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88.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF A  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL:

BEING  
NOTES OF THE LIFE AND LABOURS

OF  
JOHN DIXON;

WITH  
REMINISCENCES OF THE LATE DR. HAWKER, MR. FOWLER,  
MR. GADSBY, MR. STEVENS, MR. SHIRLEY, AND OTHERS.

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PART II.

*To be completed in Three Parts.*

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LONDON:  
J. PAUL, CHAPTER HOUSE COURT, ST. PAUL'S.  
NEW STREET, DORSET SQUARE, W.; AND OF THE AUTHOR  
(OR SIX POSTAGE STAMPS), 17, BUCKINGHAM ROAD,  
KINGSLAND GATE, N.E.

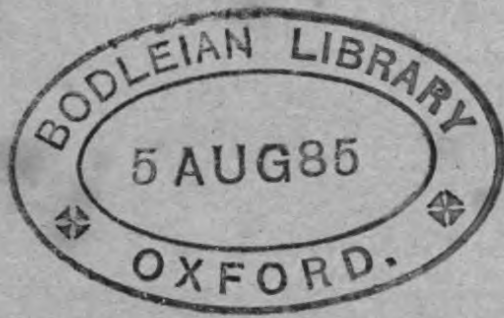
1867.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

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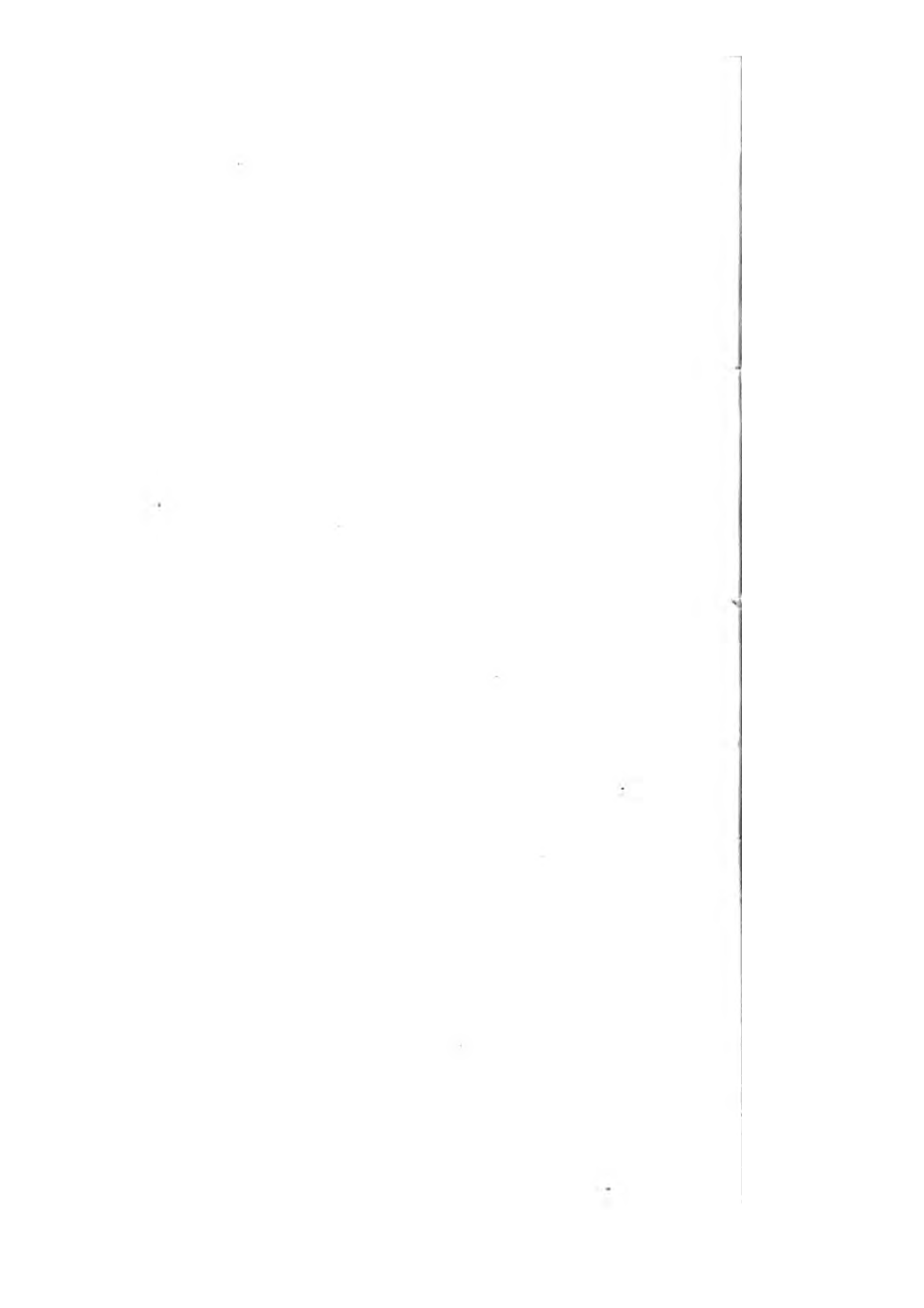
OF  
JOHN DIXON

ETC. . ETC.

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PART II.

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## CHAPTER IV.

A CHURCH-MEMBER'S INDULGENCE IN SIN, AND RETURN TO THE WORLD—SOME INCREASE IN OUR SOCIETY—PEACE IN DEATH—GRIEVOUS ANNOYANCE AT THE LORD'S TABLE, FOLLOWED BY A PLEASING EVENT—A PUZZLING CASE—CAUSE FOR JOY—SUDDEN DEATH OF A MINISTER'S WIFE ON A SABBATH MORNING—GLARING INCONSISTENCY—THE HARDENING NATURE OF SIN—MEETING TO PREVENT A ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY—MR. IRISH—GREAT EXCITEMENT, BY A BARRISTER GIVING UP THE LAW TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL—NEIGHBOURING ENGAGEMENT.

IN 1849 I preached, by invitation, the annual sermon to the teachers of a Sunday school, at the roomy chapel, nine miles from Risely, which was built on a Common about a century ago. The superintendent said to me, at the close of the service, that my discourse was "just the old-fashioned sort they liked." Amongst my auditory was a surgeon, son of the former minister, who was the pastor there forty years. I had remarked that I supposed the anatomist dissected the heart, not only to become acquainted with its curious structure and important functions, but more particularly to trace the *disorders* to which it is subject, and ascertain, if possible, a *cure* for them. And so the preacher laid open, with the knife of God's word, the spiritual disease of the *heart*, head, and mind of man, that the remedy, that is, the infinite merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His obedience, blood shedding, death, resurrection, and intercession, may be applied by the Holy Spirit and "bring health and cure." I was not then aware that a medical man was listening to me, but the minister, a very intelligent one too, afterwards said that "My comparison was just and suitable." At the tea table, I was informed that the doctor was baptized by his father, and received into the Church when only about fifteen years old. But alas!

he subsequently returned to the world, and was now addicted to drinking. It grieves me to add that he so increased this shocking habit as to induce a liver complaint, of which he died, in deep poverty, in 1853.

We can imagine that a parent's *natural* affection might incline him to accept the *warmth* of *youthful* profession as evidence of true discipleship, but we must remember that some of the keenest discernment, and after investigation, have been deceived. Does not Paul call Demas, brother, and yet afterwards tell us that he had forsaken him, having loved this present evil world?

There were in my own congregation two females, seekers of Jesus, who had been such for several years, but not bold enough to profess publicly their attachment and allegiance to Christ. As I believed them to be spiritually "meek," every encouragement was afforded them to give the Church some account of God's dealings with their souls, which they did. And as they felt at home under my ministry, and *united* to us, I baptized them, and then received them into the Church, as full communicants at the Lord's table. We had a *crowded* chapel when the Rite, which our Lord Himself commanded, was performed. It was *my first* baptizing sermon, but several spoke *highly* of it, especially an elderly man, who said "He had heard many discourses on that subject, but he liked mine the best." The Baptistry had not been used for about five years; but now, in addition to those baptized, there was a man of experience and judgment, who expressed his preference for my ministry and people, and, notwithstanding his residence was four miles off, he joined himself to us; and we certainly felt somewhat strengthened, thanked our God, and took a little courage.

It is right to notice that I had more society here than a minister finds in some villages; and the *Vicar* was very *neighbourly*, and on one occasion, at least, when leaving home for a fortnight, he requested that I would visit a church-going person. But the curate met me in a cottage where there was an invalid, and proposed that I should pray after he had read; and the short con-

versation we had induced me to think he was a brother in Christ. I was subsequently walking in the adjacent park with an Independent minister (since then a Baptist), who was visiting his sister, when we met the curate, and we three, of different denominations, held communion while discoursing of the things of God.

One of my stated hearers, when in the prime of life, a married woman, was seized with consumption. She was weak in faith, but not without a good hope in Christ Jesus. The disease made rapid progress, and soon brought her to the bed of death. About twenty hours before her departure, standing near her, I quoted part of Toplady's remarkable hymn, which commences with—

“Rock of ages, shelter me,”

and she was greatly struck with it, asking for the book, which was opened at the part wanted, and placed in her hands, as she was then sitting supported with pillows; and though her eyes had begun to dim, and her voice faltered, yet she read audibly in the *most solemn* manner, several verses; but her utterance of the *last*, as she looked at the book, and then upwards, feeling the hand of death upon her, was *most impressive and affecting*. There was, evidently, the *act of the soul* cleaving to, and depending upon the Lord Jesus Christ as the Rock of salvation, while every earthly tie was dissolving. Her parents were believers, living at Peterborough, and they came to her interment, and also her brother, from Manchester. They said they felt *greatly* obliged to my wife and myself for our close attentions to their daughter, and pressed me to visit them should I go near them. And their son gave me a tangible mark of his gratitude. They heard me preach (they said with profit), and expressed their surprise that I had not a larger congregation.

While spending a day or two with a brother minister, a deacon called to ask him to preach for their Sabbath school. My friend said he could not then comply, but told him “I should do better.” And I was taken nearly twenty miles, to an old chapel, which Mr. Coxhead left

in 1800, to succeed, as pastor, Dr. Stennett, in London. My service was very acceptable, and many thanks were expressed.

In most churches, if not all, harassing and grievous things occasionally take place. And we were sadly disturbed by a person who had some years before been a member for a short time, but was separated for non-attendance. I had been told that she was a poor afflicted creature, and visited her, giving her a little temporal relief, as well as speaking to her about *soul* matters. She now came twice on each Lord's-day to our chapel, and quickly expressed her great desire to commune with us at the Lord's Table. But as she had been cut off, and not returned as a penitent backslider, we could not *then consent* to her request. Then she acted most strangely and foolishly, for when I rose to give an address, previous to breaking bread, she stood up behind the members, and entreated to partake of the elements, saying, that "if I would let her have them only once, and she did not then feel better, she would not trouble us again." Of course I insisted on her being quiet, but she kept on talking *aloud* for some minutes; and she behaved thus on several ordinance days. It was evident that some force must be employed to remove her; and not wishing to expose the matter, one of our friends, possessing great bodily strength, put his arms round her waist, lifted her off her feet, and carried her out of the chapel. She soon afterwards *ceased* coming to our place, and went among the Wesleyans, who *once* allowed her to join in their communion; but she did not long continue a hearer there. To be disturbed while preaching the gospel, or when engaged in the public worship of God, is distressing, but to be annoyed and vexed—as we were two or three times—while commemorating the sufferings and death of our Redeemer, was indeed truly painful. In what *various* ways Satan tries to produce disorder in Zion, and break the peace of saints, that he may injure the cause, and bring dishonour upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But as countervailing this sad affair, a middle-aged woman, who was formerly a member, but, for some time, left to go to Church, now came to us regularly ; and as she expressed her sorrow for thus *acting*, and assured us that she profited under my ministry, we restored her to fellowship and communion. Subsequently she informed me that an elderly lady, residing in the village (and distantly related to the Vicar's family), heard me one Lord's-day morning, when there was no service at Church, and told her she was much pleased, as I set forth Christ as the only Foundation of a sinner's hope.

The daughter of one of our female members had been a regular and very attentive hearer. Calling one day to converse with her mother. I was informed that she had recently been much concerned about her soul ; that her parent was awoke one night by her crying, and asking her the cause of it, she said that she now felt her sinfulness : and that under a sermon which I preached on the previous Sabbath she had such a discovery of her state that she feared she was not one of the branches of the Living Vine which I then described. For some time the friends, with myself, considered her to be a real seeker of Jesus ; and one who had seen different characters said to me, "I am glad you have met with some encouragement." But a worldly man became her suitor, and she accepted him. When I heard of it I expostulated with her on her inconsistency ; and shortly afterwards, as I read while in the pulpit, the seventh chapter 2 Corinthians, which forbids the marriage of Christians with unbelievers, I made some explanatory and admonitory observations. These, she said, were *intended* for her ; and as her natural passions and pride of spirit, in connexion, no doubt, with her subtle adversary's suggestions, obtained the mastery, she came no more to the chapel. Then she attended the Wesleyan meeting house ; and was afterwards united to that same carnal man. Two or three years subsequently, there being a fresh minister preaching to the Moravians, she became a member with them. I cannot refrain from adding that when I, with my wife, were visiting our old friends



in August, 1862, we met her in the fields; and after a little talk about her late godly mother, I asked whether she really experienced a change in her soul some years before, of which she told her mother. And her reply was that she certainly did. She also acquainted me that her husband too had *joined* the Moravians. This was one of the singular and perhaps puzzling things I have met with. But I shall leave the Christian reader to draw what conclusion he may think the most scriptural.

Death again attacked us, seizing the youngest daughter of a member who *some years* before had been deprived of several children, and also her husband, who was a valuable and highly esteemed deacon. Her age was only sixteen years, when she died of decline. During the greater part of her illness she was full of doubts and fears concerning her eternal state; while others, with myself, had a good hope that she was a babe in *grace*. But ere she departed a persuasion was given *her* that Jesus was indeed her Saviour. And a peculiar *sudden distressing* bereavement occurred to the widow about that time; one of her sons, nearly of age, who was living at B—, while bathing early in the morning, was seized with cramp, and drowned. As soon as I heard of it, I went, of course, to condole with her, desiring to comfort the mourners as well as I could; and I prayed the Lord to *help* her to lean her *whole* weight upon Him, while it was my *earnest wish* to *her* that she would try to do so.

In 1850 the Lord gave me *evidently* another seal to my ministry. And who can describe a preacher's feelings in such a matter? A young man who had some for time listened with the deepest interest to the proclamation of the Gospel, so that his countenance indicated that his soul fed upon it, now told me that on a Lord's day evening he received, while hearing me, a feeling conviction of his sinful, helpless state, and had been led to the Lord Jesus Christ for pardon and peace. Being encouraged, he gave to the Church a simple yet satisfactory statement of his conversion to God. On the next Sabbath

morning I baptized him, and in the afternoon received him at the Lord's table into full communion. It is a pleasure to add that during nearly five years while I continued his pastor he wore well as a disciple; and I learned, at my last visit there, that he continued steadfast, and was a consistent character.

I should have stated that in the previous year my friend Robinson spent nearly a week with us, a change of air and scene being necessary for him, as he had lost his wife (who was his second spouse) in the preceding summer. The *manner* of her death was *appalling* to nature, while the *fitness* of her soul for heaven was not questioned. Some months before, she was, with her husband, spending a few days at a farmer's, one of his people, and about midnight was taken with an apoplectic fit. When returning to consciousness she said in an audible voice, "Into Thy hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." She recovered so far as to be able to get about; but her medical attendant told her that the attack must be considered a warning; and in the following June, on a *Sabbath* morning, about six o'clock, a gurgling noise from her throat awoke her husband, and he had the grief to behold her, apparently insensible, within twenty minutes expire. Such a solemn event on a Lord's day of course prevented his preaching. A prayer meeting was held during part of it; and one of the deacons, being then an itinerant, was able to fill up the remainder.

The minister of a rather large chapel at a town in Cambridgeshire having left, supplies were obtained, some from a considerable distance, for twelve months; and I went there for one Sabbath in May, and also one in July. On account of my distance from the railway, and having to take two branch lines, the journey was over fifty miles. But my travelling days were dry, and I was kindly entertained, so that I took no harm, but rather found the change beneficial. As to my preaching, I think that I did not sufficiently *dwell on the doctrines* of grace or truth to suit them. Glorious as they are, I wish to *blend* them in my ministry with an *expe-*

rience of their suitability and preciousness. Doubtless some excel as *defenders* of the system of truth, refuting the subtle advocates of error.

There was a professor, formerly united to a church, meeting at a considerable distance from us, but who had been separated; and he came several miles frequently, to our chapel. One Lord's-day afternoon, my text was, "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." I was enabled to open it with freedom, in a solemn manner, yet, so as not with the least *personal* reference to him, (for that I have always considered unbecoming a minister). But it seemed that *he took it to himself*, for we did not see him there again till many months had elapsed, and then not more than twice or thrice, during the four years that I continued the pastor. His absence was of course noticed, *thought of*, and *regretted* by me, especially, as a good while before, he, having, in a neighbouring village, heard me preach a sermon on "justification," commended it in strong terms to others who were also present, and much interested. And he had said on another occasion, that there did not seem to be set forth *food for the soul* at the other chapels in *our* village. What could be my conclusion, but that he felt *condemned*, yet *not* so as to be *humbled*, and brought back to the footstool of mercy? For he still indulged his easily besetting sin, giving a practical illustration of the truth of the saying, that "sin is of a *hardening* nature." It brings afresh to my mind, what my pastor, many years ago, mentioned in the pulpit:—that a young believer asked an aged minister, how far he thought a saint might go in sin, or backsliding, and yet be a Christian? And the reply was "I should be very *sorry to try*." And may *we* not add, that as the Eddystone Light is not placed there to *attract* vessels to the rocks, but to *warn* them to keep at a *distance*; so the Scripture account of the awful falls of some of God's people is not given to encourage in the *least*, their carnal and depraved pas-

sions, but to *caution* them against dallying with temptation; and also to teach them that notwithstanding the final security and glorification of all the election of grace they shall prove by *woful* experience, that "it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God."

It was in the autumn of this year, that an attempt was made to establish a Roman Catholic Hierarchy in this country. My people thought with myself, that a meeting ought to be convened, and a petition to the Queen got up to prevent it. As it *equally* concerned *all Protestants*, I spoke to the Vicar respecting it, and he said that he should have no objection to come to our chapel, but, as a *clergyman*, he *dared not*; and he then proposed having the national school fitted up with a platform, and enlarging it by carrying a tarpauling over the yard as far as the wall, which was done. There was an announcement of the intended meeting made in each place of worship in the village; and about six hundred persons assembled. The Vicar had called upon me, and requested that I would frame the resolutions. A peer, who resided in the neighbourhood, occupied the chair; and the speakers were both clerical and dissenting. His Lordship expressed to me his surprise that *so large* a gathering had been obtained. Several of my people afterwards said that they thought their pastor took the lead; and it was stated in a local newspaper, that the Baptist minister "delivered a *forcible* speech."

An occasional interchange of labour with brethren seems both pleasant and profitable. And our esteemed brother (Irish) then at Warboys, having kindly promised to preach our anniversary sermons, on a Lord's-day, I occupied his pulpit. As he lived nine miles the other side of Huntingdon, which town was seventeen from us: one of our farmers conveyed me on the Saturday to H—, and brought him from thence to Risely. On Monday there was the same journey to take him to H—, and bring me back. He was a full and mellow preacher, and of a very friendly disposition. What a variety of *natural* temperament there is in the servants of God, and how great the difference as to their *bodily* strength.

Brother Irish told me, that for many years, while he preached three times every Lord's-day, he did *not* feel *tired* after his labour, though his chapel seated nearly six hundred adults, and was filled; and he was so hearty and vigorous the last time I saw him (May 1864, at Crown Yard Chapel, St. Ives) that he seemed likely to make an octogenarian, if not to get *beyond* four-score years; but in about sixteen months afterwards, while riding home (which was then Ramsey), he was attacked with heart complaint, and in a few months died at the much shorter age of sixty-eight. Of course we are assured his work was done, and that he *beholds* His face with rapturous delight, whom *here* he spoke of as being so precious to his soul.

As the year (1851) was ushered in, there came with it, to us, a new trial. We lost several seat-holders, and more of the usual hearers, in consequence of there being a new preacher at the Moravian chapel. The former one becoming aged, and unfit for constant labour, he had given up his pulpit to a gentleman who was trained for the bar, and had been for a short time a counsellor, but had left the study and practice of the law, to preach the gospel. He certainly possessed *great* abilities, and his power of description was indeed striking. He was also able and very willing to give *temporal* assistance to the poor, which, no doubt, influenced some to adhere to him. For about *a year-and-a-half* the excitement was great, (which is the more noticeable in a village). And he expressed to the elders his earnest desire for the enlargement of the chapel, which seated about one hundred adults, saying that he had *faith* in the continuance of increase. But they advised him not to be in a hurry, telling him, that when the Baptist chapel was erected, which would seat at least twice as many as theirs; there was for some time a full attendance, but which afterwards lessened very much indeed; and in less than two years there were seats to spare with the Moravians. He gave general invitations, or addressed the unconverted as Arminians are in the habit of doing, and yet would set forth the doctrine of sovereign grace. And his zeal was so unbounded, that

by *excessive* walking and preaching, he *strained* both his physical and mental powers. And after little more than three years' labour there, he became so debilitated that it was *necessary* for him to leave, and desist altogether, for some time, from preaching. With regard to the effects of his labours, there was, no doubt, a *change* in the *habits* of many; and it was said that several instances of spiritual conversion took place. But one man, who, after hearing him in the open air, was exceedingly troubled, and laid up with nervous fever from terror of soul, and a little time afterwards told the minister he had found pardon and peace—that man *soon* reassumed the conduct and character of a worldling, and a few years subsequently, while dressing himself to go to his labour, fell down *dead*. It is my conviction that in cases of great religious excitement, there is *very much* more of the *flesh*, than of the spirit. I must add that one of their members said to me that when he wanted to boil some milk, he used wood, which made a great blaze, and soon went out; but to roast a piece of meat, he had a coal fire, banked up, which lasted some time. So in religion, he liked, not the flare of excitement, but solid and continuous attachment to the gospel and God's house.

During the summer, I was three times invited for a Lord's-day, to a good-sized chapel in a large village within ten miles from us. The minister had resigned his office, and was the principal means of my going there. He heard me, and in conversation said, he "*liked* my preaching. I told him that it appeared to me there was a *paucity* of thought in my discourses, but he said there was *not*; and he wished the church would give me a call to the pastorate, as he felt that he could with confidence leave them in my care, as their under shepherd. I had reason to believe that my testimony was made a blessing to some; but there were others of influence, who, having been among Wesleyans, wished for more "free will" than I gave them. And they did afterwards choose, for an overseer, one whose preaching was more open and general than mine.

## CHAPTER V.

SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL ENCOURAGEMENT—A MINISTER'S QUIANT EPITAPH—SUDDEN AND SINGULAR DISSOLUTION—MINISTERIAL EXCHANGE—AN ORIGINAL AND INSTRUCTIVE PREACHER—STRIKING INSTANCES OF THE LOVE OF SIN PREVAILING—EXCELLENT WISH OF A TEACHER—DEPRESSED, BUT SOMEWHAT CHEERED—UNEXPECTED CLOSE OF A VERY USEFUL LIFE—HEARTS RIGHT, WITH BECLOUDED JUDGMENTS—LABOURS IN LONDON, TWO COUNTRY TOWNS, AND A VILLAGE—A MISTAKE IN DIVINITY CORRECTED—MR. HORSLEY—A PECULIAR CASE OF AFFLICTION, AND SYMPATHY WITH THE SUFFERER—DESCRIPTION OF SEVERAL DEATHS AT RISELY—GREAT TERROR OF MIND, WITHOUT SPIRITUAL REPENTANCE—A MONUMENT OF GRACE FEELING IN HIS BODY THE EFFECTS OF FORMER EXCESSES—A SURGEON AND LINGUIST DEVOTED TO THE MINISTRY—NOTICE OF REMOVAL AND ENGAGEMENT ELSEWHERE—PLEASANT PARTING.

It was about this time (1851) that a good man, residing in Suffolk, was staying for a short time on business in our neighbourhood, and came several times to worship with us. On the last occasion, he stopped to speak with me, and while he alluded to the smallness of the congregation, he expressed himself with much feeling as benefited; and when he gave me a farewell shake of my hand, left something in it. I remember my text was, "Thou hast loosed my bonds." The sermon was, of course, an experimental one; and he seemed to have *realized* somewhat of spiritual freedom. My gracious Lord thus cheered me up again in the midst of my trying path. How suitable are His favours, and how seasonably He affords help!

A year or two previously I preached at an old chapel, which originally was a very large barn. Being asked to stay over Monday evening, and give an address at the prayer meeting, I read and expounded the twenty-third

Psalm. At the close of the service, several warmly said to me that they found it truly good to be there. And some weeks afterwards, one of *our* friends told me that a member there informed her that I was heard well.

There was a tablet against the wall, in memory of a former pastor, some part of the epitaph on it being composed by himself. "He was born crying; he lived sighing; and died saying, 'I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.'"

And a few years subsequently a female, in a London chapel, where she was about to join the church, acquainted me that *she* listened to profit when I was at that old-fashioned place in Northamptonshire.

In my own quiet sphere, I was rather startled by the sudden death of a stated hearer, the wife of a tradesman, who rented a pew at our chapel. She was now confined, being safely delivered of twins. But in less than four hours afterwards, when she had just turned on one side, she gave a heavy sigh and expired. The doctor being instantly fetched, said that she being dropsical, the movement of her body caused the water to touch her heart, and occasion dissolution. She was not a talker, but there seemed *reason* to believe she was a lamb of Christ's fold.

In May, 1852, I went about forty miles to a very large village, in Cambridgeshire, exchanging with the minister of one of the Baptist chapels (for there were two fair-sized places, and well attended), that he might preach our school-anniversary sermons. There were some families, part of which held seats at the old, and the other part at the new chapel. The pastor of the latter (Mr. Sutton) had been a shepherd till he was *middle-aged*. He would sometimes call himself a child of nature; and would say that for many years his hair was so long, that dividing it at his crown, he tied it under his chin, to prevent the wind from *covering* his face with it. He might be compared to a rough diamond, for he was original, and deep, and full in thought, while his manner and phraseology were somewhat rough. After the evening service, he came into the friend's house at which I was



staying, and chatted with me. Alluding to different ways of addressing the unconverted, I said it seemed to me best to appeal to their consciences, without exhorting them to do what none but those born again could do. And he added, "I see you would try to incite, though you would not invite." My pastor was for several years in that neighbourhood, and had so high an opinion of his friend's gifts, that he got him to deliver the *charge* at his settlement in London. And I have more than once heard him repeat a small but *weighty* part of it, which was in reference to his treatment of the lambs of Christ's fold. "When," said he, "the cold wind (of temptation or affliction) blows hard upon them, take them up in your arms, ministerially, and lay them on the sunny side of the hill."

There were three instances of the *love* of sin prevailing over some knowledge and even conviction of truth, which came under my immediate notice. One of these men was for some time a stated hearer; the others came occasionally. The first would sometimes *weep*, as he sat listening to the sermon, but was given to *excessive* drinking, and also what was *worse* than that. It is said the crocodile will sometimes shed tears before seizing its prey, and occasionally after devouring it. And are not some sinners similar in their conduct? Do they not *cry* in a place of worship on the Sabbath, and the next day or two feed upon the gratification of their evil desires? Or, after indulging their depraved appetites in the week, shed tears from terror of mind on the Lord's-day, in His house, while the preacher declares "that for all these transgressions God will bring them into judgment."

The second of the persons I refer to had long been a toper. When meeting him in the village or neighbourhood, I used to speak solemnly to him on the matter of his frequent intemperance, and once told him of a drunkard having a dream which horrified him so much that for some *little* time he lived soberly, but then *resumed* his bad habit, and died *according* to his dream. My hearer said, "Oh, how awful!" but still continued a tippler. I remember his saying to me, "You are my

*best* friend, sir, because you tell me the truth." Of course I had quoted the Scripture "that drunkards could not enter the kingdom of heaven;" and that, notwithstanding his chapel-going, if he died in his present state, hell must be his portion. But after that I several times saw him from my window inebriated; yet his inward monitor seemed not quite asleep, for though he could not walk strait, he would *try* to keep pretty upright *till* he got *past* my cottage.

The third party actually knocked at my door while in a state of drunkenness, with his face bleeding from a fall. He begged my pardon, but said he must tell me how much he liked my preaching, and that he wished to take a seat, and also purchase one of our hymn-books. I referred him to our deacon, and got rid of him as soon as possible. He was such a sot, that, although he was the best hedger in the place, and could have supported his family decently, yet they were in want and wretchedness. Once or twice he had lived in sobriety for some months, attending the Wesleyan chapel, and was asked to pray; but he returned to his easily besetting sin, giving evidence that it was, as in the case of the others, *stronger* than his convictions of the guilt of his practice, and his fear of divine wrath denounced against it.

At the commencement of autumn I occupied, one Lord's-day, the pulpit of a brother, at a small town in Northamptonshire, where, for a few years, he was settled; and he preached for us on the occasion of our chapel anniversary. After morning service, the senior deacon said to me that it was manifest, by my discourse, that I was a free-grace minister. At the close of the day, he told me that he had received *his* portion under the evening sermon. And several spoke to me very cordially. No doubt there are many instructed, edified, and comforted, who have not the courage or inclination to put themselves so forward as to speak their minds to God's servants, to whom they have been listening. A Christian told me that he once heard Mr. Hardy so comfortingly, that when he attempted to inform him of it, such was the fulness of his heart, he could *not*, and Mr. H—,

shaking his hand, said, "The Lord help you to *keep* what you have."

We were now at home very thinly attended, and without any increase in the church: there *seemed* to be no progress; and I felt much depressed. Oh, how trying to the Spirit to continue preaching while such is the case. But one Sabbath morning I took these words for my text, "Nevertheless, Lord, at Thy word I will let down the net." And though I was *not aware* of any particular *result* of my discourse; yet I believe there *never* was a truthful sermon delivered without some good, by the Divine blessing being effected, even if it be only in reproof, or correction, or instruction. Are not these as necessary as consolation? Does not God say that His word shall not return to him void—that it shall accomplish the thing whereto He has sent it? And about this time one of our members, quite elderly, made a remark to me which was calculated to encourage me. I had proclaimed the Gospel while favoured with feeling and freedom, and he had heard with pleasure; and he told me that a passage of Scripture occurred to him, which he thought was in *some* measure applicable to *me*: "Though Israel be *not gathered*, yet will I be *glorified*." By the setting forth of the Lord Jesus Christ in His excellencies, and suitability, and preciousness, God the *Father* is glorified, while there may not be, apparently, a gathering of souls from the power of Satan, and the world, into the church. Besides, the Father is glorified (and the Son too), as the Spirit testifies of Jesus, through the preaching of the Gospel to one or more, making Him to such, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

Being recommended by a London friend, I was invited for one Lord's-day to serve a cause at a town in Kent. The treatment I received was really kind. But a variety of supplies, for a good while afterwards, preached there. On the Monday afternoon I got to my friend Robinson's, and remained a few days with him. The Lord had given him another suitable wife, and my reception was as cordial as ever. While I was there, he lost a very active

deacon, who was not more than about *fifty* years of age. His second son had married *six months* before, and was in business at Chatham, but was just now taken ill, and died. The father (it was said by a physician) had been attacked with an affection of the brain, and in less than a week expired. The corpse of the son was brought from Chatham to Borough Green, and interred at the *same* time as his father's in the family vault, made just previously. Was not this circumstance altogether solemn and affecting? When my brother R—— was informed of the decease of deacon S——, he was nearly overcome, for it was not expected till a few hours before. We are not forbidden to weep and sorrow; and I have felt heavenly relief through this verse of Dr. Watts' :—

“ Our sorrows and our tears we pour  
 Into the bosom of our God ;  
 He hears us in the mournful hour,  
 And helps us bear the heavy load.”

Our neighbours, the Wesleyans, did not have a stated minister, and requested me several times to visit cases of sickness and bereavement among them. There was the eldest son of a farmer in a consumption, whom I conversed and prayed with rather frequently; and he appeared to be a broken-hearted sinner at the feet of Christ. His mother had symptoms of the same disease some weeks before he died, and fell a victim to it not long afterwards. I certainly concluded that she utterly renounced self, and possessed a good hope of heaven, by the merits of Jesus.

A poor elderly woman, afflicted with spasmodic asthma, wished for the repeated calls of my wife with myself. She was a great sufferer, for many months at least, but was often favoured with spiritual peace, as she felt her soul stayed on Him who is mighty to save from everlasting woe. Shortly before she departed, she told my wife that although she was for some years with the Wesleyans, yet *our* conversation and supplications were rendered useful in giving her clearer and fuller knowledge of salvation by grace than she had possessed; and that the Lord had made us the means of consoling and cheering

her spirit amidst her bodily pain, and in the prospect of her *last* struggle.

The illness of a relative occasioned me to be in the metropolis in the first month of 1853. Being with Brother Foreman at his house one afternoon, he asked me if I could and would go for a Sabbath to a large village chapel in Hertfordshire; and as I consented, he wrote to the old friend of his who obtained supplies for the pulpit. In less than a fortnight I received an invitation for the third Lord's-day in February. The minister was for some time prevented from preaching by excessive palpitation of the heart. But he was at chapel twice on the Lord's-day; and he told me, when I was taken by my host on Monday to see him, that he felt *interested* in my discourses, and hoped to hear me again. While riding to the station, I was asked if I could come again for a Sabbath; but the journey was considerable, as I came to town from Bedford, and then by the Great Northern got to Royston; and several years elapsed before I was called there again. Then I went direct from London, and stayed over two Lord's-days.

When I had returned to town from my first visit, I saw my friend Wyard, who said he had promised to take the pulpit of a brother in affliction for the *next* Sabbath, and having a supply for the evening only, he asked me if I would preach for him in the morning. Obtaining an itinerant for my own place, I was the speaker at Soho Chapel. Two days afterwards, being with Mr. W——, at a tea-meeting, he informed me that my sermon was liked by his people very much. And he said that he should recommend me to a destitute church in a country town. About five weeks afterwards, they wrote me for the first two Lord's-days in May, and I went then. There were some very encouraging remarks made at the dinner-table of "mine-host;" and a deacon, at the Monday prayer-meeting, thanked the Lord for the feast which he had on the previous day. Respecting the second Sabbath's labours, the oldest deacon alluded *most* favourably to my discourse. But another minister *had* been engaged for the whole of the following month;

and nothing was said to me of a future visit to them.

I had been called, at the close of the preceding spring, to a place from which the *sea receded about two centuries ago*. While travelling, I was met by a north-east wind, and felt my chest disordered the *first* time I was preaching. At the tea-table, one of the deacons remarked that I seemed in my afternoon sermon to have grown from a child (as he thought from my discourse in the morning) quickly to a man; so much better did *he* think the second sermon was than the first. But the wife of another deacon told me that her husband spoke quite *approvingly* of my discourse in the *morning*. On the second Sabbath several spoke warmly to me, one saying, "We have had some grand truths set forth."

What a diversity of taste I have met with among hearers! An elderly female member, conversing with me at her house, said she thought the doctrine of Reprobation ought to be preached. I did not speak of it there, nor do I see any *scriptural* reason for treating of it *anywhere*. I much prefer using the term Preterition, which implies, when used in a religious sense, God's act of *passing by* some while he chose to endless felicity many others. And while we read of some being of old *ordained* to condemnation, they were so, of course, not as *creatures*, but as *sinners*, and *ungodly* in the foreknowledge of God, appointed to the punishment justly due to their transgressions; for Holy Writ assures us that "the *wages* of sin is death; but the *gift* of God is eternal life."

On the Friday between the two Lord's-days that I stayed there, I went by train some distance to spend a day with my esteemed brother Horsley (who came out of the same church as myself into the ministry). How pleasant for brethren to meet on the most friendly terms! Nearly ten years had passed away since we had chatted together in his own dwelling; and now we talked over trials and deliverances, joys and sorrows. He was a widower, having buried his wife almost two and a half years previously, while he laboured in Lincolnshire. Towards the close of the day he took me to

the house of one of his people, who treated me in a truly hospitable manner.

In conversation, he alluded to the former minister of one of the Baptist chapels, and told me that he used to remark, "that some persons who habitually heard the Gospel preached, but remained carnal and unconverted, were damned by the law, and damned by the Gospel." I replied that such a statement was a great blunder in divinity, for it was neither the nature of the Gospel nor the design of God in giving it, to be the instrument of any man's condemnation, since it is emphatically styled the Gospel of our *salvation*; and as such is good news or glad tidings to all sensible sinners. The law can *only* condemn, and does so for every transgression; but the *Gospel*, Christ in His blood and righteousness, being the substance of it, *justifies* all who have faith given them to believe in Him.

It may be asked, Are we not told that the *ministers* of the Gospel are to them who perish the savour of death unto death, while they are the savour of life unto life in them that believe? But Paul says that it is unto God we are a sweet savour in both cases; by which I understand that the *proclamation* of the Gospel, the holding forth our Lord Jesus Christ, in the glories of His Person, as displayed in His finished work, is odoriferous to God the Father, and the Spirit too, as when Paul proclaimed, "Christ is made of God unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption." Also, His greatness and preciousness, being "able to save to the *uttermost* all who come unto God by Him." While the *declaration* by His servants of His justice certainly punishing all who live and die in the love of sin, whether immorality, or self-righteousness, is a sweet savour, or *pleasant* to Him.

The next morning brother H—— called, and accompanied me to the station. And in June, 1854, having an engagement for one Sabbath, a few miles from Risely, he walked over to us, and on Tuesday evening addressed a fair congregation in our chapel, giving us a good plain discourse. He was favoured to possess a full and com-

manding voice. When he was with me in our garden, he expressed his admiration of the spot, which certainly was *picturesque*, adding, "I should like to spend a fortnight here every year." His age was but forty-one years; he was tall and good-looking, having a ruddy countenance, and seemed likely to labour very long in the cause of our Divine Master; but that was *not His* will, as in less than *two* years this manly and vigorous frame was laid in the grave. He was attacked with inflammation of the liver, and after about seven or eight weeks' illness, died in May, 1856, having been engaged solely in the ministry nearly fourteen years. He used to say that it was not his gifts (which he considered moderate) that procured him a fair standing in the church, but the smile and blessing of God.

But I must here record a circumstance of a singular and distressing nature, which occurred at the close of summer, 1853, to one of our members. Her husband had been dead about ten years, and there were four children, the youngest being now about eleven years old. As a young tradesman he had done so well as to be able to "put by a little;" but was attacked with cough, which proved to be the forerunner of consumption. The business gradually declined; and the widow's energies, both mental and bodily, were, no doubt, *over-wrought*, by constant exertion to pay her way honourably. Her age was only forty-two, but she had for some time been weak in her health, and depressed in spirits. One fine evening she went nearly two miles to visit a fellow member who was ill. Leaving her about nine o'clock, she was passing through one of the two fields which lay between the house and the road, when paralysis seized her, and she fell on her back, remaining unable to move. But she did not lose, even for a minute, her consciousness; and she afterwards told me that her mind was quite stayed upon the Lord, while she was lying there helpless, all night. Several cows approached her, but did *not touch* her. A very slight rain fell, yet the air was warm. Her medical attendant said that if the weather had been cold she must have perished. At four o'clock in the morning,



as a boy was going to the stables attached to the farm, he saw her and ran to tell his father, who brought a large chair, in which she was taken to the nearest cottage. The doctor being immediately fetched, he desired her to be placed on a bed, and conveyed in a van to her house. She had *lost* the use of one *side*; and for some days her *head* was *greatly* affected, but that soon got better; yet there remained too much reason to expect that she was *crippled for life*. And she has not since been able to stand alone. On the following Sabbath I felt constrained to preach from these words, "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright." And doubtless He has such a foreknowledge of them, and all connected therewith, that he can and does guide and control each and all of those events which are painful, sad, and grievous to flesh and sense; and He in love and wisdom, *works* them *together* for our *best* interest, and *endears* himself in them to us, Christ tenderly sympathying with us, and supporting us; and thus inclines our souls to render to *Him* honour and praise, who says to us, "Glorify ye the Lord in the fires," (Isaiah xxiv. 15). It must be added that our afflicted friend was much respected by the inhabitants of the village and neighbourhood. And when it became evidently a hopeless case as to her regaining the use of her affected side, the Vicar called on me to know whether I intended getting up a subscription for her, and said if I did not, he would. I had already procured a small book, and in the course of two or three weeks I had the pleasure of collecting a sum of money, which, for a village district was considered very good, as an expression of sympathy to assist her in her continued weakness and trouble.

We continued *losing* friends, who were not replaced by additions. Three members *had* been removed by the providence of God and dismissed to other churches. And in the course of this year, two communicants whose place of membership was *distant* from us, died, and also one of the oldest of our company, widow of the worthy and useful deacon, who departed this life two years ere I came. It is only *just* to notice that *many* of the Lord's servants

were entertained at their house, the pastor pretty often. And I willingly add that some others, stated hearers, and occasional ones too, were steady supporters of the Cause, and gave myself and wife tokens of *their* good will. It must be obvious to those acquainted with village chapels and their interests, that as the greater part of the attendants are agricultural labourers, the burden of maintenance has to be borne by comparatively a few persons. Yet I would not forget the *value* of their contributions, and *especially* their *prayers*, who live by the *sweat* of their brow. It seems proper to observe that the age, the complaint, and the manner of dying, with those three friends who were taken from us to the Church triumphant, differed considerably. The first, a widow, was afflicted with paralysis of the left leg for two years before she died, *having been* very strong and hearty. She knew and loved the truth, but did not possess the *confidence* of faith as to her interest in the everlasting covenant. There was a baptized Church of Christ, meeting in a large chapel seven miles from us, which she joined about thirty years previously, and they had always been averse to dismissing members; therefore she let them retain her name on their book. I must here say that it seems the more *consistent* for a Christian to transfer his membership to a society of the same faith and order *near* where his lot is cast, than to remain *only nominally* connected with his earlier associates in the ordinances of the house of God. In my visits to our sister in the faith, I generally found her somewhat dull and dark in her mind; but a few days before her death, she was favoured with a sense of divine love, so that she was then quite cheerful in the view of dissolution; but she lingered so long, the extremities (her feet and legs) being cold first, that she was, my wife thought, nearly *five* days dying, although her life had been extended to seventy-seven years. I can but mention here that many years ago, two old disciples, well-known to me, both of deep Christian experience, *differed greatly* as to the *time* they were in the *last* struggle: the one I *saw* die was not more than twelve hours in it, the *vital* parts being *first* affected, and

his feet warm (to my own hand) when he *had* expired. The other was about three days under the grip of death, her lower extremities being cold for a great many hours ere she breathed her last. It is thus *evident* that we cannot judge of the state of the *soul* in reference to *another* world, by the measure of *bodily* suffering at the *close* of life, whether the transition be rather *easy* or very *hard* to nature. And I recollect perusing some account of the last days of a physician, and of an author; the former saying, "If I could hold a pen, I would write; what an *easy* thing it is to die!" but the latter, who had been weakly and nervous, said, "I did not think it would be such *hard* work to die." Nothing was mentioned as to whether they were religious or not, and I conclude that it was the *difference* of their *disease* which produced such a dissimilarity in their feelings.

The second of our friends who were taken from us in this year, was a married woman, only a few months beyond her prime. After some weeks' illness, her complaint being obstinate, there was a consultation of two medical men, and they said she had a *complication* of disorders. In one of my visits, she wished a hymn to be sung, and I proposed that, by Newton, which begins with "How sweet the name of *Jesus* sounds, in a believer's ear!" Before we had finished it, she said, "That is nice, and sweet;" and she expressed a strong hope, that He was *her* Redeemer. But shortly afterwards, for nearly two days, she seemed insensible, yet, when I went to her bed-side, about ten hours before she expired, and spoke, she raised her right arm quite up, which indicated consciousness, and her desire that I should *pray* for her; and I could but intreat our God to *release* her imprisoned soul; and early the next morning she exchanged, I trust, this world of sin and sorrow, for that of holiness, peace, and joy.

In noticing the *third* death which occurred among us this year, I allude to an old friend, who was one of those that were formed into a church when the chapel was erected. She was a widow about nine years. She was for a good while subject to indigestion, which induced a

weak state of health, and at length she was seized with consumption, which terminated her mortal life when she had reached the age of sixty years. Respecting her mind, she used to say "I cannot get further than a little hope." And in her last illness, doubts and fears harassed her considerably. She exclaimed, "I am a great sinner;" and I said that such were just fit for our Almighty Saviour. It was her complaint that she was not near so fixed on Jesus as she wished; but, on being asked if upon the whole, her spirit was not stayed upon Him, she said that she trusted it was. As dissolution approached, she endured great pain, particularly in the chest. One of her children said, "Mother, are you happy? If so, hold up a finger;" and she did so, with a smile on her countenance.

I now seriously thought that it would be better for me to leave my present sphere of labour, as, during the last two years, we had got lower in all respects. Yet, wishing not to act with the least rashness, or even hurry, I besought our God, the Holy Ghost, to revive and increase us "in the *midst* of the years;" and I resolved to continue twelve months longer. But the next *striking* circumstance which occurred scarcely yielded me any encouragement.

I met with a case the ensuing summer, affording clear evidence of natural conviction, or terror, frightening a person into a kind of religious fit, which soon subsided. A girl about sixteen years old, living with her parents, who were church-goers, had heard me preach on several Sabbath evenings, and being taken ill, was *greatly alarmed* about her soul. One of the family came to my house, and asked if I would favour the invalid with a visit. I went immediately, and was told by her that what she had heard me say, in the pulpit, very much *distressed* her, so as to make her afraid she should, as a sinner, be sent to hell; and the pangs of conscience so affected her body, that she was very pale, and trembled while lying on the bed. As plainly as I could, I spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ as the able and willing Saviour of all who are ready to perish; and prayed for her. But when I

saw her two or three days subsequently, she was much less earnest respecting her mind, seeming glad that she was *regain*ing her strength. I called in the week following, a Sabbath having intervened, and found her, apparently, free from mental trouble; and she informed me that she had been to church! My conclusion is, that in the apparent *nearness of death*, she wished for the minister whose preaching had disturbed her in her carnal state, that he might take, or pray away the *dread* of divine wrath, which she felt; but this being removed, by her quick return to *health*, she did not care to enter the chapel again. How *different* was her sorrow from that which worketh repentance unto *life*; this is evidenced by *hatred* to sin, while *groaning* under a body of sin, seeking Jesus, listening to His gospel, associating with His people and leaving the sinful habits of the world, but *hers* by a *slavish* fear of punishment; and when the rod of God seems for the present removed, a return to former evil ways, either in a coarser or more refined form, and living in vanity and folly all the week, and then attending on Sunday a place of worship, in a formal, or self-righteous manner, but pursuing one of those paths which terminate in endless death?

Having occasion to be some days in London, in the month of July, I called on several ministerial brethren, Mr. Newborn being one of them. On the next day, a deacon from D—— asked him to recommend a preacher for the next Sabbath morning, as the one who had promised was now very ill. Mr. N—— mentioned me, and I went. My discourse was spoken of very favorably, but I was not again invited till nine years afterwards. Yet nearly twelve months subsequently, one of the deacons so far remembered my sermon, as to tell a friend at C——, that I gave the Lord Jesus Christ a good character, which *occasioned* him to invite me to H—— for two Lord's-days; and while I was there, he received such an account of my labour, that he was induced to ask for my services at C—— anniversary, on the Sabbath following my engagement at H——.

While I was in Town a note came to hand, requesting

me to go for one Lord's-day, to a village about forty miles distant, which I did at the close of August. At the nearest station there was a conveyance for me, and the owner of it was one of the heartiest and freest Christians I ever met with. Both his wife and himself cordially received my humble testimony. When taking tea, he said, that in the afternoon he was apt to be sleepy at chapel, but my discourse was the means of making him *lively* then. As his business did not require my absence on Monday *morning*, he pressed me to stay till evening. A friend of his called and had some close conversation with us, giving us an outline of his life; and while he acknowledged, with *shame*, that he had been guilty of almost every crime, except murder, he said he was, indeed, a monument and a miracle of divine and sovereign mercy. But he was suffering in his health, as the result of his former intemperance and excesses.

The Moravian Chapel and house were very near my cottage. The minister who was there when I settled, continued several years, till age and weakness necessitated his resignation. He was trained for the medical profession, and practised many years at Devonport, attending Dr. Hawker's Church (who was Vicar of the parish of Charles, Plymouth), which seated fifteen hundred persons, and was regularly filled. Subsequently he was a surgeon at Bristol. And he was familiar with several languages. He afterwards became the Moravian preacher at Haverfordwest. Leaving there, he went into Bedfordshire; that being his lot, for in his connexion, he told me, ministers are apportioned by *lot* to their different spheres. I have reason to *respect* his memory, as he visited, and prescribed for me, in illness, several times; and instead of taking a fee, he said it was a pleasure to him to be of any service to me. We were sitting together in my garden one hot day, and I made some observation relative to the holy and precious doctrine of sovereign grace, when he added, "I should have been in hell long ago, but for electing love." His private income was a competence, and he removed with his family to Bedford; but came for a few days twice to

his former residence. Benevolence, and good health also, were expressed in his looks; and he had always possessed a strong frame of body, and his age was turned three quarters of a century. But how strange and unexpected, to us, was the means of his death. While getting out of a conveyance his foot twisted, so that he was thrown, or fell on his back; and, though he felt pretty well for a week or two, yet then he was seized with *sharp* pain, reaching from his neck to one of the great toes. The head-surgeon to Bedford Hospital attended him, and said that his fall had produced a spinal affection. The paroxysms were so violent, that (his house being close to the pavement) his screams were heard by those who were passing at the time. Yet then his soul was enabled to triumph in Christ. After a fortnight's acute suffering, he entered into everlasting rest.

There was no *particular* incident which occurred to me and my people during autumn, and as this year, 1854, drew to a close, I felt it to be my duty, after prayerful consideration, to resign my office; which I am deeply conscious had been *very* imperfectly fulfilled for nearly eight years. And on the last Sabbath I told my little flock that I should leave them three months hence, and that it was my earnest desire for the Lord to give them one whom He would make more useful than I had been.

About seven weeks afterwards, a friend spoke of me to Brother Flack (with whom I was not then personally acquainted), and he introduced me to a cause in Cambridgeshire, so that I was invited to supply there on the last two Lord's-days in March. The journey was rather awkward, and I was advised to get by train to H—, and then to C—, and to take a fly for the remaining seven miles. I called on a good man who had listened to my testimony several times; and he, after giving me suitable refreshment, kindly sent me on in his own chaise, and through pouring rain, to my destination. But he did more than this well-timed favour, for, as he knew that I should on my return, eight days forward, be too late

for the third-class train, he wished me to be driven to his house, and stay there over night, so as to breakfast with him, and then travel cheaply. Of course, I *thankfully* accepted his hospitality, and *blessed* my *God* for giving me a place in the esteem of my host and his spouse, and many others, in different places.

On the first of the two Sabbaths mentioned, many of my hearers spoke smilingly to me, and an intelligent farmer asked myself and Mr. F—— to spend the next Friday afternoon and evening with him. I preached in a cottage at a short distance on Monday night to about twenty adults, one of them being a young man, who was *much interested* the day before at the chapel. (In less than two years afterwards he entered the ministry, and was soon settled in Devonshire, where he still labours.) A small body of Baptists at E——, six miles off, desired me to preach twice on Wednesday, which was the day of National Humiliation, and I was conveyed there on Tuesday evening. At their neat place of worship, in the morning, my text was, “The Lord’s voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see Thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it” (Micah vi. 9). At night I tried to occupy large gospel premises, found in Rom. v. 20, 21: “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” The friend who cheerfully took me to dine with him, expressed himself as *profited*. He had formerly sat under Mr. Newborn’s ministry in London. The next day I returned about half way, and met Brother F—— at a member’s house; and in the evening he was among my hearers at a neighbouring cottage. I made some reference to the *divinity* of our Redeemer, *not* knowing there were any before me *inclined* to Arianism, but F—— told me there were several. Privately, I asked him if *he thought me suitable* for the chapel, and he replied in the affirmative. There was a funeral *before* the afternoon service, on the second Lord’s-day, and the mourners with the corpse being, I suppose, *unavoidably* rather late, I



was requested to pray only at the grave, and make some remarks concerning the member deceased in my sermon. No further invitation was given to me, which, several months afterwards, I was *glad* of, being then called to a place for some time, which was much preferable. How different has been the ministerial course of Brother F—— to mine! After four years' pastorate here, he removed to P—— for twelve months; and then came to a London church, on probation; but that not being his home, a few who were very desirous to hear him constantly, rented a small hall for six months, when a nice chapel in a nearly new locality was *providentially* put in their way, and purchased by them. And the Lord gave His blessing, so that there has been a great increase both in the Church and congregation, and the chapel has been considerably improved and enlarged.

A small interest in a town fifteen miles from the metropolis had *long* been supplied by a *variety* of preachers. The Deacon who obtained ministers for a great while, said that the book or books containing their names afforded evidence that *some hundreds* had occupied that pulpit in the course of thirty years. The owner of the chapel, who occasionally got a preacher there on a week night at his own expense, had seen a letter written by myself to a Christian friend, and observing, in a magazine, the announcement of my resignation at Risely, wrote me at the close of February, that he wished to know my address, when I should have removed to London.

My last Sabbath at Risely now arrived. There was no ill-feeling between me and those among whom I had lived and laboured for a *very* considerable time. And my farewell discourse was from these pleasant and consolatory words, "*And so shall we ever be with the Lord*" (1 Thess. iv. 17.) Several times since then I have visited them, and preached the same Gospel, but I trust with greater fulness; and they seem glad to entertain me, and my wife also, whom they very much esteem.

## CHAPTER VI.

REMOVAL TO THE METROPOLIS—ENGAGEMENTS IN IT AND SEVERAL TOWNS AND VILLAGES—INVITED TO A PROBATION AT W—  
 —SPIRITUAL PEACE ENJOYED BY A DEEPLY-AFFLICTED SAINT, BED-RIDDEN FOR MANY YEARS—ANNIVERSARY SERVICES AT C—  
 —CALL TO A SEACOAST TOWN—A FOREIGNER EXPRESSES HERSELF BENEFITED THROUGH MY DISCOURSE—REMOVE THERE, AND STAY ONE YEAR—AN ALMOST DISTRACTED ONE OBTAINS CALMNESS, AND IS RAISED FROM DESPONDENCY TO HOPE—MANY ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIVING PROFIT AND COMFORT, BUT THE ATTENTION OF OTHERS IS DIVIDED—SOON HOT, SOON COLD—EXPRESSION AND PROOF OF ATTACHMENT—A MATTER FOR LAMENTATION—A PREACHER DESTITUTE OF SPIRITUAL FEELING—AN OLD SAINT DYING IN PEACE—RETURN TO LONDON—SILENT AND PREACHING, WITH ADMINISTRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN TOWN, AND AT B—, C— AND M— —BRETHREN ROBINSON, BLOOMFIELD, DICKERSON—ENCOURAGEMENT CONNECTED WITH AFFLICTION—VERY SUDDEN DEATH OF A YOUNG PASTOR—AWFUL DELUSION OF THE LEARNED—LIGHT SUCCEEDING DARKNESS—HELPING A MINISTERIAL BROTHER IN ILLNESS—MISCALCULATION AS TO SUITABILITY OF A PREACHER—SEVERAL ENGAGEMENTS, WITH DIFFERENT FEELINGS AND EFFECTS—ILLUSTRATIONS OF DIVINE GRACE.

As my Master had not seen fit to open a door for me, I thought it best to return to London, there being much greater reason to expect invitations, at least for itinerating, while residing in the great city, than if I continued in a village. And, favoured with divine protection, we reached town in safety, April 7th, 1855. The next day I was asked to preach, on Wednesday evening, in our neighbourhood. I complied with the request sent to me at Risely for my address, and was very soon called to W— for a Thursday night sermon. At the close of the service, one of the Deacons said, the friends would like me to take the first Sabbath they were open; and after I had supped with him who *wrote* to me, he *liberally* paid me, being

guided, I suppose, by the word of God, which tells us "*the labourer is worthy of his hire.*" At his table there was another minister, whose Chapel was about two miles distant. He told me that he had promised to take the place of a friend in Huntingdonshire, one Lord's-day in August, and said if I was agreeable to preach for *him then*, and would make the engagement, he should consider the business settled. Well, although it was a *good while forward*, yet, as it had been put in my way, I agreed to do so; and he said that he would acquaint me a few days before the time, where to go, on the Saturday, to a *quiet resting-place*. When I went to C——, my surprise was excited by meeting a lady who had heard me at Risely in the preceding summer. And several of the evening congregation had walked over from W——, where half-a-dozen times they had listened to my voice; thus showing that my testimony was to them very acceptable. And so it was at Brother Glaskin's, Islington, on the third Lord's-day in June. One who nine years before was a fellow member with me at Hill Street, took me to a comfortable provision for the body, which a learned divine once said he found must be consulted.

After serving the cause at W—— on three different Sabbaths, I was asked to give four successively, and there being an attachment to my labour in word and doctrine, the Church invited me for two months more. But being previously requested to visit D—— for three Lord's-days, I told the friends at W—— they should have three Sabbaths on my return from D——; and I hoped then to know which place it became me to take, should there be a renewal of invitation from D——; as I felt very desirous to ascertain my Lord's will, and *trace His hand* guiding me. Conversing with an occasional speaker who was acquainted with the W—— people, I alluded to the extension of their call for my services, and he said, "*Then you will do, as you have been weighed and measured there.*"

I had spent, at Whitsuntide, a week with my old friend Robinson, in Kent, and preached, by his wish, on the Lord's-day evening. While at supper, Mrs. R. told

me that the wife of one of the Deacons informed her "*She had got on exceedingly well, and it was just the subject she had wanted, for some time, to hear.*" This was mentioned for my encouragement. Now I always thought my brother R. opened a text much better than myself, and I knew that this sister was *very partial* to her minister; yet our God was *then* pleased to communicate instruction, profit, and comfort by means of a comparative stranger and little one.

In April, May, and June, I was for one Sabbath at a pretty little chapel about thirteen miles westward, "breaking bread" the third time I was there. The leading deacon was an old disciple, of unusual knowledge and discernment. And he was much acquainted with and very partial to the system of divinity, as set forth by those worthies, Gill, Brine, and Toplady, including Stevens and others. His circumstances were good, but evidently he and his wife disliked *showing off*. While at table, he said to me, "We live plainly, but you are quite welcome to such as we have." Yet the repast was both good and ample. Do not *some* Christians conform to the world, in *extravagant* living, *fine* apparel, and *splendid* furniture?

It was in July that I went to H—— for two Lord's-days. One of the deacons had been confined to his *bed* fourteen years, his legs being useless to him. When I visited him, he told me that he was favoured with the light of his heavenly Father's countenance, and great peace in his soul. Some observation I made in reference to the spiritual sweetness of Dr. Hawker's writings, induced him to say, "Yes, a *short cut* to Christ;" as he considered the Doctor's aim was to lead the mind immediately away from both righteous and sinful self, to a complete, glorious, and precious Saviour.

His pulpit discourses were generally more like effusions of truth concerning Him whom he used to call, "our most glorious Christ," and "all-precious Jesus," and the rich and sweet promises to sin-sick and timid souls, than sermons; but he was an *excellent scripturist*, and would quote, one after another, several texts, con-

firming and illustrating the thoughts he had expressed. And he was *very affectionate* in addressing the distressed, and *doubting*, trembling seeker of Christ, saying, "My brother, my brother!" Neither was he indifferent towards the *ungodly*. Mr. S——, who knew much of his habits, told me that, as Vicar of the parish, he had gone to cases of *sickness* in a brothel, to "warn the wicked," and point to Him "who is able to save to the uttermost." And he instituted a refuge for unfortunate women, naming it the Magdalen.

His love to *dissenting* brethren was displayed in different ways. When S. E. Pierce preached annually at Plymouth, the doctor would be among his hearers, and invite him and all other ministers present to dinner. And he would sometimes listen in the chapel to the prayers offered at the weekly prayer meeting with *close* attention and feeling. At the time there was a probability of that place being closed, he met an itinerant whom he knew, and said, "I shall induce the friends there to announce your name for a Lord's-day." John exclaimed, "I am astonished that you, Doctor, so learned a gentleman, should propose a poor creature like myself." But he replied, "My brother, I only preach the Gospel as the Holy Ghost enables me; and you can do the same; you *must* go."

An aged Christian tells me that, in June, 1823, he heard the Doctor at Aldersgate Street Church, when the heat was most oppressive, yet he preached for more than one hour and a half, retaining the fixed attention of a closely packed audience *all* that time. His gown was so moist that the sleeves adhered closely to his arms, and it looked as if it had been dipped in water, while through his clerical band, which had got rolled up, there fell drops of perspiration. That supreme desire of the apostle, expressed in these words, "*That I may be found in Him,*" formed the text. He was enabled very clearly to show *how* the believer wins Christ, and to portray with deep feeling, the *blessedness* of being found in Him. And my informant says that, although forty-two years have passed since he was privileged to hear and enjoy

that testimony, yet, in reading that passage of Scripture, there is still a recurrence to his mind, and, with some freshness, of a little of that beautiful and sweet discourse.

My testimony was very acceptable to the people at H—, and there was a desire expressed for me to remain; but they could not, then, *support* a minister. While there, I was asked to proceed to Colchester, to preach anniversary sermons at the Chapel where Mr. Dowling was pastor a long time, but left for Van Diemen's Land, above thirty years ago. A London minister could not then be obtained, and as I was only twenty miles off, and had been spoken of well at H—, bills were circulated announcing my obscure self, as of London, to preach three times on the following Sabbath. But the messages I was enabled to deliver were quite welcome, and the treatment I received from the pastor (who listened to each discourse) was in every respect both kind and generous. Since then he has been called to the place

“Where congregations ne'er break up,  
And Sabbaths never end.”

D— was the scene of my labour on the first three Lord's-days in September. There appeared to be one hundred communicants at the Lord's Supper. After the morning service of the second day, I was told that a French woman-servant having heard me preach then, expressed to one of the members her regret that she could not stop to speak to *me*, as she must leave with the family, almost immediately, for the Continent; and asked her to acquaint me that she had found my sermon most suitable, and that it was greatly blessed to her soul. In the evening there was a good congregation, and the people were very lively. There was one of Brother Foreman's flock who shook my hand most heartily, and said she should tell him about my discourse; and, as I returned to my lodging, it was said to me, “The friends seem to have got on *well*.” At the close of the third Sabbath, a church meeting was held, and, by a large majority, I was invited for three *months*; and I felt dis-

posed and thought it best to give my consent, on condition that I should first *fulfil* my promise to preach three Lord's-days at W——. This was done. On the day I took my leave, an elderly member made me a useful present as a "small token," she said, of her respect for me, the Lord having made my testimony a blessing to her.

The deacons at D——thought, as the distance from town was great, our goods should be moved at once; and, the cost being defrayed by the friends, we arrived there in the early part of October. Then came the worst part of the year for attendance, especially as the locality was a watering-place, in which the congregation is much the largest in summer and early autumn. Soon after we got there, I spoke my thoughts on the sealing of the Spirit; and when I had descended the pulpit-stairs, a deacon said to me, with feeling, "Blessed sealing this!" And seven or eight weeks subsequently, a member told another she was reminded of old times, by my manner of setting forth the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the quarter had nearly expired, I was asked to stay another. We held a service on Christmas-day evening. The previous day was the Sabbath, and I had then discoursed on the *birth* of our Saviour. Now my text was His words, "He that *eateth* me, even he shall *live* by me." My sermon was listened to with the closest attention; and one (having come a distance in the drizzling rain) said it was "well worth *enduring* the wet to hear it, and it was quite a *feast* to him." About this time the senior deacon told me that the pastor who preceded me, while there on a visit, said to him that he thought I was just *fit* for them. However, there was evidently a number who liked my ministry; and at the beginning of March I was invited for six months longer.

There was an old debt of £400 on the chapel, and the mortgagee insisting on the payment of £100, an effort was made to collect it. I was requested to write to several churches and wealthy Christians for assistance. I made also personal application to some liberal professors in the town. The church at S—— desired my company, that

I might preach there on a week night, and receive contributions, which I did, being kindly entertained by the minister, who was known to me. In four months the required sum was produced; and, it was said, principally by my efforts.

It being agreed to have sermons and a tea-meeting on Good Friday, I was asked to obtain a London minister; and one promised to come, but was prevented by an attack of erysipelas, and got a brother to take his place. Now he came to *old* friends, as a long time back he was their pastor for *some years*. It had been understood that he was not in his mind quite settled just then, which induced them to try to get him back, to whom they had so long felt attached. Of course their minds were divided, and many became indifferent to myself; and although he did not return till seven years afterwards, yet the hankering after him occasioned a restlessness and uncertainty in them.

But it was said to me by the senior deacon, on a Wednesday evening in July, when I had been heard well from Isaiah xl. 11, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd," &c. "Had not that former pastor been *expected* back, I have no doubt you would have been settled." It was certainly a great *trial* to me; yet I concluded that my Master had work for me to do in other places, and so it came to pass. While here, I went twice on a Thursday to F—, and preached at night to a small company, who very warmly received my testimony, several expressing themselves as spiritually benefited.

In May, 1856, I purchased of the venerable J. A. Jones his interesting and valuable work, entitled "Bunhill Memorials," which will be always prized as a rich fund of information concerning the "illustrious dead," who were preachers of "the glorious Gospel of the ever-blessed God," interred in one spot. I was, indeed, instructed by his notices and records of these great men of God, which are at least sufficient to show the variety of their gifts and labours, and the difference in the duration of their ministerial life, with the precious dying testimony of numbers. Several times I have taken this book to the



spacious burial ground in the City Road (open between one and four o'clock from Michaelmas to Lady-day, and between two and five during the other half-year), as a guide to those tomb-stones, which I chiefly wished to behold, while listening to the Divine injunction, "Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." About four years ago, the man in charge of this place told me that some time previously a gentleman asked to be shown the grave of Mr. Hart, author of hymns, and as the inscription on the stone had become rather faint, he ordered a complete renovation, and paid for it himself, as a tribute of respect to his memory who wrote so pathetically of His Redeemer's sufferings, and described the experience of believers in all its depth and variety.

A married couple came to reside at D——, who had lived at Brighton, and attended Mr. Grace's ministry. They could listen to me with interest, and asked me and my wife several times to spend the afternoon at their habitation. So also did others of the members and hearers. Yet I realized here, as well as in other places, the truth of the adage, "soonest hot, soonest cold." A middle-aged member, whose smiles were plentiful, and who was very desirous of conversation with me, became frigid in less than half-a-year and opposed to my continuance. But one quite blind, who had been many years here, and latterly itinerated with a good degree of acceptance as a preacher, remained partial to me, and said "he could hear me better than the minister, who was a good while here, whom I succeeded." And just before I left, he insisted on my accepting, "as a token of his love," half-a-crown, towards our travelling expenses.

I must notice that a tradesman, husband to one of the members attached to my ministry, was very ill, and so distressed in his soul, that he was near despair. He had been among the Wesleyans, but latterly a great backslider. By request, I visited him and prayed for him. He was of a highly-nervous temperament. Getting

about again, he came to our chapel, paid the greatest possible attention, and *wept* under the word; and on my speaking to him, he said that he felt some encouragement to *hope* there was *mercy* for *him*. Some little *proof* was given of their kind regard to us, as when we were leaving (our abode being two miles from the station), our goods being packed the day before our exit, they wished us to sup and sleep at their house; and they got breakfast very early, that we might take the half-past six train for town. It is the *timely* nature of such help which renders it valuable.

Among my hearers, on two Sabbaths and week-night in August, there were a deacon of a Baptist church in London and his wife. In free conversation, they said my preaching was profitable and comforting to *them*, and they seemed surprised that I had not been chosen pastor. But there are some in different places who, even if the truths they love are declared, yet are still dissatisfied unless such matters are *set forth* in that *way* to which *they* are partial.

At the end of this month I went, by recommendation of a brother minister, to a distant part of the county, for one Lord's-day. My message was welcome, and I was asked to stay and preach on Tuesday evening; but the congregation was very small, and not long afterwards the chapel was given up; from a trifling cause there *had* been a division, and a little company met in a room. How often have I been grieved and pained to hear of Satan, our great and cunning adversary, separating brethren by means of their pride and self-will!

We resided near "a mother in Israel," who was much attached to us. She had known the cause from its commencement, and she told me that the first minister, soon after he began preaching there, said to one of the friends in the morning, ere he went to chapel, "I am going to preach a Gospel which I am *not experimentally* acquainted with." Subsequently, his conduct was discovered to be immoral, and he was obliged to leave; and though a party took a small place for him, yet he could not continue there. Some years afterwards, when dressed *very*

*shabbily*, he entered the chapel while the keeper of it was cleaning or dusting it, and asking leave to go once more into the pulpit, stood therein a few minutes, and, looking around, shed tears. In reference to myself, our steady friend twice evidenced her sincerity by pointing out, in a kind manner, my deficiency when handling certain texts. She was old, being in her seventy-eight year, and was quite laid by several weeks; and death laid his hand upon her the day before we departed, so that we were obliged to leave her struggling with him, yet able to let us know she had a firm confidence in her Redeemer, while she begged His smile, and an entrance into His immediate presence.

My engagement, which had been lengthened to twelve-months, terminated on the first Sabbath in October. A private subscription having been made, there was given to me rather more than the cost of our removal. And a few days afterwards, we were again located in the metropolis. I have travelled on all the main railway lines, and on very many branch ones, in England, but have never met with any injury, nor seen any calamity thereon; and surely I am bound gratefully to acknowledge the watchful care of my covenant God in preserving me from those harms which numbers have met with, and as well His goodness displayed in supplying all my needs.

I found my brother Robinson in town, he having left Borough Green, after an eleven years' pastorate; and I learned with surprise that he was disengaged on the first *three* Lord's-days, which I concluded must be the result of his transit being scarcely known. For myself, I was silent on two Sabbaths. Then I was called to a rather small place fifteen miles south-east, and a divine savour, I was informed, accompanied the word. On the first Lord's-day in November, I preached and administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in the easterly part of London. When I was in the vestry on the next Wednesday evening, brother Bloomfield, who had promised a week-night sermon, and *thought* this was the time, came in, and I suggested he had better take the pulpit; but he said, "Do your *own* work." After

service, he told me that "preaching thus, I need not be at all afraid."

Brother Dickerson called upon me and requested I would take his place on the third Sabbath evening, while he served an aged friend, at whose chapel there was to be a collection for him. And I was told of a circumstance which showed the impropriety, or rather folly, of a minister leaving a country sphere in which he had long been prosperous and beloved, to obtain a London pastorate. Some time after his acceptance of the invitation to settle here, the congregation lessened, and continued declining, till there were but a *small* number to hear him; so that in his last days of labour he was dependent on the kindness of relatives and friends. It is true that his merciful Father did not allow him to want; but he *blamed himself* for leaving the earlier scene of his work when a large flock, much attached to him, and considerable usefulness, seemed, as the voice of God, to call upon him to *stay*.

Speaking again of self, on the following Lord's-day I was engaged a few miles out. The wife of a deacon offering her hand, said, "You do not know me, but I well remember your text at B——, a year and a half ago, and must tell you that myself and half a dozen more received a *sweet portion* under *that* sermon." And she asked me to take the same words then, but I did not feel disposed; yet we were favoured with the Holy Spirit's influence, and several told me they had an exceedingly good day. I must say here, that such communications have somewhat resigned me to the employment of bearing messages to *different* parts.

For each Sabbath in the next month I went to a small town some distance westward. Several acquainted me they were profited; but the attendance was truly thin, and the cause was altogether in a dull state. And it is likely that *I* was *heavy*, for I believe that liberty in preaching was not just then granted to me. They remained unsettled for two years afterwards. Bodily illness subsequently confined me at home for three weeks. Well, it is surely as needful that we should *suffer* the

will of God, as that we should be *actively* engaged in his work. I was favoured with a call from two ministerial brethren. One of them had the same complaint rather more severely within ten weeks. He bears a good character, as a pastor should, for visiting and sympathizing with the sick and afflicted.

In both February and March I was one Lord's-day at a village in Surrey, nearly forty miles off. One of the friends came to the house of my host, and assured me that the morning subject was particularly suitable to her. She had recently passed through a great trouble. Here the Lord sanctified *my* affliction, not only to my personal benefit, but also to the comfort and instruction of another, and probably more, though unknown to me. So that the language of Paul, addressed to some disciples, might, in a small measure, be used by myself, that is, "Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation." The next Sabbath evening my sermon was doctrinal, preached at Westminster. A man of letters pressed me to visit his mother, and take refreshment. I thought I had rambled, but he said that he "had not heard a more connected discourse."

It was my lot to be a hearer only during the month of April. My friend Robinson (having been a great deal longer in the ministry than I had) supplied two Sabbaths in town, three at Deptford, four at Leicester, and four at Bath, and was now invited to B—— for six months, which he commenced in May. But although he accepted a call to the pastorate, yet, the congregation remaining very thin, he felt that he must leave; and after a short stay of rather less than a year and a-half he returned to London. A long time previously he told me this Scripture was laid on his mind, "I will violently toss thee, as a ball in a large country, and there shalt thou die." And I know this *was* the case with him.

On the first Lord's-day in May, in addition to my principal work, that is, preaching the Gospel, I administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in a suburban town. There was evidently spiritual *feelings* of peace and comfort realized by some, at the table of the

Lord, and under the sermons. And I was there again on the second Sabbath in the next month. A very large village in Essex was the scene of my labour on May 17th. Both morning and afternoon the chapel, a fair-sized one, was pretty full, but looked almost *deserted* in the evening, so many having gone home, which was at some distance. Against the front wall there was a tablet to the memory of a young minister, the pastor for about two years, who while bathing in the neighbourhood was seized with cramp and drowned. He had gone out in the morning to obtain a chaise, for the purpose of treating his wife, who was delicate, to an airing, and was not seen again, till, his lengthened absence causing suspicion, a search was made, and his body found. I would never lose sight of that direction of my Lord, "Be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh."

Being called to a rural district for the latter part of this month, I took train to Cambridge, and was met there by a farmer, who drove me in his chaise thirteen miles to his residence. At dinner next day he and his wife said they *had* heard my text preached from, and in a *similar* way some time before, and they appeared to like my discourse. They seemed to be of that class who do not speak their minds *freely*. At the close of the afternoon service on the last Sabbath, an intelligent member said to me, "The subject was very clearly set forth." I preached in a cottage two miles off on Wednesday, and at the chapel on Thursday. Just before I left, a deacon, who gave out the hymns, cordially told me that "many, if not the most of the people had heard me well, and hoped to see me again." In a neighbouring church there was a small monument in memory of a young gentleman, said to be a *perfect* character, and who as such offered himself up to God! No reference was made to the *merits* of the Lord Jesus Christ; yet this youth belonged to a family celebrated for learning. What a proof of awful ignorance and delusion!

It was at a small chapel in the easterly part of town, that I preached on the first Lord's-day in June. Among

my hearers in the morning was a minister, who several years before, had for some time occupied the pulpit. Not long after this he went to a Kentish village, and became pastor. Having a large family, and many unemployed Sabbaths, he was *much* tried in circumstances, but now the Lord wrought a deliverance for him. Such things encourage us to ask, when black clouds *gather* around us, Is anything *too* hard for the Lord, who has said that none of them that trust in Him shall be desolate?

Again, I was several weeks disengaged; and, grieved and distressed in spirit, I entreated my gracious Master to open a door, or doors for me. Meeting with Mr. Box, he kindly inquired into my state, and wrote to the deacon of a church then having supplies, who *applied* to me. Living pretty near brother Glaskin's chapel, I, with my wife, attended, and communed there on the first Lord's-day in July. At his request I occupied his place in the evening, while he listened; and he afterwards smilingly said to me, "I am very much obliged to you, my brother, for your sermon." Nor did it *pass away* from his mind, for being taken very ill on the Thursday preceding Sept. 6th, he wished me to preach, and also administer the Lord's Supper, to which his people were quite agreeable; and subsequently, when he was in the country—during the week days of a fortnight—he got my services on each Wednesday night. Thus "the Lord kindly took my part with them that helped me."

In the heat of July I went, for a friend, to a small town about seventeen miles distant, and preached twice (which for me is quite enough, as I find a hot atmosphere distressing). The dew of heavenly grace rested in a measure, upon us. A deacon accompanied me to the station, and when I mentioned that my engagement at F—— would be on the last Sabbath, he said, "I think your ministry would *suit* there." But that was not the case; for at the close of the day, one of the elders told me that he thought the friends did not get on much in the *morning*, as they liked ministers to show

forth the way of salvation; but the *evening* discourse they *quite approved*." And I was asked to serve them again, on the fourth Lord's day in the next month. But an old lady, brought to chapel in a travelling chair, had in the vestry pressed my hand, saying with tears, the morning sermon was all *for her*. And I noticed several others whose eyes were evidently moist from a reception of my discourse, which was a very experimental one. Now it was plain to me that the path of many there, being *rather smooth*, they were not interested like the afflicted one who spoke to me, and others referred to, in the *morning*. And with respect to the judgment of some—even those of extensive observation, as to such a preacher suiting a certain people, it has often been incorrect. Many years ago, during conversation with a minister and some friends about a church he knew, and a young man on probation there, the minister asked if there was a little humor in his manner? and the reply being in the negative, he said, "Then he will not suit them, as their late pastor was very quaint." Yet the *contrast* in their manner did not prevent the *settlement* of this *grave* junior: on the contrary, he has continued there much longer than a quarter of a century.

I journeyed—by rail and omnibus—to a beautiful spot, on the second of August, and preached three times on the following day. The chapel was very nicely situated, and would seat four hundred adults; but was not more than half filled. I thought, from what I heard and saw, that the people were in an *uncomfortable* state. The looks and manner of several towards me indicated that they had in some way been profited. But I was not again invited. My labours were in the north-west of London on the next Sabbath. I had a good auditory, and was favoured with considerable freedom, while it was evident that many had a good time there. How different are the feelings of ministers—and hearers too—at one time, from what they are at another. Yet, blessed be God, His truth, His gospel, is unalterably the same: especially the great matter



and substance thereof, amid all our changes of frame and feeling, Jesus Christ is the same—both now and ever—to His people in all climes, and ages, and circumstances. It should be noticed that a brother minister's daughter, whom I had not seen for some years, spoke to me in the vestry, informing me that the discourse was *blessed* to her. She had joined that church, and a deacon said of her when she left me, that considering her age, —which was scarcely seventeen years—she possessed a good judgment in the best things.

Then I was invited to a rather small chapel in the westerly part of town. A minister's son was there, and with others cordially received my testimony. And he told me that a brother of his long ago became a Roman Catholic, and continued such, while he himself was a subject of sovereign grace and mercy. His *younger* brother was lost at sea, but some letters of his afforded evidence that he was a *saved* sinner.

## CHAPTER VII.

THREE DIFFERENT SABBATHS AT MAIDSTONE, WITH WARM RECEPTION—INVITED FOR THREE MONTHS—SETTLEMENT—INCREASE OF CHURCH AND CONGREGATION—PREACHING AT T——, AND RECOGNITION OF AN OLD FRIEND—MR. GADSBY'S COURSE OF LECTURES IN THE CORN EXCHANGE—PLATFORM ATTENDANCE AT BIBLE SOCIETY MEETINGS—"BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING"—A SINGULARLY FAVOURED COUPLE—LIVELY AND GOOD ANNIVERSARIES—DECLINE OF ATTENDANCE, WITH REFLECTIONS—RESIGNATION—DISTANT AND NEIGHBOURING ENGAGEMENT—FOURTH RETURN TO THE GREAT CITY.

For the first time I was at Maidstone, when this month closed. During two years there had been a variety of supplies, and my name being mentioned by two brethren, a written request that I should take the fifth Lord's-day had been sent. And the Lord so ordered it, that my preaching was quite acceptable, and I was asked to go again for the last Sabbath in September. Previously I was invited to Soho Chapel, Oxford Street, for the 13th and the evening of the 16th. Then my testimony was so far approved that one of the deacons suggested, "it would be better at once to make an engagement with me for the third Lord's-day in October;" and I laboured there then, and on the following Wednesday evening. After the first morning's discourse, I heard it said to one who *had* been laid up, "A word in *season* to you, brother;" and he replied, "Yes, quite so."

On the first and second Sabbaths in October I was testifying of "the Gospel of Christ" in a small town far east. One of my subjects was the anointing of the Holy Spirit. A member, while shaking my hand, said, "Anointing is good, but sealing is better." Shortly before I went, a preacher had been engaged for two

months; but just before leaving, I was asked whether I should be willing to serve them again if required, and my reply was in the affirmative.

Having fulfilled my promise at Maidstone on the 27th of September, I was invited for the fourth Lord's-day in October; when—there being a general attachment to my ministry—the church gave me a call for three months, to commence on the third Sabbath in November. The early part of this month I spent in a village nearly fifty miles northward. It was at the residence of a farmer that I met with most kind entertainment. He was well acquainted with the truth of God, both doctrinally and experimentally. In his contributions towards the support of the ministry of the Gospel he was *very* liberal, and his treatment of the men employed by him was the *opposite* of oppressing the hireling in his wages; neither was his regard for them confined to their bodies, as he gave each of them monthly a good magazine. My company and discourse had been evidently welcome to him, and the friends generally, as I had been favoured with much freedom in my work among them; and at parting he asked me to acquaint him with the result of my probation at M——.

I now preached regularly at M—— till near the end of January, 1858, when a special church meeting was held, and all the members present except one, voted for my becoming pastor. He said that he did not hold up his hand because, being *very* deaf, he could not hear much, but what he did hear he liked well. Of course I felt satisfied that my Lord and Master now called me to this sphere of labour; and soon removed, with my wife, to the neighbourhood of the chapel. At the first service, which was on a week night, my text was, "For here we have no *continuing* city; but we seek one to come." Not that I imagined we should again change our place of abode in less than three years. Is it not compassionate of our God to conceal our future path from us? How much greater would be our heart-ache, did we know all the trials and sorrows which are apportioned to us! He whose eyes, whose wisdom, and whose love, and whose

power, are all engaged for our present welfare and everlasting happiness, has told us that "sufficient to *the day* is the evil thereof;" and has assured to us strength *according* to our day. Blessed be our God, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation!

There was a wish expressed for the public recognition of myself as pastor. My *own* desire was to confine the *active* part to the *church*, and this being agreeable, we held a public tea meeting; after which the senior deacon read a letter from Risely, of honourable dismissal of myself and wife to them, and also gave us the right hand of fellowship. I then made a statement of my conversion to God, and my Christian experience; of the time and manner of His calling me to the ministry, and the way I had been led to take the oversight of them in the Lord. The other deacons addressed us all present. And prayer and praise were of course both associated with the proceedings, which were truly pleasant, and, I trust, rendered profitable. But I must here say that, upon reflection, it seems to me the *better* way for two or three *pastors* to conduct such services.

As the spring advanced, our congregation somewhat increased. And there were several who had been regular hearers a considerable time, now desired to obey the commands of our Lord; and after they had given some account of the work of grace upon their souls, were baptized by me in June, and received into full communion at the Lord's table. Then eight others expressed themselves attached to my ministry and the church, and became members, half of them by dismissal, and the rest by stating their experience, as they had *not* been in *communion* with any church for a good while. We were now favoured with a pretty good measure of the spirit of prayer; our state was rather lively, and love and unity prevailed among us. The anniversary was held in this month, and several friends remarked that it was a better one, both for attendance and collections, than they had had during some years previously. Our esteemed brother Milner preached both morning and evening; and alluding to the peculiar exercise of his mind on a Lord's-day

morning, occasionally, he said that Satan suggested to him, while working on the depravity and corruptions of carnal nature, that he was more fit to go to *hell* than to preach the Gospel; but he would answer him that he was determined to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, even *if* he should be sent to the regions of despair. Now this was encouraging to my own soul, as I had often been similarly harassed. Thus I proved the truth of John Newton's observation, That it is some pointed *sentence* in a sermon that generally is more particularly blessed to our instruction, or reproof, or comfort.

It was in October this year, 1858, that Mr. John Gadsby, author of "My Wanderings; or, Travels in the East," wrote me, by the wish of a friend, asking if I could *assist* him, at Maidstone, to give his lectures on Eastern Customs. Of course I replied it would be a pleasure to me to forward his design as much as I possibly could. His residence being then in London, at his request, I sought and obtained the consent of three gentlemen to act as chairmen, one on each night. And I procured, chiefly from my congregation, the females, and also the men and boys, required to wear the Eastern dresses. The Corn Exchange was hired, and the seat-accommodation was seven hundred chairs. A very large number of tickets was taken, and Mr. G., as he acknowledged, met with complete success. He expressed himself greatly obliged to me, and presented me with a best copy of both his volumes of travels. His lectures certainly afforded great instruction and entertainment. How *strikingly* the Eastern customs set forth by him, both in his lectures and books, illustrate many portions of the Bible! Dr. Hawker truly remarked, half a century ago, that we seem to lose various beauties in the Scriptures in consequence of our ignorance of the customs and manners of the East. But since then we have become deeply indebted to Dr. Kitto, Mr. Gadsby, Dr. Burder, and others, for the information they have furnished us with on that subject. And I remember hearing that spiritual preacher and writer, Mr. Philpot, observe that the more clearly we understand the *literal* meaning of Scripture, the more

fully we shall be acquainted, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, with the spiritual purport of it.

In this town there were three substantial Baptist chapels, ours being the smallest, as it was without a gallery ; but it would seat nearly three hundred adults. And there was a small company who left in the latter part of the pastorate of my predecessor, and who had become more particularly connected with the good people represented by "The Gospel Standard ;" these rented a large upper room. Besides which there was a little party assembling in a lower room, whose minister had, many years before, preached at our chapel for several months, but was not further invited on account of inquiries respecting him, which were made by the deacons, being quite unsatisfactory. Yet some went to this place with him, and continued his adherents. And other denominations, such as Wesleyans, Independents, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Quakers, and Primitive Methodists, had each a chapel, while the Plymouth Brethren had also "a gathering."

The principal church is really an ancient structure ; and there is a large house, equally old, very near it, in which Archbishop Cranmer for some time resided, he then being vicar. But subsequently, in the reign of Henry VIII., he made an exchange, so that he removed to Canterbury. I was a hearer once of two of our resident clergymen, and it seemed to me that they aimed to lay the creature in the dust, and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ. There was an auxiliary Bible Society, which held its annual meeting in November, at the Town Hall, and to this I was each year invited ; and, being a warm advocate for the free circulation of the Bible, I always took a seat on the platform. On one occasion, a Dissenting pastor, whose doctrinal views I knew to be unlike mine, gave in his address some account of *his experience* of the value and suitability of the Scriptures.

I had been invited, in the preceding May, to preach at Hanover Chapel, Tunbridge Wells (where brother Whitaker, who had listened to me in Northamptonshire, was now fixed), in connection with a tea meeting, and

was thanked as well as paid for my sermon. A Christian sister who had many years before been a fellow member with me in London was now settled here. I called, and spent an hour with her; and we talked of some of our sorrows and joys, and our gracious Lord's helping, delivering, and comforting us amidst the changing scenes through which we had passed. She came to hear me, and as I saw her countenance from the pulpit, tears started from *my* eyes, for I was the subject of grateful wonder at the sovereign goodness of my God in upholding, guiding, and honouring me, to make me a preacher of the glorious Gospel. And I was called to a Lord's-day's service there fifteen months afterwards, when my discourses were quite acceptable; and there was evidently mutual feelings of spiritual fervour in the proclamation and reception of the truth, and the worship of our God. In the first I showed, rather figuratively, how saints' afflictions were made by God to "yield peaceable fruits of righteousness." In the second, I described faintly the glorious person and marvellous work of my adorable Redeemer.

There was a tea meeting in February, 1859, to commemorate my settlement. A beautiful hand Bible was presented to me, by the hand of one of the Deacons, the following lines being written on the inside of the cover:—

"This Bible was presented to Mr. John Dixon, as a mark of esteem and love for his Ministry (much blessed to the Giver), on the 14th February, 1859, the first Anniversary of his settlement as Pastor of the Baptized Church of Christ, MoteRoad Chapel, Maidstone."

An elderly man, having for many months been a regular attendant, wished to join us. He had for some time been in church-membership at H——, in Surrey, but, having a good while neglected communion, he was admitted on stating his experience; and he gave us an interesting account of God's dealings with his soul. For about twelve months after I received him into fellowship he seemed much attached, and was constantly with us; but he then grew cool, frequently absented himself, and soon left altogether. He was

necessarily separated for non-attendance. And he told one of our people that he liked Mr. —, who was an unsound and erroneous preacher. Yet a short time before I left, he came and heard me on several week-nights, and said to a member, that "it was indeed a good discourse." How fickle and wavering are some professors! I must add, that when, three-quarters of a year afterwards, I preached and administered the Lord's Supper, this very man spoke to me in the vestry, most cordially, saying "he had never heard a better sermon than that which I had just preached."

In May, I received a note from a ministerial brother, of London, that he was coming into our neighbourhood, and was willing to give us a discourse; and I published him for the next Thursday. But he was hindered, and I had to address a large company. The Lord so helped me that some said to me that they had not been disappointed, and one or two particular hearers remarked to my informant, that "it was really an excellent sermon."

Our Chapel Anniversary now was a good and cheerful one. We had, as morning and evening preacher, the well-known brother who is now frequently called The Venerable John Foreman. And while it is *evident* that he is gifted with great mental vigour, and a rich imagination, his bodily strength, in the endurance of a multiplicity of travel and ministerial labour, is shown to be vast, of which we *then* had a demonstration: for he had preached three times (and his sermons are generally *full* ones) at Dover, on the Sabbath, and once on the Monday; rising about *five* o'clock the next morning, he came *without* breakfast, over forty miles, to us, *cheerfully* took a *moderate* meal, and preached twice, and then did not seem tired, but returned to Paddington after evening service.

We had no increase of members nor hearers in this year. On the contrary, some were dismissed, being removed to a distance, and two or three were taken to the Church triumphant. A few dissatisfied ones, now the cause got lower, tried to prejudice the minds of many. And are there not in every place some who are fond of



change? Several that had been *anxious* for my settlement, now showed themselves the *reverse* and turned their backs to us.

When we are witnesses of the fulfilment of God's Word, and in a *peculiar* manner, it surely becomes us to publish it. Within my observation and knowledge, "There was a brand plucked out of the fire," in the evident salvation of a relative of one of our members. She had been very immoral. Now, being seriously ill, with symptoms of consumption, she was brought to her father's house. I visited her, and she expressed her anxious concern about her soul, confessing she was a great sinner. Several times I read, and talked, and prayed with and for her, her distress of soul being acute. The suffering of her body was great, and she sank rapidly. But a few days previous to her death, she told me that Christ had given her a sense of His pardoning mercy, and that I had been the means of greatly comforting her. By request, I officiated at her interment in the cemetery, and felt a confidence in committing her body to the earth, "in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection." And on the following Sabbath I was constrained to speak of the "plucked brand" as a trophy of distinguishing grace; and to show how she participated of the riches of Divine favour, which manifested her soul to be a "*vessel of mercy, afore prepared unto glory.*"

One of our deacons, during a long life, afforded a striking illustration of the *sovereignty* of God in His dealings with His people in *temporal* things. He had a wife but no children, and having prospered in business, retired with a moderate competence, when about fifty-eight years of age, to a rural spot, rather more than a mile from the chapel. Here they resided twenty-two years, favoured with almost uninterrupted health; attending the Sabbath and week-night services with scarcely an omission—for they did not regard either *dark* nights or *rough* weather. It was their nearest way to go through a beautiful though small park (the mansion in which had stood upwards of three cen-

turies, having been greatly altered and improved). The good old folks told me that the *only* annoyance they met with was on one very dark and stormy night, by losing, for a few minutes, their way; but it was again *shown* to them by a flash of lightning. Nor had they been visited by thieves more than once, and then their depredation was confined to the fowls. A beautiful flower garden was in front of their cottage, and an orchard, with a variety and abundance of fruit-trees at the back of it. Of course they found here both exercise and amusement.

Many times did I, with my wife, enjoy their home and hospitality, for they gave us proof that they were much attached to us. At length their increasing weakness necessitated their removal nearer to the chapel, and this took place shortly after we left M——. I observed that they were not the subjects of half so much spiritual trouble as some believers are. The good man several times told me that he had been living upon Christ for more than forty years. And frequently, after service, he would say, "We must go home and meditate on these great and glorious truths." I have been struck with the diversity of the experience, or path of the saints in *olden* time. And does not the life of Isaac, both inward and outward, seem to have been much more serene than that of Jacob?

The congregation during this winter was *small*, which had been the case, I was informed, with *each* pastor before me, after *about* two years' residence there. And although there was a little improvement in the spring, yet the state of things greatly disheartened me, as I learned the funds were lowering, and there was an increasing desire in some for a *change* of ministry. After prayerful consideration, I spoke to the deacons respecting it, telling them that I did not wish to stay so as to be a burden; nor was I desirous to hasten away, and leave the church in trouble. As a proof of my sincerity, I would take a little less than the small salary I had received. They replied, "You have expressed a honourable and very kind feeling, but we should feel

ashamed to offer you less than the sum we have given you; and *we cannot wish* you to leave, for *we* hear you *well*; but we scarcely know what to do, being deficient in our finances, and fearing we cannot do without the little party of disaffected ones." I then desired them to think and pray over it, and give me their mind at the end of a week. Then they said, "We hardly know what to suggest; we cannot *advise* you to leave, but under all the circumstances perhaps you had better follow your own inclination, which seems to be to *tender* your resignation, with three months' notice to leave." Well, I did so, writing to the church that, although I became their pastor by unanimous vote in January, 1858, believing the *Lord* called me to it, yet *lately* the state of both congregation and funds induced me to offer to leave at the end of three months; and if they deemed it best to accept my resignation, I should then see my way *clear* to depart. When this was read, there was a few minutes' silence, and then one of the elderly members rose and said, "For my part, I can hear our minister exceedingly well; but can we go on to *support* him?" To which the deacon presiding replied with a sigh, "No." "Will it not, then," continued the member, "be trifling with him *not* to accept his resignation?" And some of my best friends voted, with others of a different feeling, for my leaving; so that there was a decided majority for dissolving our union. He who first spoke knew that two former pastors received a very small sum for their last year's labours here. Having several children *dependent* upon them, they continued till the *Lord* *opened* another door, to which they could at once remove their family. But as I had only a wife to provide for, it seemed *best* for me to leave when the quarter of a year had expired. And several who were opposed to me observed, that I "certainly acted in the most straightforward and honourable manner."

There was a striking *disparity* between the state of our *Cause* and the Anniversary in this year; for the latter was better than previous ones. We again had Brother Foreman, who drew a good company, and also

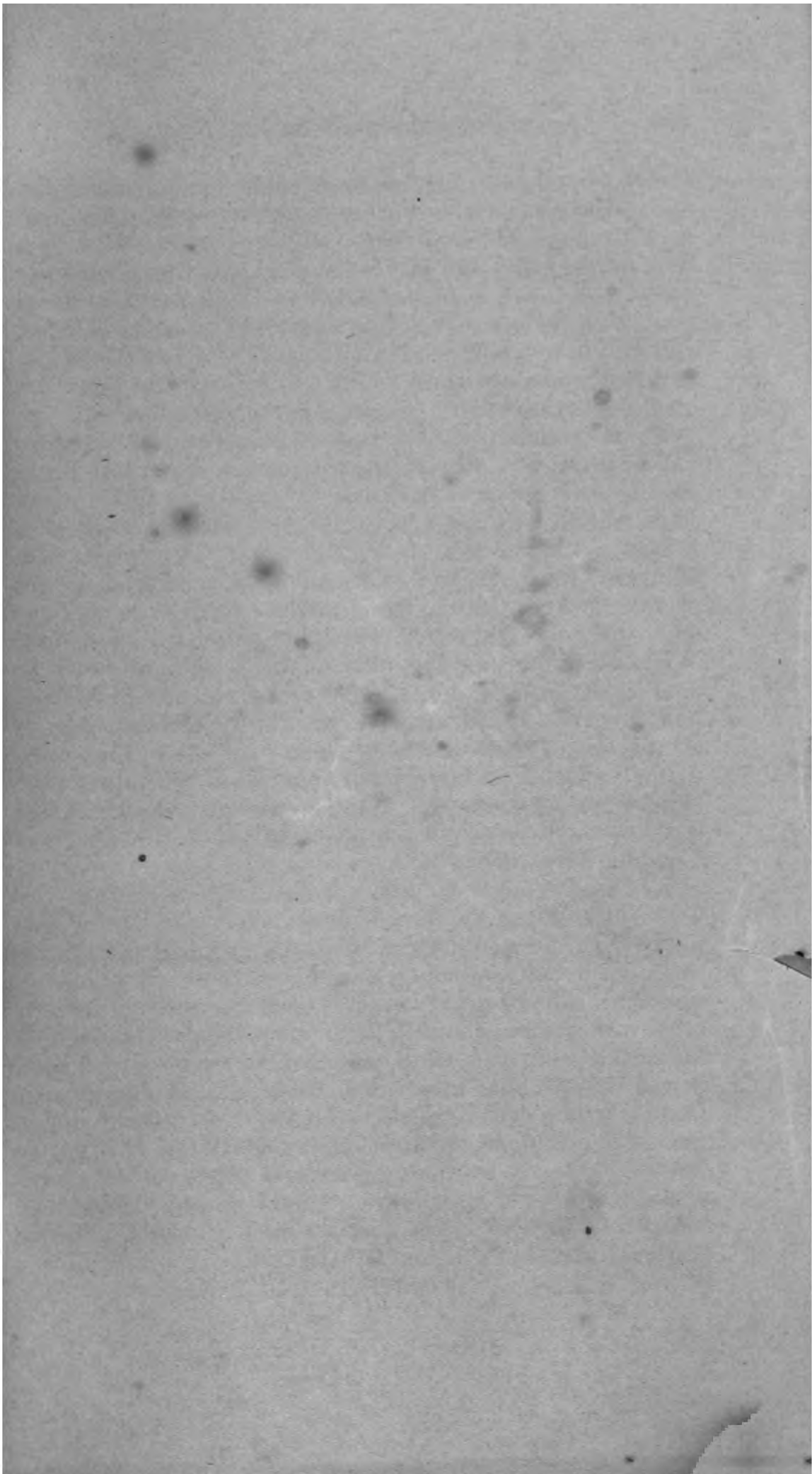
collections. But on *such occasions* visitors may think there is much greater prosperity than really exists.

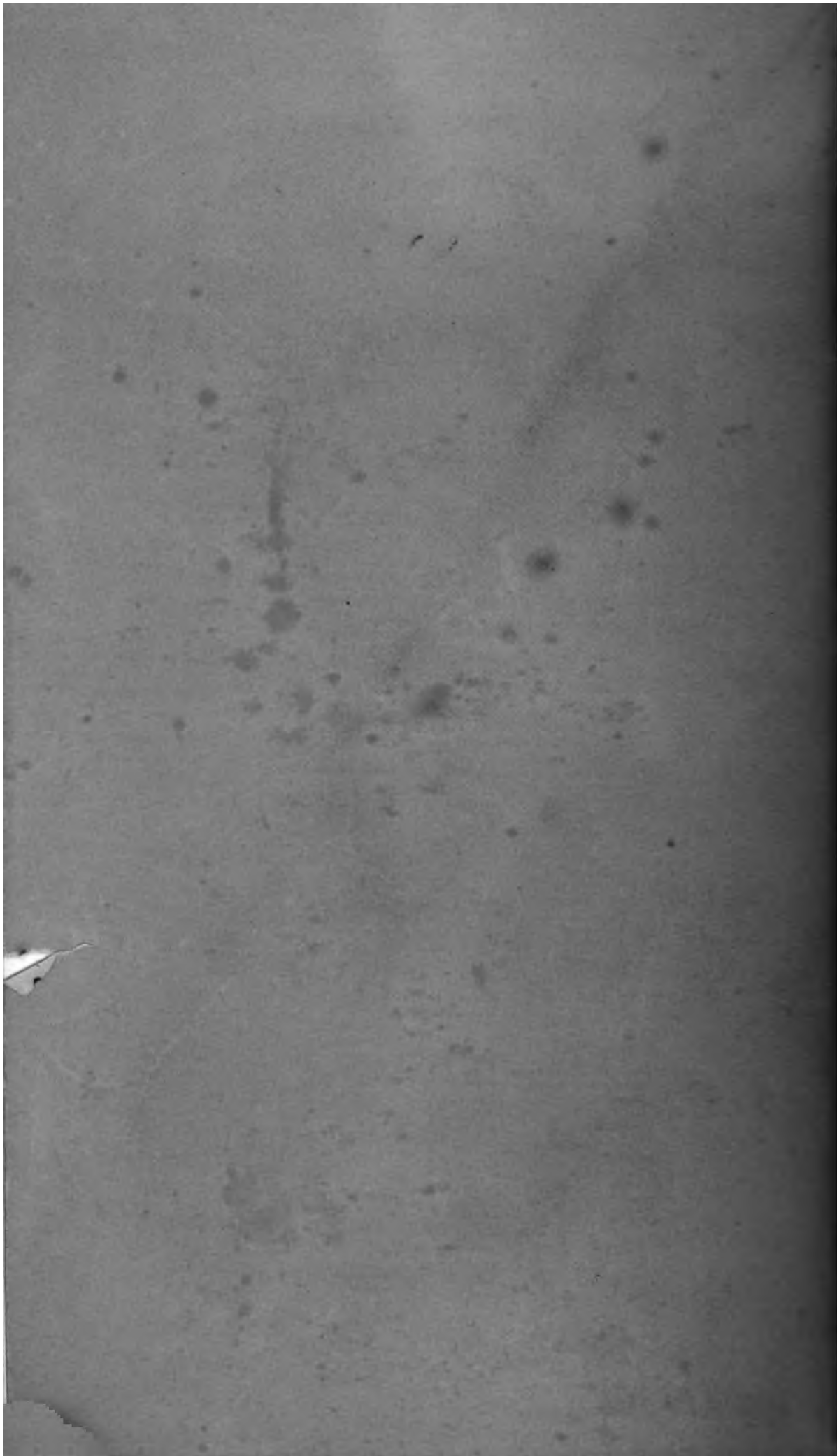
Two destitute churches invited me to supply them, one for a Lord's-day, and the other for two Sabbaths; but I was *too Calvinistic* in doctrine for both of them. Many months afterwards I met, in a railway carriage, with a leading member of the former place, and he told me that now they had Mr. ——. "Well," said I, "it is reported he has 'lowered his sails.'" "Certainly," was the reply; "he has thrown overboard narrowness and bigotry." And when I remarked that it was plain to me, when there, "that I was too high for the majority, he said, with warmth, "My dear sir, be as high as you like, only *invite every body*." My answer to this was, I knew that would be the way for me greatly to increase my income, yet I could not, as it would be contrary to my settled convictions. While I am aware that such gracious men as Bunyan, Watts, Newton, and others gave *indiscriminate* exhortations and invitations, their practice seems to me quite inconsistent with a belief in God's sovereign efficacious grace alone producing conversion. And if it be conceded to our opponents that our Lord said to *unconverted Jews*, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed" (John vi. 27); still, as their motives were *carнал* (see preceding verse), and their religion legal and fleshly, our Lord told them it was the *work of God* for them to believe on Him, Jesus Christ, in *distinction* from their pursuit of worldly enjoyments, which must perish; and *especially* their toiling in a *legal* way for meat, or food, or peace, present and eternal, for their souls: as our divine Master told the young man who wished to *work* for eternal life, and thought he *had kept* the commandments, Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and *prove* that thou lovest thy neighbour *as thyself*, which is a part of the law. Thus meeting him, as it were, on his *own* ground; saying also, "Take up the cross, and follow me," *showing* him that *that* was the *only* way he could enter heaven. But Jesus

assured the Jews that no man could come, spiritually, unto Him except the Father (by the Spirit) drew him. And although He said they *would not* come to Him that they might have life, yet He must mean that, in consequence of the ignorance and weakness of their carnal state, they had neither ability nor desire to come to Him; and as the result of their enmity against Him, His blood, and righteousness, these being *quite opposed* to their *own* obedience, they were *obstinately set against Him*.

There were many, both in the church and the congregation at M——, who expressed their sorrow that I was soon to leave them. And a pretty liberal attendant, in conversation with an elderly member, asked him whether I was really on the eve of departure, and why. On being answered in the affirmative, he said, “I do not profess to be a judge, but I never heard a better sermon than the one we had on last Sabbath evening.” Well, the time came for me to give up the pulpit; and, as I then had no invitation, I returned, with my wife and furniture, to town. We received an expression of sympathy, a private collection being made, and presented to me, which was more than sufficient to defray the expense of our removal. And, by the good hand of our God, we safely reached our destination, in the north of London, July 10th, 1860.

I was disengaged only one Lord's-day during the next three months. While our goods were being unpacked, Brother Anderson, who was about to get a little rest and change, called to ask me to take his place on the 22nd. Then I preached on two Thursday evenings, for other ministerial friends in the metropolis. And on the last Sabbath, being at a small chapel about twelve miles out, it was told me that my “discourses were rendered profitable.” The first Lord's-day in August, I administered the Lord's Supper, as well as preached the Gospel, at Gravesend. My testimony was cordially received; and at the tea-table more than one member said “they had never seen the Ordinance administered in a nicer or more spiritual manner.”





THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF A  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL:

BEING  
NOTES OF THE LIFE AND LABOURS  
OF  
JOHN DIXON;

WITH  
REMINISCENCES OF THE LATE DR. HAWKER, MR. FOWLER,  
MR. GADSBY, MR. STEVENS, MR. SHIRLEY, AND OTHERS.

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PART III.  
MEMENTOES OF SEVEN YEARS' ITINERANCY.

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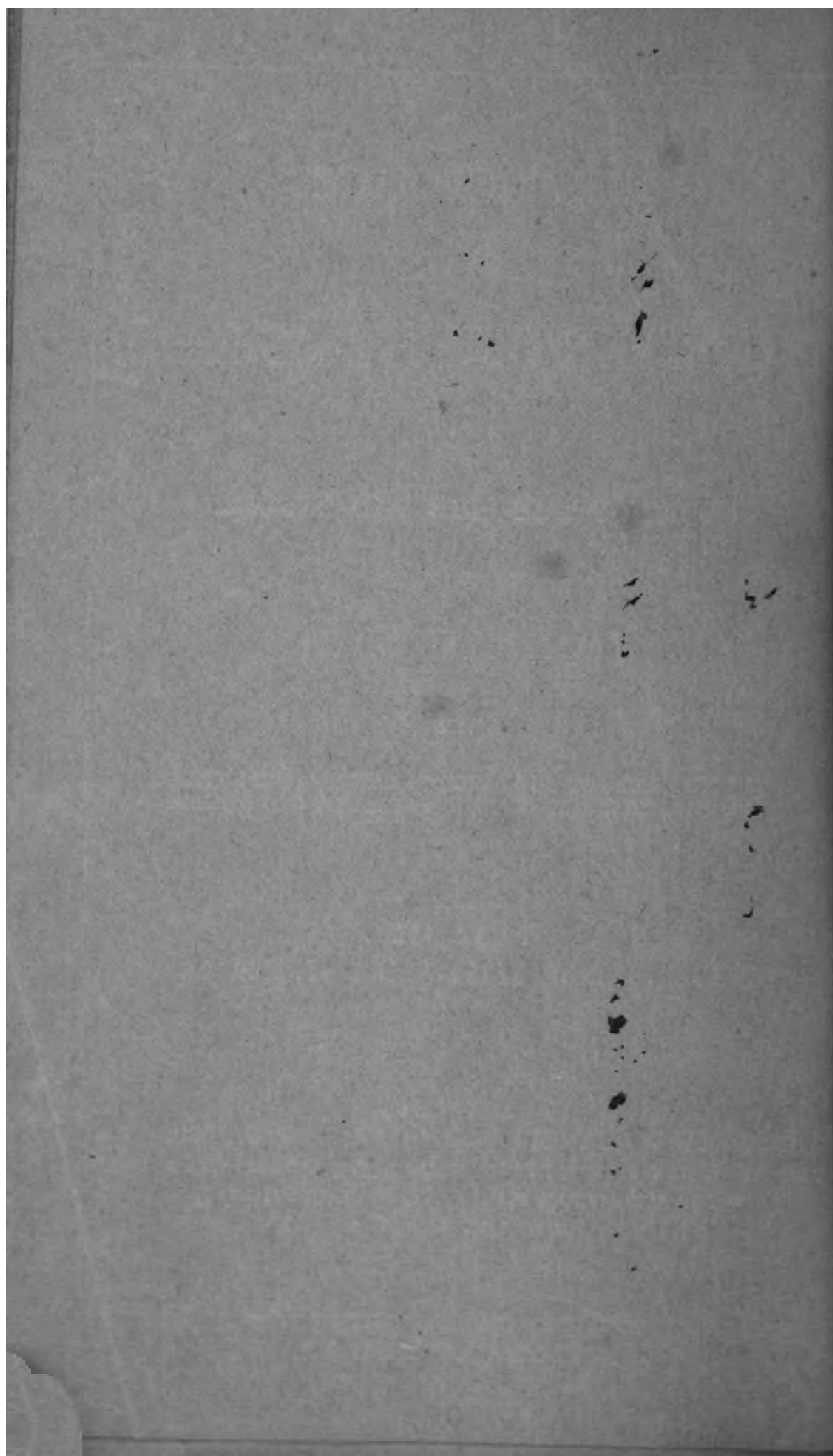
LONDON:  
J. PAUL, CHAPTER HOUSE COURT, ST. PAUL'S.  
HOLMES, 3, NEW STREET, DORSET SQUARE, W.; AND OF THE AUTHOR  
(FOR SIX POSTAGE STAMPS), 17, BUCKINGHAM ROAD,  
KINGSLAND GATE, N.E.

1867.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

11135. e. 2





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PART III.

*Mementoes of Seven Years' Itinerancy.*

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## CHAPTER VIII.

REFLECTION—CALLED INTO THE NORTH—INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE SANCTUARY—SERMON TO A LARGE COMPANY AT A SECLUDED HAMLET—A WORD FROM THE DIVINE MASTER TO HIS SERVANT—SACRED FEAST, AND MR. HART—MINISTERIAL RECOMMENDATIONS—MR. SILVER, AND GOOD NEWS—LABOURS IN SUSSEX AND HERTFORDSHIRE, WITH CORDIAL RECEPTION—VISIT TO FORMER SPHERE—PLEASANT TIDINGS IN A LUNATIC ASYLUM—PREACHING TO DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS, ONE SPIRIT BEING EVIDENCED—A DOOR OPENED, BUT SOON CLOSED—SELF-DENYING TRAVEL, WITH BENEFIT TO SELF AND OTHERS—LABOUR IN SEVERAL PLACES, AND KIND TREATMENT—MINISTERIAL CONVERSATION, AND INVITATION—A NEW SCENE, AND SAD THINGS WITNESSED—ONE MONTH'S LABOUR IN A DISTANT PART, WITH PAINFUL OBSERVATIONS; ALSO AN INTERESTING SERVICE—DEATH OF A HONOURED MINISTER—SINGULAR CASE.

As the works and ways of God in creation are different and various—as in providence, His dealings with mankind, both in their circumstances and position, exhibit great diversity—so, respecting His servants who are ministers of the Gospel, what *disparity* is there in their *gifts*, and the *sphere* of their labour! While *some* continue, whether more or less prominent for abilities, very many years in one locality; others occupy, for a much shorter time, their first pastorate, having several changes; and not a few, like myself, are led about greatly. Since I commenced preaching (April, 1841) my labours have extended to 66 towns, 67 villages, and also 27 chapels in London.

Being unsettled in September, 1860, I took a journey of more than two *hundred* miles into Yorkshire; the chapel, to which I had been invited for three Sabbaths, stood in the township of S——. An excellent harmonium was used, and it seemed to *stimulate* the voices of the congregation. In this county, and also in Stafford-

shire, and Lancashire, there is an earnest desire for instrumental with vocal music in chapels. The editor of one of our magazines said, in 1846, that where the *vocal* power was *weak*, and that part of the worship of God could not be conducted properly, he thought it *right* to use one instrument in leading the service of praise. Some ministers are opposed to it, and even put *out* by hearing it; but I do not perceive its inconsistency, nor is it disagreeable to my ear in the house of God.

There was a hamlet two miles off, on a *great* height, where I was requested to preach on a week-night. One wished me to walk *up* to his house, a third of the distance, take a little rest, and go with him, there being a *steep* ascent pretty nearly *all* the way. In the *higher* parts pieces of stone were placed about a foot apart, to prevent slipping. A spacious school-room, which would seat one hundred adults, was filled to hear Mr. Newman. I took this plain text, from Psalm cxlvii., "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy," and could not have had a more attentive congregation. Two brethren left the place with me, and when we had *descended* about half a mile, one, aged 74, left us to go through a *wood*, the nearest way to his house; but although it was half-past nine o'clock, yet the moon shone brightly. Another conducted me by the side of a *canal*, more than a mile. What a contrast to the busy and gas-lighted streets of London!

One morning, on my return from a walk, I was favoured with the application of two verses in the 37th Psalm: "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." Though not then reading, I was aware of this being Scripture language, and received it as a *direction* from my Lord, and also an *assurance* that He would open a way for me, and sustain me, in the ministry of His Gospel.

It was during October, December, and January, that I preached on four Sabbaths in the county town of Buckinghamshire, administering twice the ordinance of

the Lord's Supper. To me it is the *most interesting* part of my work to *dwell* upon the humiliation, agonies, and death of my glorious and compassionate Saviour. Of Joseph Hart (who was a singular trophy of Christ's power and grace) it is noted that he greatly excelled in discoursing, at the Lord's Table, of His *sufferings*, concerning which he sang,

“View Him in that olive-press,  
Squeez'd and wrung, till 'whelm'd in blood!  
View thy Maker's deep distress!  
Hear the sighs and groans of God!”

The minister of a large village chapel in Cambridge-shire having left in November, two London pastors recommended me; but it did not seem the Divine will that I should go there, as no application was made to me from thence; and there was a very unsettled state of the people for a good while afterwards. Was there ever a period when the love of novelty, and also pride, self-will, and strife, abounded more than at the present time?

Just now I listened on a Lord's-day morning to Mr. Silver, Jewry Street, whose discourse was full of the preciousness of Christ to believers. At the close of service, he beckoned me into the vestry. Several years had passed since we met. Taking me warmly by the hand, he said, “I am sorry to see you idle to-day; but I must tell you that you have been laid upon my mind, so that I have felt constrained to pray for you by *name*.” I could but reply, “It gladdens me to hear you say so.” While associating with a variety of persons in so many places, how much greater freedom we feel with some than with others! While we would show our love to all disciples of Christ, we feel more attracted to those whose sentiments and experience resemble our own. And the *manner* of the naturally kind and amiable have considerable influence with us.

In December I laboured on two Sabbaths at a seaside town, south-west, and several subsequently. Some expressed themselves benefited. A retired farmer twice

asked me to visit him; and he also wrote of me to the manager of a chapel in the north-west, to which I was soon invited. A London merchant was half a dozen times at the former place, and showed his attachment by inviting me three times to his hospitality. He also presented me with a piece of gold, saying, "You know from whom it comes."

I went in the spring, by the "Great Northern" to an ancient sanctuary, where, next day, I three times "spoke unto the people," being in the morning favoured with deep feeling in my subject, which was the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. More than one told me they had realized a blessing. Then I visited my friends at Maidstone, and "broke bread," as well as preached to them. While there, I went to the County Lunatic Asylum, and was taken over all the male wards of it. In what different forms I beheld the greatest human calamity! There was an elderly man who talked with the greatest fluency about the Bible, alluding especially to Job; yet he was a little incoherent, and in about ten minutes became so wild as plainly evinced the disorder of his brain. But one *agreeably* surprised me, as he came direct to me, and affectionately offering his hand, said, "You do not *know* me, but I remember hearing you at West Malling, and my soul was blessed and comforted. I am quite aware that *I have been mad since*, and bit my own shoulder, but now my mind is right, and I shall soon leave this place." To this an official assented, adding, that no doubt in a week or two he would be discharged. This was another encouraging proof of the Lord's making use of me while I knew it not.

On the last Sabbath in May I was called to a *roomy* chapel at the West End, for the morning. A deacon, in his parlour, referred to the minister who preceded me, and I said, "He is a *good* preacher." The reply was, "Yes; but he did not open and enter into his text so much as you did yours this morning." I said, "You must be *mistaken*;" but he answered, "No; it is only the *truth* to say so." In the evening, that spacious chapel in the

Grove, Camberwell, demanded all my energies. My sermon was heartily received, and the pastor, just then in ill health, warmly addressed me: "My dear sir, you are a stranger, but I must tell you that I have heard you exceedingly well; your Master has indeed been with you."

Then I was in an opposite locality, showing the nature and difference of law and gospel. What a display, in the former, of divine purity, and God's hatred of sin! What an exhibition, in the latter, of Christ's righteousness, and "*His ability to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him*"! At a hall some miles distant, the next Sabbath, I proclaimed "glad tidings" to sensibly-perishing sinners. And then, in a small place south-west, I described a heir of heaven. My evening's discourse set forth the Christian warfare with Satan, sin, and the world. A young man informed me, with much earnestness, that "some months previously he heard me in town, with a great blessing to his soul." The anniversary was at hand, and there being some uncertainty of obtaining Mr. Dickerson for the afternoon, I was asked to spend the day there, so as to take his place, if necessary. Brother Hazelton lectured there on Friday evening, but being in the country one week, *my* services were required. I endeavoured to set forth the nature of *spiritual* prayer, and the great encouragement given to every humble self-renouncing soul.

At midsummer I had a slight attack of rheumatic gout in one of my great toes; but my doctor allowed me to travel; and, in a cab, I got to London Bridge station for the 7 a.m. train, went twenty-five miles by 8 o'clock, and was taken thence some distance in a car to my kind host's, where I slept. The change was rendered beneficial. At the chapel, to which I was conveyed, there was a good company of earnest listeners to the strains of the Gospel; and I was divinely helped: the deacons cordially assured me that my discourses were blessed to them and the people, and they practically demonstrated their belief that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." Also a gentleman gave me a sovereign, with the pleasant



information that "he heard well." Thus my gracious Lord again smiled upon me in my work, and in His providence.

I was called to a town, about twenty miles north-west, for three single Sabbaths during September and October. How often I have felt ashamed, at the close of service, of my poor attempts to proclaim the salvation of God, sovereign, rich, and free! Not that my sermons were *lightly* esteemed there—both the looks and manner of my hearers showed the reverse of that. And the leading friend, who had been familiar with a London ministry, asked me to take a seat in his carriage, and dine with him. In the numerous places of my labour, what a variety of accommodation, as well as disposition, I have met with! Generally, I have been entertained by the middle class, but sometimes by those of very humble sphere. The great apostle seems to have been associated, in his travels, with much diversity of character and treatment, occasionally lodging in the abode of wealthy disciples, and at other times receiving the kind attentions of poorer brethren.

When returning home on a Monday, I met, on the railway platform, a minister whom I had before conversed with, and we rode together. He asked for my texts on the previous day, and how I handled the evening one. When I had given him the heads and sub-divisions, he said, "I like them very much;" and, taking from his pocket a note-book, requested a *repetition* of them, which he inserted, and then asked if I was engaged the next Wednesday evening. As I was not, he got me to take his pulpit then, in the south-west of town, his absence being necessary. My auditory was good, and my sermon was heartily received. It was from these words, "O God, thou art my God," and contained a threefold description of character: First, he who used this language in a religious sense, without scriptural warrant; second, he who is authorized by God's word, but afraid to say so; and third, he who feels by the Spirit's witness that he has a divine warrant to assert, "The Lord is my portion."

Then I travelled by water and land, being called to the Isle of Wight for two Lord's-days. My hearers were not numerous, and with some heaviness of spirit I addressed them on the solemn and precious truths of the Bible, but my discourses were quite welcome. When leaving, my landlord said, "I have found your conversation instructive and useful; so that the great matters relative to eternity are seen by me in a different light from what they were."

Roman Catholicism has a pretty strong hold here, since a clergyman, formerly Incumbent of a church here, embraced Popery, because "he found the ceremonies of it were *alone* sufficient to keep alive the flame of devotion on the altar of the human heart;" and he being the means of "perverting" two ladies of large fortune, they, principally, had erected a *handsome* chapel. It was told me that one of them, unmarried, gave *away* annually *three* parts of her income, *not* confining her generosity to *one* sect or party. Subsequently, she was seized with a *fit* while at *worship there*, and died almost immediately. As to the Minister, he *returned* to Protestantism, but then *removed* from the place of his mischievous errors; the remembrance of which, surely, must have yielded him grief and sorrow.

Very near the close of this year (1861), I had a full month's engagement at a township in Staffordshire. After the first morning's service, several members spoke *warmly* to me, one saying, "You are the same minister that I lately saw in a dream; and you have described character, and given a portion to each, according to the word of God." There was an organ, and a pretty good Sunday school. But I was informed there had been personal and petty feelings, which induced two parties. And the prayer meeting was, in general, very poorly attended. How often have I seen, with eagerness to hear sermons, a comparative indifference to besiege, collectively, the Throne of Grace! But our God has said that He will be waited on, and intreated by His people. And is there not the greater spiritual prosperity where there is most of the spirit of prayer? The *habitual* late

attendance of some gives evidence that their souls are *not* in a lively grateful frame, longing for the courts of the Lord, to join in thanksgiving and supplication. Does not their conduct say, "If we listen attentively to an impressive and interesting discourse, that will do?" Certainly the sound of the everlasting Gospel is most pleasant to a circumcised ear; and the spiritual taste craves "heavenly bread, and water of life," which are communicated *through* the preached word. But while many profess to serve the King of kings, do they not treat His glorious Majesty (in the *public* service of God), by the lateness of their attendance, as they would be ashamed to behave towards an earthly sovereign? Cases of *unavoidable* detention are, comparatively, few. It is a *lamentable* reflection, that some Christians, in their pride, self-will, and carnal temper, are, in a measure, made tools of by *Satan*! They might feel shocked at the *insinuation* that they were, indirectly, *helping* the great adversary of the Church; but their spirit and conduct show that, for the time being, they are led astray by his influence who, in his hatred to Christ our King, uses all his subtlety and tact to divide the saints, and hinder the prosperity and increase of Zion.

During my stay here, I became familiar with mortality, as the disease called diphtheria being prevalent, many children died of it, and it fell to my lot to inter six within a fortnight, besides an adult, in the spacious ground attached to the chapel. I am a believer in the salvation of all who die in infancy, for it seems fairly *inferable* from the Bible that they were included in God's electing love, and Christ's redemption, and are subjects of the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. While the *cause* of *damnation* is represented to be *actual* transgression.

An Ironmaster residing near, who was a deacon of the oldest and largest Baptist Chapel in that locality, having a very great and lofty room, adjoining his house, which had been erected by a former proprietor for a *Ball-room*, used to get a sermon, each Tuesday evening, there, by several ministers, in turn; and he requested

me to preach there. I said it must be in *our* way of thought, which, most likely, *differed* from his; but he *still* wished to hear me. I gave both a doctrinal and searching discourse which was listened to with approving attention. Immediately I had finished, he said "he must tell them that he fully agreed with *all* I had stated," commending it in grateful terms; and added, "he thought those *not* agreeing in all things might unite in the proclamation of the Gospel. The place was filled, there being, it was said, two hundred and fifty adults. And I hope the blessed Spirit made use of my feeble testimony for the good of immortal souls.

Now I lost my highly esteemed, and long endeared friend and brother Robinson, who died in London, January 9th, 1862. Almost two years previously, he had a *slight* attack of paralysis, but was, generally, able to preach, and mostly called out to different places, for about twelvemonths. Then he became evidently unfit for ministerial labour. But, for half a year, he was a hearer and communicant at Hill Street Chapel, Dorset Square, where, *thirty-five years before*, he filled the office of deacon. He informed me that a short time previous to being laid by, he was *disengaged* three Sabbaths running, which greatly distressed him, as his age was but sixty years. One morning he earnestly besought his Master to take him home, if He had no more work for him, and then rose from his knees persuaded he should receive an invitation, which came the next day, as an *answer* to prayer. But, in the following week he changed for the worse, and had to decline going! This *seemed* to him *strange*, yet he wished to feel passive, quite resigned to the will of his gracious Lord, which now appeared to be his dismissal to *eternal* rest. Notwithstanding his silence, it must have been pleasant to receive evidence of having a large share in the respect of a people who had long known him, as the invitation just named was given with the view of his becoming *their* Pastor. He was prostrated for several months, and endured much bodily suffering. As to his mind, Satan took advantage of the

extreme weakness and irritability of his nerves, and he was sometimes harassed and depressed by him, and also by doubts and fears; but generally he felt the Rock of ages was his solid stay, and he longed for his release from sin, and the miseries accompanying it.

It is only just to say that he was a really good preacher of the Gospel; there being considerable fullness, depth, and variety in his ministry. His manner being very plain, and his voice rather harsh, might occasion the thought that he was better adapted for the country than the metropolis. But he sustained the pastorate at Brentford, where there were some critical hearers, about thirteen years; and was nearly as long at Borough Green, where he published a very interesting little work entitled "The Introduction of the Gospel into a Country Town." Brother Wyard wrote a commendatory preface to it, and two editions were rather quickly sold.

I must record a most striking circumstance with which he himself acquainted me. Between 1833 and 1840 he went twice, for a change, to Wolverhampton, and to preach on three or four Sabbaths and week-days. While sitting on the coach in his first journey, these lines were strongly impressed on his mind again and again. (They are in one of Hart's hymns):—

"I have a sinner to renew,  
And, lo, this charge I give to *you*."

He fulfilled his engagement, and one of his hearers was savingly converted by the Spirit's power under one of those sermons. But my brother was not informed of it till the next time he was called there, when the renewed man was introduced to him. "The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there." (Psalm lxxxvii. 6.)

A minister, having *promised*, preached in a *lonely* place, the weather being *exceedingly rough*, to *one* man only, who left *immediately* after service; but *long* afterwards he told the preacher, "That sermon was blessed to my *conversion*; and I am now *proclaiming* the Gospel."

## CHAPTER IX.

A MOST SUDDEN ENGAGEMENT—INTRICATE PATH—ILLUSTRATION OF PAUL'S STRUGGLE, AND REFLECTION THEREON—INTERESTING DEATH—AN AGED PASTOR—JUDGMENT WITH MERCY—A SINGULAR TROPHY OF DIVINE GRACE—VISIT TO THE SEA-SIDE, AND A HONOURED MINISTER—LABOURS IN LONDON, SUBURBS, AND COUNTRY TOWNS, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT—BODILY PAIN, WITH SOUL-COMFORT—VARIOUS ENGAGEMENTS, NEAR AND DISTANT—A SINGULAR DIVERGING INVITATION—"KEEPING THE FEAST"—MY BIRTH-DAY, POETRY.

ON the first Lord's-day in February, 1862, a singular and unexpected event occurred to me. Being disengaged, I went, with my wife, to Keppel Street Chapel, to hear the esteemed pastor, and commune with the Church in the ordinance of our Lord's Supper. As soon as he had read and prayed he *left* the pulpit, and the senior deacon came to me, requesting I would step into the vestry, where brother Milner held out his hand, saying, "Such is the tenderness and soreness of my throat that I cannot preach; will you help me?" My reply was, that I would do my best, with *Christ's* strength. Ascending the pulpit stairs, I mentally exclaimed, "What shall I do? O Lord, guide me!" A verse was given me, which I found immediately; and though I felt a little embarrassed, yet I occupied fifty minutes. As I re-entered the vestry, brother M—— said, "Thank you, brother; the Lord helped you." "Yes, he did," said I; but was I not a little confused?" The reply was, "I did not perceive it." And a deacon said, "Nonsense, you was not at all so; both your sermon and arrangement were good." In the afternoon brother M—— got me to give the address before he "broke bread." At tea-time he said, "You must take the harness to-night." When service was closed, he again thanked me for my labours, saying, "Your

*morning's* discourse, considering the *hurry*, was heard *well*; but it is only the truth to say, you gave us this evening a good sermon: the Lord has indeed helped you." An elderly lady sitting next my wife said to her, "We have had an excellent discourse this morning. Do you know the name of this minister, and where he preaches?" My wife could but smile, and say, "He is my husband." Brother M—— said he would speak of me at ——; and two other pastors, when there, did so. But I was not applied to for a good while, and when an invitation *was* sent to me, I stood engaged elsewhere. How sovereign are the ways of God with His servants! I was now *silent* four successive Lord's-days. Then I took the place of a brother in a southern suburb, and was heartily received. A deacon said to me in the evening, "I believe you would suit the people at A——, and I will write of you to them." But they did not apply to me.

Is not the path of some *much* less plain and strait than that of others? and *mine* has been rather intricate. It was expected that I should preach on a Sabbath in April at a chapel in the Borough, though a promise had been given to labour in a distant country town the second Lord's-day; but on the Wednesday morning previous I received a note from thence, acquainting me that a grievous affair had occurred an hour before writing, and therefore wishing me *not* to go there at *present*. Immediately I communicated with the senior deacon of the Borough Chapel, *showing* him that note. He said, "I am sorry to hear of such things, but I *thank* you for coming. It is somewhat remarkable that just before your arrival I was on my knees asking the Lord to send us a minister for next Sabbath, and I felt assured that we should have one. The *Lord's* hand is evidently here, and we shall be glad of your labours then." At the close of morning service an elderly gentleman, for *many* years a clergyman of the Established Church, who had been baptized in this chapel, cordially addressed me, saying, "I must tell you that I like your sermon very much, and have heard you exceedingly

well." On the first Sabbath in May I was there, both preaching and administering the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and *that* minister was among the communicants. We were favoured with much spiritual enjoyment, and I was invited for two Sabbaths in June. After these, a stranger, who had been strongly recommended, came for a month; but they did *not* renew his engagement, and their attention was directed to others.

Brother Dickerson (of Little Alie Street, Whitechapel) got my services just now, in his pulpit, one Sabbath. When I reflect on a minister being sustained with credit and acceptance in one place for more than one-third of a century, I am reminded that the apostle Paul said, "I keep under my body, lest after I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." Is it not evident that he referred to his *reputation* in the Church of God? It is a lamentable fact that some Gospel ministers have by open foul backsliding lost their honourable character, and, as to their reputation, been cast away, and even from the ministry altogether; while others, with reproach resting upon them, may have continued proclaiming the truth. But the notion that Paul alluded to the salvation of his *soul* makes him *contradict himself*, since he tells us that *no* power whatever shall be able to separate the saints from the love of Christ.

There was an occurrence in July, where we had for some time lodged, which it becomes me to notice. Our landlady had been laid up with bronchitis, but, partially recovering, the doctor advised her removal to the *West* end of town. The change was not accompanied with much benefit to her, and she said to her husband that she should *die* soon, and wished to return, that she might have the company of *my* wife, to whom she felt much attached. They came back at the end of seven weeks, and nine days afterwards she was suddenly taken very much worse. A physician's skill could not avail; it was evident she must sink. Two of her sisters remained at her bed-side, but she wished for the presence of my wife as much as possible. Now it



seemed the Lord took *away* her *stony* heart, and gave her a feeling one; for she said with solemnity, "I am a great sinner, and crave mercy for Christ's sake alone!" She told my wife that *we* had been made useful to her *soul*. About one hour before death she wished those near her to take refreshment, saying, "I need none; I shall dine with Jesus." And she prayed earnestly that her *husband* might obtain mercy. Of death-bed repentance I am generally suspicious, but must conclude that she was a trophy of sovereign grace at the close of her mortal life.

On the 12th instant I was lifting the blood-stained banner of the cross in a small chapel three miles northward. There was present, at the first service, a superannuated minister *eighty* years old. He was baptized when a youth, in Bedfordshire, and so soon displayed gifts, that it was said by some of his fellow members, "We heard the *tall boy* pray at the noon meeting." By the time he reached *manhood* he was considered an interesting preacher. He laboured stately in a large village chapel, having a good congregation, and a numerous church for many years in an adjoining county; and then he was for a much longer period a pastor in the metropolis, till infirmities necessitated his retirement. I heard him preach at the jubilee of his ministry in 1854, when he was rather feeble; but now he had become the *wreck* of a man, yet he lingered nearly two years ere he dropped the clay of mortality. Successive generations of God's servants pass away, and still we say, "The fathers, where are they?"

Now I again visited, with my wife, our old friends at Risely. It had been our intention to remain there only eight days, but there was given us a fresh instance of the truth that "man appoints, but God disappoints;" as, in the night previous to our expected departure, my wife was seized with pain, sickness, and coldness of the extremities. Her suffering was great, and for two hours her stomach refused medicine. When I asked her the state of her mind, she replied, it was fixed on Christ as her Redeemer. There seemed reason to con-

clude death was approaching; but we had the attendance of a *skilful* medical man, who came *four* times within fifteen hours, and the great Physician was pleased to heal her. As she was prostrated several days, we had to continue another week for some renewal of her strength. Since then five years passed, and she has been favoured with tolerable health, which affords another proof that when God intends to lengthen life, He generally directs to the use of means, and gives His blessing to them.

In this summer I met with a striking instance of distinguishing mercy. The eldest son of an old friend had lived utterly careless of his soul, and being at work on a railway, he slid or fell down a bank, and the wheels of trucks just then passing went over him, cutting off *both* his feet. His father asked me to visit him, which I did several times at the London Hospital. When I tried to set before him the depravity of his nature, as the *source* of all his transgressions against the law of God, he listened with *close* attention, and admitted he was a sinner, but did not seem to possess *spiritual* vision and feeling. I then went into the country for a fortnight. On my return he was dead; but his father informed me that soon after my last conversation with his son, he told him with *much* feeling that he was *deeply* conscious of being a great sinner; and he subsequently said God had graciously pardoned and blotted out his sin and guilt for Christ's sake. The father had long been in the school of Jesus, and he assured me that he could but feel a confidence that his son was a changed character, or a "brand plucked out of the burning;" and he was surprised to hear him address his fellow patients in a most solemn manner. The surgeons took great interest in his case, and hoped he would recover; but mortification set in, and, of course, he soon expired. We may wonder that God *permits* some of those He has chosen to everlasting happiness to live for years in open and daring violation of His laws; but if He is pleased to magnify the riches of His grace, and secure to Himself a revenue of praise and glory by *raising* vile and

lost creatures from the depth of wickedness through cleansing blood, and justifying righteousness, to a participation of His loving-kindness and *tender mercy*; we are constrained to exclaim, in the language of His own word, "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and sin?" Thou delightest in mercy. Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. (Ephes. ii. 4, 5.)

Towards the close of September, I was called to a watering place *far east*, where I stayed nearly three weeks. Father Wright, of Beccles, had promised to give the morning sermon at the anniversary, but, feeling unable, he declined; and I was asked to go down the day previous, instead of Saturday, and take the afternoon service, that brother Bloomfield might preach both morning and evening. My labours, on Sabbath and weekdays, and in "breaking bread," were heartily received, while several times considerable feeling was evinced in *moist eyes*. But the deacons told me another minister had been invited for three months, otherwise they should have asked myself, as many said "they heard me best." I inhaled as much sea-air as possible, and, thanks to God, was greatly benefited. With father Wright I spent, at his house, a couple of hours profitably. According to *his custom*, there was evening family worship immediately after tea, to "avoid drowsiness, which was likely to be attached to the service *just before bed-time*." It is a pleasure to note, that this highly-gifted and consistent pastor was sustained here *forty years*, and made a great blessing by the Head of the Church, while much beloved by his people. Some time ago, the old and awkward structure was left for a spacious chapel, which is designated, "The Martyrs' Memorial," as several Christians were victims to Popish rage there, in the reign of Queen Mary I.

Engaged in the metropolis one Lord's-day in December, I tried to show how Jesus is *endeared* to His people in their deep trials and sorrows, and how the blessed Spirit *sanctifies* their griefs and troubles, so as to make them yield "the peaceable fruits of righteousness." It was said

to me, "Your discourse was most truthful and suitable." As I am averse to dwelling exclusively either on doctrine or experience, it was my aim, in the evening, to set forth His Person and work who is the glorious and precious Prince of peace. When called to address large and intelligent audiences, I would deliver my "message" in a *straightforward* manner, commending myself to every man's conscience, in the sight of God, for the exaltation of my Divine Master, and the welfare of souls. And I have always followed the advice of an elder to a young minister, which was, "Never make any apologies when preaching the Gospel, for that needs none, and your weakness or littleness will be sufficiently apparent without your mentioning it."

Early in 1863, I went some distance north-west, to labour three times in a great chapel, on the following day. A slight disorder of my throat excited the sympathy of my hostess, who kindly used every means to strengthen it. And I was divinely helped both as to my outward and inward man. My testimony was quite acceptable, except to a few *very* deaf persons. It is matter of *regret* to a minister that any *cannot* hear his testification of the suitability and sweetness of that Name which, to sin-sick souls, is as "precious ointment poured forth." Then I preached for a brother in the north-east of town; and was afterwards told by him, that "his people got on well." Soon afterwards, a pastor in a suburb south-east being ill, brother Anderson was asked for a Sabbath, and agreed to give the morning, on condition that I took his place then, and the other's at night, which was done. There was one whom I had not seen many years, who said to me, "I have heard very suitably."

Now I travelled to the sea-side for one Lord's-day. Those friends in whose house I lodged were *more* spiritually-minded than the generality of believers, and they possessed a conversational gift. I heard them say, "they were advantaged through my preaching." And many pleasant countenances indicated that I was favoured with some degree of enlargement, while pro-

claiming salvation full and free. But, with grief, I learned that one, rather advanced in years, had grossly sinned, after dallying some time with temptation. If it becomes us "to avoid the appearance of evil" in daily life, how needful is it, when by business, or circumstances, we are necessarily with persons, or things, *improperly* attractive to flesh and sense, that we should *suspect danger*, and shorten, as much as possible, our association with them! And, while conscious of the power of indwelling sin, with the cunning of our adversary to entrap us, we should daily and hourly pray, "Leave us not in temptation."

During a part of May and June I was called to the pulpit, and the Lord's table, at a small chapel in town. Previous to the first evening service, a leading member spoke to me very cordially, and said, "I trust we shall now have as profitable a discourse as that you gave us this morning." My labours were evidently generally welcome. The senior deacon said to my wife, "Your husband's sermons are to *me* instructive;" and others spoke *similarly*. But, it was added, "We *have* a few *funny* ones whom we cannot very well do without, and they want a change." And my stay there was but very short.

On the second Sabbath in July, I occupied the place of a brother who entered the ministry long after myself. At the close of the day, two deacons said, "We hope for the pleasure of seeing you here again." And a hearer addressed me heartily thus: "You do not remember me, but I must tell you that I, and others too, heard you exceedingly well at — some years ago. How is it you have not been there *lately*?" My reply was that I could not tell why; but as reference was now made to my preaching there in 1854, I would mention that after my sermon then, while in the vestry, I heard a deacon say to one sitting *close* to it, "I never heard that text opened so clearly before." How obvious to a travelling preacher is the *diversity* of taste in deacons, members, and hearers! The *greater* number of hearers are more taken with the *powerful voice* and pleasant

*manner* of a minister, than with the *matter* of his discourse. Are there not *living* preachers whose sermons unfold the great truths of Scripture, and abound with rich ideas of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, with a *much* smaller congregation than others, whose discourses are *comparatively* simple, but whose *voice* and *manner* are attractive and engaging?

Another change now came, as for part of each month, from Midsummer to Christmas, I went (on Saturdays) to a small town south-west, and besides "labouring in word and doctrine" on more than a dozen Sabbaths, "broke bread" to the disciples every ordinance day. Some informed me that the Holy Spirit blessed my efforts to the comfort and profit of their souls, adding they wished me to be their pastor. But a minister could *scarcely* be supported; and there were two or three *odd* and fanciful members. One met me at the station, and seemed a little while very hearty, so that the third time of my going he expressed his gladness at seeing me again; but he soon became *cool*. The behaviour of some Christians evinces that they really prefer a constant change of preachers. And others talk as if they consider *themselves* better able to explain a text than the minister.

Often have I been told of a divine blessing attending my poor labours when unconscious of it. At the station, one Monday morning, two elderly females addressed me in a most friendly manner, saying "they felt averse to come forward in the chapel, but now they must tell me that they had heard with much comfort and encouragement." And there was a little chapel, about a mile and a half distant, served by supplies, one of whom had *failed* to get there. The deacon therefore came to me, and asked me as a favour to go with him through the park in the afternoon, and give them a sermon, which was gladly and gratefully received. Are we not told in God's word, Blessed are they that sow beside all waters. And I must notice what occurred when engaged in a northern suburb. One of the members informed me that, as he went to the morning service, his prayer

was that he might receive a portion then, and immediately a verse was impressed on his mind: "My grace is sufficient for thee," &c. Now *my* text was the very same, which I was enabled to open, so as that "his faith was strengthened, and he felt calmness and peace." But this passage did not occur to *me* till breakfast-time, and was quite different from that which I thought upon the previous day.

At the opening of 1864, I went a few miles south-east to hear brother Bloomfield, and attend a tea and public meeting. Brother Milner had engaged to take one of the evening subjects, but ill health prevented him. I was asked to take his, which was, "The conflict and victory of faith." Though I had very little time for reflection, yet I was divinely helped, and my address was much liked. In the following week a deacon, who heard it, told my friend P. that "he thought Mr. D. got on as well as any of the speakers there."

Then I was called to the county town of Hertfordshire for one Sabbath, and was favoured with feeling and enlargement. The pastor's wife, the deacons, and others, told me that "a good day was realized in the sanctuary." But this was followed by *illness*, which made me a prisoner for three weeks. One night, when my pain was sharp, I thought, how much greater, beyond comparison, must be the pangs of souls in hell! Then these words of the Psalmist were brought to me, and I was favoured with a deep feeling of *personal* interest in them: "Great is Thy mercy towards me, for Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell!"

I laboured in an easterly part of London on the ordinance day of February; and then, next Saturday, travelled in safety, while rather lame, to a large town in Berkshire. The chapel being *spacious*, I had to speak at the top of my voice. A deacon, who sat close to the lobby, said he could *hear* the *whole* of my discourse; and a *grey-beard*, warmly addressing me, spoke of being "profited." For the third Sabbath I went to a bustling locality in Mid-Kent. Snow lying on the ground, my audience was thin; but some told me that they felt a

heavenly influence accompany my sermons. On the last Lord's-day in this month I was in the north of town, occupying the pulpit of an afflicted brother. At the close, a deacon came quickly to me in the vestry, and said, "I must tell you that your discourses, particularly this just delivered, have been made to me both edifying and comforting." And his wife assured me that "she had been greatly favoured." Another deacon, an itinerant, meeting me some weeks afterwards, said, "I must inform you that our friends generally had an exceedingly good day." And on my telling him that I was now *disengaged*, he expressed his surprise.

The second Sabbath in March I was at an old chapel westward, where several *eminent* preachers of the *last* century had been pastors. The friend who generously entertained me observed to his spouse, that he "had indeed heard well." In the evening, an elder said to me, "I am thankful for the feast I have had, but grieved at the smallness of the congregation." A member asked me to sup with him, his residence being in my way home, and, expressing "himself much profited," said, "I feel sure you will again be invited." But I have not. Respecting many places, it seems to have been my Lord's will that I should deliver His messages there on one day only.

A brother, whose sphere is a few miles from town, had asked me to fill his place on the third Lord's-day, but, ten days before it, requested me to go to C. instead, as he had been *out just* previously. Now, the pastor there was about leaving for T., and wished me to oblige him by going to R. (where he had promised a Sabbath) instead of C., so that he might be here continually till his removal. It was a pecuniary benefit to take R., but I considered the *double* alteration as to the locality of my labour an indication that my Master had some work for me to do at R. on that day. As I entered the vestry, I said to the deacons there, Paul, in a certain sense, was "born out of due time," and *I* had come out of the course of their *arrangement*; but they smiled, saying, "the people would doubtless be



glad to hear me again, as in the preceding month I was well received." They wished for a short discourse on Monday evening, and the attendance was considered good. Two elderly brethren, one being an itinerant, treated me very cordially. They had come over two miles through small rain; and "I am sure," said a deacon, "they would not have been here on such a night, if they had not heard well yesterday."

In London again, on the first Sabbath in April, I discoursed, at morning service, on Prayer, its source, nature, ground, and effects. In the evening, I tried to explain these cheering words, "To them that look for Him, He will come a second time, without sin, unto salvation." Then we "kept the feast," in obedience to Him whose death we thus "show forth till He come." And do we not *connect* His humiliation and suffering with the future display of His triumph and glory for and in His people?

My birth-day is the eleventh of April, and I had now reached the age of sixty years. As I looked back upon the way in which it had pleased the Lord to lead me, and reflected on His gracious dealings with my soul, I expressed some of my feelings in the verses following:—

And I have lived here sixty years,  
In joys, and sorrows, hopes, and fears;  
My God, Thy mercy, rich and free,  
Calls forth a song of praise from me!

Father, Thy love how wonderful,  
Fixed on me in eternity!  
Jesus, Thy grace what tongue can tell,  
Who gav'st *Thyself* to ransom me!

Thy sovereign power, blest Spirit, too,  
Which raised me up to live anew;  
Applying Jesu's precious blood,  
Sealing me to the day of God!

Triune Jehovah, I would praise  
And honour Thee in all my ways;  
Thy goodness is so vast and free,  
My soul will make her boast in Thee!"

## CHAPTER X.

INTERRUPTION IN A SANCTUARY ENGAGEMENT—VISIT, WITH REMARKS—VARIOUS CALLS, AND DIVERSITY OF CHARACTER—SPIRITUAL PROFIT AND PLEASURE—MR. BERRIDGE—A STRIKING MINISTERIAL OBSERVATION—EARLY DEATH OF A BELOVED PASTOR—BRIEF MEDITATION—MR. STEVENS—SUDDEN CALL, AND RAPID TRAVEL—THE ZEAL OF FORMER AND PRESENT SAINTS CONTRASTED—PLEASANT TRAVEL, WITH REFLECTIONS—LABOURS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY—JOURNEYS IN FOG, WITH FROST AND SNOW—PREACHING IN LONDON, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT—RICH MERCY DISPLAYED—A CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF LONG STANDING, AND SOME PASTORS ALSO—CHEERING RECEPTIONS.

AT the commencement of May, 1864, I went, by the Great Northern Railway, and another conveyance, nearly seventy miles, for the first, fifth, and eighth of this month. During the afternoon service, in the early part of my sermon, the young people in the front gallery, perceiving a *fire*, though at some distance, *left* the chapel, and *most* of those below got up, and walked to the doors, which occasioned me to stop abruptly. But I learned next day that the exit of persons from the *church* was still *more* sudden and general. Two or three stacks of clover or beans were consumed, while the buildings were *not* injured. On Tuesday I attended an anniversary, six miles distant. Conversing with two ministerial brethren, each of whom had long been *settled* in a town, they inquired of my present position; and, when informed I had for some time been a travelling preacher, they said, “We sometimes think that we should *prefer* that.” But my reply was, I believed they would be tired of it in about six or nine months. As to my labours at W——, the language, countenance, and behaviour of some afforded evidence that they were rendered beneficial. It is a rule with me not to ask *how* I am heard, because it might seem

fishing for applause. Yet I think there is a way in which Christian hearers should speak, at times, without flattery, but encouragingly, to the minister. And if they imagine him to be in error, or pursuing a wrong course, had they not better communicate *privately* with him, than talk about it to others in his absence?

Then I was called into a new and very pleasant locality, within twenty miles south-west. *Mr. Newman* was listened to with some avidity, and strong desire expressed to see him again, while two or three displayed affectionate kindness. But there are many fond of *cheap* Gospel; and while they *could* give *much* more than they *do* for the support of the ministry, and are commanded by God in His word not to muzzle the ox (spiritual labourer) that treadeth out the corn (of truth), and told, "the workman is worthy of his meat, and is to be esteemed highly in love for his work's sake," they are yet *comparatively* indifferent both to the needs of the minister and the creditable appearance of the house of God.

On the fourth Lord's-day, at the east end of London, I treated of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit; and at night tried to set forth the wonderful triumph of our Redeemer over sin, death, and hell. Brethren smiled, expressing their obligation to me. But I was deeply conscious of only touching these *profound* subjects. Yet there is *sweetness* in the thought that there is an unfathomable depth in the Gospel of the grace of our covenant Triune Jehovah; and that the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ *cannot* be *diminished*. And therefore I endeavoured, on the following Sabbath, in a northern suburb, to "draw water out of the wells of salvation," for other seekers of spiritual good.

I went, on the 4th of June, to a good-sized town in Bedfordshire, and preached three times. My hearers were chiefly very plain, and liked "the trumpet to give a *certain* sound," while they relished only the unadulterated "bread of life." And they certainly appeared rather lively and zealous. So hearty was my reception, that in the *afternoon* I was asked for another Sabbath,

but could not then comply, having promised that elsewhere. The third Saturday I got, by the Eastern Counties Railway, to a village in Hertfordshire. How charming the prospect from my bed-room window! I thought of Watts's lines respecting the heavenly Canaan—

“ Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood  
Stand dressed in living green.”

The little place of worship was, to us, “the house of God and the gate of heaven.” Two of my hearers came *four* miles, and said, “they were so profited, that they must ask me to preach at *their* chapel,” which, in the next month, I did, on two Lord's-days; when my testimony was eagerly received, and we realized much blessing.

A large village chapel, near Cambridge, was the scene of my labours on July 17th. Two of the members said, “We had the *pleasure* of hearing you at L——, about six weeks ago.” Mr. Berridge, vicar of Everton, *while* living there, styled himself “an itinerant servant of Jesus Christ,” as he preached in *various* places, and afterwards wrote, “he had been running on his Master's errands for many years.” But I have been a good while *unsettled*, and called to a great number of towns and villages, besides many metropolitan and suburban chapels, and therefore am more of a humble travelling preacher than he was. Well, if our Master is pleased to employ some in carrying “round about” His messages of truth and peace and love, while others occupy one sphere, “let Him do as seemeth Him best.”

In August I was a passenger, on “The Great Western,” to Buckinghamshire, and on two Sabbaths, at an old-fashioned Meeting-house, declared to the best of my ability “the whole counsel of God.” At the evening Prayer Meeting, allusions, *encouraging* to the preacher, were feelingly made to his efforts to exalt Christ, and set Him forth in the almighty *power* of His arm, and the *tenderness* of His heart, for sensible sinners, however distressed and tempted; which indicated there had been, then, some experience of His suitability and

preciousness. A short time previously, I heard Mr. Philpot say that, in his late illness, he thought much on the *experience* of Jesus *while* He was on earth, and shortly *before* His death. And he said it was his belief that *our deep* consideration of it would be to us very *profitable*. I will add, in what striking language does Paul allude to the exercises of our Lord: "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with *strong crying* and *tears* unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."

Brother Pells, of Soho Chapel, Oxford Street, had been taken seriously ill, in June. I was asked to take his place on the Lord's-day, but could not assent, having gone by a morning train some distance eastward. Although he was better on the succeeding Tuesday, yet he soon relapsed, and sank into the arms of death on Friday. How sharp and sudden the stroke to his beloved partner, children, and flock! His age was but thirty-seven years; and his pastorate here had lasted scarcely six of them. No doubt, he had completed, according to divine appointment, his ministerial work, but the ways of God with His servants seem strange to our *dim* vision. There was now one, long known to me, *eighty* years old, formerly settled for eleven years, who had become *unable* to preach, and yet survived brother Pells nearly twelve months, while paralyzed and childish! It must be noted that *very great sympathy* was shown to the bereaved, who was then in a critical state, as "more than £600 was collected, at many baptist chapels, and a good house purchased therewith, and vested in trustees for the permanent benefit of the widow and children."

During my summer journeys, when I have left a village railway station, and gone through byroads and fields to my next day's sphere, how pleasantly striking has been the contrast to the noise and smoke of a railway engine! It has been to me a *luxury* to sit on a stile, and survey the verdant grass, or the *golden corn*, ripe for the sickle. And how sweet to *feel* gratitude to the

almighty and bountiful Provider for the manifold wants of all His creatures. But it is *delightful* to rise from the nether-spring blessings of His goodness, to the upper-spring blessings of His grace! Dr. Watts must have been the subject of similar feelings when he wrote,

“Creatures, with all their endless race,  
Thy power and praise proclaim  
But saints, who taste Thy *richer* grace,  
Delight to *bless* Thy name.”

Yet, what a Christian in *affluent* circumstances acknowledged to the late Mr. Fowler, is often *my* complaint; that it was “a frequent grief to him that his heart was so *hard* as not to *feel thankful* to God for the abundant mercies bestowed upon him.”

On the third Sabbath in August, I preached where Mr. Stevens laboured for a quarter of a century. He was, unquestionably, a great *theologian*; and few have possessed the *power of argument* which he displayed. Lord B—— previous to his elevation to the highest law dignity, heard him once, and said, “He is a *profound* reasoner.” His sermons were, mostly, very elaborate, and the delivery occupied nearly an hour and a half. Mr. C——, who well knew him, told me that, being at an anniversary some distance from town, he went to him in the vestry, before evening service, to say “good-bye,” adding, “Do not be offended when I tell you that I am interested in your discourse for about an hour, but, exceeding that, you *rob* me of what I have received.” Mr. S——, smiled, and, when he had preached for sixty minutes, said, “I must stop, as a friend present told me that I *robbed* him when preaching longer than one hour, and, as I would not be a thief in my old days, must now sit down.” He was a very able *defender* of the truth; and doctrinal preaching was always his forte; yet in his *later* years there was considerable *savour* and *experience* in his sermons. At B——, he said, “I do not want these truths or doctrines, beautiful and precious as they are, merely as a chain to ornament my neck, but would realize them by divine power in my heart.”

And I heard him describe "a good hope, through grace," in a feeling as well as instructive manner. At another time, I listened to a sympathizing, encouraging, and stimulating discourse from Malachi iii. 16: "Then they that feared the Lord," &c.

As he was rather taciturn, it was necessary to make some inquiry "to draw him out." Being in his company, with my friend Robinson, at Borough Green, in 1846, I asked for his thoughts on a *critical* text, when he shook his head, but, turning to the context, gave us an *explanation* of the passage. Once, at a social meeting of some of his people, where the conversation was becoming rather worldly, he said to the friend next to him, "This will not do; cannot you ask me some question?" And on such being put, he *profitably* entertained them.

When he had become quite elderly, one of his intimate ministerial friends said, "You have *long* known, believed, and loved, and also advocated, the glorious Gospel of the ever-blessed God; let me ask, how do you *now feel* while you are looking for an exchange of worlds?" His reply was, "The state of my mind is expressed in a verse of Dr. Watts:—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
On Thy kind arms I fall;  
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,  
My Saviour and my All!"

And not very long before his death he gave evidence, in a singular way, of his solid confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Rock of his salvation. Being at the grave of an old friend, in the ground of Tottenham Court Chapel, just as he closed his address or prayer, he had a slight *fainting* fit, but, *quickly* recovering, he said, "All right; there is nothing to pay, and nothing to fear."

Several times, in the case of a minister's illness, I have been asked, with a very short notice, to go some distance to stand in his stead: and *late* on Saturday, October 2, an urgent application was made for me to take a train next morning for C——. A cab con-

veyed me to King's Cross Metropolitan Station, then that train to Paddington; from thence, by the Great Western, I got to D——, where I entered a fly at ten o'clock, and reached the chapel four miles farther, *just* before the half hour. Thus I had occupied four conveyances in order to arrive in time for the *morning* service! I felt rather flurried, but was divinely helped to discourse on the priestly office of Christ; and the deacons said there was *no* appearance of confusion. These unexpected movements are superintended by Him who "makes crooked things straight," and "works all things together for the best." In memorializing the sufferings and death of our Redeemer, solemnity with *fervency* of spirit prevailed. At night my text was, "He must needs go through Samaria." Though not informed of any *particular* result, yet I am bound to believe the Lord sent a message by me then to one or more, for He says His word shall not return to Him *void*, but shall *accomplish* that which He pleases. And at the closing prayer meeting there was grateful acknowledgment for "a good day."

How much greater privileges are possessed in some localities than others, as to hearing the Gospel and attending the ordinances, and also friendly association! But when abundant, we are prone to *undervalue* them; for we prize most what we feel our need of. It is true that some are *only able* to get to the public ministry once a week, but many *could* be there regularly who are not. How sadly the spirit of indifference prevails! *Few*, indeed, are at the ten o'clock prayer meeting, and numbers do not enter God's house till *past* eleven on Sabbath morning. While living at Risely, I learnt that during persecution in Bunyan's time, believers assembled at night, in a wood near there, to join in supplication, and listen to the Gospel. In 1854, a retired farmer in that neighbourhood, when *eighty-eight* years old, and so deaf he could scarcely hear a word, would be at chapel, and give out hymns at the half-past nine prayer meeting, and stay with his "best friends" all day, until he became childish; in which



state he continued some time, and died at the extreme age of ninety-four years.

It was in October that I went, for one Sabbath, to a *lovely rural* spot. Leaving the bustle of London, and the noise of a railway engine, I enjoyed a quiet walk by moonlight. Cowper, the poet, resided many years in a village, and must have been enamoured of retirement when he wrote—

“The calm retreat, the silent shade,  
With prayer and praise agree;  
And seem by Thy sweet bounty *made*  
For those who *follow Thee*.”

And perhaps some of David's *happiest* hours were passed when, as a shepherd, he watched his flock. Is not this indicated by the 8th Psalm, which, it seems, was composed by him *then*?

It is true there is no place, situation, or circumstances free from temptation, and the working of human corruption in our hearts. I remember a pastor saying that one of his people built a house not far from that town, and *retired* to it, when his minister visiting him, asked him, “Has *Satan* found you out?” “Yes;” was the reply, “and I find he can come here as easily as he could to me in my shop.” And it is evident that Cowper was conscious of the need of *divine* influence when *secluded* from the *activities* of human life, for he says, in a verse following that just quoted,—

“There, *if Thy Spirit touch* the soul,  
And grace her mean abode;  
Oh, with what peace and joy and love,  
She communes with her God!”

Brother Hazelton, of Chadwell Street Chapel, being unable to preach in the evening of November 11th, application was made to me; and I delivered, from personal experience, a discourse on these striking words of David: “I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right: and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” First, the sense of the term judgments as here intended, which is affliction and chastisement: distinguishing the former

from the latter, as trouble is *not always* sent as correction. Second, *how* these judgments are known to be right; by the feelings which our God causes to accompany them—submission and resignation; and by the state of mind produced, more fervent prayer, stronger faith, and warmer love. Third, the grateful acknowledgment presented, that these afflictions and chastisements, *with* the Holy Spirit's *sanctifying* influence, *express* the faithfulness of God's love.

Being recommended, I laboured in a roomy chapel at the east end of town, the first Lord's-day in December, "proclaiming liberty to the captives, and good tidings to the meek." A blind member *wept* under the word, and several said, "they got on well." Union to Christ and with each other was felt at "His table." And an invitation was given me for two Sabbaths next month. But the following Saturday I went into Buckinghamshire, where, in a picturesque village, I tried to "put forth the precious from the vile;" and "give to each a portion, in due season," according to my Lord's command. The chapel is very neat, erected from the gratuitous design of a London architect. I can but observe the great improvement in the *construction* of such buildings within the last dozen years. A friend here sent my address to the deacon of a church at some distance, and shortly afterwards I was invited there for a Sabbath. Often have I found one journey connected with another, and must acknowledge that my Lord fulfils His promise to "instruct me, and teach me in the way I shall go; to guide me with His eye" (Psalm xxxii.).

The year 1865 I *commenced* ministerially, being on the first and also eighth of January fully occupied in "the King's business" in London, E. That mighty promise, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass: and as thy days, so shall thy strength be," was my text in the first morning; and it was said by some that my discourse "had been to them a word in season." While "shewing forth our Lord's death," we were favoured with the joy as well as the sorrow of faith, for we con-

doled with Him in His sufferings, and participated a little in the triumph connected with His death. If our Redeemer and His disciples *sang before* His dread struggle, anticipating victory, have we not *greater* reason to do so *since* He conquered sin, death, and hell? I was there next Sabbath, with cordial reception, and then requested to take Ordinance-day in February, but could not, having promised a cause at some distance both that and the 22nd instant. When I was there, a deaf member being asked if he had heard me, replied, "Oh, yes; and felt too." But half a dozen were so *very* deaf that *my* voice, for them, was not powerful enough.

In the latter part of this month there was a *very thick* fog and *severe* frost, in both of which I travelled. When I left home, at noon, the 21st, the atmosphere was *very* sombre, and the pavement slippery; but when, by a metropolitan train, I got to Bishop's Road (the passage being unusually sulphurous), and emerged at the Great Western Station, I was as much surrounded by *light* as I had been, in the City Road, by gloom. Arriving at L—, scarcely twenty miles out, I then had a nice walk, partly through fields, having learned that the day had been *bright there* from 8 o'clock. Such contrast I have found in the dispensations of God, both in providence and in grace—dark ones being succeeded by light, so as to change greatly the scene.

Besides, when many times I have nearly lost my foothold, the psalmist's words have occurred to me, and I have exclaimed, "When I said, My foot slippeth, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." And, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not."

On the following Saturday I went, by the North Western, to W—, then, by a branch, to R—, and from thence, in an omnibus, eight miles farther, while snow laid *thick* on the ground, and the road was *frozen*. What a chilling, *tedious* journey was that! Next day I endeavoured, three times, to bring forth things both new and old, from the heavenly storehouse. An old member of the Church there told me that "he received a portion

both morning and afternoon." Visiting his wife, I found she had been *paralyzed* for *twenty years*, so as to be unable to attend the sanctuary during that time. Doubts of her spiritual safety often distressed her, but she evidently possessed the faith of reliance on the Friend of sinners. There was, on Monday morning, a snow storm, and while I was *inside* an excellent conveyance, the cold penetrated my very thick clothing, so as to make my chest *ache*. In what variety of weather have I travelled! occasionally, the heat has seemed scarcely bearable; at other times I have met a *dusty* wind; and, now and then, pouring rain. Yet these changes *faintly* resemble those of my inward frames and feelings, which are aptly expressed by Beddome:—

" Now hot, then cold ;  
In deep distress ; then raptures feel."

Or, as Berridge says, " Hot and cold in half an *hour*."

I was engaged at Soho Chapel, Oxford Street, the second Sabbath and Wednesday evening in February. When, after morning service, I got into the street, a young man, offering his hand, said, " I very much profited by a sermon of yours at Holloway, fifteen months ago; and seeing your name in a magazine for this place to-day, I felt constrained to come." And on my asking him if he had now been benefited, he replied in the affirmative. This was to me encouraging, and another evidence that the Lord sent messages by me to souls in various places. And, on the week-night, the widow of a minister assured me that " my discourse was made to her exceedingly suitable."

At the East End, on the 12th of March, I discoursed in the morning on grace (which is "sovereign favour, unmerited kindness") in its superabundance, in the everlasting covenant, and in the Person and work of Christ for His people—noticing the dying thief as a *wonderful trophy* of His grace, even *while* He (Jesus) was in the *extremity* of shame and suffering! At night I showed that as sin *had* reigned in the hearts and lives of God's people, now grace was supreme (giving Scripture

illustrations of it). And then I set forth the conflict between flesh and Spirit, with the triumph of grace, referring to Romans vii. and viii. An invitation was given me for two Sabbaths, but for them I was engaged elsewhere.

For the last Lord's-day this month I was called into Hampshire. Through fast-falling snow I rode two miles to a chapel on a common, erected long ago, and occupied by a gentlemen whose convictions induced him to resign his living in the Established Church. Though the weather was bitterly cold, yet some hearts were warmed, and several said "they were much blessed through my visit." An aged member, who, during *forty* years had *not* been absent *one* Sabbath, was now confined to her bed with paralyzed legs. I repeated and briefly explained Psalm cxxx. On asking her what more particularly I should pray for, she said, "that Jesus would take me to Himself, or give me resignation to wait His time." She now "felt some consolation." Satan and unbelief sometimes harassed her, but generally she was *stayed* on Christ as *her* Redeemer. Much greater freedom I have had in conversation and prayer with some afflicted Christians, than with others. Anyhow it is more profitable for a minister to *frequent* the "house of mourning, than go once to the house of feasting."

The "widow indeed," at whose house I had a great deal more than "a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick, assured me that "she was greatly *indulged* in the house of God." And she recommended me to a church at some distance, of which she was formerly a member. Soon after, I was invited there for the first Sabbath in May. On the evening previous to that, I was met at the railway station by one with whom I had a delightful walk, principally through fields, to H——, as he informed me how and when God "called him by His grace," who, when in middle life, was a great sinner and an infidel, I was constrained to exclaim,

"Wonders of grace to God belong,  
Repeat His mercies in your song."

My testimony was most cordially received, and was desired for several Lord's-days in June, but I had promised them in a southern suburb. An invalid told me that he was healthy and strong, uninterruptedly, till *eighty* years old, and *constantly* attended the chapel for half a century; but then, in frosty weather, while close to his back door, he slipped down, and fractured his thigh bone, which kept him a prisoner in his house.

Called to a town in Buckinghamshire for Ordinance-day, in April, I went there by an evening train on the Great Western. After preaching both doctrinal and experimental truth, we practised our Lord's command, "Do this in remembrance of me." A good-sized chapel had been *lately* erected, though it was the fourth there built by the Baptists, for, nearly *two hundred* years ago, a small company of believers were formed into a church. The communion cups are a pair of silver goblets, the gift of a friend, about 1690. What a contrast do some causes form to others, in the continuance of their ministers! I have a small volume, in which is written the names of two pastors of a church at C——; one as being so *fifty-four* years successor to his grandfather, who was there *fifty-seven* years. In London, S.E., Dr. Rippon was sixty-three years, and his predecessor, Dr. Gill, fifty-one years, pastor of one church. But *most* Christian societies have had their overseers a short time *comparatively*; and during the *last thirty* years, changes have been *frequent* in many places. Is there not an increasing love of novelty? And, while the number of preachers of *the Gospel* exceeds, in proportion, the influx of population during the present century, *observation* and reading convince me that, as to spirituality, the churches generally, are in a low and lukewarm state.

In July I laboured, in a garden-like district, to set forth the suitability of the Lord Jesus Christ to self-despairing ones; minutely described character; and, ministerially, "gave to each a portion." A Deacon (who is a village preacher) said to me, about noon, "Your subject is a very important one," and the blessed Spirit helped you indeed to treat it clearly and precious,

and the friends, have heard well." And if the countenance and hearty shake of the hand are an index to the feelings, my testimony was by *many* received with comfort and profit on that day. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us. (2 Cor. iv. 7.)

Brother Wyard got me to take his place in the evening of the 12th. But I was again out of town, at W——, on the third Sabbath. The widow of a minister, with others, told me that "the day was to them a really good one." And "a father in Israel" assured me that "he had been entertained and benefited." I learned from him that he had listened to "the ancient and the honourable," now gone to their rest.

At the Annual Meeting of a Benevolent Society, held in Chadwell Street Chapel, Brother M—— gave a most *striking* instance of *confidence* in God, which *he witnessed* when visiting a peculiar case of distress. The occupant of a back room had just been deprived of all his goods, by distraint, and not allowed to keep his *Bible*. When Brother M—— looked around the empty place, he saw these words of Scripture, written by the poor man on the blue wall, "For He hath said, *I* will never leave, nor forsake thee." On being asked what that meant, he replied, "That, sir, is my *Reference Point*," evincing much feeling as he repeated the words. He added, "They took my *Bible*, which is to me *grievous*." The circumstance being mentioned to a few friends, there was soon a sum collected, sufficient to furnish a room for this tried Christian and his little family.

## CHAPTER XI.

A JUNIOR BROUGHT FORWARD—DIVINE FAVOUR, PROVIDENTIAL AND SPIRITUAL—MR. HUNTINGTON—ENGAGEMENTS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT—A PASTOR, WITH DIFFERENT CHANGES—MR. WILKS—MR. COMB—CARRYING MESSAGES—SAUL OF TARSUS—STRENGTH AS MY DAY—MR. HART—EBENEZER—ANTICIPATION.

THERE was a scholar in the large Sabbath-school of which I was one of the superintendents, twenty-seven years ago, who afterwards became a disciple of *Christ*, and made a public profession of his faith by baptism, and joining the Church. It was not very long ere he commenced itinerating, and he was rather early called to the stated ministry at a large village. Now he requested me to occupy his pulpit for one Lord's-day. My efforts to exalt "him whom the Father delighteth to honour," by showing the greatness of His salvation for every sensibly ruined soul, were very acceptable; and hope that I should preach there again was expressed. My hostess informed me that her mother was one of those formed into a church there, by Mr. Stevens, and that, longevity being her only complaint, she died happily at the advanced age of 87 years.

For the first Sabbath in August, I went by train some distance west. The moon was at the *full*, and as it shone brightly upon fields of corn, some of it being in shocks, I was *charmed* by the beauty of the scene, and felt somewhat as the Psalmist did when he exclaimed, "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. "The valleys are covered with corn, they shout for joy, they also sing." But what can I say of His "paths of mercy and truth to His people"? O the riches of His mercy! and how immutable His truth! What depths are there of His wisdom and knowledge



and goodness, even *when* His ways or paths are past finding out!

On the next Lord's-day I was ten miles south-west, preaching in a chapel that was opened by Mr. Huntington, 1797. He possessed a deep and varied experience of the nature and workings of the human heart, with Satan's cunning and powerful temptations; and he largely participated in the sovereign, redundant *grace* of our Triune Jehovah. Such was his capacity of discoursing on the great truths of the Bible, and with so much instruction was he brought forth, that, for about *thirty* years, he attracted in London a very large congregation. The president of a Dissenting college, having heard singular accounts of him, resolved to judge for himself, and, after *listening* to one of his sermons, said, "I believe he has given the sense of the Holy Spirit in his text." It was considered that "he was rather eccentric," and "his natural temper somewhat harsh;" but he was *liberal* in his dealings, and *kind* to the needy.

I was at Brother Wyard's on the third Wednesday, and at Brother Hazelton's, the third Thursday in this month. Ministers employed in many places have been styled "floating lamps." Well, it is surely a honour to be employed by the great *Source* of light to communicate a *few rays* of instruction and comfort to immortals. But on these occasions, especially the *latter*, several who had reached the stature of "*men* in Christ," assured me "they had been *benefited* through my discourse." It is my conviction that if a preacher has much self-conceit, opening a text before a London auditory will indeed lessen it, if not remove it entirely. And I heard an *able* minister say, that he was in the earlier part of his career, during eighteen months, the subject of liberty when *studying* the word, but felt himself greatly straitened while in the pulpit. For myself, on the first Sabbath in September, at C——, I felt some *enlargement* while describing a truly praying soul, and the nature and prevalency of Christ's intercession for such; and was favoured with melting of soul in speaking of His

dolorous sufferings, and celebrating His death. But, in the evening I was as much *bound* in spirit.

Then I "lifted up my voice" in a large chapel in the metropolis, W. My text was a great and precious one, 1 John ii. 27; and I was divinely helped to exert all my powers. A deacon said, "We have had a solemn discourse, and it is indeed a favour to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, as you have set it forth." In the aisle, two staid men cordially addressed me thus, "We have realized the presence of our God; and you had great liberty; thanks to the Lord—it is *His* doing."

God commands His servants to "cast their bread [His word] upon the waters," and they sow the seeds of truth among their hearers (spoken of as waters) depending on His promise, that "they shall find it after many days." And our hearts are occasionally cheered by evidence of its fulfilment. At a public meeting, just now, two young Christians told me that, a year and a half before, they heard me preach in town, from a text which they now repeated, "with much blessing to their souls;" and that several elderly members there acknowledged, "they had a good time then."

A brother who entered the ministry long after myself, had been several years settled in a southern suburb, and favoured with a good measure of prosperity. I took his place on a Sabbath, and was again invited. At the first service, I showed *how* a believer realizes the *paternal* character of God; contrasting therewith the false confidence of a carnal professor. One friend said, "You *searched* us, and then comforted us." I replied, "The surgeon *probes* the wound, if there be proud flesh, before he applies the plaster." Another spoke thus, "I *must* tell you that myself and others, have been much favoured." In the evening, I treated of death, eternal, spiritual, and corporeal; and of the wonderful work of my Lord in abolishing all this for His people. A member said to me, "My soul has had a feast;" and the oldest deacon added, "Your subject is indeed good, and I hope to see you again."

But now being at home two Lord's-days, and without

any engagement, I felt depressed and pensive. It occurring to me, that two hundred years ago, *many* excellent preachers, having left their "livings" for *conscience sake* were prevented doing their beloved work a *considerable* time—some of them with a wife and children, tried with pinching poverty—and others suffering imprisonment in gaol, I became somewhat reconciled to my present position.

In October I was called for a Sabbath to a small town in Hertfordshire. My heart was warmed while I spoke of the suitability and preciousness of Jesus to sin-sick souls; and I noticed *moist* eyes, and also *smiling* faces. An elderly member, who had been very ill, said, with much feeling, "I greatly enjoyed your discourse, and have proved it *good* to be afflicted." The leading deacon remarked, "No doubt the word has been blessed." At night, a brother came into the vestry, and reminded me that, "when he was in great soul-trouble, twelve years before, I wrote him a letter from Risely, which God blessed to his comfort." I pray that my message may be rendered as cutting to the ungodly and self-righteous, as it is healing to the broken-hearted. What pleasure the minister feels when his "fitly-spoken words" are, by divine influence, as nice as "apples of gold in baskets of silver." But the *Saviour's* auditory might well be filled with "*wonder* at the gracious words which proceeded out of *His* mouth."

The first evening in November, I listened to a father in Christ, eighty-two years old. His text was the same as Berridge's the *last* time he preached in London, 1793: "Trust in Him at *all* times; ye people, *pour* out your heart before Him: God is a *Refuge* for us. Selah." (Psalm lxii. 8). The discourse I heard was a rich and warm effusion of experimental truth; and it was the means of strengthening my faith. This pastor laboured first in town at a small chapel, for several years, and his people erected a larger one, where he stayed nine years. But differing from them, decidedly, in a church-matter, he left and was settled at C— between four and five years. His former friends

being now without a pastor, invited him to return, and he did so, spending *twelve* more years with them. Another *great* difference arose, when a party took for him the chapel, rented *twenty-eight* years before; but his stay there was little more than *two* years. Then, for twelvemonths he occupied a village station, above one *hundred* miles off. From thence he removed to a town about thirty miles distant, and laboured there seven years. Invited to a large place, at the seaside, he again shifted. And now, having travelled considerably to preach anniversary sermons, he was a few days among his *old* friends, and affectionately addressed a good company in the chapel, which, thirty-six years before, was erected, and subsequently enlarged for him. Yet he has had another change, and is serving publicly his gracious Master, in his eighty-fourth year at a town north-west.

Soho Chapel, Oxford Street, was the scene of my labour on the first Lord's-day and Wednesday evening in November. I was favoured with considerable freedom, and trust that my sermons comprehended doctrine, experience, and practice. It was remarked by Mr. Wilks, of Moorfields Tabernacle, "that some professors liked *all* doctrine, others *all* experience, while a few would have *all* practice; which resembled *parts only* of a body;" but, said he, "let us have doctrine as the head, experience as the body, and practice as the legs; then we shall have the *whole* man of truth." The first minister at "Soho," Mr. Comb, *excelled* in treating of *justification*. I well remember hearing him in 1840, at Camden Town, from these words, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." And certainly, with a smiling countenance, he set forth the *nature* of that sound, and the spiritual *blessedness* of a *knowledge* thereof. But he once said, that during a *week*, some time previously, he was peculiarly exercised with temptation and darkness of mind; and next Sabbath morning preached in a *very* experimental strain; after which two members told him they were glad he had been *sharply* tried, for that sermon just suited them,

and was the means of doing their souls great good. He thus realized the truth of Paul's words, "If we be afflicted, it is for your consolation." And much to be remembered is the exclamation he uttered when near death, and *absorbed* in a faith's view of his Redeemer: "Glory, majesty, wonderful—ready to save!"

For a fortnight I was silent, and then rather suddenly, called to a western suburb; but evidently my Lord had a message for me to deliver; for while preaching I noticed a middle-aged man *much* affected, and he told a friend that "I had been the means of taking a load off him." Soon afterwards I was in Hertfordshire, where I had been in October; but neither preacher nor hearers were favoured with so much feeling as we were then. What a difference we find in this respect! An old member told me that "he got his portion in the morning," and a sister said "a remark made in the paraphrase exactly suited her," that is, as weights were attached to the palm tree, to promote its growth and fruitfulness, so the Lord applies heavy sorrows and afflictions to His people, called "trees of righteousness," and thereby, with His sanctifying grace, *causes* them to bear more spiritual fruit. Or our troubles and griefs are employed by Him, in the exercise of His love and power, to draw our souls into *closer* communion with himself.

Again at "Soho," on December 17th and 20th, I was requested to plead the cause of the poor at the annual collection. Before prayer I read 2 Cor. ix., and at the close of morning sermon, mentioned four different passages in Scripture, which exhorted to kindness and liberality: "If thy brother be waxen poor, thou shalt relieve him." "I command thee to open thy hand *wide* to thy poor and needy brother." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."

The Deacons said, "the chapter read, and verses quoted, were most suitable," one adding, "if God's word does not induce the people to contribute, nothing will." The sympathy of our Redeemer was included in my

subject, and one said, "I much enjoyed it, feeling I have a *part* in it." At night I described the ministerial warfare in a general and a special sense; the weapons used, truth, faith, prayer; the Source of success, Divine power; and the effects produced, as stated in 2 Cor. x. 5. My text on the week evening was, the bush burned with fire, but was not consumed (Exod. iii. 2), which *spiritually* sets forth the Church of God, in the fire of persecution and affliction; yet *preserved* by Christ's presence, in His *power* to sustain, and His *love* to bless. Those dispensations which are paradoxical to carnal sense and reason, are controlled and used by Him for our realization of the almightiness of His arm, and the tenderness of His heart; so that we are enabled feelingly to say,

"From all our afflictions His glory shall spring;  
And the *deeper* our sorrows, the *louder* we'll sing."

On the next Lord's-day, in an easterly part of town, I preached from these words, "Behold, he prayeth." Saul of Tarsus, here spoken of, was, in his natural state, the *greatest* human enemy Christ ever had. What a singular trophy of sovereign grace! He who exerted all his energies to destroy, if possible, the cause and disciples of Jesus, becomes His *most* laborious servant, and displays the *intensest* love to Him and His people! In the evening I said a little concerning our glorious Saviour, as revealed in patriarchal, prophetic, and apostolic testimony, and in His wisdom, goodness, and power on earth; and then I treated feebly of His amazing work of redeeming His people from sin, hell, and death, in every form. A Christian of fifty years' standing expressed great desire to see this sermon in print.

The death of Lady Lucy Smith, many years a friend of Mr. Jay, of Camberwell, calling him into the country, he asked me to take his pulpit (the last Sabbath in this year). Having just then a slight affection of my throat, I found preaching twice in so large a chapel very trying, but the Lord helped me, physically and mentally, and my voice was heard, while in the morning I retrospected

the Christian's path, and showed *how* he was brought to acknowledge that God was leading him "by the right way to a city of habitation." An elderly member said, "Your discourse is the voice of the Lord to me." At night my theme was, the adorable and precious One, who is "altogether lovely;" and "whose name is as ointment poured forth." Several expressed themselves refreshed; and a Deacon pressed me to partake of his noble hospitality. In conversation respecting the excellence of Hart's hymns, I mentioned my possession of a copy bought at his chapel, 1767, the year before his death, by a *distant* relative, who worshipped there. For *depth* of feeling, in the exercises of the soul as regards both the greatness of human depravity, and the riches of Divine grace and mercy, he is, I think, unequalled as a poet. One of my hearers told a friend that my remarks on 1 Peter i. "were quite edifying." For myself, I have always liked to hear a few explanatory observations on the Scripture read before prayer.

In the previous October, for the first time in all my journeys, I met with a fall (in ascending the steps at Ludgate Hill Station), but was not seriously hurt; and a physician being present where I was (at an anniversary) he gave me his advice. And I must acknowledge the providential care of God when travelling on *foot*, having been offered refreshment by *strangers*, and occasionally a ride, which, to a poor walker, was a *timely* help. Indeed, repeated proofs of His mindfulness have constrained me again and again to exclaim, gratefully, "My God will *never* cease to love me and provide!"

#### A SOLILOQUY.

"And now, Lord, what wait I for? At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—DAVID.

Is there a rest for weary souls,  
Where nothing can disturb their peace?  
Yes, faith the mansion *now* beholds,  
Since Jesus has prepared the place.

Is there a feast to satisfy,  
The *utmost* cravings of the soul?

The marriage supper, far on high,  
Will yield me bliss while ages roll.

Is there a river where my thirst  
Can be for *ever* satisfied?  
Yes, flowing from the Fountain Christ,  
And while He lives it must abide.

Is there a state of glory too,  
Near the bright throne of heaven's King?  
Yes, there, enraptured, I shall view,  
And of His beauties ever sing.

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THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF GRACE.

Long before the World was founded,  
Christ's delights were with us then;  
And His thoughts of peace redounded,  
When we proved *rebellious* men;  
To restore us,  
He was for us *sacrificed*.

His compassions, how abounding  
To the wanderers from His breast!  
Everywhere His eye attending,  
Safe He leads them back to rest;  
Full of mercy,  
Gently chast'ning with His rod.

David's crimes, so foul and horrid,  
They had pardon full and free;  
Mountain-sins are lost and buried,  
In Thy blood's atoning sea;  
Guilty wretches  
Are made kings and priests to God!

The redeemed of every nation,  
Shall Thy mighty acts resound:  
Praise to Thee, Thou great Salvation,  
Must for evermore abound!  
Hallelujah!  
Jesus is with glory crowned!



## CHAPTER XII.

A DARK PATH, WITH STREAKS OF LIGHT—OLD FRIENDS VISITED—  
 A CHRISTIAN PEER—EXERCISES OF TROUBLE, WITH PEACE—  
 DIFFERENT LABOURS, WITH ENCOURAGEMENT—TRAVEL, WITH  
 SPIRITUAL PLEASURE—SUDDEN CALAMITY, AND MERCY, WITH  
 JUDGMENT—EBENEZER—SYMPATHY—STRIKING PROVIDENCE—  
 DIVINE PATRONAGE.—JESUS MY ALL.

EARLY in the second Sabbath of 1866 I was favoured with melting of soul, and drawn out in grateful praise to my covenant God, for His rich and distinguishing love, grace, and mercy. At night, being quite disengaged, I mused on the *darkness* of my path, and asked myself whether I could say with *confidence*, "I will trust, and not be afraid;" for there is much *difference* between quoting Scripture, even as *suitable* to our state, and being enabled to appropriate it by faith to our *present* condition. And I felt so encouraged that I said in humility, to my gracious Lord, Didst *Thou* not *put* me into the ministry? And hast Thou not made some *little* use of me? "Thy goings I cannot see, nor Thy footsteps find," but as Thou hast bidden me to "call upon Thee," I beseech Thee to make a way for me. Two days hence I was invited for a Thursday evening, at the West End. My sermon was on Heb. iv. 9: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." 1. Gospel rest, typified by Canaan. 2. The *entrance*, by faith, of Christians into this rest. 3. Its duration as God *rests* in His love, and Jesus Christ is the same (in all our changes of frame and feeling) yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And there is a *final* aspect of *eternal* rest.

"There shall I bathe my weary soul  
 In *seas* of heavenly rest,  
 And not a *wave* of trouble roll  
 Across my peaceful breast!"

WATTS.

Then for several Lord's-days, I was silent; but one evening while weeping in prayer, the Lord spoke kindly, thus, "Fear not, I will help thee, I will strengthen thee, and uphold thee;" and I felt emboldened to say, in Micah's words, "My God will hear me." And I was soon called to an eastern suburb, where I set forth the different features of character in the worldling, the self-righteous, and the saint. I trust my discourse did not indicate an angry or a bitter spirit, which occasionally I have witnessed. An elder has told me, with regret, that "his first seven years preaching was, principally, declaiming against those who did not think and feel just as himself."

Now a month passed without an engagement. About the middle of it, when very depressed, this verse of Newton's was brought to my mind, and cheered me:

"Can His pity, or His power,  
Suffer thee to pray in vain?  
Wait but His *appointed* hour,  
And thy suit thou shalt *obtain*."

But, continuing without an invitation, my courage gave way, and I thought that what our Lord said to His disciples might well be addressed to me: "How is it ye have no faith?" There is what may be termed, the faith of *judgment*, in distinction from the faith of *feeling*. For the possession of the latter, I am dependent on the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit; but to exercise the former is my duty and privilege, that is, I am to look at, and think of the Lord's former dealings, and His promises, rather than dwell on the greatness and continuance of my difficulty; and I am to *depend* upon *Him*, as able, willing, and faithful to help me through the worst, even while I have to *wait long* for His delivering hand.

I had taken the place of a brother who said, "I desire to hear you;" and a senior, speaking to me very cordially, said he knew a people at N——, "who would be glad of my assistance," and he should communicate with them respecting it. But there was some *delay*, and when application *was* made, the deacons said "they

could and would have invited me had they been written to ten days *earlier*; now they were engaged." Soon afterwards, I went about sixty miles, N.W.; and among my hearers was one who had listened to me in town, and now came six miles to hear what God would say, through me, to his soul. I was favoured, and some others, with three "good times;" (the ordinance of the Lord's Supper being administered after the third sermon) but another preacher stood engaged there for a month, which led to twelve months more.

Being, then, only twenty miles from Risely, I again visited my old friends. The sister who was attacked with paralysis in 1853 (see page 83) remained *nearly* helpless, yet her *general* health was rather *improved*. She informed me that "Satan, and her own unbelief, often depressed her spirit, causing her to fear she was not spiritually right; but, upon the whole a good hope in Christ prevailed." When I observed in a way of sympathy, that her life, bodily, must be a *dull round*, she replied, "It might be *more* so; and I look at cases *worse* than mine, which tends to lessen somewhat the bitterness of my protracted weakness and pain." On a week-evening I gave them a discourse from Psalm cxxvi. 5, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Sowing in spiritual grief, and sorrow for sin, the seeds of faith, hope, and love, shall be accompanied, while here with a measure of joy and peace in Christ; and more fully, where "the *Lamb* will lead us to fountains of living water, and God will wipe away all tears for ever."

Information was given me by one, who spoke from personal knowledge, that thirty years ago there resided a good while in that neighbourhood, a *Nobleman*, who gave strong proofs that he was a lover of "the brethren, as he delighted in assisting them, especially ministers of the Gospel, whose income he knew to be small. An elderly one, having received his bounty during illness, was furnished by him with money, and comfortable apartments at the sea-side, and desired not to return home till he felt *quite* well. This peer called one

evening, at a cottage, and after conversing with the occupant, an old saint, about two hours, made him a *handsome* present. "I fear," said he to my informant, "that his potatoes were spoilt, being so long cooking, but I left that with him which would *more* than compensate him for the loss."

On the the third Sabbath in April, I was at a small town, W. In the morning I described the faintest evidences of possessing an unction from the Holy One; one of which is, *hatred* to sin, *irrespective* of punishment due to it; so that the *greatest* desire is to be *free* from sin, in the *likeness* and *presence* of *Jesus*. At night, I aimed to shew *how* the blessed spirit, "works all things together for the best," and thus connects the various afflictions of His people with the welfare and comfort of their souls. I felt straitened, but it was not observed, and one of brother Foreman's flock said, "The discourse was very precious, exactly suiting me."

Silent next Lord's-day, I was indulged, at breakfast time, with a sweet sense of my Redeemer's love. Oh, how it soothed and cheered my spirit. While walking out the following day, this Scripture was *forcibly* impressed upon my mind, "Let patience have *perfect* work;" and it was explained to me thus: Let patience *keep pace* with the trouble, grief, and distress; *possess* your soul in patience; so that it will *prevail* amidst the *conflict* between faith and unbelief; and *quietly* wait God's time of deliverance. But I am dependant on thee, O Lord, for strength to do this. And now my patience was indeed, sharply tried, as six weeks passed without an invitation. During this time I rose, one morning in a comfortable frame, constrained to sing the praise of my God; but at noon my mind was disturbed; then, again, I realized composure by the application of this verse:

"Sweet, in the confidence of faith,  
To trust His firm decrees.  
Sweet to lie passive in His hands,  
And know no will but His."

TOPLADY.

A fortnight subsequently I was distressed and amazed,

but reading Psalm lxxi., I was enabled to pray as verses 1 and 3, "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be put to confusion." "Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort." And brother Wyard's text and sermon were rendered to me enlivening: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." (Philippians iv. 19).

In June, I was called a few miles out S.E., and discoursed of the blessings set forth in "Waters, wine, and milk," spoken of in Isaiah lv. 1. The first is God's everlasting love represented in Scripture by the metaphor of a river; and allusion is made to Christ as the smitten rock, from whom flow the waters of salvation; the second intends the wine of atonement and of consolation; and the third, "the sincere milk of the word," implying the sweetest, tenderest promises, and declarations, for babes in grace. A deacon told me, "the people fared well." Next Sabbath, I laboured in a S.W. suburb. One said, "I received a message from God through your sermon." In the second service I spoke of Christ as the foundation of His temple, and the corner stone, uniting the whole; and then described the building of the stones. A very intelligent brother said, "I must tell you that I have listened with great pleasure." But then came three silent Lord's-days; and I realized great struggles of faith and unbelief; yet sometimes I was favoured with calmness and resignation. To "glory in tribulation," I felt the need of a large influx as of Christ's strength, and he gave me a *measure* of joy and triumph.

During three previous years, I had occupied many spare hours in writing my memoirs, and since last January, being *chiefly dis-engaged* in preaching, I *re-wrote* the whole. From a conviction it was my Lord's will I should publish it, and being encouraged by several brethren competent to judge, I resolved to bring it out, and in three parts, as most suitable to the far greater part of those willing to purchase it. God makes use of little ones, and it was my prayer and hope that

he would bless my feeble effort. And I have received several invitations to preach in consequence of its circulation.

Some light shone on my ministerial path in July, as Brother Wyard introduced me to a village cause, in Kent; but there was *not* the appearance of its being the Divine will that I should *settle* there, for after my second Sabbath there, and being asked for the next Sunday only, I was requested to go for a month, commencing Aug. 26th, to a town, one hundred and twenty miles, north-west; and though I continued, *till then*, supplying in Kent, yet I did not afterwards preach there till October 21st; and I went there, for November 18th, and December 2nd, when being invited for *two* Lord's-days, I had to decline, *having promised four* Sabbaths elsewhere.

One Saturday, as I crossed a park, and field, to reach D—, waving corn attracted my particular attention, and the Lord Jesus indulged me with sweet communion, fixing my mind upon Himself as the *Bread of life*. And I felt constrained to praise Him *more* for His sovereign loving kindness to my soul, than for the display *now before* me of his yearly bounty. But how soon there is a withdrawal, or I quickly lose *my hold* of Him, as to *sensible* enjoyment. I must say, with Joseph Hart, "More *frequent* let thy visits be, or let them *longer* last!" The next morning, my mind was divided between two texts, nor could I *fix* on one till the second hymn was half sung; but I was favoured with enlargement, and much *savour* accompanied my discourse. A deacon said to another, "He preached as though he was at our prayer-meeting last Thursday;" and a member added, "you spoke as if you had been by my bedside just before I rose." And an itinerant, from London, said to me, "I have found it good to be here." The great Toplady, on a Sabbath morning, *lost his arranged thoughts*, his mind being then *disordered*; but during the service of praise, had another text opened to him, from which he preached with great freedom; which sermon was much blessed.

Respecting W——, on my first Monday there, as I returned from visiting an old friend at B——, a stranger, who was an occasional preacher, passing in his chaise, got out of it, and addressing me cordially, said, “he must tell me that, on the previous morning, he was greatly interested, and profited by my discourse,” which was on the Holy Spirit, His anointing, its sufficiency, its abidence (John ii. 27). And a neighbouring minister on a week-night, remarked, the “sermon was good, and the manner of delivering it engaging.” After the services of my second Lord’s-day there, a church-meeting was held, and then the senior deacon informed me that their funds necessitated their having supplies from towns much nearer to them than London.

What unexpected tidings occasionally reach us! On the last Sabbath-noon, a note from my son, reached me, acquainting me but very partially that something had befallen his mother; and the next day I got home to find her *prostrated*, having been eight days previously, while returning from chapel, knocked down by a hansom cab-horse, and considerably injured. But *mercy* was mingled with judgment, as she met with the *kindest* sympathy and assistance; and one month afterwards was able to go to the house of God. She told me that her *consciousness* was preserved while she was *under* the horse, and she felt herself to be in the Lord’s hand’s; these lines immediately recurring to her:

“Not a single shaft can hit,  
Till the God of love see fit.”

But now *another* trouble came, I being *dis-engaged* four Sabbaths running; and yet there was given to me *two* invitations for the next Lord’s-day, and also for November 4th; and I had *three* different calls for the 11th. It must be noticed that amidst this grief and perplexity, the circulation and sale of my little book proceeded *quicker* than was expected. Some thought *lightly* of it, but the review in a magazine, having very

numerous readers, was, "Mr. Dixon's Life, Experiences, and Labours, will prove edifying to many." Some were purchased in different London chapels, but the greater part in the country, in various towns and villages. And while I received cold treatment from some, many evinced *kind* sympathy, with their wishes for my success, and the Lord's blessing. A stranger wrote me, from Dover, that, "he had read my little book, and hoped to see the other parts, and would try to dispose of some. Having heard of my wife's calamity, and my *disengagements*, he thought sympathy should be shown, and had made a private collection which he now sent me." Surely, our *God influenced* this brother, and thus displayed his mindfulness of our *temporal* needs.

In November and December, I laboured in Sussex, Berkshire and Kent. On the first Sabbath in each month, I joined the disciples in memorializing the death of our Redeemer, founding my address at the latter place on these words, "The Lord's Supper," and treating of the institution, the proper communicants, and the design. One morning before rising, I was indulged with a strong sense of the covenant-love of our triune Jehovah; and at noon, several assured me that my sermon "had been truly a word in season to them." I went into Sussex, December 8th, and preached *eight* times in as many *days*. A deacon conversing with me, said that "in my first discourse I stated what he had not before heard from any preacher, and which he had experienced." Showing *how* "fear hath torment" (John iv. 18), I remarked there was the torment of suspicion and of jealousy; the soul, being suspicious that Jesus does not love him, is distressed; and, observing the manifestation of Jesus's favour to another believer, is *jealous* of such till the Lord smiles on him as his Redeemer, and he realizes his love so perfectly as to cast out slavish fear.

On the last Lord's-day in this year (1866), I was at a suburb, south-east. In the morning, I retrospected the pilgrims' path, noticing some of our difficulties,



trials, and dangers, in connection with divine guidance, strength and comfort. At night I spoke of the rich blessings of the Gospel, for every *hungry* and thirsty soul; and repeated *God's* assurance that, during all our days, his mercy shall heal our diseases, and his goodness supply our needs. A stranger heartily said, "I have had a blessing; may the Lord bless you!" Soon after sun-rise next day, I felt constrained to sing,

"My helper God! I bless His name!  
The same His power, His grace the same  
Thus far His arm hath led me on,  
Thus far I make His mercy known!

MEDLEY.

*A note to one deeply afflicted and tempted.*

Dear brother,—I have often inquired respecting you, and have remembered your soul-distress in my petitions to our Great and merciful High Priest. My path has been strewn with thorns, and my way has been hedged up as with hewn stones. Satan at times has beat *hard* upon me, tempting me strongly to destroy myself, and know the worst; telling me that if I were not a hypocrite, God would not have dealt with me in the manner He has. O the pride and rebellion of my heart, which, by his malicious influence he has wrought to a great pitch! Fiery darts of blasphemy have been injected to my trembling soul, and base and abominable thoughts concerning my glorious and gracious Saviour! Do not think your case is exceptional.

As to the Lord's dealings He has no doubt, in infinite wisdom frustrated my plans, and brought me into sorrow and tribulations, so that David's language has been mine, I looked on my right and left, refuge failed, no man cared (seemed to care) for my soul. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me; Lord, be *Thou* my Helper! And blessed be His name! He has *appeared* as my friend, both spiritually, and temporally. But again, griefs have been my portion, with faith weak in exercise, and patience nearly gone; yet His *arm* has been bared for my deliverance when I have had nothing to look to but His faithful promise, and immutable oath. Yes, He has then, "maintained the hope, and the cause of the afflicted." And how has He endeared Himself to me as my heavenly friend, by the manifestations of love,

mercy, forbearance, and compassion, in my weaknesses, short comings, and trials! His covenant-face has shone through the clouds of sorrow. Out of the *eater* He has brought to my soul *meat*; and out of the *strong* He has given me, by His sanctifying influence, *sweetness*: that fiery trial which threatened to devour my faith, He has made the *medium* of communicating Christ, as the bread and meat of heaven. And, in the *bitterest* affliction He has given me the *sweetest* cordial, the wine of His unchangeing love, and the soothing of His tender sympathy.

You may have often exclaimed with Asaph, Is His mercy clean gone for ever? Will he be favourable *no* more? But you will acknowledge with Him, that it is your *infirmity*. Surely, unbelief is one of our *greatest* enemies. This petition is *suitable* to you, "Lord, I believe, *help* thou mine unbelief". You *do* believe all He has said in the bible concerning *his people*, but are painfully anxious to feel assured, by the blessed spirit's witness that *you are one* of them. How often do Satan, and our own hearts lie against our right. And your brother Jeremiah was in as miserable and desponding a state as *you now* are when he mournfully said, my strength and my hope are *perished* from the Lord. David compared himself to one long dead, but he found that he had *fresh springs* of life in Christ, who restored his soul. Although *your case seems* to yourself peculiar, yet the *prominent* features of it are to be seen in many saints of all ages: for "there hath no temptation or affliction taken you, (nor darkness, nor doubt, nor fear,) but what is *common* to God's people." "And He is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way for your escape." O may the Lord raise your soul to exclaim with David, "he brought me up out of a horrible pit, (of corruption and misery), and out of the miry clay (of fearfulness and despondency); and set my feet upon a rock, (fixed my soul upon Christ as my refuge and salvation), and put a new song of praise in my mouth! Amen.

Early in January, 1867, there was a great deal of snow with very sharp frost, which lasted about four days; but a thaw commenced the first Saturday night, and travelling was so difficult the next morning that I could not get an omnibus, nor find a cab on the stands. But a striking providence awaited me: my train would leave London Bridge station at 9.58., but I had *hobbled* (being lame with gout in the great toe), no farther than Finsbury-square when it wanted only twenty minutes to ten o'clock. Certain of being unable to walk there in time, I begged the Lord to send me help, and soon there came along the road a four-wheeled cab, and I asked the driver if I could ride, when he shook his head, saying, "There are two ladies inside;" but I, apologising, told them I was likely to *lose* the next train, and there would not be another for me till one o'clock. Immediately, the elder lady said, "Get in directly, sir; I remember seeing you some time ago." And she desired the driver to set me down *first* at the station, before he took her to her destination, so that I obtained a ticket without confusion.

On the third Sabbath I occupied the place of a "Master in Israel," and, he being very ill, my labours were there during six Lord's-days and seven Thursday evenings with much acceptance; and a large number of my little book was sold. When returning home one week-night, I heard of a fire being *close* to the house of an *old* friend, and while getting through a crowd to reach it, my watch was stolen (though my coat was buttoned close). The loss of his watch is to a minister a *serious* inconvenience; and, being wakeful in the night, my text (a few hours before) occurred to me, and I said, Do I *now realize* its truth? "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he *trusteth* in Thee," and felt that I could reply in the affirmative; while other cases of ministers losing a watch and more property by thieves, recurred to my mind, so as to prevent murmuring.

This loss of mine being mentioned to several of the leading friends, sympathy was expressed by a private

collection, which enabled me soon to get another Time-piece, and I was a money-gainer by that loss. Thus, again my Lord helped me in time of need.

A few days subsequently, my gracious Master spoke kindly to me in these words of John, (Rev. i. 17), "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last;" which greatly encouraged me. And although it was so great a text, yet I felt constrained to paraphrase these voluminous words on the next Thursday Evening. The countenances of my hearers showed my discourse to be truly welcome, and one said, "I have been brought into the banqueting-house." On the last Sabbath morning, I preached from the gracious assurance of Christ: "My grace is sufficient for thee," &c., and I showed that grace *here* means Christ's favour, *securing* to His people His wisdom, power, mercy, and faithfulness. To this I am a living, though feeble witness. And there was an *expression of concurrence* by several, with my views and feelings.

Having been requested to give more poetry, I here insert a hymn composed by me while my pastor was preaching on the subject of mercy (in 1833), which discourse was very cheering to my spirit.

#### DIVINE MERCY.

Mercy is a *precious* theme;  
 Mercy for us reigns *supreme*;  
 Mercy suits our cases *well*;  
 Mercy we must sing and tell.

Mercy unto *hardened* fools;  
 Mercy to backsliding souls;  
 Mercy to our *vilest* crimes;  
 Mercy o'er guilt's *mountain* climbs.

Mercy listens to our *sigh*;  
 Mercy's *hand* is always *nigh*;  
 Mercy saves from *deepest* woe;  
 Mercy *keeps* and *comforts* too.

Mercy *rescued* Lot from *death*;  
 Mercy *strengthen'd* ABRAM'S *faith*;  
 Mercy *cover'd* in the *flame*  
 Those who trusted *Jesu's* name.

Mercy shone *exceeding* bright  
 In Him who is Truth and Light ;  
 Mercy *triumphed* when He *cried*,  
 When He *groan'd*, and *bled*, and *died*.  
 Mercy show'd a smiling face  
 When He *left* the *deathly* place :  
 When He took the *Conqueror's* seat,  
 Mercy in Him reign'd *complete* !

About the same time I listened with much pleasure to an excellent sermon by my friend Robinson, from Isa lxxiii. 5 : "Mine own arm brought salvation unto me." And at night, the subject resting warmly on my mind I gave vent to my feelings in rhyme.

#### MY SAVIOUR'S CONFLICT AND VICTORY.

How dreadful the struggle, the anguish, and smart,  
 Endur'd by His arm and compassionate heart !  
 But *perfect* salvation my Lord has obtain'd,  
 And hell's mighty *prince* is to His throne chain'd !  
 Isaiah, in vision, His Majesty saw,  
 In blood-stain'd apparel returning from war :  
 Amidst human weakness *divinity* shone ;  
 The wine-press of wrath He had trodden alone.  
 Surrounded with glory and praise, He will reign ;  
 And I, with the ransomed, His presence shall gain.  
 We conquer all foes by *His* power while *here* ;  
 And *there*, we shall triumph with Him *evermore* !

#### EXERCISE AND OBJECT OF FAITH.

By faith I *see*, by faith I *talk*,  
 By faith I *live*, by faith I *walk*,  
 Through heart-felt griefs and mortal pains,  
 To my *full* rest, which yet *remains*.  
 Faith draws refreshment by the way,  
 From One who is my Life and Stay :  
 No stock have I, but all in *Christ*,  
 My King, my Prophet, and my Priest.  
 My path is often dark and rough,  
 My conflicts *seem more* than enough ;  
 But He, my Light, sheds a new ray,  
 And conquers for me ev'ry way.  
 The briars that prick me on the road,  
 He makes them press me *nearer* God ;  
 Thus proving, *while* I'm far from home,  
 I shall to rest *unceasing* come.

