

and he applied himself to learn the trade of a weaver in Alloa. But Providence which "leads the blind by a way which they know not, and conducts them in paths which they have not known," was compassing his path to bring him to the enjoyment of blessings he yet knew not of. He came to the Lowlands seeking worldly good, but Providence designed to make his visit the means of securing to him that wisdom, whose price is above rubies, illustrating the divine saying, "I was found of them that sought me not."

We must however here advert to the ecclesiastical state of Scotland at this period. That spiritual deadness into which many of the churches of the Reformation had sunk at the beginning of the eighteenth century was severely felt in that country, and was in a large measure produced or at least greatly aggravated by the measures adopted for the settlement of the Church of Scotland after the Revolution of 1688. That settlement while it restored the Presbyterian form of Church Government so dear to the people of Scotland, and delivered the persecuted from the severe sufferings to which they had been subjected, yet entailed many evils upon the Church. The admission to parishes on easy terms of the late Episcopal incumbents, men whom Bishop Burnet, himself an Episcopalian, describes as "the worst preachers he ever heard, ignorant to a reproach, and many of them openly vicious, a disgrace to their orders, and indeed the dregs and refuse of the Northern parts," paved the way for the introduction of many errors in doctrine and practice. The law of patronage also facilitated the introduction of a corrupt and time serving ministry, so that, at the time of which we speak, they had become the ruling party in the Church. The Evangelical party had continued after the Revolution to exercise considerable influence, but corruption gained strength. The generation of ministers who had upheld the testimony of the Church in the trying times of the martyrs had now passed away, and a generation of another spirit ruled the counsels of the Church, whose measures were characterized by utter unfaithfulness to the doctrines of the gospel, as well