

REMINISCENCES  
OF THIRTY YEARS'  
GOSPEL WORK AND REVIVAL TIMES.



*BY SAMUEL BLOW.*

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KILMARNOCK :  
JOHN RITCHIE, PUBLISHER OF EVANGELISTIC LITERATURE,  
AND THROUGH ALL BOOKSELLERS.

OUTLINES OF ALL,  
**THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE,**

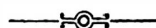
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# REMINISCENCES OF THIRTY YEARS'

## GOSPEL WORK and REVIVAL TIMES.

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### EARLY DAYS.

I WAS born at 13 New Road, Balham, Surrey, on December 2nd, 1837, the youngest of four children. My eldest brother, George, died when in his teens. I have heard my father say, No. 13, was the second or fourth house that was in New Road. I can remember when the road was rough, and when the old windmill at the back of the Inn still bearing that name, on Clapham Common, was pulled down, the rubbish and old material carted and thrown down on the road, to make it more suitable for vehicular traffic. There used to be two pretty little cottages on the left side just before you reached a rustic picturesque gate, overshadowed by an old willow tree at the entrance to Streatham Common. A year or two ago when visiting this particular spot, every vestige of the past was entirely obliterated, and I found it difficult to hit upon the exact place where this gate stood. New streets, shops, and



villas now cover the whole of this once delightful and rural district. I can remember well the old watch-box which used to stand between the top of Cavendish Road and the corner of Clapham Common leading to Balham Hill, and when a ditch ran along on the right-hand side from the top of the Common to the George Inn. Only one or two coaches then ran through Balham once a day to London and not a shop from the corner of Devonshire Road, till you reached the Wheat Sheaf, Upper Tooting. What a contrast then from now, with its crowded thoroughfares, large shops, services of buses and trams. I have picked ears of corn from fields where now Clapham Junction Station is, and I used to go nutting where the Crystal Palace at Norwood now stands.

The first educational instruction I received, was at the National Infant School, then at the top of New Road, now converted into a chapel. This school was conducted by two unmarried sisters named Bristow. When I reached the proper age, I was transferred to the Boys' National School in Streatham Lane, Upper Tooting, to which a Mr. Low, a comparatively young man, had but recently been appointed as master. In the Spring of 1891, being in London, I ran down to Balham, and walked up the yard, and into the old house of 13 New Road, the present tenant kindly inviting me to do so. This visit I recorded in the following verses:—

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HOME RE-VISITED.

Near three decades have passed since last I stood  
Upon this beaten path and garden floor,  
The same old house flanked round with fence of wood,  
Home of my birth, the youngest child of four;  
The vines and sheds and water-butt no more,  
It is the same old spot I loved so well,  
What recollections come as I run o'er  
The chequered past ; no pen its tale could tell,  
And like the heaving sea I felt my bosom swell.

It was the same old house where I had spent  
My childhood days, so blithe, so gay, so free ;  
A father's love my sapling branches bent,  
A mother's love taught me to bow the knee  
To Him, who would my Guardian ever be,  
If in His trust and fear I walked below ;  
Faithful have been these promises to me,  
If they have gone, a parent's love I know  
Has made me what I am, and God would have it so.

'Twas here my lyre its early chords I struck,  
But lacking symphony, I let it lie  
Till I had older grown, then took it up,  
And found it none the worse for laying by ;  
Time had mellowed down its tones, Harmony  
Swept from its glowing chords, music and song  
Responsive to my touch gave melody :  
Brightening life's chequered scenes as I move on,  
Thrilling my inmost soul with passions deep and strong.

I went to Streatham Lane to see if the Old School still remained. To my surprise I found it just as it stood fifty years before, only a portion of the play-ground cut off, and a few houses built at the back. Mr. Low still occupied it as a Voluntary School, but having only five or six pupils. The interior of the school-room remained exactly the same, but every thing in connection with it gave the appearance of desertion. Mr. Low looked thin and terribly care-worn, and struggling on with his six pupils to add a little to his limited income. His health seemed very precarious, and to all appearance the earthly house of his tabernacle was fast breaking up. He spoke feelingly and touchingly of God's kind providential dealings with him and his wife, during a long and severe illness. We stood under the little porch door-way unobserved, and out of sight of the pupils within. When we met, we both silently wept, without either of us exchanging a word or speaking, as we held each other's hand. Personally, I was too full of past recollections and feeling for a moment, to utter a word, and he, though appearing less emotional, took out his pocket handkerchief and wiped away each successive tear as it started, and slowly coursed down his thin pallid cheeks. Over forty-five years had come and gone since I stood last in that too well remembered school-room. What reflection it gave birth too! How old and long-forgotten faces and circumstances revived:

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some sad and painful, others joyous and glad! How many whom I had known, and played with then, I knew had passed away into Eternity! Some like the early flower had been nipped in the bud, others had grown up into manhood; and when everything in connection with their earthly circumstances and prosperity seemed to have reached the highest pitch of expectation and serenity, they unexpectedly and suddenly became the prey of the ruthless and merciless hand of death. Others were scattered—it may be to the four quarters of the globe. But the solemn question still pressed itself forcibly upon my mind, “Where are the majority now?” And the echo seemed to answer, “Where?” My education was exceedingly meagre and poor, and the precarious state of my health prevented me from attending school the greater part of the winter months, especially if the weather was rough and cold.

#### BEGIN TO WORK.

I think I could not have been more than ten years of age when I went out to work; first to the grocery, then the bakery business. It was rather remarkable that my first master and the whole of his family were Roman Catholics. The second, a strict, or close Baptist by religious profession, and a member of old Mr Wells’ Chapel, Walworth Road, the most celebrated Calvinistic preacher of that time.

When older, I often heard this quaint and characteristic hyper-Calvinistic preacher. His preaching seemed to my young mind more destructive than constructive, and the experimental took the place of the doctrinal, and the subjective more than the objective presentation of Christ and the Scriptures characterised his teaching. But this I would say, the bulk of dissenting ministers and their members or communicants forty and fifty years ago, were more pronouncedly evangelical, and decidedly more spiritual and godly, and less worldly in their associations, than the present rising generation of Non-conformists are. There was a simplicity and religious devotedness in their mode of worship and home life, which is not to be found among them at the present day. Alas! the ritual and carnal display of an outward and worldly show, which is fatal to spiritual growth and divine life in the soul, has taken the place of the old non-conformity and simplicity that marked them off as Christians from an ungodly and even a religious world.

We all had to go out to work early in life, as my father sometimes would be in bed for weeks at a time, with severe and evidently painful attacks of gout in his feet. So my beloved and honoured mother had to resort to the use of her needle, but finding such a scanty remuneration for her labour she took up laundry work, and by employing help, she managed to get along in supplying our daily needs and the necessities of life, without getting into debt. Thus she

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continued to maintain the family for some years after the death of my father, which took place about 1855. Then a small annuity was left her by a brother, and with the help I was able to render her, she was enabled to live in comparative comfort the remainder of her life. She passed away at the age of 72, triumphing victoriously, through faith in the atoning death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. I shall ever have to bless God, for a good, kind, and God-fearing mother. All that I am, I owe to her, and her memory is sweet and blessed.

#### LIFE IN THE GREAT CITY.

In 1851, I went to live with a city merchant whose private residence was on Balham Hill. I had not been with him long, when he asked if I would like to go into the city and learn the wholesale warehouse business. After consulting with my mother, I accepted the kind and gratuitous offer, and went into his warehouse. I began in the packing room, then after awhile the entering, and at last the show and sale room. Then later on, I was chosen to go as assistant with the chief traveller, staying at Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, and Belfast. This round we generally accomplished in about a month, then after replenishing with new patterns and stock in the city warehouse, we started off again. I need not say what a change there is in these towns, both

as to their size and business, since then. Also, as to the accommodation in railway travelling, especially in reference to third class trains and carriages. If you wished to go by a third class train, you had to be up at some untimely hour in the morning. Then the incessant and constant delays on the journey, by being kept at some out of the way place on a siding, to allow a fast or express train to pass, and not unusually, coupled on to a huge luggage train.

Being only in my teens I was often thrown into strange company and strong temptations. The Sunday dinners at the Commercial Hotels at that time were usually sumptuous and expensive, sometimes as much as six to ten shillings a head, through the excess of wine drunk. All had to share equally in the wine bill, which of course was extra, whether he only drank one or six glasses. I need not say how this kind of loose living, and repeated drunkenness, ultimately brought some not only into disgrace, but to absolute ruin, and their families to poverty—fulfilling the Scripture which says “Wine is a mocker.”

#### FIRST CONVICTIONS AND AWAKENING.

While on one of these provincial journeys, I heard Arthur Mursell deliver one of his popular and attractive lectures in the large Free Trade Hall, Manchester. I think it was “The Cabman’s Sunday.” At any rate, it was one of those series of striking discourses he had just begun. It was on a Sunday afternoon. The large hall was literally

crammed; I could only find standing room at the bottom of the large platform from which he spoke. I shall never forget the impression that vast concourse of people made upon my mind, when the whole assembly stood up and sang the hymn—"Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah." This hymn was a favourite of our minister at St. Mary's Church, Balham, and frequently sung, and always appreciated by me. As I stood alone, and unknown in that vast congregation two hundred miles away from home, the singing of this particular favourite hymn carried my thoughts instantly back to the old place of my birth, my dear and honoured mother, and St. Mary's Chapel, so vividly and real, that soon I was over-powered with emotion and feeling. I stood and wept like a child, and the truth contained in that hymn has ever since left a lasting and indelible impression on my mind. During these periodical journeys, there developed within me a strong passion to go on the stage as an actor. Usually in each town I became acquainted with some provincial player. These acquaintances were formed by coming in contact with them where I put up. If I had had confidence in my memory, which I knew was some times uncertain and treacherous, I believe nothing would have at that time kept me from trying, at any rate, the theatrical boards as a profession.

I remember when in Edinburgh one evening, seeing and hearing an open air preacher (a rarity then), who became a



notoriety and public character in that town. His name was Robert Flockhart—a daring, bold, unflinching, and faithful open air preacher of the Gospel. He stood alone, outside the Old Theatre with open Bible, preaching to the conscience and hearts of the few hearers who stood looking on, or attentively listening to this peculiar denouncer of sin, and proclaimer of the Gospel of the Grace of God. While I stood looking on, no doubt like most of the rest, I judged him to be no sycophant to, or flatterer of his hearers. I little dreamed then that within twelve or fourteen years I should preach the same Gospel in the streets of that same town. Between the seasons of business, I remained in the city and had comparatively little to do, and on Sunday, as well as week evenings, I went to hear most of the celebrated preachers in St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and on two or three occasions I went to Old Surrey Chapel and heard Newman Hall, then at the height of his popularity, and attracting a crowded congregation. There was a novelty then connected with Mr. Hall's Services, which was exceedingly rare. He held an open air meeting within the railings, just before the service commenced inside.

C. H. Spurgeon was at this time beginning to attract considerable notice in London. One Thursday evening I recollect going to hear him in Park St. Chapel. I certainly was not much taken up with him on that particular occasion, and thought comparatively little of his preaching. To me

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he appeared to be eccentric and extravagantly theatrical. No doubt at this time I was very "churchified," and prejudiced against dissenters. In the winter months, I attended the weekly popular lectures that were delivered at Exeter Hall in connection with the Y. M. C. A. Two lectures and lecturers, made a deep impression on my mind. One was delivered by Morley Punshon, the other by Mr. Chown, of Bradford. Morley Punshon's subject was "Macaulay, the Historian and Poet." Mr. Chown's subject was "William Carey, the Missionary." The enthusiasm manifested at each of the lectures was unprecedented and overpowering, especially after Punshon had quoted, apparently from memory, the "Armada." The whole of the vast assembly that crowded every part of that large Hall rose *en masse*, waved their handkerchiefs, clapped their hands, and applauded. When all was over, and I got some distance down the Strand, I shall never forget how soon all the impression of that lecture and the enthusiasm evaporated, and sank into oblivion. The whole affair appeared evanescent and exceedingly short lived. After this, I heard Punshon lecture on different subjects, and on different occasions with the same result. Mr. Chown's lecture produced quite a different effect, leaving a more lasting impression on my mind. One worked upon the emotional; the other on the mental part of one's nature. Through my going to these lectures in connection with the Y.M.C.A.,

and getting books from the library, from Aldersgate centre, I was dubbed by the young fellows in the warehouse, as "Immortal." Although I may have appeared outwardly moral and a professor of religion, and separated from gross sins and immorality, I was absolutely dead in trespasses and sins, without a spark of divine life in my soul. I had not been "Regenerated" by the Holy Ghost, "Born again."

While in this warehouse, I had a marvellously narrow escape from being killed, or maimed for life, by falling off a lift in the premises. I have always considered my miraculous escape from harm was through the interposition of a kind Providence, and the merciful sparing hand of a God of Love. Never being robust, or strong constitutionally, from 1857 to 1859 I gradually became weaker and weaker, and I found the city air, especially in the hot weather, so detrimental to my health, that I was forced to relinquish all thoughts of city life, and come and live at home with my beloved mother. It was during this prolonged indisposition and apparently blasted prospects in reference to business life, at any rate, that I really became truly awakened to my state as a lost, helpless, undone sinner before God. My convictions were deepened while listening to a stirring sermon delivered by the late C. H. Spurgeon at the Surrey Music Hall.

#### HEARING C. H. SPURGEON.

I had been at the Surrey Gardens before. This only

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increased my curiosity to visit the Gardens, and the large and spacious Music Hall again, only for a widely different purpose. So according I and an old Balhan friend went one Lord's Day. When we reached the spacious building, on entering it we found it already three parts full. In a very short time, and some time before the service began, the area and galleries were literally packed. Such a sea of heads and faces! The sight was truly grand and imposing; there must have been from eight to nine thousand present! When Mr. Spurgeon came forward and said, "Let us pray," the effect was electric. The subdued buzz, and commotion caused by the people taking their seats, and getting into a comfortable position, was instantly suppressed. And after the rustling and motion caused by the vast assembly bowing head or knee in the attitude of prayer, a hush of solemn stillness prevailed the whole building. There was no commotion, or the slightest disturbance during the whole of that memorable service. Mr. Spurgeon's manner seemed different from what it was when I heard him first in Surrey Chapel. He appeared more natural. His voice seemed stronger, more powerful, voluminous, and musical. There was a ring about it that was enchanting and thrilling. His wonderful fluency and natural command of his native language, the ease with which he controlled his voice, and the remarkable and ingenious way in which he embellished his discourse by

introducing occasionally an apt illustration or anecdote were remarkable. He was passionately in earnest, in his solemn appeal, and you fully realized as you saw and heard him, that he was a true man of God. His stirring discourse that morning made a deep and lasting impression on my mind. If previously I had been resting in any self-righteousness of my own, or good works, or moral, religious life, hoping thereby to obtain salvation, all was dispelled that morning and thrown to the moles and bats. Deep down in my inmost soul I felt, and fully realized I was a lost sinner, and nothing short of a "new" life, a "second birth" would bring me to God and heaven. Still I was not saved. For hours at a stretch I would walk round the Park, and on the Common, weeping and praying and crying for full deliverance and liberty of soul, always carrying with me to read for my instruction, "Baxter's Saints' Rest," "Alleine's Alarm," or John Angel James' "Anxious Inquirer," As I read these books, my spiritual awakening only deepened and intensified, and instead of obtaining peace and satisfaction they only seemed to plunge me into despondency and hopeless despair.

#### YOUNG MEN'S MEETING.

Two young fellows about the same age as myself, both belonging to Balham, had passed through a similar experience, but had happily and joyfully obtained full deliverance, and were rejoicing in a knowledge of the

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forgiveness of sins. They not only could say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," but *knew* it, and enjoyed it as a present possession. These two converted young men hired a small empty room in one of the cottages in New Road, and began prayer meetings on Saturday evenings. They invited me with two others to attend. There were only five of us present. It was the first prayer meeting of the kind I had ever seen. Prayer meetings in connection with the "Church of England," to me at least, were unknown and unheard of, hence this prayer meeting without the aid of a prayer-book or a minister, was a novelty. After singing a hymn, we all knelt down, and remained some little time on our knees before any one audibly prayed. Then these two young men engaged earnestly in prayer. There was such an earnestness and sincerity in these prayers; they pierced me through and through like so many burning shafts. God seemed to be so near, I felt it, and trembled like an aspen leaf moved by the wind. Big drops of perspiration rolled down and off my face. I realized the solemn presence of God as I had never done before, and I felt then, and confessed inwardly and silently my sins before God. Then with deep inexpressible emotion, and deep contrition in broken utterances, I cried out—"God be merciful to me a sinner." After the meeting was over, I was prevailed upon by one of the conveners of the meeting to stay and have a quiet talk when the rest were all gone. Mr. Kennedy had

an interesting conversation with me, and pointing out to me several plain Scriptures on the way of salvation, whereby I was gratefully and materially helped. Before this instructive conversation, I had been chiefly occupied with my inward experiences, rather than with Christ. I still continued attending these small weekly prayer meetings and enjoyed them immensely, yet still without obtaining full liberty and conscious peace of soul.

#### CONVERSION TO GOD.

A few months afterward, one beautiful, bright May morning, while I was sitting in our little front room reading the Bible alone, I saw for the first time, that if I only believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, I *was saved* (Acts xvi. 31 ; John iii. 36). I believed God, rested on what He said, and that moment light dawned in my troubled soul. I believed God, and I instantly knew on the authority of His Word, that I had eternal life, and inwardly felt it.

Blessed Saviour, hallowed name,  
Guilty, vile, to Thee I came ;  
Black as Ethiopian born ;  
Barren as any briar or thorn ;  
Hopeless, helpless, did I flee,  
Found a welcome, Lord, in Thee.

While I tried to keep the law,  
Justice only thundered more ;  
Righteousness still sterner grew,  
I more vile and sinful too ;

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Prostrate at Thy feet I lay,  
Thou my ransom price didst pay.

Blessed Saviour ! Peerless One !  
Welcoming the blind and dumb,  
Making leprous souls more clean,  
Cleaner than they e'er had been ;  
Dumb and blind may speak and see  
If they will but come to Thee.

Blessed Saviour ! Risen Lord !  
Worthy Thou to be adored ;  
Ransoming and setting free  
Captive souls eternally.  
Blessed Saviour ! Son of God !  
Thou hast washed me in Thy blood.

#### BEGINNING TO SERVE THE LORD.

My soul was so inexpressibly full of its new-found joy and peace, that on the afternoon of that day, I went to Clapham and purchased some tracts and immediately commenced distributing them.

#### THE SATURDAY MEETINGS FOR PRAYER.

After a time this small room was vacated for a larger and more convenient one, at the bottom of New Road. Here the prayer meetings remarkably increased, not only in numbers, but in interest, so that the room was sometimes nearly full, and attended by persons coming from Upper Tooting and Clapham. The fervency, earnestness and informality of the prayers, the social, homely and family character which characterized and pervaded these Saturday



gatherings, expelled all formality and stiffness, and gave the fullest freedom to the most timid and nervous, so that there was not the least restraint to any who felt desirous of engaging audibly in prayer. We had no president or leaders, neither were any ever *asked* to pray. Special and varied requests for remembrance in prayer were mentioned, as well as thanksgiving asked for distinct and speedy answer given. These requests for prayer as well as thanksgiving increased and no doubt deepened the interest in these Saturday evening gatherings, and at times there seemed remarkable manifestations. There was no Sunday evening services in the church or elsewhere in Balham, when we opened the room for Gospel meetings. The interest in these Gospel services, so deepened, and the attendance so increased, that it became necessary to procure a more commodious place. After much prayer and inquiry the blacksmith's shop was obtained, and for several years good and successful meetings were held there every Lord's day evening. No doubt the novelty of preaching in a blacksmith's shop, attracted and drew many who would not have come otherwise. Regularly, on Saturday nights after the prayer meeting, a few of us prepared this shop for the following evening service, by carrying up the forms, making seats by placing planks along in different positions, and covering up the dirty trough and benches with sacks and matting. It was a wonderful sight to see on a quiet calm summer evening, this place full of attentive

hearers, some standing outside, others at the open door and iron window, without glass or frame, listening to the Word preached. In the winter months the old shop looked even more novel still, when the boarded shutter was up, and the door closed. Some sitting on the narrow benches, with here and there an iron vice or other fixed or moveable implements between, while others had to perch themselves in too close proximity to the furnace, small water trough, and dirty bellows. Then the meagre light, the additional supply made up by candles, gave to the whole scene a weird and picturesque effect which could not easily be forgotten or obliterated from the memory. The many remarkable instances of real blessing that followed these primitive and unostentatious services, eternity alone will reveal.

#### REYNOLD KENNEDY'S HAPPY SERVICE, AND DEATH.

The chief mover in these prayer meetings and gospel services in Balham was Reynold Kennedy, the son of a lawyer, residing in Devonshire Road. After a few years of bright and blessed testimony for Christ, he was suddenly called to his eternal rest. After preaching and distributing tracts in Trafalgar Square during the night of the celebration of the Prince of Wales' marriage, he came home, complained of feeling unwell, and without taking his usual supper went direct to bed. The next morning it was apparent malignant fever had set in. He remained the whole of three days

unconscious, with but one short interval, when he asked to see me, but quickly relapsed into his former semi-unconscious condition, then passed away to be "with the Lord." When the unexpected news of his sudden death was circulated, many, who if not openly, had inwardly laughed at him, and considered him a little weak mentally and over-enthusiastic, were known to weep. His death I have no doubt was the means of the spiritual birth of some in Balham at anyrate. He was a sweet, bright, happy, decided Christian.

Brave Kennedy. Would that my humble lays  
Could sound thy praise. Thy life so true and real,  
So short and brief, just like a sunbeam plays,  
But for awhile. Or notes symphonious steal  
Softly upon the ear, then die. I feel  
To-day the power of that self-absent life  
Against a selfish worldly one appeal,  
No sham life thine, or mimicry of strife,  
Or turning back with thee, but foremost in the fight.

Ah, why that life, with such a lustre shining,  
Should be extinguished, is to us unknown ;  
Blackest clouds they have a silver lining,  
And shadows o'er this earthly pathway thrown,  
The future will the past His dealings own.  
If much is hidden now, and wisely too,  
His ways misunderstood will then be shown ;  
Had we our way, we know what fools will do,  
We are but fools at best, and this He surely knew.

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FIRST MEETING WITH RICE T. HOPKINS.

Soon after my conversion, I became acquainted with Rice T. Hopkins, with whom I have had over thirty years' unbroken fellowship in the Lord. We first met each other as some would say by accident, but evidently providentially, and ordered by the sovereign will of a God of grace. A Balham companion and I, had heard that a Bible Class especially for young men, was to be opened on Lord's day afternoon, in Manor Street, Clapham. On the Saturday evening we were just returning, having been to the rooms to make inquiry as to the time this class was to be held, when just before reaching the Plough Inn, on the Clapham pavement, Hopkins, who was an entire stranger to both of us, put a notice into our hands; advertising this class. We told him we had just come from Manor Street, and purposed being present. Next day there were not more than half-a-dozen present I think, and R. T. Hopkins was one of the number.

## OPEN-AIR WORK BEGUN.

Soon an intimacy sprang up between us, and we became inseparably associated together in Gospel Work on Clapham Common, at Battersea Park, Brixton, Tooting, Croydon, Mitcham Fair, and Epsom Races. Throughout the winter, as well as the summer, we stood at the fountain opposite the Plough Inn, as also on the Common. On Lord's Day afternoons under the large elm tree not far from the pavement,

and reputed to be the one Captain Cook planted. For several years we continued holding these open-air services. Sometimes hundreds would stand round, listening with rapt attention to the message of God's free sovereign Grace, and constantly real and decided cases of conversion were coming under our notice, as the result of these open-air efforts.

Over thirty years have passed since first we met,  
Time has not, neither will it e'er erase  
From memory's page that meeting. We forget  
Much that which fills our lives, yet has no place,  
But like the flakes of snow which crowd in space,  
Then melt away, and well that it is so ;  
Yet there are incidents and things which grace  
And stand like monuments, and grandly shew  
A Providence controls our footsteps here below.

We did not dream that link would form a chain  
Which time and years would only stronger grow,  
And bonds of love a firmer hold would gain,  
Amidst the strife of tongues with friend and foe.

From a boy, I had a taste and strong inclination for drawing and sketching. I remember when my father was living, he had a contract to fit up a temporary wooden structure for a celebrated artist, who was engaged painting a panorama. Unknown to me at that time, my father got hold of some rough pencil sketches I had made, and showed them to this artist. He was so pleased with them, that he made arrangement to take me into his studio to assist in grinding and mixing his paints, and otherwise

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receive tuition from him. Just as I was about to go with him, he failed, and left Balham hurriedly. During my long indisposition this innate gift revived, and for occupation during the day, as my strength permitted, I sketched any object that attracted my attention. When passing the National Gallery, I had read the notice that by a payment of sixpence I could get in on certain days. Having made application, I was admitted on students' days. Two, sometimes three days in the week, I spent, either at Kensington or at the National Galleries, making studies and copying different pictures, and in the evening would arrange to meet Hopkins to go to different places for open-air services, and frequently when alone, and on my way home, I have stood on a seat by myself, and spoken for an hour or more to the crowds that passed, as well as to those who gathered to listen to the Gospel.

#### A SUICIDE ARRESTED.

On one occasion, a man who was on his way to commit suicide by drowning himself in the Thames was arrested, and I believe truly converted. This incident under the title of "Thank God I'm out of Hell," formed one of my earliest contributions to a Gospel Magazine.

I well remember the first week after I had settled peace in my soul, hearing a sermon from the text—"He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the

day of Jesus Christ," which was a great help to me, shewing that as God was the author of my salvation, He would be the continuer of it.

MR. S. A. BLACKWOOD'S BIBLE READINGS.

At this time Mr. Stevenson A. Blackwood—afterwards Sir Arthur Blackwood—had opened his house at Streatham for Gospel services every Monday evening. I attended almost every one of these, which were exceedingly helpful. His Bible expositions, and the clear way in which he presented the Gospel were of untold benefit to me at that early period of my Christian life. Usually the drawing-room, library, hall, and stairs were filled. Sometimes the gentry of the neighbourhood attended, but the audiences were chiefly composed of the middle and working classes. Great blessing accompanied these weekly meetings. Numbers were converted, and they became a kind of rendezvous once a week for Christian fellowship and mutual greeting. At one of these early meetings Archibald Brown, well known for many years in London, was converted. His sister had previously been saved and was an active helper in these services. In after days we frequently came across persons who made themselves known to us as having been converted at some of our open air meetings, in these early times of testimony for the Master. This was often used to stir us up to fresh vigour and earnestness in this sometimes difficult work. One case I will mention as an illustration.



FELLOW-LABOURERS IN THE GOSPEL.

SAMUEL BLOW.

RICE T. HOPKINS.



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THE TORN TRACT.

It was a Good Friday. Reynold Kennedy and several of us were going to Red Hill for a meeting in the open air. While on our way in the train distributing tracts, I presented one to a young man who sat directly opposite me. He accepted it without making any objection, but as soon as he received it he immediately tore it up, and flung the torn pieces out at the carriage window, curtly remarking, "That is what I always do with such rubbish." Then he said, "I have come out to have a day's pleasure, and mean to have it." When we reached the Crystal Palace he got out. Six or more months had passed, and I had forgotten the circumstance, when at the close of one of Mr. Blackwood's meetings, a young man with a crutch came to me, and asked if I recognised him. I replied, "No." Then he related the circumstances in the train on that Good Friday and informed me he was the young man who tore the tract up. That very act had been the means of his awakening. Shortly after, he met with a serious accident; one of his legs had to be partly amputated, and it was while he lay helpless on his bed that the tearing up of the tract, and some portions of Scripture I had quoted, revived, and resulted in his conversion. A cousin came up to stay with us for a few weeks, from Hertford. She was intirely unconcerned about her eternal interest and welfare, but through conversation with her, and relating my own experience and change, she became

interested, then deeply anxious. I took her to one of these Monday evening Gospel Services. Mr. Blackwood spoke with much earnestness and clearness that evening. She saw the truth of the gospel, and during the meeting accepted Christ as her only Saviour. When we got home she ran up to my mother and kissed her, exclaiming with joy, "Aunty, I'm converted." There were also prayer meetings with short addresses held in a room in Manor Street, at eight o'clock, on Lord's day evenings. There was great power in these prayer meetings, and many took part in prayer. It was at one of these meetings I first audibly opened my lips in prayer, in public.

#### FIRST PUBLIC GOSPEL TESTIMONY.

My first speech in public was delivered in White Square, Clapham, a notoriously low and rough neighbourhood. Two town missionaries, Mr. Collins, and Mr. Haughton (author of "Heaven, and how to get there," and other booklets widely known), very earnest workers, with the help of local friends, gathered a goodly number of the aged and infirm to a substantial free tea, with the special object of preaching the Gospel to them. There were five young men asked to give short addresses at this meeting, who had never spoken in public before, and I was one of the five. These five all became public speakers and Gospel preachers. We were all about the same age, ranging from 17 to 20

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years, all recently converted. All the others had a superior education, and spoke correctly and grammatically, while my short word was a rough appeal, with tears running down my cheeks, to those present to get converted, be saved, and be happy for time and eternity. As soon as I had finished, though I noticed some were weeping while I was speaking, I confess I felt I had made a lot of terrible mistakes. In short, I not only felt myself a fool, but I thought all present rightly thought me one too. How I did wish that I might be able to sink through the platform unnoticed, or that a back door was near so that I might slip out. But when the missionary began speaking, he kept referring to the earnest appeals of "our young brother Blow." I got a little cheered, and encouraged myself in the Lord, Unknown to me at that time, there was a woman present who had nursed me when young. She had a good education, and had been well connected; was a capital horse rider when young, but had been unhappy I believe in her marriage, and became as the result a notorious drunkard. My mother in her early struggles to maintain a home for us, engaged her to help her in her laundry work, at the same time doing all she could to seek her reformation. Though occasionally she would break out into short periods of intemperance, she never insulted or annoyed my mother. My beloved mother had a wonderful influence over her, and when in later years, and sometime previous to this tea meeting she

become partially paralysed and incapable of work ; my mother used frequently to go and see her, and converse with her relative to her eternal welfare. God used the Word at this tea meeting to awaken her from her state of indifference. For some time she remained under deep conviction of sin, and one Lord's day evening after I had done speaking in the open air on Clapham Common, a piece of paper was put into my hand, requesting me to go and see a woman who was dying and wanted specially to see me. I went, and found to my surprise it was none other than this poor woman in great agony of soul. I read, and spoke, and prayed with her, and I have no doubt whatever, she trusted Christ, and died rejoicing in Him as her Saviour.

#### FIRST ADDRESS IN THE OPEN AIR.

My first attempt to speak in the open air occurred very shortly after I had spoken at that tea meeting. Two or three young fellows arranged to go to Battersea Park and have an open-air meeting. We decided on that place because it was some distance away from our homes, and we should be unknown ; and those to whom we spoke would be strangers to us, thus anticipating more liberty. While crossing Clapham Common, we found Mr. Haughton had just begun the usual open-air meeting not very far from the church. They were singing a hymn, and I suggested we

should stay and help them, and then proceed to the Park, as soon as the singing of the hymn was finished. Without saying a word to me, Mr. Haughton intimated that "Our young brother Blow, who was present, would say a few words." There I was, asked to do the very thing I was going with others to Battersea Park to avoid. I was ashamed to run away, and felt too nervous to speak. When Mr. Haughton had prayed, he asked me forward. Praying to the Lord to help me, I stepped forward, and for a brief while, spoke to the people, telling them they "must be born again." These were the chief, and I believe about the only Scriptures I used ; and as soon as I felt I had said all I could, I stopped. However rough and unpolished my words may have been, the people listened with remarkable attention, and some manifested a sense of conviction of sin. Now that the ice was broken, as the saying is, from that time I began in full earnest speaking and addressing, people in the open air, sometimes all alone, but most frequently with Rice T. Hopkins.

#### FIRST CONFLICT WITH THE POLICE,

We soon found open air preaching brought reproach and interference, and one of our earliest experiences at an open air meeting was with the police. I had begun a meeting all alone, and stood just within the bounds of the Common, and close to the Plough Inn, only a rail and a small space

dividing me from the crowd of people who continually passed along the pavement, a chief resort after shop closing. I had not been speaking long, when a policeman came very officiously, and unceremoniously told me "You must move off there," and sneeringly suggested that I should go further across the common. Knowing my legal right and liberty to stand where I was, I replied, "God never sent me to speak to trees, but to men who have souls—such as you—who must either live eternally in heaven or in hell." My personal address to him naturally helped to gather a congregation, and I had a good hearing for a long time, to God's message of salvation. All this seemed to irritate the "Man in Blue," and he soon began to show fight. Because I did not at once "move on" into the darkness of the interior of the common, out of sight and out of hearing of my audience, he caught hold of me by the neck, and lifted me off my legs, then flung me clean over the rail. Fortunately, I was rather quick and agile, so using a little skill, I landed safely on my feet. Being now on the public road, my presence caused an obstruction, so I immediately became a "case" for this humane representative of the law, and he quickly marched me off in triumph, with the help of another officer, to the police station, about a mile away. It being Saturday night, the crowds were large who followed, and I frequently heard the remark—"They've got the preacher." While on the way to the station, I struck up singing—

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“ My rest is in heaven, my rest is not here,”  
Then why should I murmur when trials are near ;  
Be hushed, my sad spirit, the worst that can come  
But shortens the journey and hastens me home—  
For the Lion of Judah shall break every chain,  
And give us the vict’ry again and again.”

Many in the crowd who followed us joined with me, and sung heartily this hymn all the way. At the bend of the road to the station, we met the night policemen coming out on duty. These soon formed a line, and so prevented the crowd from coming close to the station. Providentially, the sergeant in charge that night happened to be a Christian, and after briefly explaining my situation on the Common, and the rough treatment I had received, he let me go, informing me the policeman had evidently exceeded his duty. It turned out that this policeman was a Roman Catholic. When relating this circumstance to a friend, some years after, who kept a Tract Dépôt close to the place where I was apprehended, he told me that the sergeant, while walking round on his duty one morning, had been converted through picking up and reading a tract that had been swept out of his shop on to the pavement.

#### THE REVIVAL OF 1859-60.

In the years 1859-60 there was a great revival and awakening. It first began in a small meeting in America, then Ireland, Scotland, and England shared the wave of

blessing. I believe this revival was unprecedented, and was manifestly the work of God. He used human instruments no doubt, but what chiefly characterised this movement, was the marvellous manifestations of the Work of the Holy Ghost. It rolled like a huge wave over the whole land. Apart from preaching, men and women were awakened. Theatres, public halls, and smaller places were crowded with people drawn irresistibly together by a super-human influence. Frequently, men under the influence of drink would come in, and under deep conviction of sin cry aloud for mercy, and many before they left the meetings were not only converted, but free from the previous effects of intoxication. Others who came to ridicule or mock, were convicted of sin, or so awed by the presence of God that they left, afraid to interfere. At all these meetings deep conviction of sin was apparent in the numerous cases of conversion, and while there was singing of hymns by the whole congregation in which they devoutly and reverently joined—real earnest importunate prayer chiefly prevailed. While the speaker was addressing the meeting, groups of brethren were in anti-rooms wrestling with God on their knees for soul-saving power to be manifest among the people. There was real work done for eternity then. Need we wonder there are so many sham converts now, when believing prayer and pointed preaching are pushed out to make room for Solos and entertaining music. As an illustration of God working





REVIVAL PREACHERS AND SOUL WINNERS.

CHARLES H. SPURGEON.      BROWNLOW NORTH.  
DUNCAN MATHIESON.

and saving apart from any human instrumentality, or even preaching; there were from sixteen to twenty young fellows about the same age as myself speaking together, and relating their different experiences, and the way in which they were saved, while we were walking out together on Clapham Common, and not one of the number attributed his conversion to any human instrumentality, but directly to the work of the Holy Spirit either by night, or while at his daily employment, or while teaching the Scriptures. And such cases were not exceptional but general. Besides the prayer meeting in Balham, one was begun in Upper Tooting, and another in Nightingale Lane in a Christian's cottage, and as it happened, close to the road leading to Mr. C. H. Spurgeon's house.

#### MEETING WITH MR. SPURGEON.

One Friday evening—which was the appointed night for this weekly prayer meeting—Mr. Spurgeon was at home, engaged in his study, writing part of his exposition of the Book of Psalms. He thought he heard some one singing. When his servant entered the room, he asked her to pull down the window, saying—“Did you hear some one singing hymns.” She replied—“No, but thought it must be men singing songs in the public house close by.” “Oh no,” said Mr. Spurgeon, “it wasn't song-singing,” and with that he walked out into the lane toward Clapham Common just as

our prayer meeting had closed. While we were going home, just at the bottom of the lane, we saw by the light of a lamp a gentleman talking with one of our number, who had presented him with a tract. We went across to them, and to our surprise we saw it was none other than Mr. Spurgeon making inquiries about the meeting. He laughed heartily when he told us about his maid's remark, and said—"I knew it was not the song of the public house, but the songs of Zion I heard." He walked and chatted freely with us right along the Common, to the top of Balham Hill. He told us he was writing on the Psalms; made inquiry as to what we were doing, and seemed delighted when we told him we were preaching most of the evenings and on Lord's day in the parks and neighbourhood around. He encouraged us to go on in the good work, then shaking hands bidding us "God speed," he returned home.

#### EVANGELISTS AT WORK IN LONDON.

Reginald Radcliffe, Joseph Denham Smith, Richard Weaver, and William Carter were all preaching in London, and much used of God at this time. The two former chiefly among the upper classes, the two latter among the working and lower classes. Wherever these brethren preached, they had immense audiences; especially at Weaver and Carter's meetings there were great crowds. Their meetings were chiefly held in theatres, and such places

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as the working classes were in the habit of attending, and always crowded before the advertised time. Mr. Radcliffe was not what one would call an eloquent, or attractive speaker, but he was remarkably simple in his utterances, while at the same time there was great pathos and spiritual power accompanying his words, and all his addresses were brief and to the point. Mr. Denham Smith was of quite a different stamp. There was an eloquence and refinement, a poetic embellishment, and exquisite charm in his preaching, with a musical ring in his voice, which allured and captivated you as you listened to him. He excelled as an able expositor of the Word of God, and more than any other among the preachers of that time he proclaimed the personal advent of the Lord. He preached this comparatively unknown truth effectively, not only in stirring up Christians, but in the awakening and alarming of the unsaved. Many striking and thrilling incidents occurred in connection with his preaching on this blessed theme, and large numbers were saved and set at liberty. His preaching was greatly used among the upper class, and in setting Christians free from doubts and fears.

Richard Weaver, while he had fluency, and a ready flow of speech, excelled in his striking testimony to God's saving grace, and in relating incidents in connection with his own personal experiences when a miner. . Over an hour at a time he would hold his hearers spell-bound without appearing the least weary or fagged, as he related anecdote after

anecdote, some exceedingly touching and pathetic, melting the meeting into tears. When he poured forth his burning, earnest, impassionate appeals, and warnings, sobs would be heard in different parts of the building from convicted.

J. B. Gough, the temperance orator, was also in England about this time, and I have no doubt won sinners to Christ as well. William Carter worked more independently and locally, and established a Mission on the south side of the Thames. He had great audiences in the Victoria Theatre, commonly known as the "Vic." This was the central place for his preaching for a considerable time. He was known and designated as "The Converted Sweep." Crowds of the roughest, and lowest of the population flocked to hear him preach, and the "Vic" was packed from floor to ceiling, on Lord's day evenings. He had marvellous power in his preaching. His native eloquence—the indescribable way in which he portrayed the sufferings of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane, and on the Cross was most effective and telling, and hundreds were melted and won for Christ. He gathered around him an enthusiastic band of converts and workers. Some notorious characters were converted, and became useful preachers of the Gospel. Some are well-known to this day, as zealous and godly evangelists. The principal evangelists whom I have named as leaders in the great Work of God in 1859-60 have all gone home, most of them dying in harness, and in

advanced years. Only a few weeks ago, Richard Weaver went "up higher," he being the last of the band to enter the Master's presence.

It was at one of the earliest Barnet Conferences that I first met W. P. Lockhart, of Liverpool. We preached together in the open air in the town of Barnet during the Conference. He was then known as "The Converted Cricketer." He was of a manly form and commanding presence, a fine speaker, winning manner and very earnest and practical in what he said. For many years he worked as pastor of a Baptist congregation in Liverpool, still continuing in business, till his death in 1893.

Rice T. Hopkins and I continued for four or five years preaching on Clapham Common and in Battersea Park, visiting Peckham, Mitcham, and Croydon Fairs, and Epsom Races, at all of which we had at times to encounter rough usage and opposition.

#### AT MITCHAM FAIR.

One memorable incident occurred at Mitcham Fair. There were only four of us, one being a retired military officer, of very tall and commanding appearance, like Saul of old, head and shoulders above his fellows. The special service he had that day, was to march up and down in the pleasure-loving crowd, having pinned to his breast and back, large texts of Scripture, "THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH,"

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“YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.” His tall, manly figure and stalwart form, no doubt shielded him from the seething and sometimes angry crowd. His commanding presence and the Word of God he carried, had a marvellous effect for a time, and the people seemed awed. But when we began reading aloud the Word and preaching, soon the effect of our presence and testimony began to tell. Whether it was for the lack of trade, I know not, but the show proprietors became terribly irate and vicious. They looked upon us as the cause of the people not entering their booths, so they beat their drums, blew their trumpets, and made all kinds of discordant sounds with their various instruments, to drown our voices, and attract the people. At one of the largest establishments in the Fair, the clown mimicked the “Parson” and his “Clerk” so admirably and efficiently on the stage, that the people were quite satisfied with the performance, and refused to go inside, the free performance outside being superior to, and cheaper than the inside one. At the conclusion of this mimicry not one walked up the steps into the show. This exasperated the actors still more, and as you may guess we had a full share of their blasphemy and slang, but all evidently to their own detriment and harm financially. I don’t know why it was, but invariably when there was any interruption or opposition at Fairs or Races, I seemed to be the unfortunate individual whom the devil’s emissaries attacked. On this occasion it was so.

## THE SHOWMAN AND THE PREACHERS.

We were on a raised mound, a little above the general level of the fair, when a tremendously big woman—evidently the wife of a proprietor of one of the shows—came deliberately up to me, and began molesting me. I regarded her charitably as “a weaker vessel,” which, however, was not her view of herself. I being lighter and more active, and able to use what would be called “self-defence,” kept her at a distance for a time, but when she could not give me a hard knock with her fists or hands, she began dexterously using her heavily-shod feet, giving me some unmerciful kicks. I had been unmercifully pushed, flung over a rail three feet high, pelted with mud and flour, without thinking of resentment, but I confess the rather serious attacks of this strapping show-woman tempted me to quietly put my foot behind hers and let her down, but this temptation was resisted, and I am ever thankful I had grace given me to do so. But how to keep the woman at bay, or get her to cease the attack, was the difficulty. At last I shouted out “I think you are a great coward to attack a little harmless fellow like me,” and then humorously said, pointing to one of the brethren, “Why don’t you fall out on that big chap there?” This remark seemed to disarm her, and soon her husband appeared, and evidently not agreeing with his wife’s behaviour, laid hold of her, and half-coaxing and half-pushing her, got her into the booth, for which we were truly



thankful. I think it was at this Fair, only on another occasion, I had quite a different experience. We usually found it best when holding a preaching service, to get as far as possible from the noise. We had selected a place which we thought suitable ; the few brethren stood round, forming a nucleus, while I mounted a chair we had borrowed. We sang a hymn, then I began praying audibly. While I was praying, whether intentionally or accidentally, I know not, a man drove a pack of donkeys right through the place where we stood, and before a brother could get to where I was, the donkeys had come between them and me, and before I knew what had transpired, I felt myself suddenly flung from my chair, and, turning a kind of somersault. I came flat down on my back on the grass, my nearly new silk hat lying as flat as a pancake on the grass by the side of my over-turned chair pulpit. At another Fair, we had a large waggon kindly lent to us to preach from. We nailed up pieces of boards to it, and pasted striking texts of Scripture on them. When we came down the next morning, we not only found our boards broken and the texts of Scripture destroyed, but the big waggon literally turned topsy-turvey. How they managed to accomplish it, we did not know, but we found it no easy matter to replace it on its four wheels. Yet amidst such opposition we frequently came across persons who were convicted and converted at these rough places. One day, while I was addressing the

people at Peckham Fair, a brother who accompanied me, while standing among the crowd of listeners, heard a boy say to his mother—"Mother, these are the preachers who made Sarah weep so on Clapham Common."

#### MEETING WITH JOHN HAMBLETON.

It was while preaching the Gospel at Epsom Races I first met with John Hambleton, once a leading actor in England and Australia. He was the author of "Buds, Blossoms, and Fruits of The Revival," a book giving a striking account of the Lord's work. A singular and wonderful man, unflinchingly bold. Like Harrison Ord—another servant of Christ of that time—he had a powerful voice and always commanded large audiences in theatres and halls, and in the open air. His mode of witnessing at Races was to have a small banner on a pole, with texts of Scripture on it, and he would stand for hours with it hoisted up, in a thoroughfare where the traffic was the thickest, and at times take off his hat, and shout out, "*Eternity*." On the occasion of my meeting him, I stood on one side of the road and he on the other, for some hours, at intervals repeating texts, and shouting "ETERNITY, ETERNITY, WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?" The road was often blocked, so they had to stand and unwillingly listen to the warnings given. How these gamblers and betting men, gnashed on us with their teeth, and tried to give us unmerciful cuts with

their whips ! Whoever goes to such places to witness for Christ, must be prepared to take what the enemy gives. During one of these obstructions on the road—the place being crowded with vehicles—the Prince of Wales and his company formed one of the blockade party. I shouted solemnly and loudly so that they were bound to hear it, “Eternity, Eternity, where will you spend Eternity?” The Prince and his party seemed to take it in good part, and without manifesting any resentment. That night we were pelted with flour, eggs, and all kinds of missiles, as we stood in the open street in the centre of the town preaching, until the opposition became so strong and violent that we were broken up and forced to move from our position, followed by a hooting crowd till we got into the house where most of us were staying. When we got inside, some of the brethren were so completely coved with flour, that they looked as if they had come through a blinding snow-storm. Nevertheless we were all happy in soul, and rejoiced at being counted worthy to stand a little abuse for the Lord’s Name. It would be a great blessing to many of the Christian young men of this day, if they would go forth into such crowds holding forth the Word of Life.

#### BAPTIZED BY MR. SPURGEON.

Seeing the baptism of believers by immersion was according to Scripture, and that infant sprinkling was not God’s

institution or in His Word, R. T. Hopkins and I called on Mr. Spurgeon at his residence in Nightingale Lane, asking him if he would kindly baptize us without us becoming members of the Tabernacle. He received us very cordially, seemed to know us well, told us he often heard us shouting at the Fountain opposite the Plough Inn, and sometimes told his coachman to stop so that he might listen a while. He was very happy and chatty, encouraged us to go on, and agreed to baptize us, which he did, some little time after, in the Tabernacle which had not been long opened. I have not forgotten the text he preached from that Thursday night. It was—"I will lead the blind by a way that they know not." Before we left, he said to us, "Do you know Archibald Brown." We replied, "O yes." "Well," said Mr. Spurgeon "Brown wants to come into the College to become a Baptist minister, but the truth is, I don't think he has got the mouth for it." I mention this as an example of how a good, and even a shrewd and discerning man may be deceived, in judging character and latent capabilities. It is well known that Archibald Brown became one of his most successful students, and a popular Baptist minister in London. At this time, R. T. Hopkins, myself, and Archibald Brown, were holding alternately, Gospel Meetings in the vestry room of a Chapel in Brixton Road on Saturday evenings. In the year 1863 or 1864, Mr. Hopkins and I saw Mr. Spurgeon, and he agreed to accept us as students in his College. We

went in free of charge to all the classes, but bore our own expenses in all other matters of board, lodgings, etc. At this time our future path was not clear. Evangelistic work seemed to be chiefly pressing itself upon our minds, and engaging most of our attention, and while attending our classes by day, we were invariably engaged in the evenings in preaching in the open air, at Fairs and Races, and at executions at Old Bailey, Newgate, and Bedford Jails. Some of the most successful workers who have come from "The Pastors' College," were our fellow-students then. Frank White, Wm. Cuff, Sawday, and Archibald Brown, were among the number. Mr. Spurgeon's afternoon chats on Mondays and Fridays, were instructive and enjoyable, full of humour and exquisitely racy. I always thought there was more real matter, originality and pungency in his conversational addresses, than in his pulpit utterances, brilliant and unsurpassed as these were. Personally I admired him most, when sitting delivering his address. One of the most devout, spiritual, and masterly addresses, I think I ever heard him give, was sitting in the parlour of Mr. Olney, at Balham.

#### THE BAPTISMAL REGENERATION CONTROVERSY.

A circumstance in connection with one of the special sermons delivered by Mr. Spurgeon about this time which caused such a universal stir—I refer to the subject of "Baptismal Regeneration"—is well worthy of mention here,

and is characteristic of the devoutness and prayerfulness of the man. I believe it was the custom for Mr Spurgeon to revise his sermons on Monday mornings, and then in the afternoon to come to the class room, and question us on history and other subjects in a homely and friendly way. Entering the room, and taking his seat, on this particular occasion, he told us that he had just been revising this special sermon, and he was certain it would cause a great stir and raise tremendous opposition when it appeared in print. So he suggested that instead of going through the usual course of instruction, we might agree to spend the time in prayer. So the whole of that afternoon was spent in supplicating a blessing on the issue and circulation of that remarkable discourse shewing the absurdity of the Baptismal Regeneration theory. I think it remarkably significant and characteristic of the times, that in most, if not all of the different biographies that have appeared as yet of Mr. Spurgeon, little if anything, has been said on this stirring controversy. Honest, outspoken truth, is never popular long. It is soon ignored, or silently passed over, as unworthy of notice, and latterly condemned as savouring of uncharitableness and lack of brotherly love.

#### GOSPEL LABOURS.

These College days were full of work. During one of our summer vacations I went to Brighton and other places

holding Gospel Services, and when the time had to return to college, I wrote to Mr. Spurgeon, telling him I was exceedingly happy in Gospel Work, and the Lord was giving tokens of blessing in the conversion of souls, and asking if he had any objection if I did not return for that term at anyrate. I received a cordial letter from him personally, telling me if I felt the Lord was blessing and guiding me not to trouble about returning, but to continue working away while the Lord was giving blessing. I never communicated with him after this, or went to the College, so I may say my connection with it then virtually closed. He always seemed very kind, and genial, and on one occasion when he passed me on the Clapham pavement he stopped, took me up beside him in his brougham, and chatted heartily till we reached the Tabernacle.

#### BEFORE THE MAGISTRATES.

During this particular visit to Brighton I refer to, I had another encounter with the police, was brought up before the magistrates of that town, and unjustly fined. A short time previous to this visit, there had been some stir in the town on account of the authorities trying to stop preaching on the beach, and in some measure they had succeeded. Preaching on the beach or anywhere, was not at this time popular or respectable. I might have chosen the beach as a place to preach the Gospel, but not being desirous of coming into collision with the authorities, I thought it wiser to seek

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some quieter place. Accordingly, I found a small street in a rather populous district among the poor, remembering the Scripture: "To the poor the gospel is preached." It being right away from vehicular traffic, and there being few passengers, I concluded there could be no objection. But I had scarcely begun preaching, before a policeman marched up to me and bade me "shut my mouth" and "move off." I told him if I was causing any obstruction or hindering persons passing, I would immediately desist and go elsewhere; but reasoning with this gentleman was quite out of the question. "Preaching was not allowed, and they intended stopping it." Then, after a few personal remarks of not a very complimentary character, he walked away. Those who had gathered round pressed me to continue, as I was causing no obstruction, and a person offered me his doorstep. As it was a few yards further back, I accepted his kind offer. But before I had even begun to address the people, the same policeman returned, violently pushed me off from my doorstep pulpit, and began twisting me round and round, and roughly forcing me along the street, so that at times I found it exceedingly difficult to maintain my equilibrium. As he continued this rough treatment for some time, it created no little stir in the neighbourhood, and drew an increasing crowd. This brought another policeman on the scene, and I soon saw they intended to "run me in" to the police-station. While I was thus being roughly handled and



pushed about, I saw a little way off an inspector. So I made my way to him, and explained matters as well as I could. But it was like the old saying : " Out of the frying-pan, into the fire." This superior officer covered me with abusive epithets, pushing me and twirling me round and round, just like a boy would his spinning-top. Then the peremptory command was given to his two men, to take me off to the station. Immediately I was laid hold of by the arms, and a third policeman followed me behind. Of course, I wanted to walk quietly and orderly ; but this did not seem to satisfy the vicious propensities of my three guardians. They kept pushing me on one side, then on the other, the men on each side of me grasping my arms so tightly that they became painful in the extreme ; while the third man behind me kept boring his knuckles into my back, just as a carpenter would use a gimlet or screw-driver, my weak, fragile body making me an easy tool for their cruel sport. Still, I trust the Lord gave me grace to bear all this patiently and cheerfully.

As soon as we reached the station, it being almost dark. one of the policemen gave me a push inside, and, flinging my small banner, which they had taken from me, on to the stone floor, said, " We'll stop your preaching here." Here my name and address were taken down ; and the person who entered the charge, finding I was staying with a well-known business man in the town, suggested I might be allowed to leave. A



NOTABLE ENGLISH EVANGELISTS  
OF REVIVAL DAYS.

**RICHARD WEAVER.**  
**JOSHUA POOLE.**

**HARRY MOORHOUSE.**  
**BILLY BRAY.**

few days after this, while at breakfast, a policeman was ushered into the room, and handed me a summons, and the following morning I had to appear in court. It soon became known, and the place was crowded with sympathising friends. I soon saw the magistrates and officials were dead against me. The inspector who had so violently assaulted me was, of course, the chief witness against me. His statement was a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end. He denied he swore at me, or even touched me ; and, while I was giving my evidence and asking this official questions, the policeman who stood behind me in the dock, kept pinching the calf of my leg in a most inhuman way. I knew it was no good to report him. He would simply have denied it. He hoped I would have kicked him, and got a case, but grace had taught me to use a more powerful weapon. So while he kept pinching me, I kept praying for him. While I was giving my evidence I quietly unfolded my banner, and turning an entire circle round, exhibited it to the gaze of the whole court, giving them plenty of time to read it. Of course I was fined, but my friend would pay it, so I passed out free. In a long report given in the morning paper of the following day, the text which was on my banner—*"Repent ye, therefore, and be converted,"* appeared also. So the Word of the Lord was spread abroad.

#### SPREAD OF THE REVIVAL.

The Revival had spread all over the country, and

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continued blessing in the conversion of souls was reported in a small weekly paper called "The Revival," since incorporated with "The Christian." Several other halls and theatres were opened in London, and numbers flocked to hear the preaching in each of these places. Sometimes it happened that persons were appointed to speak, who were certainly not fully adapted to the circumstances, or the spiritual needs of the time, although very popular and attractive speakers. Some were particularly adapted for conducting after-meetings, which were a great factor and means of great blessing in bringing anxious persons to decision. I remember going to hear Paxton Hood one evening at St. James' Hall. He was rather a small man, but excessively energetic and enthusiastic. This sermon seemed to me to have been well studied and carefully prepared, full of illustrations and anecdotes, which were highly polished and too elaborate. One of these was Christmas Evans' striking production—"The Devil in Dry Places." His address was mentally interesting and lucid, but lacked point and above all application. Brownlow North, a converted Scotch nobleman, had been previously holding meetings in this same hall, and the contrast between the two men was very marked. Those who heard the latter once, could never forget him. His dramatic and vigorous movements while he was speaking, his tremendous appeals which fell like a clap of thunder, suddenly startled

up the seared and sleepy conscience of the sinner to his need of a Saviour. His rapid words, flying like red hot bolts, or balls from a cannon, forcing their way into the very heart's quick, producing pangs of conviction, and loud cries for mercy. If ever a man used the plough-share of the Word, Brownlow North did so, and many were awakened.

#### FIRST VISIT TO HASTINGS.

In 1865, R. T. Hopkins and I went to Hastings together, holding meetings in a hall on Lord's day evenings and on the streets; during the week, in the open air, on the beach. After a fortnight, Mr. Hopkins returned to London, and I remained continuing the same kind of work. One night I remember when alone, we had a boisterous meeting on a vacant piece of ground not far from the beach. The opposition was so fierce that I was forced to cease speaking. Soon I was pushed and hustled from off the pile of large stones on which I had been standing, and as I moved homeward the violent mob followed, hooting, yelling, and occasionally flinging nasty missiles at me. At the height of this excitement, providentially, a policeman came to my side, actually to protect and shield me. I was exceedingly thankful when I saw he was disposed in a friendly way toward me, which the crowd soon saw, and became less violent. With his help and by some manœuvring, I managed to slip round a corner, and through the large back

gates of the house where I was staying, and so evaded the crowd. When they found their bird was flown, they soon dispersed. The policeman then made his way into the house, where I was staying. We had a friendly talk, and I found out his wife was a constant attendant at the indoor services. I mention this kindly and generous act of this policeman, because at that time not one policeman, out of a hundred, would have done what this one did. I think nearly without exception they would have sided with the opposers, and then unceremoniously and peremptorily taken up the preacher for causing an interruption. I found constantly that the opposing party in the crowd, soon detected whether the policeman was favouring them or the preacher. If the former, the meeting was sure to be broken up, if the latter, there would be respect shown throughout, and attention given to the Word. On the Lord's day morning, I usually had a meeting among the fishermen, and in the evening in the Market Hall. During the season we had most interesting services, morning and evening, on the beach, which all appeared to be very fruitful and blessed. On several occasions at these beach services we noticed a gentleman who listened very attentively though remaining some little distance off, and it was noticed by several of our helpers that he frequently showed signs of being affected, and would quietly wipe off the tears as they silently coursed down his cheeks. Just before he was leaving the town he

spoke to me, and seemed deeply concerned about his soul, and appointed to meet me at a friend's house. By some mistake I gave him a wrong address, and he left next day. Singularly, he resided in Clapham Park, near my own house, and was one of the wealthy Thorntons, of Clapham Common. Miss Brown, a sister of Archibald Brown, who helped at these beach services, recognised him. Some years after, when she heard he was dying at his house in Brixton, she wrote informing me of it, and said she was sure, if I called, he would gladly see me. This letter followed me from place to place while I was moving through Devonshire, and before it reached me he had died.

#### MEETING WITH MR. SPURGEON'S FATHER AND MOTHER.

While at this time in Hastings, holding these beach services, a happy, motherly-faced lady, came up to me and said, "Do you distribute any of my son's tracts?" I replied, "Never mind about your son just now, but tell me, *Are you a saved woman?*" She gave me rather an evasive reply at first, but latterly she gave me a decided answer in the affirmative, then laughingly said, "C. H. Spurgeon is my son." I gave her a hearty shake of the hand, and said to her, "Why didn't you tell me so at first." "Well," she replied, "I thought I would try and see if you would be content without getting a decided answer." Some time after this, strangely enough, I was in a train on the way to



Clapham, giving away tracts and speaking personally to those in the carriage about personal salvation, and a knowledge of sins forgiven. An old gentleman entered heartily into what I was saying, and confirmed it with a few kindly words, then shook hands with me as he got out of the train. A person who was in the train, and followed, whispered in my ear, "That is Mr. C. H. Spurgeon's father you have been speaking to."

During my visit to Hastings, Dr. Cumming, of prophetic fame, gave some lectures to a select party in a small hall. Like others of his school of prophetic interpretation, he seemed all at sea, with fixed dates, not only on the past, but future fulfillment of events in history, and was exceedingly hazy and indefinite as to the unique character of the present dispensation, and the heavenly calling and hope of the Church. The Roman Catholics had in him a sharp and bitter foe, whom he was attacking and exposing with all the earnest burning enthusiasm and zeal he possessed. Protestants regarded him one of their bold champions, and a staunch upholder and defender of Protestantism and the Reformation. But his popularity was beginning to wane at this time, and his mistakes in fixing dates for the Lord's return, no doubt helped to form the sombre cloud that hung over him and his ministry during the closing scenes of his life. Mr. Wm. Haslam also came and conducted some Gospel Services. He was a lively, energetic and earnest



man. His addresses were always characteristic, he aimed at one object, viz., *the conversion of sinners*. How such a man, preaching earnestly and faithfully that salvation was alone and only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, could possibly sprinkle infants and thank God after he had done so, that the child "*was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven,*" is to me a mystery wholly inexplicable.

#### A FAITHFUL WORKER.

I think it was just a few years before we visited Hastings, at this time, and during the general Revival throughout the country, that a young man in consumption came down for the benefit of his health. Weak and dying as he appeared to be, he began holding meetings in the open air, and in the Market Hall, among the fishermen and their wives. He was the means of accomplishing a remarkable work. The hall used to be filled, and sometimes crowded out, and under his earnest telling appeals, some of the most notorious characters of the place were converted. While labouring in Hastings, he got interested and stirred up in reference to the low condition of the people in the villages around. One place especially was heavily laid upon his heart. Uninvited, if not unknown, he made his way to it. It was then, if not now, several miles from a railway station. When he got out of the train, after walking a bit, he found the distance telling

upon his weak and fragile constitution, but after several restings he at last reached the place, but terribly fatigued and exhausted. On entering the village, in spite of his weakness, he began speaking to the people in the cottages. In one cottage he noticed on the table, a grocer's bag with a text of Scripture printed on it. He immediately inquired particulars, and was informed it came from Mr. N——, a grocer, not far off, a good man. He went direct to the shop, and the grocer and his wife received him with inexpressible joy, saying they had heard about him and the glorious work of God accomplished through him, and that they had been praying that if it was the Lord's will, he might be sent there. Soon an old, but large empty house was taken, and seated in a primitive way. Crowds flocked for miles round to these new and somewhat novel services. A remarkable work began, and spread for miles around. Whole families were converted, and a permanent work remained as the result of this brother's visit. A good-sized building was erected, a church formed, which became the centre of much blessing in the village and the neighbourhood around for many years. I often visited this place, and the Lord not only gathered out a goodly number of hearers, but frequently gave tokens of blessing in conversions.

#### A SAD INCIDENT.

It was on one of these visits to this village, that a painful and solemn incident occurred. I had been pressed to stay

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over another Lord's day. One of my hearers, the husband of a Christian woman, when he heard the notice given out, wrote an insolent letter concerning me to my host, saying he would never darken the doors of the Chapel while I was allowed to preach, for he was not going to have his private character exposed before all the people as it had been done by me on the previous Lord's day. This note my host kept quietly to himself, without mentioning the man or the message to me, till I was just leaving on the following Monday morning. His reason for doing so was in consideration of this man's wife, who was subject to frequent and repeated cruelties, and on whom he vented his revenge when anything offended him, or while under the influence of drink. The man kept his promise. He never crossed the threshold of that preaching place again. The Lord had spoken to him more than once or twice, but he had deliberately refused God's invitations of mercy. Now he seemed left to himself. The reins of his lusts and passions were let loose, and he was allowed to go on unbridled and unchecked in his sinful course. His poor wife seemed to be the chief victim, on whom he heaped his revenge. At last, his unmanly, inhuman conduct towards her, aroused the indignation and enlisted the sympathy of the neighbours on her behalf, and one day when he made a brutal attack on her, for her sake and thinking her life was in danger, he was locked up, and while there, whether stung with remorse or

goaded on by the devil, we know not, he put an end to himself by committing suicide. So he passed into eternity, opening its portals by his own suicidal hand.

#### A PRODIGAL'S CONVERSION.

When any of the converts at this place saw the truth of believer's baptism by immersion, we drove them into Hastings to be baptized. On one of these occasions there was a goodly company, sufficient to fill two brakes. The only one of the number who was unconverted, was the driver of one of these vehicles. On the return journey I elected to ride outside, sitting on the box with him. The result of my conversation with him was, his conversion. He had been a rough man in his time ; had joined the army and deserted, and caused untold grief to his aged mother, who was a true Christian. For many years she had prayed she might see him saved, before she was called to her eternal rest. As soon as he had found peace, the first thing he did was to visit his mother whom he had not seen for years. When he reached the house, he found her dying. He told her of the great change, and she, with her dying breath exclaimed, "Lord now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation," and then, in the presence of her restored prodigal, she departed to be with the Lord. During my stay at Hastings I visited several villages in Sussex, also assisted Harrison

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Ord in preaching at Tunbridge Wells. He was having large audiences there especially on Lord's day afternoons and evenings, on the Common, in the open air.

THE JUG OF BEER, OR "WET YOUR WHISTLE."

It was a summer evening and I had been advertised to speak in a small room. I had been told it was difficult to get strangers inside, and finding only Christians present, I suggested we should go and have a short open air service. Seeing an open space not far from the room, we went over to it and began singing a hymn. While doing so I found we had taken our stand directly opposite a small public-house. While I was speaking, I saw there was something going on inside the beer-house, and that they intended attacking us. At last one of their number made his appearance from within, carrying in his hand a jug of beer, and pushing his way through the people, he kept interrupting, by blurting out, "Here old flick, take some of this to wet your whistle with." Naturally these remarks caused much laughter among the people. I saw I should have to stop, if the public-house frequenter's antics were not soon put an end to, and his jug of beer disposed of. Finding, as he thought, that he was getting the advantage of me, and spurred on by the jubilant laughter of his companions, he made his way right up to the chair on which I stood, and holding the jug of beer rather close to my mouth, kept

repeating his invitation, to "wet my whistle." For a time I was in doubt what to do. At last I thought I would take the jug of beer, and ask him if he really meant it to be mine. So, congratulating him on his generosity, I accepted the jug, and holding it up before the people, made the man acknowledge that it was now mine. Then thanking him for his liberality, I turned round on my chair and emptied the contents on the ground, immediately returning the jug to the man. This unexpected and undreamed of action, quite confounded both the giver and the people. Outwitted and chagrined, he hurried into the public-house, but many of those who at first took his side followed us into the meeting-room. The result was, we had a crowded meeting and much blessing to souls.

#### PREACHING AT PLYMOUTH.

Mr. Hopkins being a native of Plymouth, and having relatives living there, Devonshire was often the topic of conversation, and gave birth in me at anyrate for a desire to visit that lovely county. Just as we were thinking of visiting it, for gospel work, Mr. Gavin Kirkham, of London, saw Mr. Hopkins and asked if he and I would go to Plymouth and preach Christ at the Agricultural Show that was to be held there. There and then arrangements were made for both of us to go. I think it was in the summer of 1866 that we went to Plymouth, and were entertained by a singular, but very hearty old gentleman, named Babb, with whom we got

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on splendidly. Early in life he had been a curate of the late distinguished Dr. Hawker, but for conscientious reasons withdrew from the Church of England. He built a meeting place by his own house,<sup>^</sup> and for many years and at the time of our visit, gathered a company chiefly composed of elderly ladies and aged Christian people. He was a clever, diligent, scholarly student of the Word, of the old conservative type, and his ministry consisted chiefly of critical exposition and doctrinal teaching. When we used to humorously keep at him about his people not engaging in aggressive efforts, he would laughingly say—"Oh, my sheep are too fat and too old to work." Some of the local ministers had formed a kind of committee, and asked us to come up to their meeting the first evening, but instead, we preferred to go and view the ground, the scene of our future week's work and testimony. We did not wish to be fettered or governed in our service by ministerial officialism, but intended working in our own line of things, as the Lord guided, utilizing the experience we had gained at such large gatherings of people. So with all respect, we gave the committee a wide berth, and began work among the crowd of people who flocked to this great show. The ministerial party went to work also, and on one occasion had the place fixed and everything "cut and dry," in true orthodox fashion. The place they chose to stand on, was much too high. They could not be heard, and were scarcely noticed by the people who were passing below, and to crown

all, one of them drew out his written sermon and began to read it. The whole performance seemed to us to be grotesque and ridiculous, and entirely unfit for such a crowd. On the opening day, when the Prince of Wales attended, the crowds were enormous, and the road leading to the entrance of the Show was blocked. The excitement was so great and the interest of the people so centred on the Prince as he passed, that our tracts were not received with any degree of favour. Seeing this, I unfolded my small banner, tied it to my walking stick, and marched along, carried with the current in the seething crowd, holding it aloft as high as I could, having on it my favourite text, "*Repent ye therefore and be converted.*" Some of the police caught sight of it, and soon compelled me to take it down, and in the circumstances I thought it well to obey "the powers that be." But the Prince had not yet passed, and I was not to be beat, so I went into a little shop close by, bought a ball of string, and noticing an elevated place flanked with a high stone wall, I got on the top of it, tied my banner to the string, let it down about mid-way, and then held it there, while the surging crowd passed on below. Being so conspicuous it attracted a good deal of attention, and when the carriage with the Prince of Wales and party passed, I noticed one of the number draw the attention of the Prince to it, who read it and smiled. Whether he remembered it or not I don't know, but it was the same text, a few years before,



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he had seen on his way to the Epsom Racecourse. So, as I have said sometimes, when referring to these two occasions, I might pose as a "court preacher," or advertise myself like certain purveyors and confectioners, as "patronised by Royalty," and my brief sermons were delivered by "Royal command," from Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords." Soon after this, the Christians meeting in Raleigh St. Hall, Plymouth, rallied round us and showed us much sympathy and fellowship. Dr. Snell who at that time chiefly took the Gospel services on Lord's day evenings in this hall, invited us one morning during the Show week, to breakfast at his house, this being the only suitable and leisure time we had at our disposal, and there we met many Christian friends, with whom we afterwards had much Christian fellowship and association in Gospel work. When the Show closed, Mr. Hopkins returned to London, and I remained, holding meetings in Raleigh St. Hall, and around the neighbourhood, with much blessing from the Lord in conversions. I frequently visited Plymouth and Cornwall, and the north and south of Devon, subsequently to this first visit, and ultimately became resident in the county. I shall only refer to some incidents worth recording, and blessing vouchsafed at some of the places I visited, irrespective of order or date. Here I insert one of several peices of poetry which I wrote, indicating my appreciation of, and admiration for this lovely and picturesque county.

## DEVONIA.

From this high altitude I see afar  
Yon Dorset cliff resplendent in the sun,  
Belting its rugged coast and Portland Bar  
Like a silver cord along the horizon flung ;  
And sea and sky so blended into one  
Harmonious whole, with undefined line,  
Forming one azure pavement. Swiftly run—  
Yon floaters gliding to a foreign clime—  
I envy not their birth, Devonian's shores be mine.

Devonian's shores be mine ! Give me my lyre,  
I'll strike each chord and sound Devonian's praise.  
This very air inspires poetic fire—  
Gives birth to song. Though lowly be my lays,  
A grateful heart its feeble tribute pays  
In simple verse—"Devonian's shores be mine."  
Its ever varying beauty here displays ;  
Its hills and dales in glowing lustre shine,  
Reveal at every gaze a workmanship Divine.

Devonian's shores be mine ! If loved too well  
Our hearts are human. There are ties that bind,  
And make our breast with deep emotion swell ;  
And as the ivy round the oak entwined,  
Love's silken cord a stronger hold doth find.  
As time and age instinctively impart  
Its mellow tints by Providence designed,  
And youth and manly vigour lose their art,  
We shun the whirl of life and grow more fixed in heart.

If not an offspring of your native soil,  
By bonds paternal I am linked to thee,  
And, Phoenix-like, unto to your dust loyal—  
One of your daughters, noble, true, and free,

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Two branches shot from off her native tree  
To live and fructify. They both are thine—  
You claim them as your own. If not blood royal  
They're native born, and offshoots of your vine,  
So marvel not I sing, "Devonia's shores be mine."

Whenever I visited Plymouth the Lord gathered large numbers out, so that Raleigh St. Hall would be filled, not only the gallery but the platform also, with many evident tokens of blessing in the conversion of souls. On Saturday evening I usually had an open-air meeting outside the market gates, also after the meeting in the Hall on Lord's day evening, by the Railway Arch in Union Street. Many of the Christians were stirred up to engage in more aggressive work, and two other halls were ultimately opened, one close to the Quay, and another off Union Street, called Exmouth Hall. James A. Vicary was the chief and most active worker there, and was greatly blessed to conversions.

#### FREE GOSPEL TEA MEETINGS.

Frequently the Christians would get up Free Teas for the poor, and the most degraded and disreputable they could find of both men and women. These Free Teas were most fruitful in the reclaiming as well as turning to God of many precious souls. A day or two previous to these characteristic gatherings, one or two of us would go through the lowest streets, and the different wretched and despicable courts, sing a few verses of a hymn, speak some brief Gospel words

quote appropriate Scriptures, then intimate the Free Tea meeting, and distribute tickets of admission to those who would promise to come. It was a very rare occurrence for those who received a ticket not to come, and usually more came than we invited, whom we allowed to enter if we had sufficient room and provision. After tea was over, one or two of us would address them, pointedly and definitely regarding their souls' salvation. There was nothing in the the speaking savouring of, or approaching to, an entertainment. From beginning to end it was of a distinctly Gospel character, one or two hymns being sung, the rest of the time was taken up in addressing and appealing to consciences and hearts, and I never heard one complain against this course, but thanked us as much for the preaching as the tea. Several bad and abandoned characters were reclaimed, some restored to their homes. Others who appeared irretrievably and hopelessly lost, were I believe eternally saved. At Exeter and Exmouth similar meetings were held, and the result was invariably conversions to God. There was no public appeals for money, the expenses were quietly, and gratuitously met by gifts of Christians, without ostentation or show, and when one tea only was suggested frequently there would be sufficient money for two.

#### A SCOTCH FISHERMAN'S CONVERSION.

While speaking in one of the notoriously low quarters in

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Plymouth—now demolished, and large handsome shops built on the site—I noticed a man listening intently. He looked half-starved, and miserable in the extreme. After I had done speaking, I gave him a ticket to a free tea we were having that night. While speaking to him, I found by his accent he was a Scotchman, hailing from the far north—from a town I had visited and preached in. In a passionate freak, after a quarrel with his wife, he hurriedly left her, joined a vessel, and after some time got into difficulties, falling lower and lower, till he was in the pitiable condition in which I met him. At the meeting he confessed his sin, professed conversion to God, and immediately expressed a desire to return home. A letter was forwarded to a Christian friend whom I knew in the town where he came from, and an answer immediately came saying his story was true, and that he and his family were well-known as respectable fishing people. The result was, he was immediately sent home, and heartily welcomed by his wife and friends, a new creature in Christ. About twelve months after this circumstance I was in Aberdeen, then passed on to the town where this man lived. Standing at the station, with the friend who had come to meet me, was this man, but so altered in appearance that I did not recognise him until told who he was. He gave me a hearty greeting and welcome, and was now “clothed and in his right mind,” following and serving the Lord.

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MR. J. L. HARRIS.

When on a visit for Gospel Services in Plymouth I usually also held meetings in Plympton in the open air, and in a small meeting room. Mr. J. L. Harris then resided there, and had very helpful and instructive Bible Readings once a week in his house. He was a godly, intelligent, and able exponent of the Scriptures, and a writer of exquisite style. He had been a clergyman in the Church of England, holding a living a little way from Plympton, but many years previously gave it up for conscience' sake, and gathered with a feeble few on Lord's days, to break bread in the little room in which I held my indoor meetings. I visited several places in Cornwall, chiefly on the borders of the Tamar, and had large open-air meetings on Lord's day afternoons by the river-side, and in the town after the indoor services were over. We had present then large numbers from the churches and chapels of the town. After one of these evening services, just as I had finished speaking of salvation being by grace alone, without works, a Methodist came up, and after shaking me heartily by the hand, and thanking me for what I had spoken, said—"Works, brother, *works*, WORKS." "Yes," I replied, "Work as hard as you like after you are saved," but "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified, and" to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his *faith* is counted for righteousness." These Scriptures satisfied him for he said no more.

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A TRACT DISTRIBUTOR CONVERTED.

In the family where I was entertained in this town, a daughter attended the Wesleyan Chapel, but was unconverted. On the Saturday evening of my arrival I found this out by her own confession in a conversation with her. On the Lord's day afternoon as she passed along the passage on her way out, I noticed she had a bundle of tracts in her hand. I said to her, "Where are you going?" she replied, "To my district to deliver tracts." "Oh," I said, "I thought you informed me only last night you were not saved." How can you distribute tracts, or converse with people about their salvation when you are not saved yourself. What a solemn thing it would be, if God in His sovereign grace were to bless one of those tracts to the salvation of a precious soul, and you yourself were ultimately to die unsaved, and be eternally lost." I saw she felt the force of my words, so I left her to her own reflections. She was awakened from her carnal security, her conscience began to work, conviction deepened, and the consciousness of her utter helplessness as a lost sinner to do anything pleasing or acceptable to God intensified her conviction of sin. In the middle of the night her anxiety became so great, that she had to get up and go into her mother's bedroom, seeking her prayers and help. She found joy and peace in believing, and became a bright, happy Christian, and an active worker. Both she and her husband went abroad as missionaries.

## OPEN-AIR MEETINGS ON SUNDAY NIGHTS.

Invariably, I conducted an open-air meeting after all indoor services, when the weather was at all favourable. I remember going to one place in South Devon where they had a large Hall, but never gave any open-air testimony, for reasons I need not here take notice of. On the Saturday evening and the Lord's day afternoon, I went round the town distributing special notices, and making the meeting known as well as I possibly could, the result, was the place was full and great interest manifest among the people. I closed about ten minutes before the usual time, and then without having hinted to any one my intentions, I said I was going to have an open-air service, and after naming the particular spot, I continued by saying—"If any present have objections to open-air meetings I trust they will not come and join us. Of course the result of this laconic announcement was, that all followed me to the chosen spot—except one ministerial brother who usually officiated—all joining heartily in the service, and a large, attentive and respectable audience listened for nearly an hour to the Gospel of God's Grace. Twenty-seven years after this visit, I was in the same Hall, and close to the same place I had a similar meeting in the open-air, when a large company gathered round again and listened to the message of peace without even singing a hymn. Many now say, "We must have music and attractive singing to draw the crowd," but "*Preach* the Word," is the divine command and the apostolic practice, and it never fails.



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VISIT TO BRIXHAM.

I shall not forget my first visit to Brixham, and the kindly way I was received by the fishermen there. I arrived rather late on the Saturday evening. They had begun their usual prayer meeting and I slipped in quietly and unnoticed, and remained so till nearly the close of the meeting. As one after another prayed in quick succession, his earnest, brief prayer of simple faith, so remarkable, so childlike and simple, yet breathing such godly reverence and devotion that you could not but feel and realize the presence of the Lord in their midst, and one could not but conclude there would and must be blessing on the following day at the Gospel meeting. The little room was soon crowded out, and we had to get a larger place, and as halls were few then, the only available place was an old auction mart, not over clean, or the stair case very favourable to ascend, the seating meagre enough, nevertheless the people crowded in, and stood on the stairs, and at some of the meetings there was remarkable manifestations of God's power. As the result of this and successive visits, they were crowded out, the little upper room they met in became too small, and through the help of believers in Torquay, and other friends, a good commodious Hall was built.

## BRIXHAM TRAWLERS.

Brave toilers of the deep, unloose your chain,  
Haul up your sails, God speed you o'er the deep,  
Your home is there, your bread is 'neath the main,

And honest toil is better far than sleep :  
Though dangers may imperil life, and keep  
Oft times the heart in anxious thought and fear,  
Lest treacherous rocks or hidden wrecks should sweep  
As oft they do, your valued net and gear,  
Labour and money lost ; often so keen to bear.

Brave toilers of the deep, I love to see  
Your trawlers launched upon the ocean's breast,  
Ploughing its bosom, grand and gallantly  
O'er mountain waves. Then in the hollow's rest  
As if pillowing on the white foam's crest,  
Then rising Samson-like, as if from sleep,  
Meeting the angry billows, opposing test  
At prowess. Nobly your way doth keep.  
Riding on in triumph across the briny deep.

Brave toilers of the deep, an emblem see  
In the varying waves, our life below,  
The ocean of one vast eternity,  
The bourne to which we all must surely go,  
Carried by time's tide and winds we flow  
Ever onward, through squall, and storm, and calm,  
Showers and sunshine, cheered by the Bow  
Of Promise. Though lowering clouds alarm,  
If Christ be at the helm, fearless we are of harm.

#### MEETING WITH H. W. SOLTAU.

It was in 1866 I first met Mr. H. W. Soultau, of Exeter author of "The Tabernacle and its Vessels," and of a splendid Gospel Booklet, entitled—"The Soul and its Difficulties," which has had an extensive circulation, and been greatly blessed to anxious souls. I had been holding

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Gospel Services in Britton Street Meeting Room, Teignmouth, the old chapel, where Mr. George Müller ministered before he went to reside at Bristol. Mr. Soltau used to come to Teignmouth occasionally and hold Bible Readings at a lady's house, and it was there I first met him. He had heard of me through a sister of his own living in Plympton. He gave me a cordial invitation to Exeter, and believing it to be the will of God, we had meetings in the Athænaum, Bedford Circus, and in Cheek Street School-room. This latter place had been recently secured for Gospel testimony. It had been used as a kind of low casino, and was a resort for the most vile and profligate. There was still at the further end of the hall, a small gallery where the musicians used to sit and fiddle while the company danced. Mr. Soltau secured it for the Gospel, and a quick end was thus made of all this work of the devil. In this place we had frequent free teas, preaching the Gospel to those gathered, and it became the birth-place of very many precious souls. On several occasions Mr. Hopkins and I held Gospel meetings together in this city. Large numbers collected, and we managed to secure for three or four Lord's day evenings the large Lower Market. Many hundreds attended these services, though the bulk of the people had to stand or squat on the long benches, there being but few seats. The blessing that followed these meetings was remarkable, and some of the incidents connected with them were solemn

and striking. One person who was converted there, was dead and buried the following Lord's day. One evening at the close we were led to sing the lines—"I do believe, I will believe, that Jesus died for me," &c., seven or eight times without a pause, and it was remarkable what a number attributed afterwards their conversion to this singular proceeding. At Woodbury much blessing was given, and also at Exmouth. The large hall in Exeter Road was invariably filled to its utmost capacity, and the gallery and passages with attentive hearers. Free suppers were given during the winter months to the poor and the unemployed, and Gospel addresses followed. When I resided in Exeter, I pitched and wrought a canvas tent one summer. A goodly number came in to hear the Gospel, but I was not over sanguine as to results. Over twelve years after, a Christian while visiting, came across many who attributed their conversion to those tent meetings, so we do not always see the fruit at once. One Saturday night some mischevious persons cut the guy-ropes, concluding the tent would immediately collapse, but fortunately, there being but little wind, the tent stood intact and our meetings continued.

#### VISIT TO SOUTH MOLTON.

While holding meetings for the preaching of the Gospel in Exeter, I had received pressing invitations to go to South Molton, in North Devon. As there appeared great need

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for Gospel effort there, I went after some consideration and prayer. I do not think I shall ever forget the impression the first Lord's day morning meeting for worship made upon my mind. I got to the little meeting room in good time, and entering I found only the attendant there. Seating myself near the table, where the bread and wine was set, I had a good view of each person as they came in by the door, and walked up the little matted aisle. I had not been seated long, when I was aroused from my contemplations by the heavy footsteps of a person walking on the stone flags outside, and in another moment the folding door opened and a tall figure, with a fine massive head, nearly bald, came right up to the front and sat close to the table. I noticed a peculiar movement he made when placing his hymn book and Bible on the table, then I observed he had but one arm, and a polished steel crook attached to the amputated one. While these observations were giving birth to inward reflections, and thanksgivings for possessing, if not a robust frame and constitution, at least the full use of all my limbs, I heard a noise in the passage, and looking up I saw coming along a tall person led by a boy, and when they had seated themselves I then saw that this brother was totally blind. Several others blind, halt, and crippled followed. The "poor," the "halt," the "blind," and the "maimed" were the chief elements of that little company of worshippers, and I thought it was a literal fulfilment of the Saviour's

words. The brother who had been chiefly instrumental in bringing many of these trophies of Divine Grace to Christ had once been mayor of the town, but after his conversion he gave up all his political and municipal connections and associations, and came out boldly and decidedly on the Lord's side, devoting all his time to the preaching of Christ in the town and neighbourhood. During a great public festivity (I think it was the marriage of the Princess Royal), while the mayor and the principal people of the town were feasting under a large marquee in the open square, this brother, a former mayor, was at the other end preaching the Gospel to the country folk, who had come into town to see the illuminations and other attractions of the day. When the mayor was informed of his occupation, he sent the sergeant of police to ask him to desist, as these proceedings were considered "out of place" on such an occasion. When the sergeant spoke to the Lord's servant, he said—"Am I obstructing the public way?" "Oh no, sir, not in the least, but"—anticipating what was to follow, he replied—"Well, if I am not causing an obstruction I will go on preaching." The sergeant retired, and did not trouble him after that. He left a sweet savour of Christ behind him, and the poor at anyrate lost a kind and generous friend when he was called to rest. I remained in South Molton several months, the Lord sealing the preached Word with much blessing. On Lord's day afternoons, I went out to Ash Well. A meeting

had been for some years established there, and during the summer after the indoor services, we had large open-air meetings on the square. I also occasionally went to Chittlehamholt, and other places around.

#### A PUBLIC BAPTISM.

While I was working in South Molton, Mr Hopkins visited Exeter. He came to South Molton for the Lord's day, and we had a public baptism of believers in the river near the town. A number were immersed by Mr. Hopkins, and this was witnessed by a tremendous crowd, lining the banks and roadway, to whom we preached the Word, the whole company being remarkably quiet and attentive. The report was, that almost the whole town turned out to witness this ordinance of baptism, performed in its original and apostolic fashion. About this time I was laid down with smallpox. The first symptoms I had of it was while staying in Barnstaple for a day or two. During the night I became suddenly ill with nausea. I went early in the morning to a chemist, but what he gave me produced no relief. Those with whom I stayed, and also Mr. Robert Chapman, did all they could to get me to remain, neither they nor I dreaming what was the matter. I determined to go home by the evening bus, there being no railway then to the town. As long as my memory lasts, I shall remember that journey. Every few yards seemed to extend to the length of a mile, and

the rumbling, jolting, and close bus, increased my distress. When I reached my lodgings I immediately went to bed, and soon became delirious, and the next day the doctor pronounced it smallpox, in its most virulent form, and this proved to be too true. When the eruption appeared I was much relieved, and in a few weeks I was up, and able to go forth again.

#### MY VISION.

During my semi-unconscious condition, I had a remarkable "vision." The scene remains as vivid in my mind to-day as it did the night when my imagination gave it birth. I thought I was in the sunny south, with a splendid Italian sky above my head. I could distinctly feel the soft, cooling breeze, fanning my fever-heated brow, as I lay reclining, on a green, mossy sward, beneath an enormous tree, thickly loaded with rich foliage, which was overshadowing and sheltering me from the burning heat of the sun. A little to my left I saw a stupendous arch, covered over with every kind of herbage and flowers. Their variety of tint and colour was exceedingly magnificent, and their rich perfume scented the balmy air and filled it with delicious odour. The scene and place were exquisitely enchanting. As I lay and gazed with admiration at the arch-way, it seemed the only legitimate entrance to the enclosure, where I reclined. It had no doors, or gates, but all was perfectly open for any one to enter. As I looked through the open door-way of



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the arch, just outside, I observed a wide dusty road on which was pouring the burning rays of the meridian sun. In the far distance was a dark sullen serpentine river, rushing with almost lightning speed into the wide open sea. As I intently gazed upon the rough, turbid breast of this foaming river dashing wildly, madly on, I thought it seemed to repel and fling back from its dark, sullen breast, glints of brilliant sunlight. Just as I was wondering what the river could be, I fancied I heard a voice say, "That river you see yonder, is the dark river of death rushing into the ocean of eternity." In another moment I was startled from my reverie by the sound of distant music. As I listened, the sound kept coming nearer and nearer, swelling louder and louder, until the whole atmosphere seemed to vibrate with the grandest symphony of vocal and instrumental music I had ever heard. As the sound drew nearer, I heard the prancing of horses, the countless tramp of feet, and merry peals of laughter. This strange rumbling of sounds naturally excited in me a desire to see what it could all possibly mean, but when I tried to rise and approach the open archway, an irresistible spell seemed to hold me fast to the spot where I lay, so that I was powerless to move. At last, I saw the dusty road become crowded with human life of every age and social position. Many were splendidly and luxuriantly attired. Some were riding in magnificently decorated chariots, drawn by graceful horses, harnessed in rich and costly trappings,

others were walking on foot, but gaily and magnificently dressed. The whole appeared to be a scene of unsurpassing splendour and gaiety. As they rapidly passed on, seemingly drawn by an irresistible power toward the mouth of the dark river, they turned to me, and beckoning with their hands and raising their voices, one and all intreated me to follow in their wake. I partially raised myself, shouting out as loud as I possibly could, "No, you are all madly rushing on to death and Hell." But they all seemed heedless to my cry, and only smiled as they hurried on their way, to the awful precipice, over which, I saw them all plunge headlong into the dark flowing river of death.

In time their feet shall slide,  
Nowhere to hold or hide  
His judgments dire !  
As the Alpine traveller falls  
Swift down the glassy walls,  
Their hopes expire.

What if their rock be high  
Its refuge is a lie,  
And shelter vain ;  
Flung from their dizzy height,  
Doomed to eternal night,  
And endless pain !

His glitt'ring sword He'll whet,  
His hand on vengeance set,  
All mercy fled !  
The curse, the wrath, the bane  
Of everlasting shame,  
And hell their bed.



THE NORTHERN EVANGELISTS.

DONALD MUNRO.  
JOHN SMITH.

DONALD ROSS.  
JAS. W. SMITH.

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Oh ! sinner, now be wise,  
No longer thus despise  
His proffered grace ;  
Lest thou the wicked's gloom  
Should'st share, and hell thy doom,  
And final place !

In 1867 I went with Harrison Ord to Bristol, and had special meetings in a chapel taken by Mr. Henry Groves, with whom we stayed. I remained after brother Ord left, continuing the meetings with encouraging results, and also visited Cardiff on the occasion of the majority of the Marquis of Bute. The town was one scene of festivity and excitement. Thousands flocked from all parts of Wales. My business at this scene of festivity was, to stand alone for hours with a small banner with "Jesus Only" on it, at intervals quoting solemn texts of Scripture to the seething crowds as they passed along. When tired out, I tied my banner to an iron railing and left for Bristol. While distributing tracts in the morning on one of the harbours, I witnessed a sadly, pathetic sight, of a mother weeping and mourning over the lifeless corpse of her only son, a strong manly fellow, whose body had just been dragged from the water, into which he had plunged from the top of one of the masts of a vessel, in his excitement and ambition to accomplish a foolhardy feat at diving. While I write, I think I can hear the pathetic wail of that broken-hearted mother as she cried over his lifeless body, as it lay stretched on the bank,

"Oh my poor boy, Oh my poor boy." His foolhardiness had cost him his life.

#### A LADY PREACHER.

While on my way from Bristol to Bath, and as I was passing through a village, I got into conversation with a person, and learned that a Miss Geraldine Hooper, from Bath, was going to give an address in a coach-house that evening. By the time I reached the place it was well filled, everything looking very comfortable, clean and bright. Shortly a young, attractive and fashionably attired lady appeared, and began the service. Her voice was exceedingly sweet and melodious. She pitched her own tunes, and sang exquisitely. Her address which was on "Blind Bartimus," was evidently carefully studied and prepared, although many of her most telling and clever remarks were borrowed. Her closing appeals were exceedingly pathetic, and I noticed there was scarcely a dry eye in the audience, which was evidently moved under her earnest, enthusiastic address and appeals. I came across her several times after this, when in the zenith of her popularity, and commanding large audiences. She died comparatively young, and no doubt prematurely, through the strain and excitement of her public service. Her addresses were much appreciated, and enthusiastic crowds followed her wherever she spoke, and no doubt many were saved. But, notwithstanding, I confess I fail to see in

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the Word of God any command or precedent for a woman to assume the place of public ministry, and no amount of apparent success can make right what is not the will of God.

#### FIRST VISIT TO SCOTLAND.

R. T. Hopkins had preceded me in the North of Scotland, and after calling at several places, I joined him in Aberdeen. Here we remained, preaching in the open air and in a Mission Hall, which was crowded night after night for several weeks. During these services we received a large number of letters from persons who had received blessing, some whole families testifying to having been saved. During this visit it was the occasion of the "half-yearly Sacrament," when it is considered respectable and proper for all decent people to take the "Communion," irrespective of being "born again." A few evenings previous to this "Communion season," we solemnly appealed each night to those present, not to go if they were not saved, and not sure that they had experienced the new birth, to be honest with God and themselves, though they had received their "tokens," to refrain from participating in that which was only for converted persons. It was remarkable the number who absented themselves and refused to join in the ordinance, and who afterwards attributed their conversion to these remarks, which caused self-examination and conviction. Some of the ministers were terribly angry, condemning our preaching as

“erroneous,” and warned all their hearers to beware of those “new lights.” It was in Aberdeen that I first met with Duncan Matheson and Donald Ross, two remarkably able and godly evangelists, who were being greatly used in the awakening and conversion of souls. The former of these earnest workers was soon after called to his rest. Mr. Ross, although in advanced years, is still preaching with all the energy of youth, and has been greatly used of God for the past twenty years in Canada and the United States. Soon after our visit, he ceased his connection with Presbyterianism, and gave up his place as superintendent of the North East Coast Mission, to serve the Lord, free and unfettered as He might lead, and to gather simply and only in the Name of the Lord Jesus. For many years after this visit, I went to Aberdeen and other towns in the North, and also to the Orkney Islands, preaching the Word. At Montrose and in Forres we preached in a tent, which in these parts was a novelty then, and drew large companies to hear the Gospel. In the latter place an incident occurred at an open air meeting which formed a little leaflet entitled, “I was the fool sir, not you,” and in Dundee another appears in an illustrated tract entitled, “I haven’t got the assurance.”

#### TENT WORK IN GLASGOW.

For several weeks we preached in a large tent pitched in the West end of Glasgow. Every week night and on Lord’s

day evening, numbers filled the tent, stood in the doorway, and crowded round the outside canvas walls. There was a remarkable work of God there, and a number of conversions as the result of that summer's tent campaign, and the few assemblies of believers gathered in the Lord's Name that were in Glasgow at that time, received a large number of young believers to their fellowship.

#### A NEW HALL IN WISHAW.

When these Tent Services closed for the season, we went to open a New Hall, built specially for Gospel Services at Wishaw, a large mining town in Lanarkshire. For six weeks without a break, we continued preaching there night after night. A marvellous wave of blessing rolled over the town, and the neighbourhood, leaving scarcely a house without some token of blessing. In some cases whole families were converted. One night we arranged for a testimony meeting, when numbers stood up and testified of blessing they had received. The simple telling of the story of their own conversion was used of God to awaken and lead to decision not a few who had remained unaffected by the previous meetings. Numbers were baptized, and as the result, great opposition was aroused, and several of the ministers on the following Lord's day preached sermons condemning "Immersion," and seeking to justify "Infant Sprinkling" as the Scriptural mode of baptism, the Roman Catholic priest joining in the general



outcry. But instead of convincing their hearers that infant sprinkling was the Scriptural way of baptism, it led many to examine the Scriptures for themselves, the result being, that many came and asked to be baptized, withdrawing from the Presbyterian Kirk. In the Victoria Hall, the baptistry was near the entrance door. On the occasion of one of these baptismal services there was a great crowd awaiting at the hall, and as soon as the doors below were opened, they rushed up the stone steps into the hall. The open baptistry was guarded by a brother, but before he was aware, he heard a sudden plunge, and looking into the deep tank, he saw only a black cap and two hands above the water. In a minute a tall miner appeared from under the water and climbed out drenched, with the water dripping from him like a dog after a swim. He was helped out, and had to go a long way home in his wet clothes. Next day we learned he was a Roman Catholic, and had come intending to disturb the meeting. Stirling was, I think, one of the hardest and most difficult towns to work I was ever in, bigotted Presbyterianism and excessive self-righteousness making the people think they had no need of the Gospel.

#### VISIT TO ST. ANDREW'S.

When in Dundee we visited the old historical ruin of St. Andrews, and sang, "Oh Christ, He is the Fountain," at the grave of the saintly Samuel Rutherford, whose admirable and

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singularly devout and quaint letters have thrown such a mantle of distinction around his name. How we were here reminded of the dauntless preacher, John Knox, and the troublesome days in which he lived! Weird and awful scenes filled our minds as one showed us the notorious "Bottle Dungeon," where the Lord's suffering saints were confined. Lighting a short piece of tallow candle, he fixed it in a tin candlestick, which he suspended to a long string, letting it drop down as he walked leisurely round the bottle-shaped mouth of this strange place, the light, dim and flickering, made the whole place look dismal in its gloom. How these damp, dark stone walls, seemed to speak, revealing a history of human suffering and lingering deaths.

#### WORK IN BELFAST.

In Belfast the weather being exceedingly fine, I preferred holding all my meetings in the open air, on the Custom House steps, close to the Post Office. For nearly five weeks, night after night, I continued these services without the least interruption, except on one occasion when a Roman Catholic interfered, who was immediately marched out of the crowd. When he became annoying and threatening, soon a lot of strong stalwart fellows surrounded me, forming a cordon, or a kind of body guard, shouting out, "No one shall touch the preacher." A policeman led him off to the station, and I saw in the paper he was fined for causing a disturbance.

## CONVERSIONS IN THE OPEN AIR.

I had distinct tokens of blessing at these services. A night or two before I closed them, a young man asked me if he might be allowed to say a word, when I granted him his request. To my surprise, he related how he was passing by, when he was arrested, convicted, and converted, returning home in his vessel to Barrow a saved man. The simple narration of this man's conversion had a telling effect, and I believe proved a blessing to others. I remember when speaking once in the open air at Plymouth, a young man coming to me at the close informing me he had been blessed at one of our open air services on Clapham Common years before. Had come to live in Plymouth, was an active Christian worker and a superintendent of a Sunday School. I was getting disheartened at seeing little fruit, when a young man passed me on the road to Kensington. Looking at me, he stopped, and inquired if I ever spoke on Clapham Common in the summer? I replied in the affirmative. Then he told me that he came round, not to listen, but to ridicule at one of our meetings, when he was convicted deeply of sin, and ultimately found peace in believing. He informed me he was now a Christian and a Sunday School teacher. I refer to these incidents as an encouragement for any, especially young brethren in Christ, to go on in Gospel work in the open air, which on account of the peculiar circumstances, the ever-changing congregations, and often the opposition,

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tends to make it discouraging and disheartening, especially when no immediate fruit is seen. But the Divine promise is, "My Word which, goeth forth from My mouth, shall not return unto Me void."

#### THE SOUTH OF IRELAND.

From these happy meetings in Belfast I journeyed to the South of Ireland, but there was little access to the people there with the Gospel, and no liberty to preach in the open air. The bulk of the so-called "Protestants" were well-to-do landowners, and many of the Gospel meetings had to be held in drawing-rooms, the audiences being invariably select and aristocratic. At Limerick and Cork the meetings were improved by a goodly number of soldiers that attended them. When driving into Carlow we were marvellously preserved from what might have resulted in a sad accident. We had a frisky horse, a fast trotter. I kept listening to a strange scraping of one of the wheels against the body of the trap. At last my suspicions were aroused that something was wrong, and I determined to get out and walk. After a while the other two did the same, although reluctantly, as they could not detect any flaw about the trap. When we reached the stableyard and got the horse out from the trap, one of the wheels came clean off, and the axle-tree was found severed in two in the box of the wheel. Thus a merciful deliverance was wrought for us. Truly "the angel of the Lord encampeth

round about them that feareth Him and delivereth them." After visiting Kendal, Shap, and other towns, I held meetings for five Lord's days in a large public hall in Middlesborough. Six young persons who were all in a chapel choir were converted. I also held nightly open-air meetings, which were largely attended, and at one of these I had a narrow escape. It was my last meeting, and I was on the Market Square. There were some hundreds of strong, rough men present. For a while they gave apparent attention, but as the meeting proceeded I had a peculiar presentiment that the lull was only the forerunner of a storm of opposition and violence. A stalwart young fellow, a Roman Catholic, approached me, and openly charged me, with having said on a former occasion, that "all Roman Catholics and priests would go to hell." I saw in a moment that this man was the spokesman and leader of an opposing party, who had planned after causing me to cease speaking, to hustle and press me round. Without replying to his false charge, I said at once to the crowd—"Here is a man present who will tell you what God has done for his soul, I am sure you will give him a fair hearing." This for a moment diverted the attention of the people to the man, and while he became a little confused, scarcely knowing what to say, I quietly made my way through the crowd and walked calmly along the street. For the time being, it seemed as if God had blinded the eyes of the enemy to my escape from their midst. Just as I had got outside the

throng, they gave a dreadful yell after me. I walked on, expecting every moment the angry crowd would rush after me. But God kept them, I doubt not, under His control. When I had got some distance along, a Christian, quite a stranger to me, came up and told me I had made a marvellous escape, as they had contemplated crushing me to death.

#### MEMORABLE INCIDENT AT NORWICH.

My first visit to Norwich was made memorable by an incident, I shall not soon forget. I had only that day arrived, and not having a meeting arranged till the Lord's Day, and it being wet, I remained indoors the greater part of the day. In the room where I lodged, there was a copy of the "Life of George Whitefield." As I looked through it, I kept reproaching myself for having such an easy life, while a zealous man like Whitefield was always meeting with opposition, and rebuffs in his ministry. Later on in the evening as it cleared up, I went out to look round the town. When I reached the open market square, seeing the people passing, I could not resist the temptation to hold an open-air meeting. So I stood on a raised stone, and began by giving out a hymn. The people soon gathered round, and just as I was thinking how favourably the people of Norwich received the Gospel, a man suddenly confronted me, and publicly charged me with being everything that was base and vile. He denounced me as a hypocrite, and told

the people I had left my wife and children chargeable to the parish, and had run away with another man's wife. The people evidently believed this man's statements. In a few moments I was hustled off from my stone pulpit, violently pushed, knocked, and elbowed until I felt myself becoming dizzy. I should certainly have fallen down had there not been a moment's lull, when the crowd broke a little, and I stepped through the gap, and hurriedly made my way to the police station close by for shelter. I found the officer in charge was of the same spirit as the crowd, who had hustled and falsely accused me, and he would there and then have hurled me back into the angry mob, who had followed me to the station, had I not threatened to report him at headquarters. And even then, it was not for some time that he let me out by a back way, thus escaping the violent crowd, and safely reaching my lodgings. Next day I learned the cause of this opposition. I had been mistaken for a teetotal lecturer, who had been holding forth in the town, and who it appeared was really guilty of what they had charged to me. This was not the only occasion I had to suffer opposition, through the evildoing of others. Incidents of this kind are not at all uncommon in the experience of those who preach in the open air.

#### FALSE ACCUSATIONS.

On one occasion a man came up to me while the people

were listening attentively to the Gospel, and asked me for the five shillings I owed him, as the result of a bet the previous night. Then in a happy mood, he said : "Come now, you know you lost the bet, be honest and give me the five shillings." The last sentence was uttered in such a realistic way, that the people were almost ready<sup>1</sup> to believe his story. But the Lord gave me a suitable reply for him which so silenced the man, that he hurriedly left me, with the people favourably on my side. At one meeting a wicked man kept disturbing and interrupting me by holding up two pence between his thumb and finger, and shouting out : "Here's tuppence for yer to build yer chapel." I at last took them, and instantly flung them to two boys close by, and laconically asked the man if he had any more to spare, as the boys would be glad of them. This unexpected way of dispensing the man's money soon silenced him, and so disappointed and chagrined was he, that he quickly left me with a larger number of attentive hearers than I had at the beginning.

For several years in succession in the summer months, I preached in tents in Liverpool, where much fruit in conversion followed, and the different assemblies received accessions; also in Sunderland, Saffron Waldon, and other places. I frequently visited Ipswich while Mr. Hopkins lived there, and the Word was much blessed there ; also at Woodbridge, Wickham Market, and in the surrounding neighbourhood.



At the Corn Exchange the meetings were large, both afternoon and evening, on Lord's days.

#### VISIT TO JERSEY.

I visited Jersey twice, the first visit was in 1866, when we engaged the Lyric Hall for Lord's day evenings. The place was very crowded, and on several occasions many had to go away unable to obtain admission. In the afternoons we went through the streets singing hymns, quoting Scriptures, and intimating the Special Services. This novel mode of announcement brought many out of curiosity to the meetings, and I received letters from several persons informing me of blessing received through this singular way of advertisement.

#### THE CROSS-WEARER CONVERTED.

One young lady was attracted to the meeting in this way. She came wearing a large cross, dangling from her neck, which, as she told me afterwards, was to indicate that she was a Christian, when travelling abroad with her father, who was an army officer. At the first meeting this worldly girl became anxious about her soul. The next night she sent in an anonymous request asking me if I would explain how a person could *know* when they were saved. I answered this question by referring to different Scriptures, such as, "He that hath the Son hath life"—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," adding a few remarks as to

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the unchanging character of God and His Word. These Scriptures were used of God, and just before I left the Island I received a letter from her, speaking of the blessing she had received, and enclosing her large black cross, mounted on one side with a smaller silver one, and on the other studded in a similar way, saying she did not need to wear it any longer, as she had now a living Christ in her heart, "the hope of glory." Several Free Teas were given to the poor, with good results. At Weymouth, Blandford, Shaftesbury, and Yeovil, there were manifest tokens of blessing. At the former place in the old British school-room, there was a marvellous stirring among the dry bones. At one meeting a well-known and ill-reputed character cried out aloud for mercy, while I was addressing the people. Before the meeting closed he found Christ, and went away rejoicing. At Yeovil large numbers came round to listen in the open air in the Square. At Westminster we tried to engage the Temperance Hall, but the person who had the letting of it refused, when he heard for what purpose it was required, saying, the people "had the Gospel preached to them already." As I was leaving the village, I noticed an empty house and found the owner lived next door. I took it for a week, paying him the rent in advance. I then went round announcing that a Gospel meeting would be held in that house, and that the people must bring their seats with them. The news soon spread that the hall had been refused, this

increased and deepened interest in the meeting. Some lent lamps, brought candles and chairs, and friends from Melbury brought over a cart load of seats. The room, stairs and passage were crowded, a lot outside around the door and window listened to the Gospel, and in every way the meeting proved a success, and blessing followed.

#### LABOURS IN SOMERSET.

For some years I constantly visited different places in Somerset and Dorset, also the North and South of Devon. I worked in the country districts in each of these counties, and incidents which formed some of my most widely circulated tracts, originated from visits to these places. At Bridford Mills the Lord invariably sealed the Word to the conversion of souls. I suppose it is the general experience of brethren who itinerate, that some places are more favourable than others, and always appear to be ripe for reaping. Prayer, unity and godliness among the Lord's people, no doubt bring about this happy condition of things. I had been invited to go to Drewsteignton. My first meeting there was a remarkable one. Three times I tried to close, for the purpose of thinning the meeting, as it was so packed that we could not get among the anxious. But not one would leave, the power of God was so markedly manifest, and there was such a spirit of prayer among believers who had come to help. It was soul-stirring and refreshing. Christian friends

continued these meetings till a new and more commodious place had to be built. An assembly of Christians was also there formed.

#### EARNEST CHRISTIAN WORKERS.

In my early visits to South Devon, there were two earnest workers whose names were constantly being mentioned, and both left a sweet savour behind, and many monuments of God's saving grace, as the result of their self-denying and devoted labours. One was Mr. Gribble who, I think, had been a draper, but gave up his business for evangelistic work. There was a small book in circulation at that time recording his labours, bearing the title—"Recollections of an Evangelist." The other was Mr. William Wreaford, a farmer living at Gillscott, who died on his knees while in a prayer meeting. He was greatly blessed in the conversion of souls in that whole neighbourhood. I went into a cottage once when they were cutting up the cake, and making preparation for a fellowship tea, and six of those present had been converted through his ministry by the blessing of God. He would stop and talk with men on the road, and even pray with them there. Some men when they saw him at a distance, coming along on his horse, would climb the hedge, or cross the gate, and get into a field to avoid him, as they knew he would deal personally with them about their souls. He was the means of raising a meeting room a little distance from his own farm,

which was then, and has been since, the birth-place of many souls.

During my first ten years' acquaintance of Devonshire, there were Mr. Leonard Strong, of Torquay ; Capt. Thomas Hull, of Exmouth ; Mr. W. H. Soltau, of Exeter ; Mr. Robert Chapman, and Mr. William Hake, of Barnstaple, all prominent and active Gospel preachers in the open air ; also in teaching and instructing the saints in the various local assemblies, attending most of the annual and quarterly meetings in the North and South of Devon ministering the Word. Mr. Strong had previously been a clergyman in the Church of England, and while officiating in that capacity in Demerara, learned a "more excellent way," and came clean out from all association with the Established Church, and after being the means of establishing several gatherings, according to the simple order of the Scriptures, returned to England, and resided in Torquay, where he laboured for many years, and then passed away in a good old age to be for ever with the Lord. He was not what some would call a "powerful" speaker. His whole deportment, manner and address were extremely simple, and it was these humble characteristics, and a thorough knowledge of the Word of God, that drew around him, and to his ministry in the Warren Room, an estimable and goodly company of hearers. He entered thoroughly and heartily into special Gospel efforts to reach the masses, and on several occasions engaged the

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theatre for that purpose, at which services I was invited to help. He was very decided against human appointment, where the Spirit of God should be allowed to guide, such as at prayer meetings where a chairman is appointed, subjects announced for prayer, and persons called on to pray. Once at a Conference this subject was raised, and questions were asked. I shall not forget his answer. Said he, "We do not want a president, nor do we want persons to dictate what we all pray for. We have the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures to guide us, and these are sufficient." During the Baptismal Regeneration controversy, Mr. Strong published a pamphlet commending Mr. Spurgeon's faithfulness, and recounting his experiences in regard to infant baptism, and his withdrawal from the Church of England. This pamphlet had a wide circulation, was warmly commended by Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, and led to a friendly correspondence between them. I little dreamed when I read it myself, that I should years after become so personally acquainted with the writer. His only written work of any note is a small volume on "The Book of Daniel." It is very clear and concise, and exceedingly helpful in elucidating the prophetic character of that book. Mr. W. H. Soltau, I believe, had been a barrister, and if my memory serves me right, it was after a visit to his dying mother, and while pleading the cause of one of his clients that he became exceedingly anxious about salvation, and was converted. He relin-

quished his profession, and devoted himself to preaching the Gospel, and to the exposition of the Scriptures. After living at Plymouth and Briddeford, he came to reside at Exeter. A few Christians (now all departed to be with the Lord,) then met at a house to break bread on the first day of the week, as the early disciples did. As they increased in numbers, they went to a larger room in the Mint. Here, and through Mr. Soltau's able preaching, that became crowded out, and a larger place—the Athenæum, Bedford Circus—was taken, which for many years became the scene of much of his successful and profitable ministry.

His addresses were not only concise and full of suggestive matter, but remarkably trenchant and effective. As one listened, each word seemed to fall like a hammer, leaving a lasting impression. He gave no uncertain sound, but spoke the truth fully and decidedly. When there is indefiniteness and uncertainty in preaching, it helps to keep the hearers in doubt and perplexity. Mr. Soltau was a thorough evangelist, and an efficient open-air speaker. I frequently came across persons who had been converted while listening to him preaching the Gospel in the open air, and at river-side baptisms. His book—"The Tabernacle and the Priesthood"—is a masterly piece of research, erudition and exposition, and indicates he was no mean Hebrew and Greek scholar. He was a laborious and careful student of the Word, illuminated and taught by the Holy

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Spirit. His Gospel booklets have had a wide circulation, especially "The Soul and its Difficulties," "The Stroke of a Stick," and a booklet for believers, entitled—"They found it Written," which I had the MSS of, and got inserted in Mr. Donald Ross' paper, "The Northern Witness." I did not know Squire Hull, who was regarded by some as peculiar and eccentric, at any rate he was known to be exceedingly unselfish and remarkably generous. The family of the Hulls possessed Marpole House, a magnificent estate in Exmouth, and were the "Lords of the Manor." I only knew his brother Thomas, who had been a captain, and was generally known as Captain Hull. He was an accomplished scholar, and a clever and effective speaker. For many years he gathered large audiences in the Exeter Road Room, which had been built by his brother for the use of the assembly of Christians gathering there. In his Gospel addresses, he often came down heavily on fashionable religious professors. Referring in one of his Gospel addresses to a public dance that had been held on the Beacon, he said—"They were dead corps dancing their way down to hell." Of course the upper classes regarded him as a religious enthusiast and kept aloof from him, but the "common people heard him gladly." These esteemed brethren—as also William Hake, of Barnstaple—have all gone to be with Christ, only Robert Chapman now remains, and he is over ninety, yet still preaching and teaching the Word at Barnstaple and else-



where. Two if not three of the earlier generations of the Hulls lie buried in an allotted portion of the yard at the east end of the picturesque and ancient church of St. John in the Wilderness, but William and Thomas Hull are buried in a small enclosed cemetery at Withycombe, given by the former, for the use of Christians meeting in the Exeter Road Room. One brother who had the living at Lymptone before his withdrawal from the Established Church, occasionally sent a kind of pastoral letter to its inhabitants, seeking thereby their conversion and spiritual help. Miss M. A. Hull, the authoress of that well-known and popular hymn, "There is life for a look at the crucified One," was a sister. Whenever I pass Marpole Hall, now owned and occupied by others, I am always reminded of the Hulls and the Haldanes of Scotland. The devotion, self-sacrifice, and whole-heartedness to the cause of Christ of these two aristocratic families was remarkable, and should cause deep searching of heart among those Christians who are only living to add to their already extensive wealth. However liberal and generous some of these may be, it does not atone for their manifest love of gain, or obliterate the bad example of covetousness they leave behind them.

#### MARRIAGES.

On January the 1st, 1873, I was married at the Registrar's Office, to Hannah Gould, of St. Sidwells, Exeter. For

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many years she conducted a young women's Bible class on Lord's day afternoons, which proved to be exceedingly fruitful in the conversion of souls. Frequently she received cheering letters from distant parts, where some had gone, which was a great encouragement in this work of faith and labour of love. She was a thorough worker, and went wholeheartedly into Gospel work, not only indoors but in the open air, standing by and helping those who preached the Word. She was unflinching in obedience to the truth and would not surrender it to please others. I well remember when we were in London together, finding they had introduced an "organ" at Gospel meetings in one or two of the halls when they would have been glad of my help, I declined, and preferred to go to the Park and have an open air meeting. She was of one mind with me, stood by my side and I knew, helped with her prayers. Soon a large company gathered, and I believe the meeting resulted in blessing to unsaved souls.

#### VISIT TO SWITZERLAND.

Being in need of a thorough rest, I went to Switzerland for six weeks, making my centre the pretty little town of Aigle, situated on the south-east of the beautiful lake of Geneva. It was in this town where William Farel preached in 1526-7, and his visit to it then is full of interesting narratives. On one occasion the opposition was very great against him. Furious crowds assembled, tearing down the placards

that gave him permission to preach from the authorities at Berne shouting out "Down with Farel," but the Lord remarkably interposed, and soon the angry crowd dispersed and left him unharmed. His encounter with the hypocritical Friar in the streets of Aigle, and his professed repentance and contrition is well known. I addressed a few meetings there through an interpreter.

Sitting beside fair Leman's placid lake,  
I've watched the white-winged skiff glide noiseless bye,  
Leaving behind a silvery crystal wake,  
To sparkle but a moment then to die,  
While Jura's summits kissed the cloudless sky,  
And Savoy's banks reflected in the deep.  
At Chillon's hoary towers I breathed a sigh,  
And seem to hear the moan of those who sleep,  
Whose horrid death its walls their sick'ning memories keep.

What horrors ! if thy castle walls could speak !  
What butchering of human flesh once there ;—  
Those fatal steps, Oh, horrible ! To seek  
A liberty and freedom captives were  
Foully betrayed ; and stepping down the stair  
Into the darkness trod—then down beneath,  
Spiked and hacked, they rolled headlong and bare,  
Tortured and mangled, lay gasping for breath,  
The liberty they found was through a barbarous death.

From Morge's grassy plain afar I've seen  
Towering above it's fellows, gaunt and white,  
Mount Blanc, with snowy cap, erect, serene,  
The last to hold the sun's declining light,  
While lesser glaciers colder grew, but bright,

Nestling so still and calm, the lake below,  
Ripless its bosom, sweet emblem or type,  
Not of this restless world throbbing with woe,  
But heaven's celestial calm, a peace we all should know.

Quiet, pretty Aigle, nestling so still  
Within the hollow, like a babe at rest,  
While yonder Rhone rushes along at will,  
With gurgling sound, ruffling smooth Leman's breast,  
While Dome de Mede's snowy, glassy crest,  
Glistens in the sunlight; far across the plain  
St. Maurice stands, with cross and image dressed,  
Held fast by Rome's despotic galling chain,  
From which fair Switzerland broke: loyal may she remain.

#### FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SWITZERLAND.

My first impressions of Switzerland were singular, and not at all enchanting. We travelled by the night train from Paris to Lausanne. As we approached the latter place, there was a dense mist hanging over the whole surroundings, and just as I was feeling a little disappointed, gradually and almost imperceptibly it began to disappear, revealing first the snowy caps of the distant mountains glistening in the brilliant sunlight. Then the dark Jura range of hills appeared, the fertile banks of the Savoy and the delightful valley stretching far in the direction of the "Dome de Mede" and St. Maurice. Suddenly and unexpectedly, the beautiful blue Lake of Geneva appeared below in all its beauty and grandeur. The whole scene was exquisitely enchanting and sublime. On my return I stayed two days in Paris, sleeping

one night at the "London Hotel," having previously booked all my luggage at the station. I soon found I was being "shadowed" as a suspicious person, the "Fenian" scare being at its height then. After I had payed my bill, I was on my knees seeking guidance from God for that day, as I was to remain in Paris till the night train for London. One of the hotel attendants knocked at my door, and immediately entered, before I had time to rise from my knees. Observing my position, she became confused and left. This produced quite a new impression on her mind, and others, as I noticed before I left the hotel.

#### MY WIFE'S ILLNESS AND DEATH.

Early in the Spring of 1884, an unexpected gloom flung its mantle over our happy home. My beloved wife, whose health had always been good, suddenly showed symptoms of consumption, brought on by a chill. I soon had grave suspicions of her condition, and looked at various symptoms as requiring medical advice. On account of her naturally strong constitution it was a long time before she would believe there was any danger. Medicine failed to check the disease, and it became manifest her constitution was breaking up. We went to Chagford, hoping the moor air might bring relief, but without avail. I could see the disease was making rapid progress. Like the dark sullen waves of the rising sea it worked on and on, and in a few

days the "silver cord" was "loosed" and the "golden bowl broken." But to die for her was "gain," it was only to "depart and to be with Christ, which is "far better." But O the anguish of my broken heart. I was left alone with my two children, without an earthly comforter or helper. But "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him." and though left alone, I was not alone, for God was not only "for me" but "*with me*," sustaining, upholding and comforting me. The God of my beloved mother and my endeared and cherished wife, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has been my God, and my children's God.

I took them by the hand and softly led  
Each one across the darkened chamber's floor,  
Where lay their mother, fondly loved but dead,  
Wrapped in her shroud. Speechless we stood before  
That lifeless form, and then, low bending o'er  
Her rigid face, I kissed her marble brow,  
So cold and chill. I could not give it more  
Than one impress, I know not why or how,  
That chilly touch, Oh, God ! I think I feel it now.

And there we stood, my girl and boy alone,  
They motherless, and I all sorrowing  
At my felt loss ; all earthly prospects blown  
Like blasted flowers nipped by the frost in Spring ;  
Yet Faith and Hope, triumphant on the wing,  
Lifted me up, above such scenes as this—  
Too deep for human heart's imagining,  
Or sympathy to touch. My grief was His  
Who gave us each a hope of resurrection bliss.

And then I breathed a fervent prayer that they  
Might in their childhood days know Him who gave  
His life a ransom for our souls—Did pay  
Sin's debt incurred,—so dying, died to save  
The guiltiest sinner from hell's wrathful wave  
And woeful doom. That prayer has answered been,  
And now they look beyond death's gloomy grave  
To realms above, eternal and serene,  
Where faith shall end in sight, and death ne'er come between.

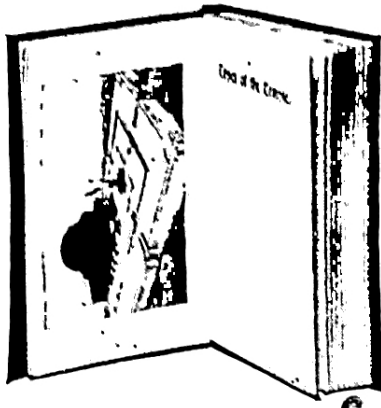
## CONCLUSION.

I might extend and continue these personal Reminiscences of Gospel Work, telling of the ingathering of sinners, and of the gathering together of saints to the One Worthy Name in many parts of the country. Although the Lord's workmen are being called to their rest His work goes on, and will till He shall come. Personally I feel that my years of Gospel labour are over. I am solemnly reminded that my days on earth are few, and that the time is near for me to "fall on sleep." I feel the touch of death's hand upon me, but the future is all bright. No cloud obscures my vision : all is perfect peace, and whether the will of the Lord be that I may linger, or go, or that He shall come, all is well.

May the Lord raise up and thrust forth many to preach the Gospel in the open air, in its purity, simplicity and power, apart from modern and worldly means, and to hold fast, obey and fully preach to saint and sinner the whole truth of God.

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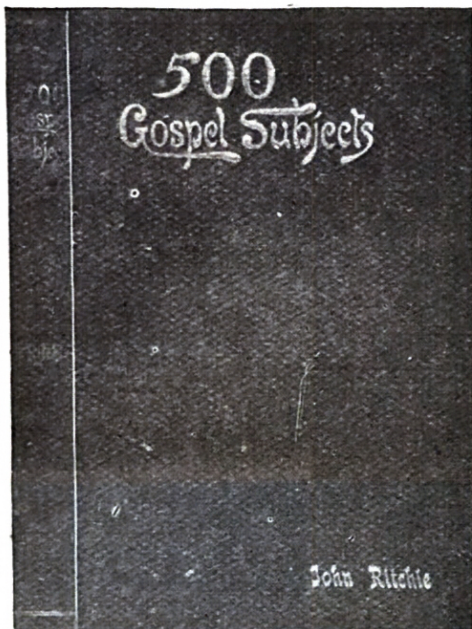
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