had a conspicuous and vital part in this world’s work. Farmers, miners, manufacturers, furnish the wealth of the world. Thoughtless capital fails to realize the full sig-

nificance of this statement. Without the brawny laborer, with his sinews of honest strength, the arrogant, supercilious, avaricious and self-centered capitalist would be a nonentity. One half knows not how the other half lives, but the laboring class is fast awakening to the fact that the upper half is as dependent on the lower as it is on the higher. The relation is mutual, and if there is any advantage naturally, why it must belong to the lower, especially to the farmer, who by the sweat of his brow and the tillage of his fields is furnishing, by God's blessing and help, the world's daily bread.

"Recently the farmer has suffered the organized board of trade and commerce to fix the price both for what he sells and buys. Consequently the men who handle the products of the farm are growing rich, while the farmers barely eke out an existence. Land is decreasing in value, in one year alone, \$22,600,000. Why are so many from the rural districts moving to the city? Why is the farmer's calling not what it used to be? Simply because organization is arbitrarily telling him what he must ask for his products, and refusing to buy until he acquiesces.

"The produce dealers, or 'middle men,' stand between the farmer and the buyer. These pa-

trons of husbandry bring the buyer and seller face to face so far as it can be done, and thereby save the expense of a series of agencies which would necessarily have to be paid out of the farmers' pockets. In order, however, that the farmer may have justice, he should fall in line and be so organized as to create his own reasonable but not exorbitant prices. Extremes often beget regrets. The pendulum has swung to the far extreme, and now for the reaction. There should be a balance of power in which the farmer, the wholesale dealer and the retail dealer, and his dealers, should all have fair play. Therefore, I for one am heartily in favor of this organization of farmers, for the protection of their own interests, and to equip them to hold their own, and to refuse to let this or that body of men dictate to them in regard to their prices set upon the products of their fields.

“Sincerely,

“R. DOWNEY BLAIR.”



## CHAPTER XVII.

### “GLEAMINGS OF THOUGHT” FROM MR. BLAIR’S NOTEBOOK

Mr. Blair, perhaps through the excess of his modesty and self-diffidence, never published much, if any, of the work of his pen. He always rejoiced to read the sermons of others, and took a keen interest and pleasure in reading the lives, actions and sayings of eminent men, ancient and modern. To be sure, this was most interesting, useful and instructive and helpful in his work. If we would direct aright the reading and training of the minds of our children we would see to it that next to the Bible, they should cultivate a taste for reading the lives of great and good men. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” The reason why children go astray so often is due to the fact that promiscuous reading material falls too frequently into their hands. Mr. Blair was a candid reader and digested whatever he read. It is not so much how much we read as it is how we read.

In an old, time-worn and yellow note-book, dated August 7, 1850, we find these few verses of scripture, with a thought or two of Mr. Blair's added thereto.

"Galatians 6: 14: 'But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.' Let us imagine the disposition of mind of the Apostle Paul when he uttered this verse so pregnant with meaning. Meekness in the understanding is seen in the way Paul received the truth of God, and meekness in the will is seen in his yielding to divine command. The truth of this verse is made more emphatic when we remember by contrast that the author was once Saul the haughty young soldier, the persecutor of the faithful, who once went about breathing out persecution and destruction. And now he is the meek, subdued, gentle soldier of the cross to which he was now crucified.

"1. The nature of this crucifixion. It was reciprocal. By the power of the cross—that is, the death of Christ—the world was crucified unto him and he unto the world. The world had lost its previous attraction to him and he too had lost his previous attraction to the world. How true and characteristic this is of real, sound conversion!

The world must lose its charms and its power, and the converted must by reason of his turning lose the friendship of worldlings and be crucified and dead unto them. And how is this, my friends, accomplished? Only by the cross, the power of Christ's death. Without this death the whole plan of redemption would be of no effect. The cross of Christ is the central figure of Christendom, the keystone to the arch of God's plan of redemption. Christ's work was only finished when on the cross he ejaculated in agonizing tones, 'It is finished.' The manger and the cross are the extremes of his life here among men, and ever before him he had the vision of the cross. So Paul rightly gloried in the death and cross of Christ, and prayed that God would forbid his glorying in anything else save this tragedy of Calvary. This disposition of mind manifested by Paul in this verse is seen again in I Cor. 2: 15-16: 'For he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.' 'For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ. Paul had learned by bitter experience to change his point of view in order to comprehend the meaning of life. 'For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.'

“2. The degrees of this disposition of mind and of this mutual crucifixion are very evident. It must have meant a good deal for one versed in the law, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, with that inborn, innate reverence for legalities, to say he had ceased to glory in the law. The law was the glory of the Jewish ceremonial worship and the characteristic element of the Jewish theocracy. The intensity of this departure from the stately, ancient, revered laws of his fathers to the unembellished cross of Christ is what Paul referred to in this verse. He now glories in the cross and not in the law. He had learned that ‘In Jesus Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything but a new creature!’ Now he ‘bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ That is, as a disciple and follower he would now do those things characteristic of Christ, he would have the marks or traits of a Christian.

“3. The difficulties and the bitterness of this mutual crucifixion were most paramount. The world, with all that was most dear to the former hero of Jewish persecution, and all his former ideals and training, had to be crucified one to the other. To assume the cross of Jesus, to follow in his steps, meant just as much then, and perhaps

more, than it does to the Christian now in the way of self-denial, self-renunciation. Paul in crucifying himself to the world had to present his whole self a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God, which was but his reasonable service!

“The consequential bitterness of Jewish hatred and contempt for an apostate was wreaked upon Paul in every way; but while God chose to write bitter things against him, he never wrote bitter things against God. The bitter thorn in his flesh was a spur to him to put him on his heavenly way. The bitterness of this crucifixion became a consecrated means of his spiritual progress and growth in grace. So, beloved, we have seen in the life of the apostle the benefits that accrue from this mutual crucifixion. Therefore, if we have not done so, it now behooves us to have ‘the world crucified unto us and we ourselves unto the world,’ for ‘they that are of the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit but they who are of the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.’”

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The following is taken from Job 14: 1-2:

“Man that is born of woman is of a few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.”

“1. Human life, strange, mysterious, ephemeral, is flattering in its commencement. It cometh forth like a flower. What in God’s great and beautiful universe is more lovely than the bright flowers that reflect the Creator’s love? Truly, as the poet said, ‘They are stars that in earth’s firmament do shine.’ They come in spring, bright, resplendent, to remind us of our own more glorious resurrection. They wither and die, to speak again of the vanity of life, to remind us that soon we too must lie in our cold, dark beds, to await the Master’s life giving touch.

“We are, too, but buds of summer,  
In the foliage of life,  
Blooming in the sunny morning,  
Drooping leaves before the night.”

“The clay that slowly hardens into man soon realizes that flowery youth is not all of Life’s ways, and the primrose path is very short.

“2. Life is disastrous in its continuance. ‘Full of trouble,’ writes the faithful and tried servant of God. How many are the beautiful barks that sailed gracefully and well as they left the shore of infancy, but when the billows and surging tides of manhood swept fast upon them, they

were shattered and now are shipwrecks on unknown seas.

“That there is a vast amount of sorrow in the universe, everybody knows. The crowds that gather at festivals, or that congregate in theaters or opera houses, seem to be happy, because they wear their smiling faces; but when the excitement of the moment subsides the shadows darken them. A skeleton is in the closet at home. But some will say that the ills of life are not half so numerous as its joys; that happiness outweighs misery by far. But such have looked at life only through colored spectacles. Sorrow is prevalent here in our midst and has a providential meaning, too. Man’s days are full of trouble. Why? Because life is full of sin. The world’s burden of sorrow is synonymous with the world’s great burden of sin. The golden apple of discord, which in my mythology brought the divinities into jealousy one with the other and set them at variance, is none other than the same luscious fruit of Eden that made our progenitors fall into sin. So long as sin remains with us sorrow’s reign is undisputed. Job says, farther on, ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing? not one.’ Sin is another term for uncleanness. This world begets sin, sin begets

sorrow, and man's day are 'the' scene of the conflict.

"3. Life is contracted in its span. 'Man is of few days.' The longest life is but one speck upon the vast ocean of eternity. We spend our days as a tale that is told. Yet we are so engrossed with the things of time and sense, to the exclusion of holy and religious meditation and concern, that one would think life on earth is synonymous with time and eternity.

All our removals in this world are but from one wilderness to another (Num. 10: 12). Life's transient dream too quickly ends, and we are brought face to face with God and eternity. Why, then, should we strive after the things that perish with the using thereof, when we may set our hearts and affections upon a life, not of a few days, but forever and ever! Eternal life is the life of heaven. This and the spiritual life are for substance the same; they differ in degree only. Life spiritual is the life of grace, the life eternal, the life of glory begun and life eternal. The life of glory, is life spiritual perfected in grace. One is the child, the other the man; one the bud, the other the rose.

"4. Life earthly is incessant and eventful. It fleeth as a shadow and continueth not. A thou-



sand years are but as yesterday when it is past. In youth one day seems an eternity but the older we grow the shorter does life's span seem, and how fast the moments fly. Like a swift flying meteor, a fast-fleeting cloud, man passes from life to death in the grave. So teach us to number our days (life's little day) that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

"5. Life is indisputable in its nature, yet uncertain. The only certain thing in life is death, unknown and mysterious in its commencement. Who knoweth what a day may bring forth? Man proposes, but God disposes. Our plans of to-day culminate in frustration on the morrow. History may repeat itself, but when and where, what prophet can tell us?

"Life, how vain thou art!  
Pregnant with care,  
Hope, groping in the dark,  
Falls in despair."

"What were this uncertain life without the anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast; without the hope that is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. There is nothing under the sun but has the stamp and brand of decay upon it. All is unprofitable, unsuitable, un-

certain, not worthy our affection when we have them, nor afflicting ourselves when we want them.

“Mark 8: 36-37: ‘What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’

“Man’s soul! What is it worth? The value of any earthly commodity is derived from its relative value, from comparing it with other things. The soul is incomparable, therefore invaluable. The soul of man is bounded only by the eternity of God. In every soul there are wrapped up infinite stretches of thought and eternal expansion. In every soul there are vast possibilities for beauty, harmony, joy and glory, of which the world has not so much as even dreamed.

“The value of the soul is evinced by its power to master the body. The lives of the saints and martyrs are an able commentary upon the ascendancy of soul over body. Amid the flames and agonies of bitter persecution, with godlike fortitude the soul could triumphantly force the parched lips to praise and glorify the Master for whom it suffered.

“The soul is immortal, its crowning glory. This distinguishes it from everything earthly

and ephemeral. The soul lives on forever. The world and all therein shall and must one day burn as chaff. Time and space cannot limit the soul, because it is a part of Him who is infinite and eternal. The soul is our one great possession, and its salvation our one great concern. Its value was so great that 'God gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.' 'The soul that believeth on me shall never die.' Christ emptied himself of glory, and came into the world of sin to die for the soul of man and to redeem it.

"The world! vast and comprehensive, a thing of beauty, a miracle of creation! Wealth, fame, power, pleasure are its offspring. The value of the world is only for the present, and to the individual certainly most ephemeral. We came into this world naked from the womb, and thither shall we naked return.

"The world and the soul! Which shall we choose? The one profits in a transitory manner, giving us the things that have change and decay branded upon them; the other gives us a higher, nobler life here on earth, and life eternal beyond the gloom and pall of the grave. It is for each one of us to say what we shall take for our souls. Satan bids loudly and long, and in a deceptive

way. Hearken not to the speciousness of his temptation. He is a shrewd trader, and seeks the most priceless thing man has. To Christ he subtly came with his tempting offers—first seeking the apparent good of the Master by telling him to command the stones to be made bread, in order to satisfy his own hunger. Then, later, he seeks to have Christ tempt God by rushing foolishly into danger. At last he frankly says, 'If thou wilt only fall down and worship me.' This was his veiled design in the first temptation. He wants your soul, Christian, your worship, your reverence—and what does he offer in exchange for it? Pleasures that canker the soul, remorse that is worth than death, and spiritual paralysis.

"At the blood-stained cross of Calvary there stands a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who says, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters and drink, yea, come buy wine and honey. Wherefore do ye spend your labor for that which satisfieth not and your labor for that which is not bread?' He is acquainted with grief for your soul's sake, bruised for your iniquities, wounded for your transgressions.' Why not give him that which is his by right, because he hath redeemed it with his own

precious blood? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Nothing, because in this ephemeral world there is nothing comparable to the immortal soul. 'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' Nothing, because the world without Christ is of none effect. The only exchange for a lost soul is the ransom of Jesus Christ; so if you have sold your soul for the vain, empty world, your only hope is in the blood-stained Cross. The Lamb of God is the Ransom of the Soul.

HOPE—A PRAYER MEETING TOPIC.

"It is a universal characteristic of human nature to look forward to something better than we now have, to live in expectation of developments in the future which will be a great benefit to us. You may term it Hope, or Ambition, or 'Great expectations,' or Utopian dreams, as you will; but it is this element in our nature which enables us to live on a crust and in a cabin to-day, in the hope that we may have the opportunity to fare sumptuously in a palace to-morrow. A person without cherished hopes or expectations for the future would be marked as one without energy, without ambition, with no incentive to labor or study.

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“As a prominent public speaker whom I have heard, expressed it, ‘Hope is the mainspring of all human action. It carries us over the deep waters, across Life’s desert places into battles with insurmountable difficulties. Without its incentive to action, the world’s arm would become paralyzed. God in depriving us of a knowledge of future events, more than compensated us by the gift of hope, which we lean upon as a cripple does upon his crutch.’

“But unfortunately the objects of hope are too often painfully uncertain and disappointing. Like delusive phantoms, they beckon us on, yet constantly elude our grasp, and slip away from our reach. Or, as a problem in algebra, Hope is the “x” character in our lives—‘an unknown quantity,’ to which we attach an imaginary value, and in working out life’s equations we very frequently come out ‘minus’—we are disappointed in our expectations.

“But the Christian has a well founded hope. It is a positive, not a minus, quantity. Having accepted Christ as his Saviour, the Christian desires and expects final deliverance from sin and perfect happiness in heaven. He has God’s word for these. They are promises made freely and graciously to all who accept the grace and favor

of God through Christ. It is the Christian's hope that having endured the burdens and discomforts of this life, he will by the grace of God attain unto that permanent reward; that in the day when Christ decides the eternal destiny of men, we shall enter the mansion above to share the glory of God.

CREATION—REDEMPTION.

“God has given us two great volumes—Creation and Inspiration, from which we learn that in the administration of his affairs he is actuated by two leading principles: The first, his own glory; the second, man's happiness. In creation the first of these was most prominent, for until something was created there was nothing upon which God could operate, which could reflect his glory. Hence the Psalmist says, ‘The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.’

“In redemption the happiness of many was the leading principle by which God was actuated, a reason for this sentiment. If God had made his own glory his highest object in dealing with man since the fall, he could have accomplished this in the eternal destruction of this world and in the

creation of other worlds, stocked with intelligence and holiness. But it is said that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life.' It is nowhere said that he so loved his own glory that he gave his Son. It is on the other hand said, 'There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine that need no repentance.' From these and many other passages which might be given we reach the conclusion that the happiness of man was the highest object of which God was actuated in man's redemption. Whatever view we may entertain of the greatness and grandeur of God, of his divine Majesty, omniscience, omnipotence, holiness and justice, the mind should reach the sublime height that God is love—that he loves me, that he loves sinners, and that the God of the Old Testament is revealed to us in the New Testament as the Father; that the Redeemer, the Messiah, the Saviour of the Old Testament is the Son of God in the New Testament; that the Father is Sovereign love, the Son redeeming love, the Holy Spirit, efficient love, God the triune Jehovah is love.

"Mark 16: 14: 'And he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they



believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.' The eleven disciples, for Judas was no longer with them, were sitting at meat, discussing the great theme of Christ's death and resurrection, and especially the current reports concerning his having appeared to the women, etc. Unbelief had cast his pall over them, and now that the Master tarried their doubts began to overwhelm them. It is as natural for the human heart to disbelieve as it is for it to have hope in the future. Faith always struggles against unbelief. Psychologists tell us that with the greatest attainable degree of certainty there is always just a little of doubt at the other end of the mental ladder, and with the greatest degree of doubt there is always coexistent with it a minute particle of belief. Doubt and faith are relative extremes in the psychological scale, and between these all Christian experience fluctuates. Hardness of heart is the gauge that determines the degree of belief and unbelief. It rises and falls, according as we have faith. For this very hardness of heart, the Master upbraided his disciples, and now upbraids this unbelieving generation.

"We seem to hear the meek, humble response 'Lord, help my unbelief.' There is no living by a dead faith, nor by a living faith, unless it is a

lively one. We need not only the faith of assurance but also the faith of adherence. 'Unto you it is given to believe.' This is the function of the Christian on the plan of redemption—to exercise that living faith in a living, risen Christ.

"To believe implies three things: (1) Assent to what is spoken as true, either from the evidence of the thing itself or from the truth of him who tells us. (2) Application of it to ourselves. (3) Corresponding affections and actions to this belief. The disciples did none of these three things, because they were not actuated by this faith. In the first place, they did not believe in the resurrection of Christ, because they doubted the veracity of those who related it. Excited women can see wonderful things. Certainly they did not apply this faith to themselves, neither were they actuated accordingly.

"Of all graces faith is a self-emptying and God-advancing grace. 'Them that honor me I will honor.' The just shall live by faith, because by faith we are justified. In the want of justification we are but dead men. So in this sense by faith we live, because justified by faith. Further, we are sanctified by faith because (Acts 26:18) 'That they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanc-

tified by faith.' We are comforted by faith (Rom. 15: 13), 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.' Faith comforts as it applies the promises, which promises are our breast of consolation, at which the believing soul sucks and is satisfied. Are there not two of them, one concerning the life that now is, the other concerning the things of that which is to come? Godliness hath both, and hath need of both, in order to comfort. They are wellsprings of salvation, and if the well be deep the more need of faith. It is by faith that we look at the recompense of reward, which makes us lively and cheerful in our obedience, forasmuch as we know our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord. Whoso believes 'shall not perish but have everlasting life.'

"If all this be true of faith, and more too, then rightly did Christ upbraid them because of their unbelief. How could they, the 'beacon lights' of apostolic Christianity, accomplish their destiny and mission unless they were to live by this faith, which they were to teach others about. This faith that purifies the heart, purges the conscience of dead works, producing fruits of love, quench-

ing the fiery darts of the wicked and overcoming the world—'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' (I John 5:4.)

"Faith is the eye of the soul by which we look unto Christ as the Israelites did to the brazen serpent in the wilderness, and thereby received a cure from him. Behold, faith is more than the eye, it is the foot by which we come unto Christ. 'Come unto me'; that is, believe in me. 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' By unbelief we depart from God; by faith we come to Christ. In fact, faith is our whole being leaning upon Christ. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive and rest in him alone for salvation. Without faith we can do nothing and are nothing. Oh, that unto us it might be given more and more thus to believe! Lord, strengthen our faith! Work this belief into all hearts, fulfilling in us the good pleasure of his goodness and this work of faith with power!

"There are different degrees of faith. There are quarter believers and half believers; but the whole believer is he that assents, applies, and is affected, and acts according to what he says he believes."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## SKETCH OF THE WORKS OF REV. SAMUEL A. NOEL.

Since writing the sketch of Rev. R. Downey Blair's life and works, and the history of the churches mentioned in this volume, memoirs of Revs. Samuel Ayers Noel and Laban Jones have been placed in our hands, which contain valuable and interesting data connected with the work of these churches, and will add much to the interest of this volume. Rev. S. A. Noel organized the churches mentioned herein, and served them faithfully during his all too short ministrations. Very few now living are acquainted with his early life. He was associated to some extent with Rev. R. D. Blair in pastoral work.

Rev. Samuel A. Noel was born in Lincoln County, Kentucky, December 29, 1814. He was the son of Rev. Joel Noel, a Baptist minister, of very fine moral character, of pious, noble bearing in society, of moderate education, well read only in the Holy Scriptures, which, we are informed, he used to say ought to be the principal text-book

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in all the schools and all the world. His manner in the pulpit was ardently zealous, and he seems to have been owned as one of the humble honored instruments in sowing the seed in the earlier settling of Kentucky, which has matured into many of the venerable Baptist churches planted in that fertile region; and though a most unpretending man, who never wrote a book, and perhaps never a sermon (for his manner was entirely extempore), yet he speaks to this day in the lives and conversation of some who remember him as the instrument of their awakening.

Samuel became quite thoughtless and wicked at about the age of eleven years old. He often grieved sorely at the recollections of his bereaved and friendless condition, and the recollections of the admonitions and prayers of his pious mother, the impressions made by whom, in her last moments, seem never to have been forgotten, and proved ultimately the means of his conversion. In the following, from his own pen, shortly after he professed religion, is shown the force of parental solicitude for their children.

He says: "When I was one year old my father died. He was a minister of the gospel of the regular Baptist order, a man of good, reputable character for piety, and usefulness in his own

church and neighborhood. He died with a strong and lively hope of a blessed immortality at God's right hand. These things my mother and the neighbors used to tell me when I was a naughty boy.

"At the age of seven I had the misfortune to lose my dear mother, also, leaving two little orphans, my sister, now Mrs. Mary W. Smith, and myself, to buffet the waves of misfortune, and share the cold charities of the world, without father or mother.

"I shall never forget my dear mother. Her last words, under God, were at an early age the means of the conversion of my soul. The neighbors had gathered in to see her die. She related her experience, and appeared very joyful in view of her immediate passage to heaven, and praised the Lord for all his goodness to her soul. She then asked for her children. We came near her bedside. She said to us, 'Remember your father's example. He is in heaven. I soon shall join him, and you, my dear children, will have no father or mother. I leave you in the hands of the Lord. Every necessary comfort will be supplied you by your guardian. Will you be good and dutiful children, and meet your parents in heaven?' And we both promised. Then taking hold of my

hand (I almost feel the touch of my dear mother's hand at this moment), she said, 'Oh, my dear little son, remember your father was a good man. Follow his example. I have prayed to the Lord that he would convert your soul, and that you might be called to warn sinners of their danger. You will be an orphan. I fear the bad examples you will meet with in the world may ruin your precious soul. Meet me in heaven. Farewell.'

"I felt the grasp of my mother's hand relax its hold. I looked at her, but she had expired. No one who has never experienced it can realize the orphan's feelings. No sooner had I discovered that my mother was dead than a feeling of desolation came over me, and though but a poor little boy, a deep sense of my situation flashed across my mind. I wept bitterly, but had no one to go to in my distress. My dear parents were dead, and the Lord was the only one for me to look to now. But I felt that I was a sinner, and how could I approach him? Here was the first time I remember to have been convicted of my sins. I thought I would be a good boy, and meet my mother in heaven; but wild associates and a lively disposition soon wore off my serious feelings, and I became as light and bad a boy as could be seen



in the schoolroom. When about eleven years old the Cumberland Presbyterians came into the upper portion of Kentucky. They preached at our schoolhouse; it was a new thing, and large congregations came out to hear them. One of these ministers related an incident, addressing himself to us children. He said there had been preaching at a schoolhouse, and the subject was prayer. He told the children they ought to pray—the Lord would hear them. They would soon love to pray, for the Lord would bless them, and they would be happy. He urged them to try it for themselves, go to some secluded place where none but God could see and hear, and make a trial. One little boy followed his advice. He went to his father's stackyard, and commenced the habit of secret prayer, and the Lord heard him and made him a happy little Christian. He continued to pray. One of his father's servants saw him engaged in prayer one day, and told his father. His father was an infidel, and reprimanded his little son severely for praying, and told him if he prayed any more he would drive him off. He would have no praying on his plantation or about his house. The little boy was in great distress, but replied, 'Father, I love you and mother, and my brothers and sisters; but it is true I love my

Saviour more, and if I am counted worthy of him I must forsake all for Christ's sake.' The father, seeing the constancy and manly bearing of his little son, determined on milder means to dissuade him from praying, and said, 'You must certainly have learned to pray pretty well. The servants tell me you have been in the habit of praying at the stackyard some time. Let me hear you pray.' The little boy said, 'If you and mother and brothers and sisters will kneel down with me, I will.' Out of curiosity on their part, and to intimidate on the father's part, they all knelt; when, lifting up his little hands before the mercy seat, and his heart to God, he began this prayer: 'O Lord, have mercy on my father and mother, and all my brothers and sisters,' etc. 'Blessed be God,' said the minister, 'before he was done his parents were both weeping, and the next day his brothers and sisters all went with him to the stackyard to pray.' As soon as I heard this anecdote related my heart was changed. To think a little boy was persecuted by his own father for serving God, while I had a praying father and mother, both now in heaven;—would not they rejoice to see me pray? I had never prayed, but I resolved to follow the little boy's example. I went alone to the grove and tried to pray. For

months I kept this up, and told no one of my feelings. At last I began to be in despair, and thought I should give up; but my mother's last words and earnest prayers encouraged me to make a last effort. I knelt down in the road, and begged God for Christ's sake to have mercy on my soul; and, glory to God! light broke into my mind. I felt the peace of pardon all at once."

Very soon after his conversion he felt he was called to the holy ministry, and at once tried to make what preparations kind Providence might place in his reach to fit him for his life work. He had many obstacles to overcome. After spending a few months in school, he placed himself under care of Kentucky Presbytery, in October, 1830. Few men have been more devoted, and have made more of their facilities than Brother Noel. He thought indolence very disgraceful, and that everyone was sacredly bound, not only to do the most, but be the most he could. His progress in science and theology was very rapid and satisfactory. On the 30th of September, 1831, he submitted to be licensed to preach, and consented to try to comply with the wishes of his Presbytery. To the people generally he soon became very acceptable. Few of his age and opportunities have labored more efficiently and successfully.

Many through his instrumentality, while he was yet in his teens, were induced to seek religion, and gave proof by their walk and conversation that they did not seek in vain. He, like most pastors of his day, had to labor for a very scanty allowance, and devote a portion of his time to farming in order to live comfortably.

Brother Noel was ordained by Kentucky Presbytery, on the 6th day of October, 1834, to the whole work of the ministry, after having preached as a probationer, and served the Presbytery as a missionary for about three years. In the character of Brother Noel we observe much decency, propriety and dignity in his general demeanor. Toward his Creator and his institutions he was reverent, obedient, grateful and affectionate. Toward his fellow-men he was sincere, just, courteous and benevolent. He was a Christian who in his life and conduct adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour, by a pious walk and conversation.

All things considered, as a preacher we do not expect soon to find a brother who will excel him. He was apt to teach. The extent of his labors, connected with other duties, denied him much leisure for study and formal preparation for the pulpit. We have no knowledge of his writing

more than a sermon or two entire. The most he had leisure to do was to sketch a brief skeleton of the leading ideas of his discourses. For the entire manner, language, unction and general details of the whole service, he relied on the promise of him who said (Matt. 28: 19, 20), "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

To speak so extemporaneously, and yet be so clear, so cogently convincing to the adversaries of the cross, and so full of edification and comfort to the people of God, with no more help from literature, observation, or long experience, was proof very convincing of his being prompted from above. His manner in the pulpit was peculiarly interesting and happy, not stiffened with gravity, nor in any sense mean in his condescensions. He had great self-possession, not elated with his success, or depressed with his difficulties. His voice was clear, articulate, and very melodious. He had little acquired, but much of natural, eloquence. Few men of his age, however superior their acquirements, could make more efficient

and heart-stirring extemporaneous appeals. Few had a more intimate acquaintance with human nature, and knew better how to select and apply more efficiently the great remedies provided in the gospel for its entire reclamation. He did not "strive about words to no profit," but was "a workman that needed not to be ashamed," "rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim. 11:15.

As a presbyter, Brother Noel was firm and independent, courteous in claiming, and always judicious and considerate in the exercise of his rights. He was particularly tenacious about acting understandingly in everything he did. He was a strict adherent to his apprehensions of his church. His caution stands written in the records of his Presbytery, as a rebuke to the rashness of some of his senior and more experienced brethren, and as a proof to all that mere gray hairs are a poor indemnity against error. He always regarded punctuality in attending the judicatories of the Church as a very important duty of a minister. He looked upon the business there in the light of arranging the work in the Lord's vineyard, and assigning laborers to each department as it may seem to need, and of inquiring into, and making an estimate of the condition of the whole work. The minister or church officer

who never attends the judicatories of the Church expresses great indifference about its prosperity. Oh, how interesting to meet the grave assembly of the saints and ministers of the cross, who come together, if they come as they should, not for debate, and long speech-making, but prayerfully to deliberate, consult, inquire into, and overlook the more extended interests of our beloved Zion. Here we see the weeping yet rejoicing minister, meeting his fellow-soldier, who has stood by his side and fought through many a battle.

In the early history of the Church, it was the custom to hold camp-meetings, on account of the scarcity of church houses. Brother Noel became a zealous advocate for a change in the policy in the bounds of Kentucky Presbytery. Instead of exhausting their strength in camp-meeting establishments, he advocated the erection of permanent, plain and comfortable houses of worship. His views were extensively advocated by many of his brethren.

To effect this object Brother Noel was one of the earliest contributors, and in this he had the practice along with the theory. He seemed to take a peculiar pleasure in bearing a part in every effort of the kind within the bounds of the whole Presbytery; and no one labored in that way more

cheerfully or more efficiently than he, according to his means. In the few years he labored in Jefferson County, Kentucky, he was a principal instrument in the building of two new churches, and having them genteelly furnished; which are now permanent and useful property to the Church, and in which the Lord has been pleased a number of times to graciously revive his work, while scarcely a relic of the old camping establishment in the vicinity survives the ravages of time.

The two churches referred to in the foregoing are old Pleasant Grove and Bethlehem, in Jefferson County, Kentucky. Pleasant Grove has been torn down and a new church built, utilizing much of the old material in erecting the new one. Thus much of the material Brother Noel had put into the old church, and the same "ground-work" constitutes the new church. One of the present ruling elders—Mr. P. E. Bates—is the son of Brother Samuel Bates, who was one of the first ruling elders elected and ordained at the organization of the old Pleasant Grove church, by Brother Noel. Bethlehem church, though having undergone frequent repairs, is still standing on the old foundation which Brother Noel helped to build. The church he organized in Jeffersontown never



owned a house of worship, and disbanded many years since; but he is well and kindly remembered by many of Jeffersontown's older inhabitants.

In his memoir we find two letters written by him to one of his first and special friends, from the "Vicinity of Jeffersontown, June 26, 1842." It was written a few months before his death. Much of his best and lasting work was performed in the vicinity of Jeffersontown, in Jefferson County. It is due to his memory and his friends to say that few men have lived and died more universally beloved by those who knew him, and those who knew him best prized him highest. He died on the 1st of November, 1842, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, at the house of Brother Amos Seabolt, where for some time he had made his home. He was buried at his uncle Elias Christen's, near Calvary meeting house. His death was sincerely lamented by people of all classes, and his burying and funeral were largely attended. He had no children, but left the wife of his youth to mourn the loss of an affectionate husband, with a large circle of kindred and friends. He was licensed to preach at 17 years of age, and ordained to the whole work of the ministry at the age of 20 years, thus laboring for

the cause of his beloved Master only eleven years. Many were the living witnesses who delighted to testify that his preaching was not in vain in the Lord. We do not doubt that in the day of eternity, though his career was short, his crown will glitter with many a brilliant star.

In the death of Brother Noel the Church lost a steadfast member, an able preacher, and a wise counsellor. The poor lost a friend, the saints a comforter, and the poor sinner a faithful reprover.

The most important and effectual guard,  
Support, and ornament, of virtue's cause.  
There stands the messenger of truth; there stands  
The legate of the skies; his theme divine,  
His office sacred, his credentials clear.  
By him the violated law speaks out  
Its thunderings, and by him in strains as sweet  
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.  
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,  
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart.  
And armed himself in panoply complete,  
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms,  
Bright as his own, and trains by every rule  
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,  
The sacramental host of God's own.

In his labors as a minister he happily connected  
the beauties with the solids, the light with the

life, and the power with the form of godliness. Surely he preached Christ and him crucified, as well as a Prophet and a King to teach and to rule, and a Priest to suffer and atone for sinners; in doing which it was abundantly manifest that he sought not to please the flesh, but the Spirit. Although he was poor in this world's good, he was a large contributor to the cause of Christ.

It is not for us to question the rulings of a just Providence in the removal of our young and beloved minister in the beginning of his usefulness, for "the Judge of all the earth will do right" in every variety of circumstances and every possible state of case that can come up in the vast and multiform affairs of all creatures, of all ages and climes. Ample justice and mercy is only sure to be administered when the Lord omnipotent rules. Every title that can give dignity to the wearer rests upon and belongs of right to the Almighty. He is Creator, Preserver, Redeemer, Prophet, Priest, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

## CHAPTER XIX.

SERMON BY REV. SAMUEL A. NOEL.

We think it appropriate to append a sermon preached by Brother Noel, on "The Internal Call of God to the Work of the Ministry," from the text, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16: 15.

This command was given by our blessed Saviour to the eleven Apostles, immediately before his ascension. Solemn charge! Arduous undertaking! Eleven illiterate men, fishermen of Judea, are to preach the gospel to every creature, and, with their successors, ultimately to convert the world. At the time this command was given our world presented one awful scene of human corruption. "Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people." All knowledge of the true God had become buried under the smotherings of superstitions or lost in the obscene rites of paganism, except what was to be found among the Jews and a very few others. The Apostles went forth with tears, "sowing pre-

cious seed," God gave the increase, and in a short time Christian churches were formed throughout the land of Palestine; and in most, if not all, of the provinces of the Roman Empire. Since their day many faithful men have been raised up under the fostering care of the great Head of the Church, to carry on the labors of the vineyard. Under their ministrations the Church has increased in numbers and growth in strength. Though persecution has ignited its fires, and invented instruments of torture, though the heathen have raged and the people imagined a vain thing, though the kings of the earth have set themselves, and the rulers taken counsel together, against the Lord and his anointed, saying, Let us burst their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us;"—still the original command has come down to our time, and reached our happy country, with all its gracious blessings. God has his church in the land, and Christ his ministers, who feel under high and sacred obligations to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

On this subject we will, in the first place, make a few remarks on ministerial character. Secondly, speak of what he is commanded to preach

—“the gospel.” Thirdly, the most successful manner of discharging this trust.

I am ever sensible of my incapacity to preach as I should to my dying fellow-men, but am almost forced to say more so than common on this occasion. Not that I am afraid of a few faces of flesh and blood, nor, as I trust, because I fear the weight of the cross, and would be glad to lay it down, but because I am called to address men of like passions with myself, engaged in the same all-important and solemn work: to preach to preachers. And should I succeed in fastening your minds upon the subject, and give a wrong touch to the ark, and gain your approbation at the loss of my Master's, unborn generations might lament my error and bewail my sermon to all eternity. As unimportant as it may appear to a carnal mind, to us it is of most thrilling anxiety.

We then remark: 1. A gospel minister should be a converted man. The very nature of his work makes this necessary. He is to preach “glad tidings of great joy,” but how can he do this when he has never felt that gladness and joy of the Holy Spirit? How can he be “anointed to preach good tidings to the meek,” when the pride of his own carnal heart has never been subdued? or “bind up the broken hearted,” while he has a

guilty conscience? or "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," when he is a slave to sin, and a bond-servant to the evil one? or proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to "comfort all that mourn," while his heart rankles with pride, self-conceit, vanity and "enmity with God," and his eyes see no beauty in holiness, or deformity and evil in sin? "If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch." Hence, the first and most important qualification is a change of heart, a converted soul: "to be born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The gospel minister, then, must be a converted man. Oh, how incongruous for the preacher to break the bread of life to others, while starving to death for it himself. We are sorry for his own soul, and most sincerely pity the condition of his flock, plodding along to hell after a blind guide. Both will fall into the ditch.

2. The minister of the gospel is called of God to preach. As there are different sentiments on this point, we will be more particular in stating our arguments for its proof. We have heard public teachers who are opposed to this doctrine say they are not called. We have no doubt but that

they speak the words of truth and soberness in saying so. Others who preach, or rather have preached, to some extent successfully, are ready, in consequence of a late system of reformation, to say they never were called. To such we would say, come and let us reason together.

First, the delivery of the talents may be regarded as the call. It is the call of Providence, and that is the call of heaven. In this case the supply of means is the requisition of duty. For example, when we find ourselves in possession of powers, faculties and opportunities, it matters not whether arising from the advantages of fortune, or station, or from endowments of mind, or faculties of our souls, we need ask for no further evidence of the intention of the Donor. We always see, in that intention, a demand upon us for the use and application of what has been given. When the Master places a tool in the hands of his servant, it is that he may use it to some good purpose. Now this is a principle of natural as well as revealed religion. God never requires of us "according to what we have not, but according to what we have." This requisition, growing out of the bounty of heaven, is founded in justice, and amounts to a solemn call to discharge the duty.



Again, how can we account for the wonderful fact that in every age of the world God has had his church in the earth among men, and a standing ministry in that church, exactly adapted in character, intellect, and piety to her exigencies? Now, you would say, you can only account for the preservation of the church amidst the flames of persecution, and the rise and fall of empires, by supposing that the invisible hand was underneath her, and the God of Israel was "round about her as a wall of fire." Well, in like manner, we cannot suppose that men would have taken it into their heads to become martyrs to fame, to earthly riches, or preferment among men; yet it is a fact, that many became martyrs for the purpose of preaching the gospel. Do you imagine—can you, upon principles of common sense, suppose that human beings would have undergone all that ministers of the gospel suffered, "and enduring the cross, and despising the shame," as they have done, unless they had been fully persuaded it was their duty to preach, and a duty imposed, not by man, nor any set of men, but a call from God himself? And this is further argued, when we notice how precisely the ministry of the church has suited her exigencies. In fact, but for the blessed chain of evangelical ministers that

have shone at different ages, the world would be at a great loss for the smallest ray by which the trace the history of the church.

Look to the days of primitive Christianity, and you will notice, as the church was persecuted, she had her venerable Polycarp, and her martyred Justin, and Ireneus, to stand and to fall in her defense. When Arianism began to spread its blighting system almost all over the church, behold her Athanasius stand forth for her rescue. When Pelagianism, with its withering kindred heresies, makes its appearance, see Augustine pleading for doctrines of grace. When the primitive simplicity of the church is converted into the senseless forms and tiresome ceremonies of a heathenish temple, then the two witnesses prophesy in sackcloth. Peter Waldo comes forth, and John Wyclif closely follows. When darkness seems again about to cover the earth, then Luther, and a whole train of reformers, rise up all at once, and "with the sword of the Spirit"—that good, old Jerusalem blade—they cut and slay the enemies of the truth, until the church comes forth "as fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." And even in this our day the ministry are quite suited to necessities of the church, in that there is a

great variety in their talents. One is strong in argument, another is eloquent in speech, a third is a Boanerges, or son of thunder, a fourth a Barnabas, or son of consolation. Now, whence all this? Is it because the church has such a knowledge of her own necessities, and that ministers have this knowledge of the church, and of the world, and of themselves? Or is it not more reasonable to say, "when the enemy comes like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him?"

Again, we argue this from the fact that God anciently called the ministry of the church, and we have no intimations in Scripture that he does not call them now as then. If we can establish this proposition, we have a very strong argument in favor of our view of the subject. We know but very little about the church before the days of Abraham, hence we will commence or review from his time. I believe it is generally admitted that the church was organized in the family of that patriarch, and that he was its minister. Was Abraham called of God? "Now the Lord said unto Abraham, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation; and I will bless thee,

and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." He was evidently called from his father's house to a peculiar country, for the accomplishment of the divine purpose and goodness concerning the race. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." After this the Lord appears to have called succeeding patriarchs to officiate as the ministry of the church, until the days of Moses. And was Moses called? The wonderful appearance of the burning bush is too notorious to need a quotation. And then, after Israel left Egypt, Aaron and his sons became the standing ministry of the church; and, as Paul says, "let no man take this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

That the prophets were called of God no one pretends to doubt, who believes in revelation. The apostles were called by our Saviour himself, while on earth. This, then, has been the standing order of God's house from the beginning; and now it remains for a successful opposer to show a passage of Holy Scriptures which says, either expressly or by implication, that this order has been interrupted, and this divine right given

up. The only objection of any importance we have ever heard alleged against this argument, is that the patriarchs, prophets and apostles were inspired, and, in attestation of their divine call wrought miracles. Can you work miracles? Then, say our opponents, as Nicodemus said to our Saviour, "We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." One remark, I think, will dispel the mist of sophistry this futile objection throws around our argument. A call from God to engage in the work of the ministry and inspiration are two things entirely distinct from each other in their nature. Miracles are necessary to prove inspiration, but not the call, of the patriarchs, prophets and apostles to preach, or minister in holy things. This was one thing and their qualification or inspiration was another thing; and the former usually prior to the latter. There have been many called ministers, but few inspired men.

For the sake of illustration, we will give you a few examples. Let us take the case of Moses for our first. Now, if a call, because it is miraculous, be identified with the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, surely Moses must have been thus inspired at the very instant he was called; for it

was of a most wonderful character, truly marvelous, indeed! A bush burning, and not consumed! "And Moses said, I will turn aside and see this great light, why the bush is not burnt. And God called unto him, out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses!" Now, I inquire, was this a call from God? It cannot be denied. Well, was it inspiration? Did this call, abstractly considered, inspire Moses? I answer, No! Because, after he had been informed of the object of this wonderful occurrence, and began to make his apologies for not being disposed to obey the mandate of heaven, and every objection had been removed by the mouth of the Lord himself, and the power of working miracles had been conferred, this is the language of God to him: "Now, therefore, go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." Again Moses said, "O, my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt." And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, "Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well; and also behold, he cometh forth to meet thee, and when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart;" and "thou shalt speak unto him, and put words into his mouth, and I will be with thy mouth, and

with his mouth, and teach you what ye shall do." You see Moses had been called before all this. He was called of God to go and bring Israel out of Egyptian bondage, but still he was not then, you will notice just then, inspired. Hence the Lord says, "I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." His call was one thing, and his inspiration another; and the call was first. Here is one "called and sent of God," but not inspired yet, and in all probability he was not until he reached Egypt.

We present the call of Isaiah as our next example. The prophet is astounded, and overwhelmed with a vision of the Lord in his glory, and cries out, "Woe is me, for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips; I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." When his iniquity was taken away, and his sin purged, he says, "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I, send me. And he said, Go." Now here is the call, then comes the message he was to deliver. This was inspiration, which shows very clearly to our apprehension that the prophet was first called and commanded to go, and then inspired by the message delivered

unto him, which was to be announced to the people.

Let us refer to the call of the apostles, and we think we shall see clearly and plainly the great distinction between a call from God to preach and inspiration. None deny that they were called of God, too; and to us it does not appear, from what is written, that they were inspired until after the day of Pentecost. Indeed, we have no question of this, when we notice that even after our Saviour's resurrection they were so ignorant of the nature of his kingdom as to ask him, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?"—meaning the Jewish aristocracy. Yet they were called ministers, and had been our Saviour's companions in almost all his travels. Again we find this remarkable language in Acts of the Apostles, ch. 13: 2-4:

"The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost," etc. Now they were undoubtedly called and sent of God; yet we have no good reason to suppose these brethren were always inspired after this. Though Saul, or Paul, was filled with the



Holy Ghost, and performed a miracle by striking Elynus the sorcerer with blindness, as the connection of the above quotation will show, yet that does not prove him to have been always after this call, an inspired man; because, "Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark; but Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work, and the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other." Now if their call to preach Christ was inspiration they were poor apostles, and had lost call, inspiration and all, on the occasion above referred to; and as they "departed asunder" because they could not agree together, were destitute of all authority to preach—for, mark, they were not both right, one was in the wrong at least—and perhaps both. When the contention became so sharp that they separated, they could not have been inspired on that occasion, yet the vows of God were upon them, they were called and it was their duty to preach.

This not only shows the distinction between a call to preach and inspiration, but also completely answers an objection urged against a called and sent ministry. It is said if you were called of

God you would not differ as you do. Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Cumberland Presbyterians, and all would see eye to eye, and come into one common agreement, and speak the same things. The above circumstance shows how unfounded in truth is this objection. If such men as Paul and Barnabas, who were called and sent of the Holy Ghost, should differ warmly, and the contention become so sharp about who should go with them on a preaching tour, no marvel if the best of us should differ in this corrupt age. From all the foregoing we conclude, that as God anciently called men of pure hearts and clean hands to minister in holy things, he does it still; because inspiration is one thing, and a call to the ministry is another. The former has long since ceased, because the word of God is complete, the object for which it was given is accomplished. The latter necessarily must remain. The reasons for which it was first given still exist and are in full force, and will be to the latest ages of time.

Now as it regards miracles: The days of miracles are past and gone. The object for which they were performed has been accomplished. They were wrought to confirm the message delivered by the called ministry, which was original,

came immediately from the Spirit or historical or of recent occurrence, and of vital importance to the gospel plan of salvation which had not been already attested to the minds and senses of the people, such, for example, as the death, resurrection and ascension of our Saviour, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. All of this being long ago established by signs and wonders, it is not necessary to the proof of these things now that the preacher should work miracles. If miracles were everyday occurrences, they would no longer be miracles, but become the common transactions of life, which would destroy their miraculous character and hence they would answer no good purpose.

Again, the minister makes no pretensions to inspiration. Were he to do that, you would have a right to demand miracles in proof. But the call is merely an impression in his mind that it is his duty to preach that gospel already confirmed and settled forever to be the truth of God, by the display of supernatural wonders and credentials from heaven—by miracles. We have as much right to require you to work miracles to prove your faith in Jesus Christ, as you have to demand miracles of us to prove our call to the holy ministry. "These signs shall follow them

that believe in my name, they shall cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." Now because the primitive disciples were endowed with such miraculous powers, and because our Saviour has said, "these signs shall follow them that believe," does it follow that none are believers but such as can work miracles? Surely not. Just so in the case of a call to the ministry. If one must work miracles to prove his call, the other must do so to prove his faith; you may take either horn of the dilemma.

Lastly, let us present our positive proof in the express language of Scripture. The Apostle Paul, speaking of the authority and honor of our Saviour's priesthood, says, "And no man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God as Aaron." It is said this has reference to Christ's calling, and not to priests of our day. True, and hence the force of the passage. With all his uncreated authority, our High Priest did not interrupt the order of God's house in this matter; because Christ glorified not himself, in calling himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, 'Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee;' as he saith also, in another place, "Thou art a priest forever, after the

order of Melchisedec, called of God," etc. Now if the priesthood be so sacred and responsible an office that Jesus would not take it upon himself without a divine call or vocation, how dare a worm, an insignificant fellow-mortal, take this honor to himself, and vaunt himself to all around, that he never was called? Such men are like those spoken of by our Lord, in the fourteenth chapter of Jeremiah: "The prophets' prophecy lies in my name. I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them; they prophesy unto you a false vision and a divination, and thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart." Again, in the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when Paul was addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus, he says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," etc.; and in his letter to Timothy, he writes, "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands; for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind; be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me, his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel [mean-

ing the ministry], according to the power of God, who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling," etc. Timothy, I suppose, was not inspired, but undoubtedly he was called to preach. Again, Paul says, "That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us," and "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; no man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier;" that is, chose him or called him to be a preacher, as the connection will show.

Another positive proof may be found in I Cor. twelfth chapter, in which a manifest difference is made by the Apostle between working miracles, gifts of healing, and divers kinds of tongues. But amidst the diversity of gifts there is but one Spirit, and though a difference of administration, the same Lord who hath chosen in his church at different times and ages, "first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers; after that miracles; then, gifts of healing, helps, governments, and diversities of tongues.

In the Epistle to the Romans the inquiry is made, "How shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach (meaning to purpose)

except they be sent; as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good." Our Saviour, well knowing that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," was affected, no doubt, at the reflection, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard. and how shall they hear without a preacher (to purpose), except they be sent." Hence, when he saw the multitude, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Then said he unto his disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into his harvest."

Oh, my brethren, let the condition of the world, and especially our Presbytery, affect your hearts, as the scattered and perishing multitudes did our Saviour; and pray ye the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into the vineyard.

Our last remark on ministerial character is that he should have authority from his church or presbytery to preach. Now some are opposed to this—to all the formalities of licensing and ordaining men to preach the gospel. They say that if it be your duty, or you be called of God, go

forth, stop not, confer not with flesh and blood. But on an examination of the history of the church, you will discover that all things should be done decently and in order in this respect, and that licensing and ordaining men to preach the gospel is of divine authority, and has ever been one of the standing orders of God's house, or church. We will give several examples. We find on record in the standard of our faith—the Holy Scriptures—in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, a case in point. The Saviour had just ascended. The apostles having just returned from the mount called Olivet to Jerusalem, were assembled in an upper room, and were engaged with one accord in supplication and prayer, the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren. "Then Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples," and spoke of the fulfillment of prophecy in the fall of Judas, who was guide to those who took Jesus; of the purchase of the potter's field with the reward of iniquity; of Judas' awful death; and quoted a declaration from the book of Psalms. Then says the apostle, "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up



from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two. And they prayed and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

We notice two important items in this quotation: First, a reference to a long and intimate acquaintance and trial—"accompanied with us all the time, beginning from John's baptism, to the ascension of Christ." Secondly, a solemn ordination, by a short and comprehensive prayer to God. Oh, how affecting the scene! The world is enveloped in moral darkness—the Saviour is gone, ascended on high—and here are a few disciples of the despised and persecuted Nazarene in an upper room, hid from the Jews, ordaining one of their number, to fill the place of a traitor, who betrayed and sold his Lord and Master. The lot has fallen to Matthias. Methinks I see him kneel down. The disciples gather round to lay their hands upon his head, and Peter, who had proposed the course, leads in prayer, and commends him to God and the word of his grace, to

go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

It may have been too precipitate in them to attempt to fill the apostolic chair, left vacant by the fall of Judas; as God alone claims the prerogative to give apostolic authority; and subsequently did call Paul to fill up the vacancy made by the fall of Judas. Nevertheless it was not wrong for them to authorize any one of their number that God might designate, by the imposition of hands and prayer, to preach salvation to a ruined world.

But, again, we give another example recorded in Acts 13. We have quoted this once already to prove one point. We give it now to prove another. The prophet and teachers which were in the church at Antioch, ordained Barnabas and Saul in the following manner: "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, separate Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Here is an ordination performed almost precisely as we perform ordinations in this our day; and mark, the Holy Ghost said, do this. Once more, "neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by

prophecy, with laying on of the hands of Presbytery," is the language of Paul to Timothy. Only notice this passage: "gift in thee, which was given thee by prophecy." That is, Timothy was taught theology, he studied and gave himself to reading and "the laying on of hands" of the Presbytery. Then he was ordained, perhaps, precisely as a young minister enters into holy orders these days.

Brethren, we are about to engage in very solemn business. The business of Presbytery is very important indeed; because we are not only called to consult as to the best method of carrying on the labors of the vineyard, but also to introduce new laborers, by the authority vested in us as a Presbytery, to say to our brethren who are looking forward to the holy ministry, go and preach Jesus Christ and him crucified to the scattered and perishing multitudes of Adam's fallen family. The responsibility is truly great, but it would be better, perhaps, to keep two back under serious impressions than to push one forward, not moved by the Holy Ghost, to the work; for, while a called, devoted, holy minister is one of heaven's richest blessings to the church and world, an uncalled, unholy and carnal preacher

is one among the greatest curses ever sent on any people.

About the acquisition of numbers to the ministry, we should not be too eager, but, like the apostles, when about to lay their hands on the first head, in order to ordination, pray God, "who knoweth the hearts of all men, to show whether of these Thou hast chosen." A sufficient time should be allowed to make a full proof of their gifts and vocation. And, after all, we should fear and tremble, lest we lay our hands on unworthy heads, and become accessory to a curse upon the church and the world. May the Lord help us to feel our responsibility and to act according to the relation we sustain to the church and the immortal souls of men!

2. In the second part of this discourse we promised to speak of what the minister is commanded to preach. Our text says, "Preach the gospel to every creature." The gospel, then, is to be preached, which is defined to be "the revelation of the grace of God to fallen men, through a Mediator." Surely, this is good news, glad tidings of great joy to all men: for it is to be preached to every creature. The above definition is rather to be preferred than any other we have

ever seen; because it appears to embrace every possible meaning attached to the gospel.

In preaching the gospel; then, I am persuaded the preacher will not err by beginning with the work of creation, and going on to show the purity and innocence of our first parents, and their ability to have kept, yet their freedom to disobey the law of God. And permit me to remark here, that without such an agency as this I cannot see any possible foundation for moral government at all. Moral good and evil are said to be "the conformity or disagreement of our voluntary actions to some law whereby good or evil is drawn upon us from the will or power of the law maker." So, then, without moral agency, we cannot conceive of a moral government.

What is necessary, in order to constitute a moral agent, but the power to perform moral actions? An action is rendered moral by two circumstances—first, that it be voluntary; and secondly, that it have respect to some rule, which determines it to be good or evil. This lays a foundation for accountability in the moral government of God relative to our race, without which we cannot see how it could have been a moral government at all.

Our first parents were constituted free agents.

free in their very nature; and could not be otherwise accountable, as subjects of moral government, except as free agents. They were placed under law to God—a covenant of words—and as representatives of all their unborn progeny, were to determine by their conduct—their obedience or disobedience—the character of the whole race.

Secondly, he should show that they abused the ability and freedom given them, by sinning against their Maker; and that they with all their children became thereby guilty and depraved in the sight of God. They became not merely “mentally diseased, involving no guilt,” nor sinners by practice, and of course guilty, but innocent in nature; no! no! but, morally speaking, deranged in the head, diseased in the heart, and guilty before God. An error in the patient, as to the nature and extent of his disease, would lead to the application of inappropriate remedies; and so an erroneous estimate of the moral disorders of our natures must lead to wrong conceptions of the means of restoration. Therefore, when you discover light impressions of the nature and extent of man’s depravity, you will find corresponding impressions concerning the atonement of Christ—of the office and work of the Holy Spirit—of regeneration and all the sacred cluster

of doctrines which hang around the cross. Hence the importance of driving the plowshare of God's word deep into the sinner's mind, tearing open and breaking up fully the fallow ground of his hard and corrupt heart, that he may see its pollution and deformity before God.

3. He should publish the law of God, and thunder forth its awful sanctions and endless penalties in the sinner's ears; and tell that, being a transgressor, he is under its curse; thereby showing him his utter inability to recover from his fall, by all his legal performances. "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God; therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

4. He should hold up the precious cross of Christ in all its simplicity and excellency, and show that it is by virtue of the atonement alone that sinners of mankind have a free and full salvation offered them. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "For it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Christ is just such a Saviour as poor, lost sinners need. He is precise-

ly suited to our condition as lost, guilty and degraded. He waits to embrace returning prodigals, and with outstretched arms says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He will in no wise cast off, because, "He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." All are called to come, and pardon is provided for all. Christ Jesus "tasted death for every man"; and now if sinners are damned, it is their own fault—the Redeemer charges the guilt upon their own souls: "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life."

5. He should show that the only possible hope for justification is through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the deeds of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified." "Wherefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Christ is the foundation of our faith, and the anchor of our hope in God.

But, lastly, he should preach all the doctrines



of the gospel, and contend for every ordinance of our holy religion—"earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."

Brethren, allow me to remark that in order to do this, it will not do to preach too often on one subject. I have known some to take what text they would, the congregation would invariably hear the same discourse, somewhat different in its verbiage, perhaps, but substantially the same. When we address a number of discourses to a people, I think we should vary our subjects so as to embrace all the doctrines of the gospel, so far as we are able, and give to saint and sinner their "portion in due season"; otherwise we shall discharge only a part of our duty to their souls. The character of God, the Trinity and unity, the character of Christ as Mediator, the office and work of the Holy Ghost, the death of Christ, nature and extent of the atonement, repentance, and glorification, with the law, life, death, eternity, heaven, hell, the resurrection, general judgment, and in all faithfully enforcing practical duties and gospel promises, should be the awful and solemn themes of a minister's lips.

Oh, my brethren, who is sufficient for these things? Yet you are ready to cry out, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel." Well, as the

vows of God are upon us, let us obey the Saviour's charge, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Go publish salvation in Christ's name to a ruined race of apostate men, to every one of Adam's fallen family; tell them there is merit enough in Christ's blood to wash away the foulest stains of sin, to purge from their corrupted hearts the last vestiges of depravity. Yes, tell them there is a fountain—bless God!—open in the house of David for sin and uncleanness—that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. Go preach the gospel to every creature. Oh, precious gospel, good news! glad tidings of great joy to all people! I will bind thee to my bosom as my only treasure—

"Then will I tell to sinners round  
What a dear Saviour I have found;  
I'll point to thy redeeming blood,  
And say, Behold the way to God!"

And now we come to the last part of our discourse, which was to speak of the most successful manner of discharging this most solemn trust.

Negatively speaking, a minister should not indulge in affectation in anything, especially in

regard to the modulation of his voice, gestures or pronunciation. Much has been said on these points, and truly we believe them very important in order to success in preaching; because a dull, monotonous tone of voice is very tiresome to an audience. Instead of arousing attention and animating the mind, it invariably stupefies and renders a congregation sleepy. But, at the same time, I think there is more danger in appearing to affect an unnatural tone of voice, by studying the rules and restrictions of scholastic address, and carrying them with us into the pulpit, and applying them to the delivery of gospel truth, than there is in becoming too uniform and monotonous to arrest attention. I think the best way to reach the hearts of our hearers is to use our own gifts and common manner of address, as dictated by common sense and nature; because there appears to me to be a kind of identity in each man's own manner of address which belongs to no other person's manner or mouth. Hence, the easy, natural manner given us by the God of nature will arrest attention, and seize upon the minds of an audience sooner than all the pompous tones of the stage.

This manner better becomes the minister of the gospel than any other. There is no trick of the

crator about it, and while the preacher pours forth the glorious truths and enlivening prospects and hopes of the gospel in conversational simplicity, it is truth, pure truth that does the work, and frees the minds of sinners from the bondage of the devil, with all his lies. Some appear to rely more upon the play and flights of the imagination to convert souls, than upon even the pure, unadulterated truths of the Bible themselves. There is great danger of this in time of revival, when feeling runs high; hence we notice more spurious conversions on such occasions than in what is called a dull and lifeless season. When we hear of a conversion in such cold times, we are apt to conclude that such will be permanent, and durable. The reason is obvious—simple truth has done the deed.

Again, in stating the subject matter of a discourse, we should not promise too much; and we should be very careful, in advancing our arguments, not to be too positive, and not attempt to prove more by them than they will establish. We have noticed two evils resulting from inattention to this point. First, in our anxiety to convince, we are extremely apt to overstate the argument. We think no confidence with which we can speak of them too strong when the intention

is to urge on our hearers. But this zeal more than otherwise defeats its own purpose. We are conscious of the exaggeration ourselves; hearers perceive it, and this corrupts the influence of the whole conclusion, robs it of its true value, and either weakens or destroys its power on the congregation.

In the second place, it undermines the solidity of proofs so much that our own understanding refuses to rest upon them. This vitiates the integrity of our judgment; renders our minds somewhat incapable of estimating the proper strength of moral and religious argument; excites unreasonable suspicions of their truth and renders one dull and insensible to their impression;—because, though it may not be the same thing to overstate a true reason as to advance a false one, yet to transgress the rules of fair argument, or to go beyond our own perception of a subject, is a similar, if not an equal fault in both cases. It is a want of candor, and that approaches very nearly to a want of veracity.

But, positively, the minister should consider the condition and situation of his hearers, and try to apply his subject and manner of address to their peculiar cases; that is, to the particular state of thought and opinion which we perceive

to prevail in our congregation. Dr. Paley remarks, in his charge to the clergy of the Diocese of Carlisle, "A careful attention to this subject is of the utmost importance; because as it varies, the same sermon may do much good, none at all, or much harm." Some appear to think that, provided they always keep within the lids of the Bible, or preach the truth, all is well; they are clear of the blood of souls. Suppose we do preach the truth, when that portion of truth is not applicable to our hearers, and by a little attention the information necessary to the choice of an appropriate subject could have been obtained, are we not shamefully guilty of wasting our time and talents for nought, and of trespassing upon the time and best interests of our hearers? Negligence here may do much harm. Sinners will become gospel hardened by hearing so much that does not suit their cases. In this way, the gospel becomes an old song to many. Now there is a peculiar tender time and set of circumstances generally connected with every sinner's day of probation, and moral career, which if we could only ascertain, and touch the proper string, and hurl the dart of truth, we would be very apt to reach the heart. In order to do this, however, you will readily discover that the minister

should imitate the example of Christ, and mix among the scattered multitude, to learn human nature from real life, and not from books; and especially cultivate an intimate acquaintance with his flock and congregation.

Secondly, he should speak with zeal and power, not with a frothy enthusiasm—but “with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven,” not to inspire a new gospel, but to give energy and zest to the one already recorded—to wield it as a two-edged sword, piercing deep into the rebel sinner’s heart. A minister unaffected with his own discourse, who talks along as though he did not believe what he was saying himself, need not expect to rouse up the slumbering minds of sinners, and break in upon their carnal security, so as to excite them to repentance and lead them to Christ. The preacher must feel himself, before his hearers can feel, and sinners cry, “men and brethren, what must we do?” He must speak from the heart, if he would reach the heart.

Thirdly. Solemnity should appear in his whole manner of address. Salvation and damnation are solemn matters. Heaven and hell are awfully important and fearful places. The soul of man is valuable far beyond computation. How, then, when this soul, for which the Son of God

groaned, and bled and died, is in such imminent danger as it is, of being lost, forever lost, of missing heaven, and going to hell, of losing salvation and being sent to damnation—how can the minister feel otherwise than solemn? Every word he utters has important bearing on the destiny of souls. Every sermon he preaches is either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death; and his ministrations are peopling the fair climes of glory, or the infernal domains of Beelzebub. Oh, brethren, let us ask ourselves, Are we doing good or harm? Am I becoming an instrument in the divine hand of good to the church and souls of men? or am I only paving the way for sinners to run more swiftly down to destruction? Brethren, I fear for some of us on this point. I feel solemn while I speak it. Oh, I tremble at the reflection, and with St. Paul say, “Lest that by any means when I have preached to others I myself should be a castaway.” When the cap of hell shall burst off, and death and the grave deliver up their dead, and all men appear before God in judgment—Woe! woe! to the unfaithful minister! Let me turn away from his doom. My heart sickens and shudders at the thought.

Lastly, every sermon should be delivered as if it was the last one the minister ever expected to



preach, until called to give an account before God. We never know when we are preaching to our fellow men, that we will live to address them again. Time is short, life is uncertain, and death is sure. Oh, how fast we are hurrying on to great eternity! Solemn reflection! Long, long eternity will soon, very soon, contain us all. Heaven or hell will be the final homes of all men! Can a truly called minister of Christ duly feel the importance of these things, and not always preach as though every sermon was his last. Brethren, it cannot be long until we shall have preached our last time. If we shall have been honest and faithful in the discharge of the solemn trust committed to us, when we shall have finished our work, we shall be called from the wall of Zion, to lay down our Bibles and go take up harps of praise around the throne of God.

I had rather be a faithful minister of Jesus, than to be a king or earthly monarch. God's own Son was a preacher, and now he is exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So shall also the under shepherds, before long, be led into green pastures and beside the still waters of Paradise above. Oh, how animating, to anticipate the close of our toils, when we shall meet some in heaven, whom we have been the

unworthy instruments of bringing to a knowledge and enjoyment of salvation on earth, and together shout "Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Go on, my brethren, and preach the gospel. You have the Saviour's promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." May the Lord crown your labors with great success! And to his name give all the glory.

## CHAPTER XX.

## SKETCH OF THE REV. LABAN JONES.

A sketch of Rev. Laban Jones' work is appended along with that of Blair, Gilliam and Noel, without which this volume would seem incomplete. Rev. Laban Jones was the spiritual father of a number of the young men who became ministers of the gospel, and we know they received their religious and theological training from this eminent father of the church. All of them loved him tenderly as an own father in life, and loved him in death, and hope to love him in heaven. Brothers Robinson and Thompson were men whose names stood first on the list of preachers who were under the tuition of Brother Jones. Next in order stood the lamented Noel, a man of the first order of talents, richly endowed by nature and grace to be an honor to any church in any age of the world. He was a natural orator, possessing a voice at once strong, flexible and melodious. He could ascend the Mount of Sinai, and, with composure "weave the lightning's fiery wing in sportive twist, and hurl

the thunders of God's violated law against the impenitent, in tones thrilling with the interests of heaven, and pursuing the deathless souls of his audience to the verge of wretchedness and despair." And then with equal ease he could step upon the hill of Calvary, and portray the melting story of the cross in such lively imagery and pathetic tenderness as often to find his congregation bathed in tears. And then, without any apparent effort, he could conduct their thoughts to the third heaven, and leave them perfectly transported with joys ineffable and full of glory.

"Where fancy halted, weary in her flight,  
In other men, his, fresh as morning, rose,  
And soared untrodden heights and seemed at home,  
Where angels bashful looked."

Brother Noel acknowledged Brother Jones as his spiritual father, and we know he received his religious and theological training from him. Next came in the writer of Brother Jones' memoir, Rev. J. Anderson, for a share of his kind regard; and at the same time Preston T. Ramsay, also S. B. Howard, and Blair, and Hamblin, and many others who have partaken more or less of his bounty, and have shared richly of the benevolence of his heart. There were but few preachers

who have been reared up under the care of the Kentucky Presbytery who have not shared more or less of the kindness and hospitality of our lamented brother. If he found a young man under impression to the work of the ministry, struggling with poverty, not knowing which way to turn for relief, while his conscience awoke him to a sense of his high obligations to God, and thundered "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," to such Brother Jones was truly a friend in need. He would comfort his heart, and urge him to devote himself to the great work of saving souls. For this purpose he would kindly invite the young man to his house, feed him at his own table, and urge it upon the brethren and sisters to clothe him, that he might devote the most of his time to preparing for the holy ministry. Here young men had free access to his library, shared his daily instructions, and by him were encouraged to exercise their talents in exhortation and prayer. In return for all his trouble, he demanded nothing at their hands, only a little manual labor on the farm in the busy season of the year, which was most cheerfully given. After specifying these worthy acts of our lamented brother, those who knew him, as well as those who knew him not, will not fail to be convinced

that the greatest burden of his Presbytery rested upon him, and need not be astonished to learn that he left behind him many ardent and devoted friends. He was ardently devoted to the interests of the church, and but few men labored more or made greater sacrifices for the cause of Christianity than he. Each of the young ministers who were reared up under his immediate watch-care and theological training, under God have been eminently serviceable to the cause of Christianity and were each and all bright ornaments to the church.

Brother Jones was better fitted to teach and train young ministers, perhaps, than any man of his day, as the reader will find. At a very early age he became a diligent student.

Having given a short preface to Brother Jones' life work, we will go back several years and give a history of his birth, education, etc. Rev. Laban Jones was born in Frankfort, Hampshire County, Virginia, March 6, 1796. His parents, Daniel and Rosanna Jones, had ten children, eight sons and two daughters. Laban was the fifth son, and in early life was reared in agricultural pursuits. At about twenty years of age he had the misfortune to lose his father, who died very suddenly. This event greatly retarded the

scientific pursuits in which he was engaged, and hindered the development of those gigantic powers of mind which shone so brilliantly in after-life. For, as a dutiful son, he was now compelled to remain with his widowed mother and fatherless brothers and sisters and assist them in the duties of domestic life. At a very early age he availed himself of every facility within his reach to obtain useful knowledge, and made considerable progress in the arts and sciences connected with the English language. In 1812 he commenced the study of Latin, continuing this study for only a short time, and not again resuming it until he became a minister of the gospel. After abandoning the study of Latin he devoted his time in obtaining a good English education, in which he succeeded admirably. In 1814 he went to Winchester and Martinsburg, Virginia, for the purpose of obtaining a better education. During his stay there he commenced the study of law. Again in 1815 he returned to Kentucky, living with his parents, working with them on the farm for several years, devoting a portion of his time to the study of history and the English classics. Here he continued the study of law, using books which were kindly furnished him by his uncle Leonard. He soon made considerable pro-

ficiency in the legal profession, the occupation he had chosen for his life work.

Many inducements were presented to his vigorous and contemplative mind of a worldly character, well calculated to nerve him on to obtain that knowledge so necessary to render him eminent in his profession, and lead him to wealth and popularity as a member of the bar. To this point all his energies were turned. He had obstacles of a serious nature to overcome, yet he had the energy of character, combined with persevering efforts, which eventually crowned his labors with success.

In 1816, upon a certificate from the County Court of Logan County, Kentucky, he was licensed and permitted as counsel and attorney at law to practice at all the superior and inferior courts in this commonwealth. Soon he commenced the practice of law, and a considerable amount of business was confided to his care, and it was evident that he was destined to rise to eminence in the legal profession.

About the year 1820 he made a profession of religion, and united with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, under the ministry of Rev. H. F. Delaney, a great and good man, eminent for his piety, talents, pulpit oratory and usefulness,



and who also gave up the practice of law and consecrated his talents and learning to the ministry of the gospel. Like him did our lamented brother abandon the same lucrative profession, and forego all the honors connected therewith, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, by which he became crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him."

He very soon turned his attention to the science of theology, and traveled with ministers of the gospel in different parts of the country. Here he was encouraged to exercise his gifts in exhortation and prayer; and such was the influence he exerted in this way, that all doubt in regard to his call to the ministry, by an all-wise Providence, was entirely removed. He accordingly consented to consecrate his life and labors to the cause of his divine Redeemer, and in the fall of 1823 he became a candidate for the holy ministry under the supervision and watch-care of Anderson Presbytery. In April, 1825, he was licensed to preach by Anderson Presbytery, and was permitted to extend his usefulness, riding the circuit and preaching daily the unsearchable riches of Christ. He studied theology on the circuit. His labors were ardent and incessant, and the Lord was pleased to prosper his work abundantly. He was

truly an interesting speaker, and upon many occasions was truly eloquent. He was a man of but little affectation. His manner was impassioned and sympathetic. He appeared to hold intimate converse and communion with God, and made himself quite useful to the church, and soon won the affection of his brethren; while his aptness to teach, and his fidelity to the cause of Christ, gave additional testimony that he was "called of God," as was Aaron. Possessing a mind considerably above the average, naturally strong, well balanced, properly disciplined, and well stored with useful knowledge, did this young champion of the cross go forth in the defense of the truth, while his unwearied labors were eminently owned and blessed of God in the salvation of many precious souls. Truth was his motto. He felt it to be an indispensable and fundamental requisite in Christian theology, and he labored with zeal and energy in the spirit of the gospel truth and its attendant influences upon the hearts and lives of its recipients, as paramount to every other consideration and the best calculated to promote their present and future happiness. His manner was plain, almost to a fault. He believed in calling things by their proper names, and conveyed his ideas in lan-

guage not to be misunderstood. His gestures were neither artificial nor graceful, but peculiar to the man, and were well calculated to enforce those profound ideas which appeared to germinate with his thoughts in rapid succession, and flowed from his mind in almost exhaustless measure. But notwithstanding this vehemence, and rapidity of thought, he was never known to want language with which to express his ideas. This also appeared to flow from a fountain truly exhaustless.

One of the most important traits in his ministerial character was his superior knowledge of human nature. In this important characteristic, Brother Jones stood pre-eminent. He was a deep thinker, and well understood the corrupt and degenerate workings of a depraved heart, and nature had eminently endowed him to be the champion of this most important branch of Christian theology. When he engaged in the discussion of subjects of this character he appeared in his natural element, while scarcely a nook or corner of the human heart that might serve as a lurking-place for sin was not discovered by his discriminating eye, and its utter hideousness and deformity exposed to the gaze of the crowded multitude; while the poor condemned, conscience-

smitten sinner often left the house enraged at the man of God for telling the truth, and blaming some of his friends for having "told the preacher all about him."

Many instances of this kind might be related, but is unnecessary. One of importance, however, we will relate. A camp-meeting was held at Mt. Gilead, Montgomery County, Kentucky, in which Brother Jones was one of the principal ministers. For some time previous a distressing drought had prevailed all over the state, and the people were much alarmed for fear the Almighty was about to visit them in wrath by withholding the rain, so necessary to the harvest. They were fearful of an approaching famine. Weeks and months had passed away, and scarcely a shower had fallen. The earth was parched and baked with the intense heat of the sun. The streams and springs of water were dried up, and vegetation was withering and drying up. In view of these calamities the Governor of Kentucky had proclaimed a certain day to be observed by all religious denominations of the country as a day of humiliation and fasting and prayer to God for rain to restore desolated nature. This day happened to fall during the camp-meeting above mentioned. About 10 o'clock on that day the

rain began to fall, and continued until the earth was completely watered. All at the meeting knew that this was a day of fasting and prayer, for it had been proclaimed from the stand, and solemnly observed by the pastors and congregation, and all felt that the prayers were signally answered. Two pronounced infidels at the camp-meeting were said to have renounced their infidelity from that circumstance, and yielded to the truth of the Christian religion. On account of the rain the meetings could not be held at the stand, and the congregation were compelled to repair to a large tent to worship a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. At this impressive moment Brother Jones arose and addressed the congregation from the first verse of the 14th Psalm —“The fool hath said in his heart There is no God;” which text was very appropriate to the occasion, and he did not fail to impress the full meaning of the text upon the minds of his attentive audience. God was with him, and he managed the subject admirably, and many were converted on that occasion, and all felt that the Almighty was answering prayer. His heart glowed with active benevolence, and melted into tenderness at the recital of human woe; while every word and gesture, and expression of countenance

bespoke his earnestness, his zeal, and his undying solicitude for the salvation of those who attended upon his ministry. His sermons were generally long, and yet he commanded the attention and interested his congregation frequently to admiration, and seldom if ever unprofitably. He used more words to express his ideas than most men of his day, yet a rich vein of thought would be seen to characterize all his discourses, both written and extempore. By his peculiar talents he was the humble instrument under God of awakening vast multitudes of perishing sinners to a sense of their danger, and many will rise up in the day of judgment and call him blessed. He possessed a heart full of tenderness and benevolence, and with a soul wrought up to the highest pitch of moral sensibility, he was impelled on in his addresses with a degree of warmth and vehemence seldom equalled, and perhaps never surpassed. His constitution was naturally strong and vigorous, and well calculated to bear up under the arduous toils and labors through which, in the providence of God, he was called to pass. He appeared to labor hard in the pulpit, and yet but few men could preach oftener.

He was a man of studious habits, with a mind naturally inclined to investigation; hence much of

his time was devoted to scientific and Biblical research. He saw and felt the great importance of a more thorough literary and theological training among young men of promise, looking forward to the work of the holy ministry, in order to add efficiency and usefulness to their future labors. For this purpose he strove hard on various occasions, both in Presbytery and Synod, to get up an institution of learning that would afford greater facilities to young men in limited circumstances, who bid fair to be useful to the church, and who were destitute of the means of obtaining a higher degree of knowledge necessary to fit them to become useful and honored ministers of the gospel of Christ. But it was some time before such an institution was established. The denomination was in its infancy, and its doctrines were new and strange to the people. Many obstacles and much opposition had to be overcome, before anything like a permanent institution could be established.

The early ministers were not easily discouraged, however, and they never tired in their efforts to keep the matter before Presbytery and Synod. He succeeded in interesting the members to such a degree that they authorized him to travel six months through the states to solicit funds

and donations for the benefit of Cumberland College, located at Princeton, Kentucky. It shows clearly that the Synod reposed the utmost confidence in Brother Jones, by appointing him soliciting agent for their infant institution; and when he went forth as the authorized agent, he availed himself of every opportunity to present the claims of the institution before the public. He drew up a kind of petition, and addressed the people individually on the subject. In this agency for the College he succeeded admirably, considering the many obstacles he had to overcome. He was ever ready to spend his time and talents to further the cause of Christianity, and education. As we have before intimated, the denomination and its doctrines and practices were comparatively little known at that time, "but," as he expressed it, "during our life time on earth if we can only be instrumental in preparing the way for future generations, to share the benefit of our toil and labor here, we should feel amply repaid for all the sacrifices and privations to which we have been subjected in the accomplishment of this great object."

And just here we would call the attention of the reader to the fact that this was the motto of most of the fathers in the early history of the



Church. They counted no labor or sacrifice too great, no hardship or privation so discouraging, but that they were willing to spend their lives for the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth, that future generations might reap the benefits of all their labors and sacrifices. Their prayers and efforts were not in vain. They were raised up in the providence of God for a special and important purpose, and were the humble instruments in organizing churches, and establishing schools. They lived to see the vine which, in the hands of God, they planted, and which has spread its branches "far and wide," and the precious seed of truth which they had sown, yielding a most bountiful harvest. They finished their work, and were gathered unto their fathers, to be followed by others no less consecrated to the great work of saving souls.

In this volume the reader will learn something of the early history of the Church, and the fathers who founded it; their tireless efforts in the ministry, their pious walk, their extensive labors, and their triumphant death. You will see what animated them in their progress through a world of suffering, how they endured hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and how they were enabled to resist temptation and overcome difficul-

ties, and to brave persecutions. The lives and labors of such good soldiers of the cross should be kept fresh in the memories of those who have taken their places, that they may fully appreciate their work in "preparing the way." Their influence will be felt upon future generations.

But to return to the subject of this sketch, Brother Jones was well calculated both in body and mind for the performance of a vast amount of ministerial labor, and was ever ready to spend his energies in the service of his Lord and Master, and was very popular and received many urgent calls to visit the different neighborhoods and churches within the bounds of his presbytery, which caused him to ride and preach a great deal. Yet nothing but providential hindrances could induce him to make a disappointment. Every one knew him to be faithful in keeping appointments. If an appointment had been made for him to hold a meeting he was always faithful in keeping it. He was always found true to his engagements and promises unless, as we have stated, hindered providentially, by sickness in his family, etc. He was also a punctual attendant upon the judicatories of the Church, especially the Presbytery, which held but few sessions from its earliest organization until his death,

that he did not attend. It was one of the greatest joys of his heart, as he was frequently heard to express, to meet and mingle with his brethren in the capacity of a presbyter, to aid in consulting about the affairs of the Church, and the means best calculated to advance the Redeemer's kingdom on earth; and he would urge it upon his brethren to be prompt in their attendance in order to receive mutual counsel for the upbuilding of the Church and all her enterprises.

His religious exercises were purely of a devotional character, and carried with them a solemnity both appropriate and impressive. He believed in the power and efficacy of fervent and importunate prayer, and delighted in holding frequent and intimate communion with God. In prayer he was truly eloquent, and a marked simplicity of thought and ease of expression bespoke that familiarity with which a man would converse with his best friend. His prayers were always interesting and instructive, because they were always new. While the young students were preparing for the ministry under his instructions it was his custom to pray himself once a day in his family, either morning or night, while the other services were committed to the students. Every day there was something new. He loved

to pray, and his reason for adopting this rule was that he thought the head of the family best knew its wants, and he felt the importance of casting their daily cares upon him who hears and answers prayer. He was careful to maintain both the form and the power of godliness; to be an example to the flock of God over which he was called to minister. He was not only a great man, as we have seen, but he was far better: he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost.

Brother Jones was truly a friend to the friendless, and many a poor orphan, left destitute of earthly protectors, and cast upon the charities of a cold-hearted world, has shared richly of his bounty and instructions, and has by his liberality and tender-heartedness, been led to respectability and usefulness in the Church. There were few men, considering his limited circumstances, who have done more for the cause of the blessed Redeemer, in this way. He knew that

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear,  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness in the desert air.”

He knew that there was sufficient talent and material in the Church, if properly cultivated and

developed, and brought to bear upon the cause of Christ and the interests of the world, to shake the kingdom of darkness to its dread center, and make the wilderness and solitary places of the earth to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Hence he sought opportunities to do good. His superior energies of body and mind were consecrated to the service of God, and his unwearied exertions were owned and blessed of heaven to the salvation of many precious souls. In revival work his influence was truly wonderful. Many who were converted under his preaching went into other churches, for as yet his church and its doctrines were not understood by the majority of the people. Yet God abundantly owned and blessed his labors. The churches he organized were well equipped in membership, considering the opposition they were compelled to meet. He organized Hebron Church, which to this day is a flourishing church, and there have been many valuable additions; but the ground work was laid by Brother Jones. He lived to see one of the early converts of this church in after years became a minister of the gospel and his fellow laborer, who shared with him the toils and privations of a minister's life. They took sweet counsel together, and fought side by side in many a

desperate battle, mutually cheering each other on in their struggles for victory. Like father and son, they were united by many tender associations and loved each other devotedly. Brother Jones was first called to his reward and eternal rest while his younger brother stood by his bedside and saw him breathe his last.

It should be remembered that much of the information available of Brother Jones' work in the ministry is from his memoir, and the time of his licensure was only two years from the time of his ordination. From the information gleaned in his memoir it would seem to the casual observer that he had organized churches, etc., before his ordination, but this is not the case. He was licensed to preach in April, 1825; and on the 14th day of April, 1827, he was solemnly set apart to the whole work of the gospel ministry, by praying and laying on of hands by Presbytery. The Rev. F. R. Cossett preached the ordination sermon, from 2 Cor. 4: 7; and Rev. H. F. Delaney presided and gave the charge.

Immediately after his ordination he returned to his field of labor with renewed energy and zeal. Because of the earnest solicitations of his friends to settle among them at this time, he concluded to change his mode of living, in seeking a matri-

monial relation, and thereby rendering his location more permanent. Accordingly, on the 28th of May, 1829, he was married to Miss Rachel Walker, of Mercer County, Kentucky, a lady of a highly respectable family. She possessed a mild and amiable disposition, and good sense, and was well calculated to render the domestic circle enjoyable. In her he found truly a help-meet, one naturally inclined to make all about her as agreeable as possible, and thereby soothe the sorrows incident to mortal life. Owing to his popularity as a preacher, and the almost incessant calls for his ministerial labors in different part of the country, she was frequently deprived of his society, and often for weeks together; yet she never murmured, but appeared cheerful and resigned, "knowing that he was set for the defense of the gospel." But the best of all was, she feared God and wrought righteousness, and was content to remain at home struggling with the cares of life, and the growing interests of a rising family, while her husband was out on his benevolent mission pleading with Christless sinners to be reconciled to God. She was a woman of deep and ardent piety, and long will her memory be cherished by many of the preachers of Kentucky Presbytery, who shared so richly her kind atten-

tion and motherly regard, while preparing for the holy ministry. Should we attempt to record her many deeds of kindness and hospitality, shown the young students under her husband's immediate care and tuition, it would fill a volume. They were ever grateful to her. Never once did she complain of the added burdens their training brought upon her already hard lot, but the contrary was the case. She encouraged and assisted Brother Jones in every way in her power in his noble and benevolent work. She was truly a faithful mother to her own children as well as to the orphaned students who were welcomed into her household as members of her own family.

The perplexities of the world, and the cares of his family were pressing hard upon Brother Jones at this time. He knew that the churches he preached for regularly were not likely to render him the remuneration for his services that would enable him to devote the whole of his time to the work of the ministry. He was, therefore, compelled to engage in secular pursuits, more or less, using his own efforts in order to obtain a decent living. The idea was then, and is yet, too common with his church in this section of the country, that their ministers will preach anyhow, whether paid for their services



or not; and too little attention was paid by the church officials in ascertaining the real wants of their pastors and trying as far as possible to relieve them. It is very gratifying to know this state of affairs does not exist at the present day to the same extent as it did during the early history of the churches. The denomination is better known, and the confidence of its members is fully awake to its needs. Not that it has arrived at perfection—no, far from it. Yet the ministers of the present day are better paid for their services, have better churches and more of them, and more and better schools; yet I doubt very much if they perform more work or accomplish more good than our fathers. As has been stated, they laid the ground work, which has been firm and steadfast, not built upon sand, but which has withstood the storms of oppression and opposition for three or four generations.

Brother Jones was ever at his post, and when duty called, and Providence appeared to open to him a door of usefulness, he was ready at any moment to drop the world and march out in front of the army where he might be seen rallying the hosts of the redeemed under the banner of the cross, and like a brave soldier cheering them on to final victory. In this way he was

eminently useful to the Church. But the greatest success ever known to attend his ministry was in the year 1833. "When the judgments of God are in the earth, men learn righteousness," and often it is the only effectual means by which a proper train of reflection can be produced in the minds of Adam's degenerate race.

In that year, it will be remembered, the Asiatic cholera visited our continent, and for the first time spread out into the country. It appeared to walk in darkness and destroy at noonday. It rode upon the wings of the wind, while from behind the battlements of the Almighty's wrath it scattered the arrows of death in measureless profusion all around. None could stay its progress. As a dread pestilence it swept over the country, leaving desolation, misery and death wherever it passed. This was a time to try men's souls, and many who before had lived in sin and iniquity now awoke to a sense of their danger, and anxiously inquired what they must do to be saved. At this fearful crisis the ministers of Christ were at their posts, directing the returning prodigals to the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." Here Brother Jones was to be seen leaving his family in the care of God, and traveling to and fro, rushing between

the living and the dead, and daily pleading with God for the salvation of immortal souls. His cries were heard and his devotion regarded and this year many seals were added to his ministry. He received into the different churches to which he was then preaching steadily about two hundred members. During this year, 1833, within the bounds of his operations, which included Mercer Circuit, assisted alone by Rev. David Robinson, there were seven hundred conversions to the Christian religion. And if we include three camp meetings, at which several other preachers were in attendance, we find nine hundred conversions reported, at all of which Brother Jones took an active part.

We pass over a few years of his work after this great revival. In 1842, on the death of Rev. S. A. Noel, several flourishing churches in that section of country were left vacant—Pleasant Grove, Jeffersontown and Bethlehem, all in Jefferson County, Kentucky. In 1843 Brother Jones was urged to take charge of these churches, and accepted, for about one-half of his time, for one year, while the other half was devoted to the churches near where he resided. His labors in consequence were truly arduous, and demanded all his attention through the week, as

well as on Sundays. He supplied the three churches in Jefferson County, and as many in Boyle County once a month, which kept him all the time in the field.

In the spring of 1843 Brother Jones was requested by his Presbytery to write a biographical sketch of the life and labors of Brother Noel, which he did, and appended several sermons on important subjects. This was published in 1846. At about that time he was preparing another book, "A Plea for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church," which contained five hundred and four pages, and was published in 1847. These are the only works that he lived to publish. He left, in manuscript, a brief system of theology, and had in contemplation a more enlarged work of that kind of which he had formed the outlines a year or more before his death; but owing to other pressing calls, he had no opportunity of finishing the work. A short time before his death he had completed a lecture on "Predestination," sufficient, perhaps, to form a pamphlet of forty pages. Had his days been prolonged on earth he no doubt would have rendered himself as an author eminently serviceable to the Church.

In 1844 Brother Jones removed to Jefferson

County, Kentucky, and settled on a farm near Bethlehem Church, on which he lived until the day of his death. Here he took charge of those churches formerly under the pastoral care of the lamented Noel. In 1847 a Board of Publication was created by an act of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and Brother Jones was appointed one of its constituent members. During the summer and fall, while attending to his numerous appointments in different parts of the Presbytery, he acted as soliciting agent for the Board, and was very successful in presenting the claims of the institution, and in obtaining donations for the purpose of carrying out the benevolent designs of the Church.

“During the summer of 1847,” says his biographer, “Brother Jones and myself, by a Presbyterial arrangement, were thrown together in holding seven sacramental meetings; and although there was no peculiar excitement, yet we had some pleasant seasons. I am confident I never heard him preach with such power. From day to day he appeared to enter more into the work, and every effort from the pulpit bore evident marks of deep thought, and a thorough investigation of his subjects, and above all that

he maintained intimate converse with God. There were two of his discourses, especially, that I do not expect soon to forget, which for depth of thought and sublimity of expression I have never heard surpassed. The first he preached on the evening of the fourth Sabbath of June, 1847, in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Perryville, Kentucky, from these words: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" His discourse was peculiarly interesting throughout, but more especially when he came to remark upon the greatness of this salvation. Here his whole soul appeared perfectly absorbed and carried away in rapturous contemplation of the infinite love of God, as exhibited in the scheme of human redemption; as if under the sudden impulses of the Divine Spirit his ideas flowed, sparkling with the brilliancy of heaven, and gave utterance to conceptions so lofty and sublime as to beggar description, and leave the mind of the attentive hearer lost in profound astonishment. His concluding remarks were peculiarly impressive. His mind was then directed to the future home of the righteous, the palace chamber of his Father and God. Here the thought of that blessed world added fervency to the impulsive ardor of his soul, and soon he was borne

aloft to the third heavens, and seemed to repose in quietude amidst invisible realities. But, ah! little did I think then he would so soon be there.

“The other discourse to which I had reference was preached during a sacramental meeting at Salem, on the third Sabbath in August, on the being and perfection of God, founded upon the 21st chapter and 15th verse of the Book of Job: “What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?” This discourse, I think, was more argumentative than the one I have been attempting to describe, and in no respect inferior, except in that impassioned tenderness of expression which melts and moves the soul to sympathy and devotion. The latter discourse, however, he managed to admiration. The subject of itself was sublime, exhaustless, deep, and left an impression of profound awe and veneration; while the former awoke the affections of the heart, and bore the soul triumphantly away to the home of the virtuous and the good. At the close of his last sermon to the church at Salem, I felt emotions peculiar and almost overpowering, for which I was not then able to give a satisfactory solution. I was called on unexpectedly to close the meeting. I was well nigh overcome by a

sudden ebullition of feeling, from which it seemed difficult to recover. In broken sentences, mingled with tears of sympathy, I at last succeeded in making a few remarks upon the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and in conclusion invited all the lovers of Jesus to come forward, and bid our aged father an affectionate farewell, and join in holy covenant, that if we met no more on earth we would strive to meet in heaven. Oh, how solemn and impressive was that hour! The congregation was literally bathed in tears. Now the word was given, all sang, and without regard to names or orders, they came mingling their farewell with tears. Our brother wept while they hung around him with Christian tenderness, and seemed unwilling to depart. But little did they then think they were taking the last lingering gaze of his healthful countenance, and that they should see his face no more until eternity's blessed morn would reveal him all radiant with the glories of heaven, and present him as the friend of God and man."

From this time on he was actively engaged in the duties of his high calling, and presenting as an agent for the Board of Publication the importance of that enterprise, and the great benefit that might reasonably be expected to result to



the Church therefrom, if only the required means could be obtained by which to place the Board in a situation for efficient and successful operation. In this enterprise Brother Jones was deeply interested. It met the cordial approbation of his heart, while for its success he spent his last energies and meekly invoked the blessings of God to attend his feeble efforts.

He was a man of uncommon zeal, activity and perseverance, and spent near thirty years of his life in the labors of the gospel ministry. He had just entered upon a new field of usefulness, and bid fair to become eminently serviceable to the cause of Christ. But death came and bade him cease his efforts. Oh! how mysterious are the ways of Providence! The call was sudden and unexpected, but, thank God! he was at his post. He died with an unshaken confidence in the truth of the doctrines he had preached. He felt every assurance of his acceptance with God, and looked forward to the last struggle without dread or alarm. His faith was firmly fixed upon the promises of God, which enabled him to calmly resign his spirit into the hands of his blessed Saviour. Thank God for the hope which Christianity inspires, which lights up the darkness of the tomb, dispels the gloom which hangs around

the future, and opens to the eye of faith the far distant glories of the celestial world! This hope, so full of immortality, was the constant companion of our beloved brother, and bore him up amidst the toils and privations of his earthly career, and, thank God! when death came, and began to enshroud him, and while he felt himself fast sinking into the solemnities of the tomb, still this hope, firmly anchored within the veil, secured his tempest-driven bark in safety through the storm, which was loud and tempestuous, but of short duration. His afflictions were severe, but he bore them with patience and Christian resignation. Said he, "I have always tried to love my God more than my wife or children, or any earthly friend, and I feel every assurance that I shall be happy when I die." With these hopes and prospects, our lamented brother bid his family and friends an affectionate farewell, and calmly fell asleep in view of a glorious resurrection. His last words were addressed to a brother minister who stood by his side, "Will you and all my friends remember, pray for and befriend my wife and children?" The God of the widow and orphan was their God, and they found Him a present help in every time of need.

He died at his residence in Jefferson County,

Kentucky, on Sabbath, the 20th of February, 1848, at 4 o'clock A.M., in the fifty-second year of his age. This last sickness commenced on Tuesday previous to his death, and was of that form of gravel which physicians call *renal calculi*, terminating in inflammation of the bowels, and brought on a speedy dissolution. Up to Saturday morning he entertained a hope that he would be able to attend his appointment on Sunday at Bethlehem, near his residence; but ere the Sabbath dawned his manly form lay cold and motionless in the icy arms of death, and his soul was caught away to worship with sainted spirits and mingle with the choristers of heaven in a Sabbath that never shall end.

Brother Jones left a wife and four children, together with a large circle of brethren and friends who mourned their irreparable loss. He was amiable in his disposition, kind and affectionate in all the relations of life. In him the Church lost one of her ablest and brightest ornaments, the ministry one of her boldest champions, the Presbytery one of her most judicious and wisest counsellors, the world an unwearied advocate. The Lord sees not as man sees, else our brother had not died. But we must not repine, for our loss is his eternal gain.

On the evening after his death his mortal remains were deposited in the church yard at Bethlehem, to slumber in peaceful silence until the morning of the resurrection. Oh, how solemn was the scene of burial! A large congregation had collected, the most of whom, when leaving home, had fully expected to hear him preach the melting story of the cross; but to their sad surprise they were called to take the last lingering gaze of their beloved pastor, and see his body entombed with the dead. All was as solemn as death. Every heart was full, and every eye overflowed with tears of sympathy. Nought was heard but the half-suppressed cries and sobs of heart-broken mourners, which arose upon the wintry storm, mingled in condolence with the widow and orphan children around the tomb of their best earthly friend. But cease your cries. Be calm. The voice of mercy whispers, he yet lives—lives in heaven, enraptured with bliss superlative; and soon, if faithful to your God, shall you be permitted to worship with him in that blessed world where "sickness and sorrow, pain and death, are felt and feared no more."

"The stranger's eye wept, that in life's brightest bloom,  
One gifted so highly should sink to the tomb;

For in ardor he led in the van of the host,  
And he fell like a soldier—he died at his post.

“He wept not himself that his warfare was done—  
The battle was fought, the victory won;  
But he whispered of those whom his heart clung to  
most,  
Tell my brethren for me, that I died at my post.

“He asked not a stone to be sculptured with verse—  
He asked not that fame should his merits rehearse;  
But he asked as a boon, when he gave up the ghost,  
That his brethren might know that he died at his post.

“Victorious his fall, for he rose as he fell,  
With Jesus his Master, in glory to dwell;  
He has passed o’er the stream, and has reached the  
bright coast,  
For he fell like a martyr—he died at his post,

“And can we the words of his exit forget?  
O no! they are fresh in our memory yet;  
An example so brilliant shall never be lost,  
We will fall in our work, we will die at our post.”