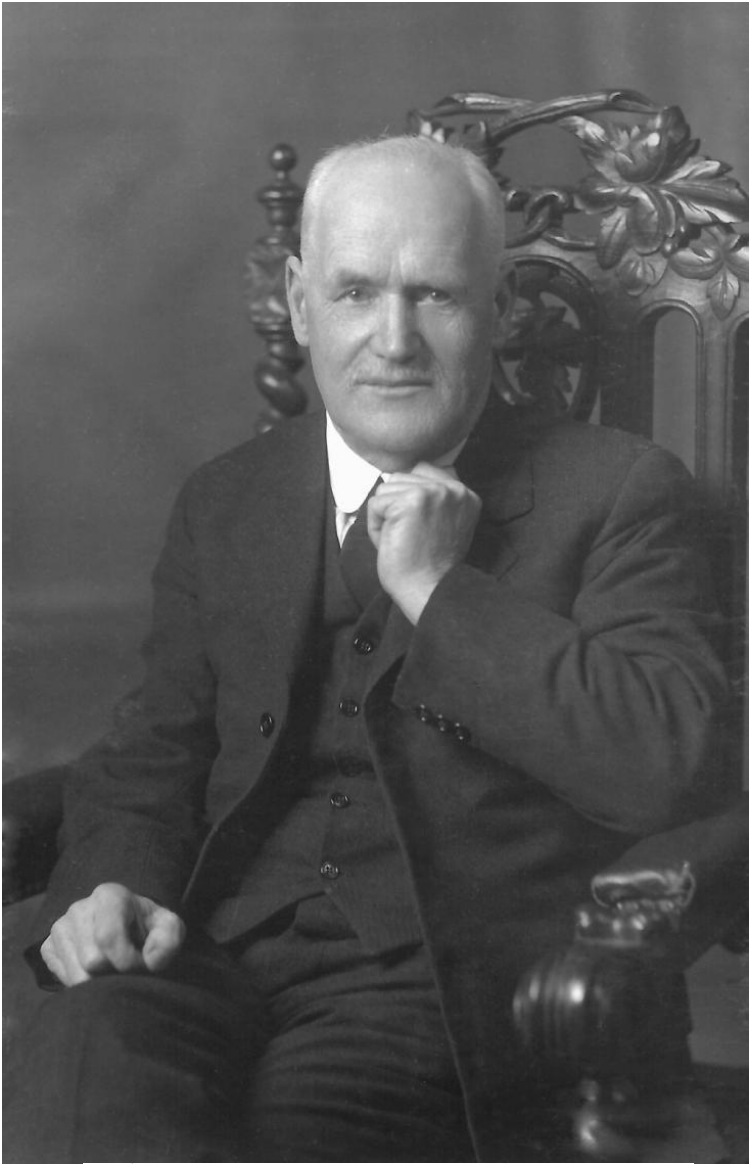


REMEMBERED MERCIES RECORDED



The Life of George Rose

REMEMBERED MERCIES RECORDED



*With Christian love
and best wishes. George Rose.*

REMEMBERED MERCIES RECORDED

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THE LORD'S
LEADINGS

by

George Rose

1873-1965

with an additional chapter giving details of his last years

by

Graham Chewter

and a Selection of Sermons and Addresses

by Mr. Rose

2014

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PREFACE

It is over sixty years since *Remembered Mercies Recorded* first appeared, so this republication will be very welcome – especially as an extra chapter has been added covering Mr. Rose’s latter years. We are grateful to Graham Chewter for his work in preparing and writing this.

I knew Mr. Rose, though not well, having heard him preach on a number of occasions, and having met him once or twice. To meet him was to realise that here was a very gracious man as well as an able minister. The thing that stood out in his life was his spiritual-mindedness. Whatever the conversation, whether with friends or strangers, he would bring it round to eternal matters.

Apart from its spiritual profit, *Remembered Mercies Recorded* is an *interesting* book, with one or two remarkable happenings.

We pray the Lord’s blessing to rest on this work – not least to our young people, who do not remember Mr. Rose and who have not seen his book.

B. A. Ramsbottom

April 2014

FOREWORD¹

I have been very kindly invited to contribute a foreword to this publication. I am glad to do so, not as possessing grace or ability to add anything profitable to it, nor as an attempt to appraise the book itself, but as it gives me an opportunity of expressing my regard and esteem for Mr. Rose and associating my name with his in this record of his remarkable life and experience.

To have known Mr. Rose personally, enjoyed his confidence, benefited by his counsel, and to have been entirely of one heart and mind with him, has been to me a great privilege.

Every spiritual and useful ministry is a gift of Christ, who being ascended on high, gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, each with the grace, experience and abilities for the work appointed to them in the gospel, and all to the same holy and spiritual end, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4). But the life and work of every minister does not justify a publication, at least, not in book form. It is sufficient in the cases of most of the Lord's servants that their record is on high. Unless a biography presents unusual features, or the subject of it is widely known, there is little purpose in publishing it. In the case of Mr. Rose there is good reason to feel that his autobiography will be welcomed by many who have profited under his ministry, and esteem him for the truth's sake; also that future generations will see in this testimony the sovereignty and power of the grace of God.

It has been decided after prayerful waiting on the Lord to publish this autobiography now. Many will be glad for it to be thus available, but for that reason one is restricted in making personal comments.

Mr. Rose has written his life in his own way. Every spiritual and unbiased reader will perceive that it is thoroughly genuine. His experience as it is recorded is deep, distinct and powerful, manifesting the sovereignty of grace and the effectual operations of the Holy Spirit in an unusual degree. The leading in the ministry,

¹ This foreword was written when *Remembered Mercies Recorded* was first published, while Mr. Rose was still alive. This will account for some of the "dated" comments by Mr. Delves.

both in the commencement and subsequent spheres as an itinerant and pastor, is one of the salient features of the record and most interesting. Gracious exercise and divine teaching has been the spring from which the ministry of Mr. Rose has been fed, and there is abundant evidence of the blessing of God upon it.

The evening of life has now come, and the days of continuous travelling and preaching in the service of the Lord and the churches are for the most part ended. May it be the Lord's will to continue his ministry for a further period to his flock, and to give him at the last an abundant entrance into His everlasting kingdom and glory.

May the God of all grace be honoured in the publishing of this book. May spiritual readers find profit in its pages, and if any who are strangers to vital godliness should read this testimony, may it be the means of convincing them that there is a reality in the things of God, to be known and felt only by divine teaching and application.

STANLEY DELVES

Publisher's Note:

Remembered Mercies Recorded was first printed in 1952, thirteen years before George Rose passed away and many readers since have wondered about those remaining years of his life, especially as little by way of an obituary was published. Not many of his sermons have appeared in print either. The publishers felt that such a gracious account of God's dealings should not remain hidden; and that a reprint of George Rose's autobiography with details of his later years and some examples of his preaching would be acceptable to the few that still remember him, and an example to a younger generation of a godly, gracious minister.

We are very grateful to Graham Chewter, who has long had a love to Mr. Rose's memory, for writing the continuation of his life and providing many of the photographs. The source of the sermons and addresses has been given with each one, and we would thank all those who have given permission to include them.

1. INTRODUCTION AND EARLY DAYS

OBJECT IN WRITING

Over a period of years, many friends have pressed me to place on record some account of the way the Lord has led me. Many things have made me reluctant to do so. In such an account it is inevitable that reference should be made to others, who are concerned in many of my experiences, and one desires a mind tender in the fear of the Lord and under the leading of the Spirit that no injustice is done to any. One other consideration, acting to deter me, is the fact that I have never kept a diary and, in consequence, absolute accuracy as to words, dates and sequence of events cannot be promised.

I have desired that God's honour and glory should be before me, else I would rather not put pen to paper drawing attention to myself. I pray that I may write in the spirit of the Psalmist when he, by the Spirit, wrote, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."

As in the providence of God my labours in the ministry are not now so abundant, and having lately passed through heavy and painful affliction, I have thought, that possibly, the Lord had this purpose, among others, in it, that during my convalescence I should make known "His wonderful works to the children of men." When I have related some things in Christian conversation friends have said that it would be well if they were written that others might know them.

May the Holy Spirit, as the gracious Remembrancer, bring to my mind the path in which I have walked, and in which I have received so much mercy and, I trust, divine instruction, being taught to know the Lord and being brought to love and fear Him and glorify Him in my body and spirit which are His. As He said, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise."

Because of my want of education in my early years and lack of opportunity to devote time to study in my later life, this account will have no attraction for those who place natural learning above the teaching of God, which makes wise unto salvation. I pray that what may be written may be used of God to edify those who desire

that wisdom that cometh from above, and is not perceived by the wise and prudent of this world. All the living family of God are taught by Himself, who

“Takes the fool and makes him know,
The mysteries of His grace,
To lay aspiring wisdom low,
And all its pride abase.”

As we read, “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

DESCRIPTION OF BIRTHPLACE

I was born in the year 1873 at Gorsty Hill in the large industrial parish of Rowley Regis – King John had a palace there in medieval times, hence the Regis – situated six miles from Birmingham, on the South Staffordshire coalfield. The locality is known as the “Black Country” owing to the pall of smoke that on working days envelops this large industrial area where all kinds of iron goods are made. There are large iron works and steelworks where the iron is smelted and the steel manufactured. Boilers, anchors, chains, ranging in size from pet dog chains to the cable chains for liners and battleships, rivets and all kinds of nails are produced in these large foundries. There are also chemical works, glassworks and collieries where for many years vast quantities of coal have been dug. The whole district near Birmingham extending for many miles on its western and northern parts is like a huge workshop. In many localities, where worked-out collieries and the adjoining mounds of the discarded rubbish from the mines has been tipped, it is very desolate. Ironworks falling into decay and human habitations situated amidst this depressing landscape make an impression on the mind of a stranger, especially on a wet day, which is not easily forgotten.

More than a hundred years ago Rowley parish was noted for its wickedness and ignorance. Sabbath desecration was general: bull baiting, cock-fighting, rabbit coursing, pigeon shooting and dog racing were the ordinary diversions of the working classes on the Lord’s Day. Drunkenness and all its attendant evils were manifest on every side and many homes were desolated. Wives and mothers would wait outside the public houses on Saturday nights to see if they could get a few shillings from the drunken husband before it

was all spent. The wife, with the daughters, usually laboured in the work-shop at home, making nails, chains or other iron goods. The sons were generally employed in the collieries, iron or other works. Where the husband was sober and industrious and in a good situation, especially where the fear of God was in the house, though the conditions were drab, there was true happiness. God had a people in Rowley parish and amidst the prevailing wickedness there were those “who feared the Lord and thought upon His name.”

INTRODUCTION OF THE TRUTH TO THE BLACK COUNTRY

In the providence of God and the workings out of the purposes of His grace, there came to Rowley Church – which was a chapel of ease for Dudley, situated three miles away – a young curate by the name of George Barrs, who was an instrument in the Lord’s hands of many being convinced of sin, brought to repentance, raised up to a good hope through grace, and were in their everyday life made to differ from the world that lieth in wickedness, among whom they shone as lights in the world, and showed forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Mr. Barrs’ first sermon in Rowley Church was from the words “I have a message from God unto thee.” The word of God was made, on that occasion, to be “sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Many were cut down by the sword of the Spirit, and caused to cry out “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

Mr. Barrs preached clearly and unctuously the doctrines of free and sovereign grace and through his ministry there was a blessed manifestation of the truth in its power to turn men from darkness to light and from the servitude of sin and Satan to the service of God, which is perfect freedom. Through marriage Mr. Barrs had a considerable influence for good in the parish in its secular life and was the means of many abuses being remedied and the social status of the people improved. Notwithstanding the excellence of his character as a minister and as a leading influence for good among the people he was a strong opponent of baptism by immersion and preached against it. This drew the attention of some of his hearers to the subject, and caused them, Berean-like to search the scriptures to see if these things were so, and the Spirit blessing the search after the truth, they were led to see the scriptural character of the ordinances of the Lord’s house, and

consequently had to leave the church and form separate bodies so that they might walk in the ordinances of the Lord, blameless.

There were three causes formed, one at Old Hill, one at Gorsty Hill and one at Rowley. The Lord raised up ministers from among them to break to them the bread of life. At Old Hill, Mr. Joseph Smith, the first pastor was, according to report, a poor illiterate man, a nail maker by trade, who when at work would have his Bible placed so that he could glance at it as he took his irons from and replaced them in the fire. Notwithstanding his limitations, he was much owned of God and many were brought to God through his ministry.

The following is an extract from the history of the cause:

In the year 1829 a few people who loved the precious truths of the Gospel met in a small warehouse at Bowling Green, near Old Hill, which they rented and in 1833 a church consisting of six of them was formed on Strict Baptist principles, Mr. Joseph Smith being appointed the pastor. The truth was faithfully preached by him and the Lord abundantly blessed the word to many souls, and as the church and congregation increased the place was too small for them and enlargements became necessary from time to time. Eventually land was purchased at Spring Meadow on which the present chapel was built at a cost of £591 16s. 9d. and opened in 1841, still under the pastorate of Mr. Joseph Smith whose labours were blessed and who passed away in 1873.

I shall have to refer to Spring Meadow Chapel again, but this extract will suffice to show how the cause was founded.

The first pastor at Rowley was Mr. Daniel Matthews, who had a very clear call to the ministry. The people who were gathered under his ministry were those who had left the Church of England and these, together with those who were called under his ministry, had much persecution to endure from the openly profane, but were enabled to continue. Eventually a beautiful, commodious chapel was built at Bell End, Rowley Regis, and Mr. Matthews was the honoured pastor until his death. He was also pastor of a cause at Willenhall some miles away, holding both pastorates at the same time. I very well remember his death, I was then only a boy; also Mr. Alfred Dye accepting the pastorate. My godly mother and one of my sisters joined the church at Rowley during Mr. Dye's pastorate.

Introduction and Early Days

The chapel at Gorsty Hill was built by a Mr. Joseph Bowater on the garden adjoining his one-roomed cottage. I do not remember him but remember the cottage, as after his death it was used as a Sunday School to which I went as a little boy. After some years the congregation increased and as there was not sufficient ground to enlarge the chapel, and most of the friends came from Blackheath, in the same parish, a chapel was built there. In a few years, through the congregation still increasing, a large chapel accommodating about 600 people was added, and the Sunday School attendance was such that the school room had to be enlarged. Mr. F. O. Yates was the pastor for about 50 years. There are now five causes of truth in Rowley parish, and today, through the grace of God, there are many who have been called by grace and love the joyful sound. May the God of all grace cause that His word may have free course and be glorified.

Through the influence of the Barrs' family a new church and schools were erected at Old Hill where for many years the gospel of the grace of God was faithfully preached. The first vicar was Mr. James Ormiston the editor of *The Gospel Magazine*. His ministry was very much valued by those who loved the Lord Jesus whether Church or Nonconformist. The week evening service was very largely attended by Strict Baptists, many of whom could not read, owing to the early age at which they had begun to labour. They would sit during the whole of the service that preceded the sermon, when Mr. Ormiston would faithfully and graciously preach the truth that is in Jesus and break the bread of life to the hungry poor of the Lord's redeemed family. His ministry might be summed up in the words, "But we preach Christ crucified." Once a month he preached in the little Baptist chapel at Gorsty Hill. One of my earliest recollections was seeing him coming up the hill to the chapel, where men and women, sons and daughters of toil would gather together from the workshop, the mine, and ironworks and other places where they earned their daily bread, "And while they feasted on His grace, their burdens and their griefs forgot."

From what I remember, my mother and those like-minded with her said in my hearing, Mr. Ormiston, though a learned man, had the grace and ability to adapt his preaching to those who had no education, but were graciously and experimentally acquainted with those things that the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. When Mr. Ormiston left Old Hill and accepted the living of St. Mary-le-Port, Bristol, there was much lamentation among the godly portion of his hearers, and the poor,

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as well as those who were well-to-do in temporal things, contributed to give of their carnal things as a parting testimonial, esteeming it a privilege, seeing they had so often reaped of his spiritual things. The Old Hill people were always dear to him, and whenever he came to preach at Old Hill Church, as he did at the Sunday School Anniversary, the church would be filled to capacity and there would be a congregation of over 1,000 people. Every new year he would send a new year's motto to those that esteemed him highly in love for the truth's sake. I remember my mother receiving one for some years, though she, like many others, could not write and thank him. The amount of blessing that resulted from his labours at Old Hill, as well as at Bristol and as Editor, is known only to his Divine Master. It is a question whether any are alive today to whom his ministry was blessed, but while they remained they always esteemed him very highly in love for his work's sake.

Having left Old Hill in 1908 I cannot now say how matters are spiritually at the church, but, from report, one would gather that the lament of Jeremiah applies: "How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!" On the other hand, the standard of the doctrines of grace and a gracious experience of these doctrines, exemplified in a consistent walk, has never been lowered in the Strict Baptist causes, and though in the course of time, there, as in all other places, many changes have taken place, yet there is a contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints, and seeking for grace to abide by the same truths that their forefathers were taught by the revelation and application of the Holy Spirit. Evidence that this is so is clearly seen in the published account of the Centenary Commemoration Services held at Old Hill on August 14th and 25th, 1941. I quote from the Appendix:

Before closing the record of this memorable event in the history of the highly favoured corner of the Lord's vineyard at Spring Meadow, Old Hill, Staffs., it was thought well by the church that a brief supplement should be inserted, expressing the sincere gratitude we feel unto God and the high praises we owe to Him, in that He hath so richly blessed us with this token of His sovereign goodness towards us in the gift of the pure, unadulterated gospel of free and sovereign grace, and which has been maintained and handed down from generation to generation in this hallowed sanctuary through the long period of one hundred years, and that this gospel is loved and honoured by the Lord's witnesses worshipping there from week to week at the present time. This is the gospel of which our forefathers were made the honoured instruments of implanting

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in this place – a gospel which separates the living from the dead and distinguishes between the things of the flesh, and those which are of the Spirit, the truths they fed upon in their generations, and the truths which are now the meat and drink of the living in Jerusalem, that are found among us. We earnestly pray that this same God-honouring faith may be preserved unto us and to our children, and for generations yet to come, so that many of distant times ahead shall be privileged to inherit the same blessing of spiritual comfort and joy, and be made partakers of everlasting life through the ministration of that gospel.

Consistent with the will of God, we pray that the walls of this earthly temple of the Lord shall long echo with the joyful praises to the God of salvation of souls quickened by divine grace, of souls blessed with a living hope and assurance of eternal life and glory through the finished work of the dear Redeemer. May the God of all grace and power pour upon us, and many others who shall follow after, much of the spirit of grace and supplication for the continued blessing of His word here, and that succeeding generations yet may have cause to bless and praise and glorify the Triune Jehovah, who hath raised up, established and confirmed His inheritance in this place.

I feel I can say, that the same gracious sentiments are true of all those who fear the Lord in the causes of truth in that immediate locality. Many precious souls have been gathered home, but it is the prayer of those who are followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises “Let the Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers, let Him not leave us nor forsake us.”

PARENTS AND FAMILY

We have no control over the circumstances and conditions of our birth. This is the appointment of the all-wise Disposer of all that takes place in heaven and in earth. It is a sovereign mercy to know and feel “He hath done all things well.” Many times have I been humbled and have adored the love and the grace that the Lord has showed me and has made me to prove, “Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments, or no.” It is not easy to give a full account of my life without revealing what I would gladly repress, viz., the causes of the privations and hardships of my childhood, brought about by the drunkenness of my father. I was born and brought up in very

poor circumstances, my father worked at the colliery all his life and my mother made hobnails for many years. My first recollections are associated with my mother. I was the youngest of ten children, four died while young, before my birth, and six lived to grow up, three brothers and two sisters. Being the youngest my mother and I were always dear to each other. After I was called by grace, she told me that when I was a little child she had a dream about me the effect of which never passed away, and in consequence of which she had a firm persuasion that the Lord had a purpose of mercy towards me. This caused her to pray and to watch unto prayer.

She dreamed that she had a view of heaven and that she saw her godly father, who was then dead, and me, among the host of the redeemed before the throne and we were singing the last two lines in the third verse of Hymn 481 (Gadsby's) with the first word altered: "Here sits our Saviour crowned with light, Clothed in a body like our own."

Her father's blessed estate she was assured of, that he was with Christ which is far better, and she had a spirit to plead with the Lord that she might live to see me called by grace. The Lord granted her request, and more, for she lived to hear me preach the gospel and for it to be applied with power to her soul, and receive it, as it is indeed the word of God and not the word of man. She said to me after a service, "My lad I forgot you belonged to me, I lost sight of you and I could only see the Lord Jesus while you were preaching." I had a great love for my dear mother and was never more pleased than when I could be with her; every memory of her is sweet. As the youngest, she expended on me all the loving care that lay in her power. This continued as long as she lived, and after the Lord called me by grace, when I was seventeen years of age, our union was gracious and as far as possible we went to the house of God in company. Mother was not given to talking much about herself, except in her family circle, and to a few to whom she felt soul union who walked in a path of trial or temptation. In times of fiery trial she had marked answers to prayer and as her afflictions abounded so also her consolations in Christ abounded. Many things I could relate in which she proved, "God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." My mother was most gracious and favoured spiritually, though I never knew anyone with a more tried pathway, through the drunkenness of my father. My poor father's course of life brought real poverty into the home and though mother toiled early

Introduction and Early Days

and late in the workshop attached to the house to get us food and a little clothing, yet we always had to be ready to fly at father's homecoming to escape ill-treatment. I feel it right to draw a veil over that part of my life, suffice it to say that a gracious God supported my mother and she was able to remain a faithful and patient wife, till the last day of my father's life. She received the word of God with power and that strengthened her to bear the fiery trials that fell to her lot. She had a meek and quiet spirit and was in a very gracious measure conformed to the suffering image of Jesus. Mother lived 25 years after father's death, and her latter days were her best days. The sanctification of all that she passed through bore fruit and in her was fulfilled the words of the Psalmist: "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in Him."

Mother was the strongest woman physically, that I ever knew. Surely the Lord knew her need of endurance because of poverty and hardship, and she proved more in measure than many, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." She lived to her 80th year and died without disease or pain. She came downstairs the day she died, sat in her chair till midday, then lay on the sofa, and about eight o'clock in the evening went to sleep in Jesus. One of my sisters, seeing she was so calm thought that she did not realise her condition, and said to her, "Mother, do you know you are dying?" She answered in a very solemn tone of voice, "Yes, Harriett, I do." My sister said, "Have you any pain." She replied, "I have no pain." She asked, "Is Jesus precious to you now?" A heavenly smile lighted her countenance and she said with a strength surprising for one so near the dissolution of the body, "Yes, Jesus is precious to me now," and she closed her eyes and passed to be for ever with the Lord whom she loved, served and followed in a path of trial few are called to walk. In her case it is true, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." My mother's memory is one of my choicest treasures.

I shall have occasion to mention one of my sisters and two of my brothers particularly. My eldest brother was called by grace last of all, and my eldest sister a little before her death. Our family was very favoured with spiritual union and there was never any shyness in talking of the things of God. The closeness of the natural relation was no barrier to spiritual communion and many profitable

seasons we had together. The last time the four brothers met together, it was at my brother's house at Wolverhampton, he brought in the Bible and laying it on the table he said, "Let the Word of God be the centre of our conversation while we are together." All my mother's brothers and sisters of the first family – her father was married twice – were called by grace, and one of my aunts was a succourer of many of the ministers of the gospel. She always kept open house to entertain them as they had need, and could say with Lydia of old, "If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house." All my family that I knew, including my dear mother, are now in heaven, and I am left below, to struggle with the powers of hell, till Jesus bids me go.

EARLY PROVIDENCES

When I was four years of age I had a so-called accident which had a great influence on my after-life. This, I believe, has been overruled by Him to whom life's minutest circumstance is subject and who sees the end from the beginning. Although unknown to us at the time, yet as He graciously unfolds the purposes of His will, we see, "Each opening leaf and every stroke, fulfils some deep design."

His providence brings about His will in the experience of man, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, "What doest Thou?" The history of His people in every age proves this, and clearly demonstrates that all things work together for good to them that love God, and to them that are called according to His purpose. Yet how blind we are and judge things before the time of God's unfolding. We are sometimes found in the place of Jacob, when walking in a dark path, and say as he did, "All these things are against me" and yet he proved, and so do all those that He is leading and teaching, that God makes no mistakes and that he is righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works. In the circumstances I am about to relate, I have seen divine wisdom and mercy and, in my right mind, would not have one thing altered, because it deflected my life into a channel that was best for me and saved me from much into which, otherwise, my natural mind would have led me in common with others. I had no higher incentive in life than to fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Through free and sovereign grace God had other thoughts towards me, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to do me good and bring about that which he had designed. I have been constrained to bless and praise His holy name, and to feel that shame of face

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belongs to me, but His name is to be praised in that He has caused His goodness to come over my badness, and where my sin has abounded, His grace has much more abounded. How well do these words fit my case,

“With mercy and with judgement,
My web of time he wove,
And aye, the dews of sorrow,
Were lusted with his love,
I’ll bless the Hand that guided,
I’ll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel’s land.”

On this particular day my mother had gone to take my brother John – he was two years older than me – to school for the first time. My younger sister had charge of me in my mother’s absence, and she sent me to an aunt’s house to be out of her way. On my return, I met a herd of cows from a nearby farm being taken to be milked. The man in charge stayed behind, gossiping with some idlers at the top of the street, I stood by a high wall near an opening where the rain water drained from the yard above. With a desire to allay my fear of the cows an older boy came and stood in front of me while the cows passed. Among them was evidently a very fierce one which charged at us to toss us. When the older boy saw the danger, he very nimbly got away into his own home which was only a few yards away. I was too young to know how to take care of myself, and the cow pushed me inside the opening in the wall, which undoubtedly saved me from serious injury. A woman saw my danger from her cottage window, seized the large poker from the hearth, ran out and drove off the cow. Though I was saved from serious bodily injury, yet the shock to my nervous system will be felt to my dying day. All our times are in the Lord’s hands, and in looking back I can now see much mercy mingled with the circumstances. As my nerves were so badly injured I was prevented from going out with other boys and was thus preserved from the evil communications which corrupt good manners.

SCHOOL DAYS – A COUSIN BELOVED

All the older members of my family were put to work as soon as possible, my two sisters were making nails when eight years of age, working at the fire. My eldest brother began to work at Coombs Wood Tube Works when eight years of age. Child labour in the

Black Country was very much practised, but possibly that in the coal mines involved the most hardship.

When six years of age I had to attend school. My school days were to a great extent uneventful, except for the fact that my nervousness was a great handicap, but even here, as I look back I can see the Lord's mercy attending me. I had a cousin four years older than myself who was a shield to me and no boy dared to ill-treat me if he was near. He was my self-appointed protector. His love to me was wonderful and after our school days we worked together in the same foundry, and there, all that he could do for me was very willingly done. Before I was old enough to pour my metal, he did it for me for two years and he would never take any payment: this in addition to his own work. Though so kind to me he went to great lengths in ungodliness. After the Lord had called me by grace, I was made faithful to him and I reprov'd him and warn'd him out of love to his soul as opportunity was given. I pray'd for grace to do so. For 30 years I pray'd that the Lord would stop him in his sinful course and though he never resent'd my reproofs and warnings, it seem'd all in vain. He still went on, but I could never give him up. The Lord led me to say some solemn words to him, on the subject, "And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." That was the bow drawn at a venture, the arrow of which enter'd between the joints of the harness, and it prov'd to be so in his case. He had months of conviction of sin, and had to break off all his ungodly associations, which meant much to him. After a time he was led to attend Mr. Calcott's ministry at Ebenezer Chapel, Old Hill, which was the means of leading him into the truth, and he was afterwards rais'd up to a good hope and receiv'd the felt pardon of his sin. He was baptis'd by Mr. Calcott and walk'd humbly and consistently till the Lord took him home.

DISTINGUISHING GRACE

The sovereignty of God was clearly seen in the case of another in my early days, how that "One is taken and another left." There was a boy my own age, his name was George Rose. We were in the same class at school and always sat side by side. For the purpose of identification we were call'd Rose "A" and Rose "B." We went through all our school life together, we were alike, even in appearance. His father was the same name as mine, though there was no relationship. After we left school we did not meet for 20 years. I was engag'd to preach at Crabtree Road Chapel, Birmingham and George Rose "A" got into the same compartment

as myself at Old Hill Station. We recognised each other and sat side by side as we used to at Halesowen National School in past years, but here was the difference that sovereign grace had made; he was going to Birmingham as a professional prize fighter and I was going as a minister of the everlasting Gospel. He was then in the prime of life, had a splendid physique, and was full of worldly ambition and left to fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind, whilst I had been stopped in my sinful course, and brought to the feet of the King, whose arrows are sharp in the heart of His enemies, whereby they fall under Him, and are brought by His grace to serve Him in love. Only once have I seen him since, many years ago, as I was returning from Bell End Chapel, during Mr. A. Dye's pastorate. He was standing with a number of men outside a public house. He looked very degraded, I noticed he had lost fingers, and the change in his appearance was very much for the worse. I could not help but contrast my lot with his. Though my path had been one of trial (since called by grace) yet the Lord had been with me to sanctify my path and to make all things work together for good, while, as far as I could judge, he had been left to prove, "The way of transgressors is hard." I do not know if he is still living and whether any change was ever wrought in him by grace. The Judge of all the earth will do right.

In my school days I had a great desire for knowledge, but had little opportunity to study the many subjects that interested me so much. My reading was confined to the few books that I could borrow and any branch of learning that required a tutor was barred to me. I have found that my way was being ordered of God, though I knew it not. I had one companion at school and one who lived next door to me. I could take pleasure in his company and when at home we were much together. He attended the Primitive Methodist Sunday School and chapel and from conversations I had with him in middle life, I should have a hope that he looked to Jesus alone for salvation and knew it was only by grace he could be saved. His outward walk was very consistent, but here we have to say, "The Lord knoweth them that are His."

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ITS INFLUENCE

I shall ever have cause for gratitude that from my earliest years I was under the sound of the truth in the Sunday School. I could mention several godly superintendents and teachers both at Beeches Road, Blackheath and at Spring Meadow, Old Hill. Although at the time I did not know by gracious experience the truths I heard from them, yet in after years, I loved them in the

Lord, and some names I shall never forget, and they will ever be sweet to me. Mr. Joseph Hewitt is one such I shall always remember both in the Sunday School and in the public services at Cave Adullam Chapel. He was blessed with great grace and gracious ability. His deep melodious voice as he announced the hymns had behind it an unctuous experience and his heart was in the work of the Lord's house. He could say "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth." In private conversation he was very savoury, and when he or others with him were speaking of divine verities, he would say from the warmth of his heart, "Friends, these are solids, these things are solids." He had a trying experience in providential things, but he bore all his losses with meekness, and though in his last days he was reduced in circumstances, yet he was rich in faith, and many glorified God in him. He died "like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

When I first attended Sunday School Mr. Thomas Downing was the Superintendent as well as being a deacon of the church at Spring Meadow Chapel, Old Hill. He was eminent in gracious humility and was a father in Israel. His childlike humility and gracious ability especially fitted him for the offices he filled in the cause with which he was connected for so many years. One of the first things I remember being applied with power, was hymn 1003 (Gadsby's). It was given out by Mr. Downing on the day of the Sunday School tea before we left to go to the field. It went with me and made me tender in my conscience so that I feared to do anything to bring guilt upon it.

After the Lord had begun a work of grace upon my heart, I was in the Sunday School Bible Class and Mr. Downing came to me and asked me to take a class that had no teacher that day. I said something to the effect, "Mr. Downing, I do not feel fit to teach, I want to be taught myself." In a very tender and fatherly way he laid his hand on my shoulder, and replied, "My lad, if the Lord Jesus would go through Samaria to speak to one poor woman, do you think it too much to go across the schoolroom to speak to several children?" I had nothing to reply and went. Others I might mention but must not enlarge further.

FURTHER PROVIDENCES AND PRESERVATION

The company I had to be in when at work was of the lowest type, and although I was kept outwardly, I had to learn, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart that there is no

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fear of God before his eyes." I felt a secret pleasure, that I dare not express, in the filthy conversation of the ungodly, and I know by sad experience, that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. One thing was, in the Lord's hand, a great restraint, my love to mother. I feel I shall never be thankful enough for that; it did not make me hate sin as sin, but it kept me, in a very large measure, from its practice.

One thing powerfully impressed me at the time (though not graciously) that God sometimes takes sinners at their word, and visits them in judgment. When I had started to work, I was employed at three different places at different times of the day. When I was at work in one of the moulding shops, I heard a man swear a tremendous oath and he supplemented it by saying that he did not believe there was a God, but if there was, he wished it might be proved by His causing the shop to fall to the ground. I went out of the shop at this time, as my work was finished for the time being, and went next to work in an upper room. I had only been at work a little time when I saw the foreman running across the yard, and bounding the outside steps leading to the room. When he saw me at work, he said "I am very thankful to see you here." I enquired "Why?" He said, "All the part of the shop where you work has fallen in and they said you were buried underneath. I have run here to see if you left before it fell." No one was killed, as it was a part of the shop used for a store place and I was the only one employed there.

Another mercy I had in those days was to have a godly foreman over me. He never gave me an angry word during the many years I worked under him, and he was used of God for my good. I shall refer to this in its proper place in my account. He was a cousin of mine and a brother of the one I have already mentioned. He was as a light shining in a dark place. He was humble and kind, perfectly honest and upright in all his dealings between master and men. As far as lay in his power he would not allow the master to oppress the men, or the men to defraud the master. All had to respect him, and his presence was a great check to wicked talking and swearing. He had great ability in his work and could show anyone how to do any part of the work that was to be done. He would not ask a man to do more than he knew was right. For many years he was a consistent member at Beeches Road Chapel, under the ministry of Mr. F. O. Yates.

When about sixteen years of age I was very anxious to see mother freed from debt, all my brothers and sisters were married

Remembered Mercies Recorded

and my wages were all that could be depended upon. I worked very hard, early and late, often working from 4 a.m. till 10 p.m. as we were paid by results and not by the hour. For seven years I laboured until my strength was very undermined so that I could not do more than two days' work in six. I was compelled to leave the foundry and go to labouring work in the open air for four years. Then when my health was established I returned.

I had many serious accidents and narrow escapes from a violent death whilst working in the foundry. I look back with wonder and humble gratitude as I see the preserving care of God over me, both before and after I was quickened into divine life, and knew by merciful experience, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." When I was fourteen years of age I had the point of the shank of a nail enter my left eye and for some weeks it was embedded there, and no one could extract it, yet, in God's kind providence it came out one night in my sleep. On three separate occasions I have temporarily been unable to see owing to the boiling iron being splashed into my eyes, yet my sight has been preserved almost unimpaired.

One time I tripped over a crowbar, as I was carrying a 60 lb. pot of boiling iron, and had much of the contents over my back. I was very severely burned from my head to my waist, and for some weeks could only lie in the position I was in when I was burned. At another time I had a sprained wrist and was wearing a wrist strap. As I was catching iron at the cupola furnace a portion of the metal went upon my wrist, ran down between the strap and the skin, and before I could get from the furnace to a place where I could put my ladle down, the damage was done. The sinews were very badly burned and for some weeks I could not move my fingers. Each time, through the mercy of God, I made a perfect recovery. On another occasion I stumbled over an obstacle that had been left in my way (though with no wrong intention) the ladle I was carrying struck the ground and precipitated the molten metal over a wide area of the shop, away from myself, but burning quite a number of men in its track. I had another remarkable escape from sudden death during structural alterations, in which several walls were being taken down. I had just asked a workman who was taking down a high wall immediately above me to exercise more care, because the falling mortar was coming into my moulding sand. In the course of my work I had just stepped backwards when two bricks fell immediately in front of me and smashed the lead patterns in the mould I had just uncovered. Had they fallen a

second earlier my head must have been smashed instead of the patterns.

The following day, as I was carrying a pan of work weighing about 1½ cwts., I had to pass very near to the swiftly revolving scouring barrels in which the sand is cleaned from the castings. The wind from the barrels caught a heavy bag apron I was wearing and pulled me towards the barrels, but the weight I had in my hands saved me from being thrown over into the machinery; if that had happened I must have been killed. The apron gave way, but the snatch threw me under the revolving barrel. I fell with the heavy pan of work on my legs, the barrel tore off my shirt, the skin and some flesh from my shoulder, but did not touch my head, which was nothing less than miraculous. There were several men in the shop, but they could not extricate me and they ran for the engine driver, who stopped the engine and then I could crawl out. I cannot forget the sense I had, at the time, of God's preserving care over me. Many other marked instances I had of a providential care over me when I was young, and I can now see that God's preserving care was over me even when I had no desire after Him. Many times was that eye that never sleeps upon me for good, and when I reflect how far I should have gone, had I been left, I wonder at the mercy that preserved me in my dangerous employment and that saved me from being cut down in my sin.

AN OUTWARD FALL AND INTEREST IN NATURAL THINGS

As I grew older my evil propensities grew stronger, yet there was an unaccountable check and restraint put upon me. I see now that it was God in His gracious purpose and in answer to my mother's and sister's prayers for me, so that, only on one occasion did the evils of my heart break out into open sin; that was a short time before the Lord stopped me by His invincible grace.

It was at Christmas time when two young men, older than myself, asked me to go and see them at their home during the holiday. I went according to arrangement in the morning, we went for a walk, and they wanted to go to a public house called *The Three Furnaces*. That was the first time I had been in such a place to sit down and drink and I felt very miserable. There were several ironworkers in, and soon there was betting between my companions and several of the men as to who could sing carols best. As I could not sing I joined those who were drinking the ale, paid for by the bets. Not being used to it I soon got completely drunk, and after a time, when the company broke up, I tried to

make my way home. I had to pass my brother John's house, he saw me as I staggered past and came out after me. He remonstrated with me as to my disgraceful condition and said, "It will not do for you to go home like this if father is at home; though he may be in the same condition he will not tolerate it in you." He took me into his home and when I had recovered in the evening I went to my own home. Only once, as far as I remember, did I utter an oath, and that was under great provocation. The Lord made me to know, that only by grace I am what I am and that if I had been left, all outward influence would not have prevented me from running into open sin, as I saw many others left to do.

During this period my spare time was spent in reading books on travel, invention, history and on general knowledge. Fiction never interested me as I could see no use in reading that which was not true. Tales with an historical background I read a little, but only because they illustrated the times they referred to. Memoirs of good men I read, but only that part that referred to natural and providential things. When spiritual experience was spoken all interest was immediately gone. I see now "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." At the Sunday School I was only interested in the letter of the scripture, and in the public service I used to try and think of what I was then reading. While the Gospel was being preached my mind was far away, perhaps in Africa or America or thinking of the life of some great man, and the most welcome part was when the minister concluded his sermon. The moral restraint I was under was a great benefit to me, for if I had been otherwise situated I know not to what extent of open sin I should have gone. Nothing but the work of the Holy Spirit can deliver us from the power of darkness and translate us into the kingdom of God's dear Son, but the set time ordained of God "Not to propose, but call by grace" had come, and then all that had held me fast had to give way before Him who has said, "I will work and who shall let it?"

I do desire to bless His holy Name, whose sovereign will has prevailed over Satan, sin and my own will and over every power that had hitherto held me in the bondage under which I had willingly bowed my neck.

2. CALLED BY GRACE AND LED INTO THE TRUTH

How sovereign are the works of the Lord in the way and manner in which He calls sinners out of nature's darkness into His marvellous light. As He told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again"; that is indispensable to an experience of salvation. Yet in what varying degrees and different ways is it brought about, so that no human standard can be set up, as to how, when or where the great change is effected. For "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In the Lord's work, He works His will. All right work is the Lord's work, He will have respect unto it and He will never forsake it, for He has said "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." In every case the work begun is carried on and performed until the day of Jesus Christ. It is the mercy and safety of the redeemed that the threefold cord of the Father's love, the Saviour's grace and the Spirit's power can never be broken, else not one could come safely through the perils of the way that lie between the day of our birth and the day of our death. It is thus that the souls of the elect are landed safely above and enter into the mansions that Jesus said He was going to prepare for them.

Many gracious souls cannot tell the day or hour when life entered their souls yet they manifest in a humble and tender life that they are born of God. They mind and are after the things of the Spirit which they could not do or be if they were not born of the Spirit. Still they cannot be at rest short of the Spirit bearing witness with their spirit that they are born of God. Do not despise the day of small things. It is right to be thankful for a good desire, a spirit of prayer, any mourning over sin and after Jesus, yet not to settle down short of a revelation of Christ to the soul, being able to say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God"; having some realisation of entering into His rest, such as Christian felt at the Cross, and knowing from experience something of the words that Bunyan puts into the mouth of Christian when his burden fell from his back and rolled into the sepulchre, "He gave me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death." In many cases it is only at evening time that it is light in the way that dissipates all darkness and banishes every fear, so that like Mr. Fearing they go over almost dry-shod. This is to be sought for and waited for; Jacob could say at the last, "I have

waited for Thy salvation, O Lord,” and the faithful promiser has said, “For they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.” Where there is, in the early part of the experience, a clear revelation of pardon through the blood of the Lamb, there is a purpose in it, and it is often followed by conflicts, temptations and trials for which the soul is prepared by Him who sees the end from the beginning. He gives sufficient but not superfluous grace; “He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that gathered little had no lack.” The Lord knoweth what things we have need of. The weak believer and the strong in faith are alike dependent and whatever the Lord may give us, it will not make us independent of Him. If we are lifted up above measure by the abundance of the revelation, He will give us a messenger of Satan to buffet us; but if the trial is needed to be continuous He will impart sufficient grace, so that when He opens our eyes to see the need of the trial, He will enable us to “rather glory in infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon us.”

One Lord’s Day afternoon in the year 1890, when I was seventeen years of age, was the time appointed that I should be convinced of sin, of righteousness and of judgement.

Mr. Edwin Greenwood, of Halifax, was the preacher, and the subject was the judgment day. Divine illumination shed its piercing light into my hitherto sin-darkened mind, holy conviction attended the word, the power that breaks the rock was felt and I stood before the holy Judge in my sin without any covering to screen me from His holy anger against me as a sinner. None can realise this but those that have been brought there, and made to prove that all things are naked and opened before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. God’s holiness is terrible out of Christ. His justice is awful in its grandeur, and crushing in its sentence. “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God.” Words cannot describe the experience, His realised omniscience was terrible, and I felt not only my outward sins but that my inward frame was all sin. The power attending the word was to make that word sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. I fell down guilty and condemned before God’s holy tribunal and found I had no hiding place. All my sins were brought before my guilty affrighted soul in dread array, and I knew not what to do.

Although I had always heard the truth, yet now I was ignorant of the way of salvation. The revelation of God’s holiness and justice and the powerful application of the law in all its righteous demands

and sentence on sinners was as if an earthquake had demolished everything in my life and all was ruin and destruction. All my previous thoughts, pursuits and pleasures were all overthrown and God in His terrible majesty was revealed in me. On that day old things passed away and all things had become new, but, that which I saw with new eyes filled me with terror and fear. I had new fearful thoughts of God, of eternity, of sin, of time, of life, of death, of heaven, of hell, of the Word of God in its purity, of its power and the certainty of its fulfilment, and as I was pricked in my heart, I said, "What shall I do?" It was as if I was alone, my own case seemed to absorb all my thought. I realised I was in God's presence, there was no escape and I knew that nothing I could do could help me. God was as a lion to me. On that day when judgment was laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, the hail swept away the refuges of lies, pride was brought down and the Lord alone was exalted. Work was done that none could do but the arm of omnipotence. Nothing has ever undone it; darkness may hide the view of it, Satan has questioned its reality and spiritually, but when God shines upon His dealings and the gracious Remembrancer leads me to consider the way He had led me, I have to say, "Who teacheth like Him?"

I went home from the service like a condemned criminal, without hope. I felt the sentence of death drinking up my spirit, and I learned – as I thought to my eternal undoing – that God can by no means clear the guilty. Yet there was put into my heart a cry for mercy, but how God could save me I did not know. I did not try to bring anything to God in a way to cause Him to accept me on the ground of works, as I could see that He was so holy and I was so vile and lost, that the east and west might as soon be brought together as God and myself. He was my enemy justly; I was His enemy by wicked works. Now I was powerfully apprehended and cast in prison without any hope in myself of deliverance. The walls were strong and I had no key to fit into the righteous lock of the locked door. I was indeed shut up and could not come forth. By the application of the law sin had become exceedingly sinful, and I sank down in fearfulness of the holy wrath of God and felt in my spirit what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hand of the living God. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon me night and day, and my moisture was turned into the drought of summer. There was no rest in my bones because of my sin. There was condemnation everywhere, and I fell down and there was none to help. As God was against me none could be for me. I was under condemnation and I felt that only God, the God I had sinned against, could have

mercy upon me; yet I was shut up to this, that I must pray and seek as long as I lived. I can see now, what I could not discern then, that it was life in my soul that realised the holiness of God as revealed in the law, "For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died," and I could see that the things I once followed after as my life, had "curse and death in every stream." My willing ignorance was gone, my unconcern about my soul and my state before God was brought to an end, the things with which I was formerly engrossed now yielded me no pleasure, all my pleasant pictures were marred effectually and my sole concern was, "What must I do to be saved?" In those days I slept the sleep of exhaustion, I was wasted in body, as my spirits were drunk up by the terrors of the Lord and my sin was ever before me. But the Lord did not contend with me for ever, else my spirit would have failed before Him. He had stopped me in my life of living without God and desiring not the knowledge of His ways. How can one sufficiently speak of His wondrous grace and mercy that had thoughts of peace to me and not of evil, to give me an expected end? But, such it was and has been. What wonders are there in grace, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Salvation is indeed of the Lord, and it is marvellous in the eyes of the quickened sinner who has experienced it.

"Words are but air, and tongues but clay,
But Thy compassions all divine."

On the Sunday School Anniversary day Mr. Jabez Eddison, of Rochdale, was the minister. I did not know anything of the service, I was shut out from it in my feelings and I felt I had no part or lot in what was said. In the afternoon the text was, John 10, verse 16, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." When Mr. Eddison spoke of the way the sheep are brought, he began to describe a law work in the conscience, and to my wonderment, the words arrested my attention and I felt he was speaking about me. Power attended the word, faith was given to believe, and as I did so, my bonds were broken. As Mr. Eddison described how pardon, life and peace are given through the Good Shepherd laying down His life for the sheep, and that justice having received, at the hands of the surety, all the payments due to the law's righteous demands, the lawful captive was delivered. The gospel was indeed good news from a far country, and as the blessed Spirit of God took of the things of Jesus

and showed them to me, there was a complete change in my soul's feelings.

“I looked for hell, He brought me heaven.”

And now my sins were washed away, life and peace flowed into my heart, and I was brought to the gospel exchange. Isaiah 61, verses 1 to 3 describes my experience better than any words of mine can do. The Lord Jesus was revealed to me in his love and grace and power. Guilt, darkness and bondage were taken away, peace, love, joy and praise succeeded, and I felt heaven begun in my soul. The concluding hymn of that service I was enabled to sing as my own.

“Firm as the earth Thy gospel stands,
My Lord, my hope, my trust,
Since I am found in Jesus' hands,
My soul can ne'er be lost.

“His honour is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep,
All that His heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep.

“Nor death nor hell shall e'er remove,
His favourites from His breast,
In the dear bosom of His love
They must for ever rest.”

All now was changed. “Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.”

The teaching of the Holy Spirit is clear, authoritative and conclusive and carries its own witness, which is superior to all others. Its grace and truth and power exactly fit into the soul's experience. “Like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” As before I could take no pleasure in life, now I could see the mercy and goodness of God in all things. The pardon of my sins seemed the key to all blessings. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” I felt I was provided for in time and for eternity, and it is wonderful to me even after so many years how (on that memorable day) the eyes of my understanding were enlightened.

In the evening the text was, Psalm 126, verse 3. “The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.” The first part of the sermon dealt with providential mercies, then the preacher passed

on to great things in grace. Redemption was blessedly traced out, and the word was honey to my taste. All the blessings that accompany salvation were described with heaven as the fruition of the great things God will do for His people. I did not know how to live under such wondrous love and grace; there is weight in the things of Jesus Christ and the human frame can only bear a little of the terrors of the law or of the love of God manifested in the Saviour. His dealings are “in weight or measure, though so little understood,” by us. I said nothing to anyone in those days, “The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.” I went home and to bed as soon as I could, I slept but little. I did not want to do so, my soul was ravished with the love of Christ, I sat down under His shadow with great delight and His fruit was sweet to my taste. As the morning dawned I realised that I must go to my daily employment, and the thought brought trouble with it, because I knew the company I must go into was the very reverse of godliness, and possibly the first thing I should hear would be someone taking the name of the Lord in vain. On my way to work I felt I could not go into the company of the ungodly, sin was dreadful to me, so that I felt I would rather die than sin: also I wanted to be with Christ which is far better. I had to pass a farm and when beyond the house I stopped at the field gate, placed my arm on the top bar, leaned my head on my arm, closed my eyes and begged of the Lord to take me to Himself. Many passages of scripture and verses of hymns were my prayer, and I waited for the Lord to take me home.

“Weary of earth, myself and sin,
Dear Jesus set me free,
And to Thy glory take me in,
For there I long to be.

“Empty, polluted, dark and vain,
Is all this world to me,
May I that better world obtain,
For there I long to be.

“Lord, let a tempest tossed soul
That peaceful harbour see,
Where waves and billows never roll,
For there I long to be.

I did not want to open my eyes any more upon this world, life had no charms for me, a precious Christ filled my heart and I was dead to all beside. The blessed Spirit filled my soul with joy and

peace in believing and I could feel already what heaven is, as I enjoyed the earnest of the inheritance and entered into rest. My security could not be destroyed for Christ was mine, I knew that He was in heaven for me and that nothing could separate Him from me. He was my all and I lay at His feet dissolved in love, gratitude and praise. Wonder filled my heart when I thought of His love in stooping so low, in being made sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in Him, and enduring my hell that I might enjoy His heaven. All the language my love could use, my love so freely bestowed from His ocean, was spent in extolling Him, for well I felt that my love was but the reflection of His love to me, that I loved Him because He first loved me, that all that I enjoyed was from the fulness that it pleased the Father should dwell in Him, and I believed that while He lived, I should live and have a life commensurate with His. As John expresses it, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

I waited a long time in prayer, to be taken home, in worship and adoration, and wanted nothing to come between my soul and a precious Christ, but I had to go to work. Everything in the world was but dung and dross; a great gulf was fixed in my mind between earthly things and heavenly things. I realised "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." How impossible it is for the carnal mind to conceive of the things that God has laid up for them that love Him. There must of necessity be a new nature bestowed, because nothing can rise above its nature. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

I walked for some time in this sweet frame of mind, contrasting so blessedly with the guilt, bondage and slavish fear which I felt when under the sentence of the law, and proved the words of Jesus, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." At one time everything I saw in the Bible condemned me, now everything was changed, and I could realise that through Christ I possessed all things. As the apostle wrote to the Corinthians, "Therefore, let no man glory in men, for all things are yours; Whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." In my simplicity I thought I should walk with joy to heaven; the Lord had indeed done great things for me. He had quickened my soul, had given me to know my lost and

ruined condition, had made me to experience the spirituality of His holy law, that hell was my just desert, that nothing but His sovereign grace had saved me and that I owed everything to Him; that the Father gave me to the Son to redeem me, by becoming my substitute and surety. Jesus had in His love and pity redeemed me and clothed me in the garments of salvation and the Holy Spirit had wrought in my soul. He had given me illumination, conviction of sin, repentance, confession, had given the spirit of prayer, caused me to prove my helplessness and poverty, had brought me to self-despair, and then had raised me from the horrible pit and the miry clay of my fallen condition and had placed my feet on the Rock of Ages, had established my goings, and put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto God. After a time my joys began to decline, and I had to enter upon a new and unexpected path, as Hart so truly describes,

“Their pardon some receive at first,
And then, compelled to fight,
They feel their latter stages worst,
And travel much by night.”

The path of experience is a personal one, and the soul is dealt with personally and privately as if no one else had trodden it before. We cannot borrow our religion from anyone, all true religion has the stamp of gracious originality. The Lord teaches all His children, and what they learn from Him, no one can take from them. None teacheth like Him, and He gives wisdom and gracious understanding. His teaching is holy and always profitable. The Spirit teaches by the Word and makes it a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. While the teaching is according to the measure that the Lord sees fit, it is always the same quality, and makes wise unto salvation in every case, giving gracious warning, reproof, exhortation, invitation and confirmation. “But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him.” Now I had begun to realise what many of the Lord’s people have to learn before they realise the pardon of sin, that is, the conflict between sin and grace in the inward experience. My position, as I have already stated, was among those who had no fear of God before their eyes, but drank down iniquity like water and took pleasure in unrighteousness. As grace had separated me from them in spirit and practice, I found in a very real way, “Yea, and all that will live godly, shall suffer persecution.”

Being naturally of a hasty spirit and a quick temper, many sore battles I have had to mortify my members, which are on the earth, when I have been wronged and spoken evil of for Christ's sake. How many times have I had to confess my sin, and how little I resembled Him "Who, when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." I had to prove painfully, that in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. I also found that there is no change in nature after grace is implanted. The ungodly talk of those around me found a ready response in my heart, and in answer to the question, "What then? Are we better than they?" I had to say, "No, in no wise." I was oftentimes the butt of their ridicule, and they would suggest sinful questions to me for me to answer. They would lay snares for me in their dealings, they watched daily for my halting and waited an opportunity, when, by some hasty word or inconsistent action they could reproach the cause of God and the profession that I made. I had much need of the power of God to keep me from rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, and not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good. The Lord was very gracious to me in my young days, and whilst He taught me in the school of trial, that it was only by His grace that I was different from others that were left, yet He enabled me to hold on my way, and to pray, "For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" As I went to work in the morning I used to pray earnestly that I might not be left to my own spirit, but that all needful grace might be given, so that by well doing I might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

A more trying experience was the inward ills of my heart manifesting themselves to teach me that, though I had mighty enemies without, I had more mighty foes within, and had to realise,

"O! the pangs by Christians felt,
When their eyes are open."

Those that have walked this path will know it in their own experience, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it?" God knows, Jesus knows, the Holy Spirit who searches all things knows, we only know in the measure we are taught. This path will never lead to sin, to excuse sin, but to loathe ourselves in our own eyes, and to prize the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Since I have been taught it by God, the scriptural testimony concerning man in the Adam fall is one thing I

have never doubted. I see now that this path, though so painful, was to lay a foundation whereby I could see and prize salvation by free and sovereign grace. None can rightly value the Saviour, except the sensibly lost and ruined, and I had to learn day by day and year by year that “The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores.” Sad and solemn truth which only God can teach, so that there shall be a gracious issue.

I was much tried and perplexed in my mind when my loving Saviour had withdrawn Himself and darkness covered my path. The foes that I thought were dead began to come out of their dens, and the ministry did not yield me comfort. Satan was allowed to tempt me about the things I had passed through and to suggest they were sentiment, or else they would not have faded away so quickly, neither should I have such evil things in my heart if I were a child of God. In this trying place I opened my mind to my sister, and to my surprise she told me that this experience would get worse as I went further. She pointed out to me that though the Lord had brought me from serving sin, I must expect a conflict between the flesh and the spirit as long as I lived. She was several years older than myself, and her pathway was very trying; she was well taught and exercised and was used of the Lord to edify me as I was led along. She watched for my soul, and I found her godly counsel very helpful as long as she lived.

I was very favoured in sitting under a gracious ministry at Spring Meadow Chapel, Old Hill. The cause was carried on by supplies, chiefly ministers from the North, the Midlands and the West of England. The chapel was well attended as were the causes at Rowley and Blackheath. There were quite a number of young men who feared God and I had good companionship, although for the most part I was a listener. I had an ear to hear in those days, and as my daily life was trying, owing to the filthy conversation of the wicked, it made service-nights and the Lord’s Day very sweet to my soul. When I could go to my own company, I found that, being sharply exercised with inward trials and outward burdens, it enabled me to understand and appreciate an exercised ministry. I had a case for the most part and I used to hang on the minister’s words to hear if he would come into my path, and when the Word was applied, it was sweeter to me than honey and the honeycomb. Another benefit I had was good books. The second-hand bookstall at Cradley Heath yielded me a good supply at a trifling cost, and I

believed the Lord blessed the writings of gracious men to enlighten my understanding in the truth. Next to the Bible, I think the works of Bunyan, especially the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which for some years, I read through once a year, and Philpot's sermons have always yielded me more profit than any other man's. The simplicity of the beautiful language, the aptness of his illustrations, the clear-cut separating experience in its depth and grace, the comprehensive variety, the orderly arrangement, and above all, the savour resting upon the truth set forth has interested and edified me. The two sermons that have been most blessed to me, are, "Winter afore harvest," and "The valley of Achor for a door of hope." How graciously has the Great Head of the Church overruled Mr. Philpot's afflictions, which kept him indoors so much in the winter, during which time his sermons and other writings were prepared for the press. The use the Lord has made of them will never be known on earth.

Hart's hymns have helped me in an experimental way more than any others, as they deal with the malady of sin and the sufferings of Christ, in a way, which has met my case. Others have their own place, that which the Lord has given to them. Watts has sublime and heavenly language, beautiful imagery soaring to great heights, but for solidity of matter and power of rugged unadorned truth, Hart, to my mind, has no peer as he writes of the solemn reality of sin, and all its terrible consequences, and all that the Son of God passed through to atone for sin and bring the sinner to God. Toplady, Swain, Miss Steele, Cowper, Newton and others have been raised up and used of God to compose hymns so that the people of God have been furnished with songs of praise wherewith they have been enabled to worship God in spirit and truth.

I had many changes in the first years after I was brought out of nature's darkness. I was very tempted with infidelity, burdened with trial and darkness of mind and I sank very low. At one time I was tempted to believe there was no reality in anything; I could not pray with any feeling of access, I felt no softness in my spirit and I was like the barren heath destitute of dew or rain. For some time I attended the services only because I did not want anyone to question me regarding my non-attendance and I hid my sad and forlorn state from all. Here I had to learn that I could not keep alive my own soul, that all means, unattended with divine power, all past experiences cannot sustain the mind under temptation, trial and the hiding of the Lord's face, but that while this is permitted the Lord keeps the soul alive in famine. He has His way in the sea,

His path is in the mighty waters and His footsteps are not known, and while He tries, He controls all things, and all things shall serve His purpose, so that, in them His wisdom is seen in His own time and way. "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord." In this sad state I went one night to the preaching service. Mr. Yates, the Pastor of Beeches Road Chapel was the minister, his text was Job 23, verses 8 to 10, "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold Him, He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him. But he knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." In the first part of his sermon, he related a circumstance in the life of Jehoida Brewer, of Birmingham, the author of hymn 134 (Gadsby's):

"Hail sovereign love that first began,
The scheme to rescue fallen man."

On the occasion referred to, Mr. Brewer took the same words for his text; before his sermon a poor woman under conviction of sin and bowed down with trouble, was on her way to the canal to put an end to her unhappy life, as she felt life insupportable. She had sought mercy, but was tempted to believe that there was none for her. Seeing the place of worship open, as it was too light to do the desperate deed, in God's merciful providence, she turned in to wait for darkness. In a few minutes after her arrival, Mr. Brewer announced his text. His first words were, "Job, you are looking in the wrong place, look up, God is in heaven." These words were accompanied with power from on high, and the poor woman's soul was set at happy liberty. As this was repeated by Mr. Yates, the power of God came with the words and all my darkness was dispersed, my hardness melted, and my soul was like a watered garden. I could see then that He is unchangeable and remains the same, and that that alone was the reason I was not consumed. God's immutability shone with glory in my soul's estimation, and I blessed and praised Him for what He is in Himself and that His gifts and callings are without repentance. It was in a path of exercise that I was led into and taught the truth, as I was able to bear it.

When nineteen years of age I had a most blessed visitation as I walked out one winter's night. The stars were very beautiful and as I looked up into the starry firmament and realised that the eternal Son of God made everything, and without Him, there was nothing made that is made, the thought came to my mind that He was the

brother born for adversity, and that in Him all the church was one with the eternal Father and the eternal Spirit. I worshipped the Trinity through Jesus and I said in the deepest reverence and sweetest nearness, "All these wondrous orbs of light are the work of God, who is my brother, my brother and yet my God." I was away from all human company, but I realised that blessed truth which Jesus spoke in His mediatorial prayer, "I in them, and Thou in me, that we may be made perfect in one." The spirit of adoption was given, whereby I said, "Abba Father," and I could feel, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." My mind was caught away from the poor, vain things that perish with their using, and I could say, "For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal." The new creature is able, even here, in some small measure to enter into heavenly things, but only a little can be known. The narrowness of our capacity and the treasure being in an earthen vessel prevents our entering fully into those things that are laid up in heaven for those that love God. The little that is known, makes those who are thus favoured, to long for the time to come, when freed from earth and sin, the ransomed, perfected soul shall rise to that blessed estate and place which Jesus has gone to prepare for them. How small and poor all earthly grandeur is compared with this, but without a new nature these things have no attraction. The carnal mind has no capacity to respond, and where there is no capacity there is no possibility. These experiences were the means of enabling me to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, believing that all other things would be added unto me. Also at this time and onward for some years, I had a wrestling spirit of prayer that the Holy Spirit would lead me graciously into the truth. "That the eyes of my understanding might be enlightened, that I might know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." As the spirit of prayer was given to me I was enabled to wait for the answer and sooner or later it was given. Some portion or portions of Scripture were brought to my mind and I found, "The entrance of Thy word giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." There was the opening of my understanding in a way beyond anything I had heard from the pulpit or had read in the works of gracious men. I do not mean to infer that I felt I had more knowledge than the ministers I heard, or the good and great men whose writings I valued, but there was an opening up the truth to my mind and heart in a new way. In those days I sought for truth out of love to it and for the treasures it yielded me, and I could say

with Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Many times, when surrounded with evil on every side in the workshop, and my hands were busily engaged, has my mind been caught away, and I have felt that drawing near to God, entering into my closet, shutting the door about me, and praying to the Father in secret that He would reward me openly. I remember at one time the 48th chapter of Genesis, where we have the blessings on the patriarchs, and the 33rd chapter of Deuteronomy, the blessings on the tribes, were given to me for some time, and what to me was most remarkable, the instruction was continued when I was asleep. "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the eyes of men, and sealeth their instruction." The union, wisdom, grace and fulness of the grace that God has blessed His people with, was shown to me in a way I had never known it treated of before. At another time in the night I was clearly shown the difference between the ministry and work of the prophets Elijah and Elisha; the reason for the particular request of Elisha, before his master was taken away, and its wonderful fulfilment all through his eventful life. At another time, as I left home to go to Old Hill I opened a small gospel according to Mark, and I begged of the Lord to show me light upon His word, and as I read the opening verses of the first chapter, I saw the person and ministry of John in a way not realised before. I had noticed nothing on my way, as I was altogether absorbed with what was being shown to me, and I was brought back to natural things by a hand being laid on my shoulder; it was one of the members of Spring Meadow Chapel, who said to me, "George, have I offended you?" I replied, "No, why did you think so?" She replied, "I spoke to you, and you took no notice." I answered, "I have not noticed anything or anyone since I left home."

The ministry was also used for my good. The ministry of Mr. George Chandler, at one time of Accrington and the last part of his life at Southport, was of great use to me in my being built up in the truth and I loved him for his work's sake. When supplying at Old Hill he used to stay at Mrs. Adams, of Haden Hill, and it was his custom, if the weather was favourable, to take a walk after breakfast and he passed our house on his way to a little-used lane where he went to meditate before going to chapel. I used to watch for him, although he little knew how I used to pray for him, "Thy servant assist, teach him to teach us." I never spoke to him, I was too nervous and shy. The Lord's servants will never know in this

life the full extent of their usefulness and that thought has helped me in my later years, that though I have seen much fruit of my labours, for which I would be thankful, yet the full results are with the Lord of the harvest.

At Old Hill, in those days, we were favoured with sound experimental ministers, among whom were Messrs. Eddison, McKee, Walsh, Wardle, Feazey, Greenwood, Hannis, D. Keevil, Clack and quite a number of others. While I was attending Old Hill there was not a pastor there, but Mr. P. Robbins, of Bath, took the pastorate a little after I went to Cranbrook.

Apart from attending our own chapel I often had the privilege of hearing Mr. Richard Adams and Mr. Burgess who used to take the evening services at Canal Street Chapel, Oldbury, which is several miles from Haden Hill. I well remember one Thursday evening, I was very burdened in my spirit and tempted to feel that I had no part or lot in the matter, and a wrestling spirit of prayer was given to plead with the Lord that if He had a favour to me, He would give Mr. Burgess a clear word for me, that would deliver me from my sad doubting state. I was so pressed, that, when I came to a lonely part of the road, I stood still and pleaded with the Lord as if I could not let Him go. This brought some relief and I had a little hope that the Lord had heard my cry, and that He would answer it, and it caused me to watch for the answer. When I arrived at the chapel there were about 20 people there, this was about the usual congregation on a week night. I sat on the side seats and no one else was sitting in that part of the chapel. In the early part of the sermon Mr. Burgess did not look my way at all, and I felt left out, and began to sink in my feeling, fearing that all I had felt was not of God. After some time the minister made a pause, and turning towards me he repeated with great emphasis,

“But can I bear the piercing thought,
What if my name should be left out,
When Thou for them shall call.”

Then, as if addressing me personally, he said “Does that thought pierce you?” In my spirit I said “Yes, that is my trouble.” As if he knew my response he said, “It will never be left out if that is your trouble.” The word entered my heart like balm, hope sprang up, I was greatly strengthened in my soul, and I believed that, though I was often overcome, I should overcome at the last, and that my name was written in the Lamb’s book of life. When I got back to the spot where I had pleaded with the Lord for some token for good, I

again stood still and blessed Him for His great mercy and for so graciously hearing and answering my desire. Many things I could write concerning the way that I was led about, but it would make my account too long. One more time I must refer to briefly, though this was not under the ministry. I was about 21 years of age and had gone from home to see the young lady to whom I was engaged, who is now my wife. As I left home I was very favoured with nearness to the Lord in prayer, that He would graciously seal my spirit and show me clearly that I was His in ties of love and blood. As I was going over a pit mound, at once the blessed Spirit of God took of the things of Jesus and showed them to me. I felt all my sin was washed away and was gone. I do think that not since my sin was pardoned when I was delivered from the law, four years before, had I had anything so clear. I stood amazed to find that I had no sin, and I proved "In those days and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." I felt clothed in the spotless righteousness of Jesus, and stood before the Father complete in Christ, and accepted in the Beloved. My feelings could not all be put into words; I know I felt one with the Father, through the love and work of His son, by the blessed work of the Holy Spirit in my soul. The wonder of such love and grace as this melted me in love, gratitude and thanksgiving. I could look forward to the blessed time when I should enter in through the gates into the city, and go out no more for ever. I felt that those in heaven were not more safe than myself, although they were more happy, as they had no sin and were with Christ which is far better; yet I had the earnest of the inheritance, a foretaste of the joy, and in a blessed measure entered into rest. Such visits as these very much strengthened my soul in knowledge and understanding, and when the gracious Remembrancer brings them back to me, there are some things I have been favoured with which I cannot doubt. Many, many times have I departed from the Lord, and I have felt the solemn reproof "O! foolish people and unwise, will ye thus requite the Lord?" After a time I went on; the one who is now my wife, and her sister, were both ill in bed, and when I recounted to them the Lord's goodness and love we rejoiced in Him together.

When nineteen years of age I had a very serious illness, what is now known as peritonitis, that is, acute inflammation of the bowels. This was brought on by drinking a basin of cold bread and milk when very heated in body, having just returned from my work in the foundry. I was 25 days without food, as the doctor said a

crumb of bread would kill me. There had been a case, only a short time before, of a strong young man, who worked in the same shop as myself, having the same illness. He was persuaded to have some milk with some crumbs of bread a few days before the doctor said he might, and he died and was buried within a week. My life was spared, but I was brought very low in body so that I could not turn in bed. In this affliction I had to learn that it is not affliction itself that gives gracious exercise or can bring the blessing of God into the soul. I was kept quiet in mind and had the visits of godly friends, and one Sunday Mr. Hannis, who was supplying at Spring Meadow, came to see me, yet I do not remember anything applied with power, or any special manifestation to my soul from the Lord. I felt the effects of this severe illness for some years. How dependent we are upon the Lord, and we have to prove, "All my springs are in Thee," but this is well, the Lord knows we have need to be kept low and dependent. In our right mind we would not wish one thing altered, but desire that He will not leave us to ourselves, but guide us by the skilfulness of His hands, and give us grace that we may humble ourselves under His mighty hand, that He may lift us up in due time. For some years after the Lord arrested me and made known to me law and grace, I was led about to teach me what dwelt in my heart and that I had still to learn that I could not keep myself. Surrounded as I was with evil men, and falling again and again through the weakness of the flesh, bringing guilt upon my conscience, and heaviness into my heart as I could not live as I would, yet there was in me a leaven of trust in my own strength that had to be brought down. I thought at first, that as I had been especially favoured I could certainly walk worthy of the vocation to which I had been called, and I tried to fulfil the exhortation, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." I was sincerely desirous of doing so, but found a powerful combination fighting against me. My sinful heart and a sinful world tried all in their power to cause me to fall, and to some extent succeeded, but I was most unhappy, when by some word or action, such as smiling at some filthy jest, or speaking an angry word when provoked. I used to think and resolve to pray more, and be more watchful another time, so that I should not be taken unawares, but still it was by a slow wearing down process that I had to learn that, in myself, I was not sufficient to think anything as of myself. I well remember going to work one morning, full of heaviness because I did not bring honour to the Lord, in my life before others, when it was clearly shown to me that I was looking partly to self, because in the latter

Remembered Mercies Recorded

stages of this experience I looked partly to the Lord and partly to myself, but found that He is jealous and that He would not share the glory, when He alone is the author as well as the finisher, the Alpha and the Omega of my salvation. I fell at His feet, and my sincere confession and prayer was,

“A guilty, weak and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall,
Be Thou my strength and righteousness.
My Jesus and my All.”

I gained much by this experience, and found that the Lord in this, as well as in all other parts of my pathway, had a gracious end in view, to wean me from all hope in myself to trust in Him alone; and His own glory and my profit and eternal well-being. As the Apostle Paul said, “In all things I am instructed,” and in my small measure I have found the same. At times, in looking back, I have thanked God for all the forbearance, patience and loving kindness He has made me prove, and that He, whom I trust begun the work, still has carried it on, and will I pray perfect it; and I have been constrained to say, “He hath done all things well.”

3. CHANGES

FRESH EMPLOYMENT

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.” As far as our way is of the Lord’s ordering it must end well; whatever trial, affliction, darkness or temptation one may have to pass through, nothing can defeat God’s ordained purpose. So I have found it, and though like Jacob I have said “All these things are against me,” yet I have found that the Lord is too wise to err and too good to be unkind, and that His overruling providence orders and marshals every circumstance, and that “God does nothing or suffers to be done but what we should do if we could see the end as well as He.”

Owing to my early privations, very hard labour and long hours, I found my physical powers undermined, so that I was unable to bear up under it, and for two or three years I found that I was slowly but surely weakening and I looked forward to the future with apprehension. I was married in 1895 when 22 years of age, my wife being a few weeks younger than myself and very delicate. Our financial outlook was very dark and I carried my case to the Lord that He would open a way for us so that we might “provide things honest in the sight of all men.” A way was opened for me to take labouring work under the Birmingham Corporation in the Streets and Roads Department. I was employed at Harborne, a suburb on the west of Birmingham. I only wish to state my circumstances, as they show the wonderful mercy and goodness of God to me; it is impossible to separate providence from grace in the lives of the people of God.

The lives of all the Old Testament saints are given at great length in the inspired Word, as instanced in the life of Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and many others. This is the background on which God’s gracious purposes are seen in bold and clear relief. It was a great trial to leave the Gospel favoured locality where I had spent my early life, and my friends felt the severance as well as myself.

I found in my new position that everywhere there is a separation between those who fear God and those who have no fear of God before their eyes. My bad state of nerves made contact with

fresh people very trying, but it caused me to look to the Lord that He would be my stay and I found Him to be my helper from day to day. The change from the heat of the foundry to the open air was very trying as there was much frost and snow, but the change was beneficial. The company was also very trying and during the first part of the time there was no one I could speak to on any subject that was spiritual. The grace of God was sufficient for me, and kept me, though so weak in myself, so that gradually my walk put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, though I had to know by experience the words of the Lord Jesus, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also." If working near the Municipal Fire Station at meal times we could have our food there. This was a great convenience in cold or rough weather, as there was always a good fire and everything was scrupulously clean. One day I went into the station at dinner time, no one was there at the time, and being as I thought alone, and feeling nearness to the Lord in my spirit I began to sing a hymn. After a little time a fireman came in from the stable in a towering rage, and said, "Who is making such a miserable noise here? I'll tell you what George, if you can't keep your religion outside this station, you must stay out." This statement was accompanied with much bad language, I replied very quietly, "Will, my religion is not in my pocket that I can take it out, but in my heart, and it must go where I go, but tell me, in what way does my religion make me a worse man, that you so object to it?" At this, he quietened down, and said "George, I must say, I like you as man, but I hate what you believe." I replied, "you acknowledge the fruit of my religion but you hate the root, because you do not understand it."

GRACIOUS LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THOMAS DAVIS, OF HARBORNE

There was no Strict Baptist cause in Harborne, the nearest place was Frederick Street, Birmingham, several miles away, and for the first three years we lived three miles west of Harborne, so that it was very inconvenient to get there. There were also two other places of truth in Birmingham, Crabtree Road, Hockley, now closed, and the Independent Calvinistic Chapel in the Parade. But though there was no Strict Baptist cause near to where we lived, the gospel of free and sovereign grace was faithfully, ably and lovingly preached in St. John's Church by the late Thomas Davis. We attended, loved and profited by his ministry all the time we were there. The Church of England services had no attraction for

us, and never interfered in any way to weaken our love to and belief in, that order of service in which the Lord had met with us and blessed us, but, I must say, that to hear the Church of England service conducted in the way Mr. Davis did it, differed very essentially from the formal superficial ceremonial way obtaining in many churches. The church service at St. John's was of the plainest type. The minister always preached in a black gown and always spoke extempore. On a week night there would be many people from Frederick Street and the Parade chapels to listen to the plain, experimental and searching ministry and I think he had more people that loved his ministry amongst the Calvinistic nonconformists than amongst the members of the Church of England. He had a simple, orderly manner, and could simplify truth without weakening it. He was a very learned man, but never paraded his learning. Besides the weekly preaching service, a prayer meeting or Bible class was held once a month. These meetings were very helpful to me as Mr. Davis graciously and unctuously expounded the Word of God. It gave me gracious insight into many parts of the Scriptures and was used to enlarge my mind and strengthen my soul and build me up in the faith once delivered to the saints.

When Mr. Davis preached his first sermon in St. John's Church, several gentlemen from the congregation went into the vestry after the service, and said to him, "Who authorised you to preach those things that you have advanced this morning?" Mr. Davis answered, "not you or any man, but God." They said, "You will not preach them here." The reply was, "I shall, and you cannot hinder me." The gentlemen said, "we shall, for we will starve you out by withholding our support." Mr. Davis said, "If the Lord has sent me to Harborne, He will maintain me until my work is done; if He has not sent me, the sooner I leave the better; I was sent to feed sheep, not to amuse goats." The living at the church was only £90 a year and a large vicarage. The minister had to depend for his salary on the Easter offering, and undoubtedly it was thought by those who did not love the faithful ministry of Mr. Davis, that they could prevent his continuing there. The Lord raised up friends for him among those who esteemed him very highly in love for his work's sake. One lady always allowed him £50 per year. He did not leave Harborne until his labours were finished and he was taken home at the age of 69.

At Harborne I found some gracious people with whom I could walk in the unity of the spirit and in the bond of peace, and

someone who lived in Harborne would walk part of the way to Quinton, where at that time we lived, and our conversation was of the truths we had been hearing, or the way in which the Lord was leading us; and in nearly every case only death made a final separation to our communion on earth. The churchwardens were both gracious men, Messrs. Blinkhorn and Kingston. A Mr. Crump was a stalwart in the doctrines of grace and in a gracious contention for them. Many names come to my mind of those long since gathered home, and the "memory of the just is blessed." May my last end be like theirs.

Mr. Davis was very kind to me and never let the disparity in our position in earthly things be any barrier to fellowship in the things of God. If possible he would stay and have a few words with me if I saw him when at my work. I well remember one Sunday evening he preached from the words, "But my God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He spoke of the words in a way new to me, showing our need of weaning, of trial, of affliction and how it was needed to keep us prayerful, humbled, from settling down on our lees and finding our rest in the things that the flesh loves. This made a great impression on my mind, and led me on in the truth. I was meditating on it the next day, I was working near to the vicarage in the afternoon and Mr. Davis came by. He stopped and spoke to me and enquired how I was, and I asked how he was. He replied, "I am up to my chin in trouble today." Without realising what would be the effect of my words, I said, "Well, Sir, it may be, as you were telling us last evening, your God is supplying all your need." He said, "Ah! I had not thought about that today," and he went on, probably to reflect how he needed grace to walk out the path he knew God's people must walk in.

In conversation he would usually have a gracious subject to speak on. One day as it was time to leave off work and return to the yard, where all the tools, horses and stores were kept, Mr. Davis was also returning home, and I walked with him through the fields, while the men I had been working with went by the road. It was a long way and I shall never forget his conversation as we walked. His subject was "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." Mr. Davis showed how needful the chaff is to the wheat whilst it is growing, how close it is to the wheat, how it preserves it until the harvest comes, when a final separation takes place, and while the chaff is burned, the wheat is gathered into the garner. He showed how the world is used for the good of God's people, who are for the

most part poor in the world; how those who have their portion in this life find them employment and enable them to provide for the needs of the body, while the work of grace is going on in their souls. Also how that those who have this world's goods are often used to help in outward things the cause of God, yet have no grace. He spoke of the lightness of the chaff and the weight of the wheat. The emptiness of everything in the world, how all is vanity and vexation of spirit, soon to pass away, while grace is permanent and profitable, "having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come."

Sometimes, when convenient, Mr. Davis would ask me into his house; he would take me to his study and would always ask God's blessing on our conversation. Such times were valued by me as I was but young in the way and I desired the sincere milk of the word that I might grow thereby. In looking back over 44 years, I feel that the Lord had a purpose of mercy and grace in directing my way to Harborne. The chief purpose was that I might be led further into His truth under the ministry and teaching of Mr. Davis. I saw his godly life and was acquainted with his trying pathway, how he was separated in life and practice from every other Church of England minister in that locality, and as far as I know there was not another clergyman in Birmingham at that time with whom he could walk.

It was his ministry and teaching that bound my soul to him; he was a faithful ambassador of Christ. It may be asked, Why did he not leave the Church as did Philpot, Tiptaft and others? To that it might be answered, Why did Toplady, Berridge, Newton, Romaine and other godly men, whose works we read and whose hymns we sing, remain and end their days in the Church? Certainly none can say they were not blessed and much used of God in their day and generation, in a way far beyond what we witness today. During one of the last conversations I had with Mr. Davis, he said to me, "It would be easier for me to leave the Church than remain in it, as it is harder to stay in the Church and preach against the many things that I see to be wrong. But I feel my place is in it though my path is so trying." For myself, in these matters, I feel the words of the Apostle Paul are a guide to me, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." I am persuaded nothing but the grace of God enabled Mr. Davis to bear such an unflinching testimony. I never knew a kinder man in his natural disposition or a more fearless one in preaching the Gospel that had been committed to him. Friends told me that at one time,

before I knew him, he had given lectures on Roman Catholicism. This aroused such active and violent opposition from the Roman Catholic priests and laity that the police had to intervene. When violence was threatened Mr. Davis told the priests that led the opposition that if they and their people would listen quietly they should have every opportunity to present publicly their side of the case, that they could have the same platform, and he would promise on behalf of himself and his people that they would be present and accord to them the liberty they asked for themselves. Rome can only offer violence to truth where they cannot otherwise silence it. The meetings had to be discontinued because the police authorities said they could not be responsible for Mr. Davis's life unless he stopped the lectures. Possibly the real reason was that the chief of the police in Birmingham was, at that time, a Roman Catholic.

On his death bed about a year after I left Harborne Mr. Davis said to one of his hearers, "Never lower the standard." He died in the Lord and found his stay, when heart and flesh gave way, in those truths he had so graciously and faithfully preached. The text which he chose to be put on his gravestone was, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also that is of the faith of Abraham, who is the Father of us all."

PUBLIC PRAYER AND SPEAKING

I will now relate how my mouth was opened in public prayer. Owing to my nervousness it never entered my mind that I should ever speak in prayer before others, but one night after the prayer meeting Mr. Davis said to me, "I should very much like you to engage in prayer sometimes." I was very surprised and troubled and said to him, "O, Sir, I could not possibly speak in prayer before others." I was so much in earnest that he said, "If you feel like that I must leave it." I was greatly relieved and he said no more about it until, one night there was only one man beside myself and Mr. Davis at the prayer meeting. A few minutes before the meeting commenced he came to me and said, "I do not know how we can have a prayer meeting unless you try to pray, as you see, only Mr. Brown and myself are here to speak." I said to him, "Well, Sir, if you cannot go on except I try, I will try, but do not be surprised if I fail in the attempt, because I do not feel able to speak, but if anyone else comes that can speak, please ask them instead of me." When he returned to his place, one of the churchwardens came in, and I

felt now the position is met. Mr. Davis, at the beginning of the meeting always announced its order, and he said, "Mr. Brown will speak in prayer, also Mr. Kingston and Mr. Rose will conclude." This announcement tried me very much; all I could do was to beg of the Lord to be with me and to take away all fear of man, that the blessed Spirit would help my infirmities, and give me a true spirit of prayer. This the Lord was graciously pleased to do, for as soon as I began to speak, I lost sight of Mr. Davis and all the people, language was given me, I felt a gracious nearness to the Lord, and I was enabled to pour out the desires of my soul as if I had no listener but Himself. It was wonderful to me, as it was altogether beyond me. After the meeting, as we were leaving, Mr. Davis, as he wished me "Goodnight," said very emphatically, "there, that is just what I thought," and then added, "I shall call upon you to speak in prayer as I do the other friends," which he did from that time.

It was also at Harborne that I was called upon to give an address for the first time, and it came about in the following way. The last year I was at Harborne I lived in the town as I found the double journey on Sundays to be trying. One day, in the winter, when I arrived home for dinner, my wife said, "There is a letter for you from Mr. Davis." When I opened the letter it read thus: "Dear Mr. Rose, Owing to the severity of the weather and my chest being so weak, I feel unable to come out this evening, and I am asking if you will kindly take my place at the Bible class tonight. Praying that the Lord will help and bless you." This put me in a great strait, but as I had to go back to work and there was no time to see him, to tell him that I could not do it, I thought, I will go to the meeting, and ask someone else there to conduct it. My want of education was before me, and I knew that a large proportion of those that attended were educated people; and the thought of occupying Mr. Davis's position seemed impossible to me. I was very tried for the rest of the day, and dreaded the time coming when I had to go to the meeting, and went to it in a very disturbed state of mind. There was a large number of women there but no man came before the time the meeting was to begin. As Mr. Davis did not arrive, there was a quiet undertone of enquiry, such as "The vicar is late tonight, what has happened to make him so late?" So I stood up and read Mr. Davis's letter, and told them that I did not feel at all equal to take his place. One lady who, with her sister, kept a ladies' High School said, "Mr. Rose, please go and take Mr. Davis's place and we shall be very pleased to listen to what the Lord will give you to say to us." As there was no other course open, I did so. During the singing of the first hymn a young man came in, and, as I knew he

was a gracious person and I felt, far more able to conduct the meeting than myself, when the hymn was finished, I briefly stated the position to him, and asked him if he would take the meeting, but he declined to do so. I ventured to read the first part of the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, and felt great liberty in separating the precious from the vile. The Lord enabled me to be faithful and took away all fear of man, and though it was all so unexpected and new, I believe the Lord opened my mouth, and enabled me to speak as before Him, so that, when I had finished I had a clear conscience. After the meeting there were many expressions of appreciation, but not with all. Thus the Lord gave me to prove that He could make His strength perfect in my weakness, and that it is "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

WITNESSING

I trust the Lord also made me a witness to those among whom I worked, as Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." One young man when he came to the foundry, said to me "Where do you go on Sundays." I said, "I go to church." He replied in a bantering manner, "I suppose you do, where they have handles on the prayer books," meaning that I went to a public house. I then told him about myself, how I had been shown the evil of living in sin, the awful state of being without God and hope in the world, and that sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. We were working by ourselves, he listened to me with great interest, and with tears in his eyes he told me that he had parents who always attended a place of worship, how he had broken away from all moral restraint, and that it would break his parents' hearts if they knew the life he was living: that they had no knowledge of where he was as he had not written to them for some years. He said, "I dare not let them know where I am as I should be so ashamed of my present life," but, he added, "I wish I was like you." He did not stay long at Harborne and I lost sight of him. It needs an almighty arm to save from the power of Satan.

Another case was very sad in its course and end. A young man I worked with lived near to me and we often returned home together. He and his aged mother and his young wife, lived together in a country cottage, and they were a quiet orderly people in a moral sense, but he was very weak in that he could not say

“No” when asked to go into a public house. Many times has he stayed behind after leaving work, and gone home in a greater or less state of intoxication to the great grief of those there. One night, when going home one of the men said to him, “Eli, come and have half a pint before you go home.” I said to him, “Come with me, and go home,” but he turned back and stayed until he was very drunk. On his way home he laid down in a ditch at the side of the road, a summer thunderstorm came on with drenching rain, and the water ran under his back, which brought on inflammation of the spinal cord. He was ill for many months, and I have never seen such suffering. He was eventually raised up and returned to light work, but he lived only a little time and passed away, leaving a broken-hearted wife and mother to mourn his loss. “Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

“SEEKING GREAT THINGS” AND THE WAY BACK

Though I was favoured in many ways, yet as I got stronger in body, I found that I grew dissatisfied with my small wages, as I could not support the truth as I should like to have done, and we had to live very carefully. I began to think of getting work in my trade in Birmingham. When I mentioned it to my wife, she wisely said “You know the Lord brought you here, and if you go elsewhere without the Lord’s leading, you will only get into trouble, as you will not have His blessing.” I was in my own spirit, and said something to this effect, “It is not your matter, and I shall please myself.” To carry out my project, I had half a day from my work, intending to go into Birmingham to get employment in a foundry making the class of goods I was used to. When I was a short distance from home, these words were very powerfully applied to my mind, “And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not; for I will bring evil on all flesh, saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.” These words brought me to a stand, and turned me from my purpose. My wife was surprised that I remained at home, but she told me afterwards that she thought the Lord had intervened and that I should tell her, so she did not remark on it. I told her in a few days, and so I was made willing for the time to abide in my position. Whenever the desire for greater things began to rise in my mind, the words were always present to check me and they remained with me all the time I was at Harborne. At that time I had no concordance, but I felt the words were from the Bible because of the power and authority accompanying them. About a year afterwards I was relating the circumstance to a friend, and said I

had not seen the words and she told me where they were to be found.

Though I had been prevented from leaving my work, I still had a craving to earn more money and I commenced to repair boots at home in the evenings. This over-anxiety about the bread that perisheth, brought on much deadness and barrenness in my soul, and I began to neglect the means of grace on the week evenings, as I had too much work to do. But the Lord did not leave me to myself. One evening Mr. Davis preached from the words, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." That discourse searched me through and through and was made a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. I said to Mrs. Rose on the way home, "That sermon has made an end of my boot repairing," and from that day to this I have never repaired a pair of boots for payment. Thus the Lord watched over me for good to keep me chiefly from myself.

My desire for natural knowledge was very strong and books dealing with general knowledge have always appealed to me, out of all proportion to their benefit, and proved a snare to my soul; and at this time got a great hold upon me, so that I neglected reading the Word of God. I got into a sad state, and my wife reprovved me and said to me, "I am ashamed to see you so much taken up with so much reading about natural things, I rarely see you read the Bible now." My conscience echoed her words, but being overcome by the wrong, I excused myself to her by saying that all I read was true. But the Lord took the matter in hand. Having departed from Him and made myself poor and bare, and having hewn out to myself cisterns, broken cisterns that could hold no water, following after idols that could not profit, and the Lord leaving me to be filled with my own devices, Satan came upon me with fierce temptations to make me believe that I never had any right religion. If I could take such pleasure in following after natural things, and neglect the things of God, then all my religion could be accounted for naturally. I tried to pray but could find no access at the throne of grace. Day after day, week after week, I was beset and it seemed as if there was no escape. "Pursue and take him, for there is no help for him in God," and I seemed carried away captive and there was none to deliver. I can truly say, "The wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me."

In those sad days I entered into much of the meaning of the Lamentations of Jeremiah. When the Lord visits for sin, and walks frowardly to us, because we have walked frowardly with Him, His

strokes are fewer than our sins, but as sanctified, it makes the burned child dread the fire, and ever since that time I have prayed to be kept from a backsliding spirit, and though my flesh is no better, yet I have desired that sin shall not have dominion over me. In this path Satan tempted me to curse God aloud thus putting it out of my power any more to make any profession of religion, to read the Bible, or go to any place of worship. One evening as I was returning from my work all kinds of evil thoughts were working in my heart like a boiling cauldron, as if they must find vent in open expression. I had to clench my teeth and close my lips and lay hold on a field stile and press with all my might to keep me from saying the blasphemy against God. Though I had so grievously departed from the Lord, there was still some good thing in my heart towards Him, and there was no hope of good in anything else but in Him. This close battle of wrestling with temptation, foot to foot, shoulder to shoulder as it seemed to me, was dire conflict. How I sighed like a prisoner, and groaned by reason of the awful suggestions of the enemy. When I reached home the thought came into my mind to go and hear Mr. Richard Adams at Rowley that night. Though it was a long way to walk I went, but only expected to hear condemnation and to be cut off. Mr. Adams was a deeply-tried minister and his ministry was very separating. I do not now remember anything of the text, I seemed outside anything that was gracious, but in his sermon he entered into my case in a wonderful way, described my pathway in detail, and his words were accompanied with power to my heart, and proved to me that, though so sinful and tempted, yet I had the root of the matter within me, and that, however tried, the Lord would save me. Mr. Adams spoke of the Lord's everlasting love, and the wonderful atonement that Christ wrought out, and that He was able to save to the uttermost all them that come to God by Him. That night in Rowley Chapel the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in His wings, and I returned home a different man in my feelings. That was a night much to be remembered, and even now I would bless the Lord for delivering me, though I had so much departed from Him.

A MOUNTAIN TOP AND VALLEY EXPERIENCE

One very favoured time I remember, having had only one such time in my life. It was one winter's morning on my way to work. As I had three miles to walk, and had to be at the yard at 6 o'clock I left home not later than 5.15. I had to go through a country lane for about two miles. I had great liberty in prayer that the Lord would

reveal Himself to me as my God and Saviour, and I was caught up in my mind from the earth and all time things, and for some time my soul was ravished with the glory and grace of God. I will not try to put into words all that was revealed to me, for that is impossible. The glory of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, the bliss of the redeemed in heaven; their peace, love and joy, and how the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, was shown to me. It was, I believe, a foretaste of heaven, as I entered into what I saw, and knew in my soul that I had an interest therein.

After a time some consciousness of my position returned to me, and I vaguely realised I was in Harborne Lane going to work, and I did not know how long I had been unconscious of where I was. This caused me to hurry on my way. When I got to the first street lamp at the entrance to the town, I realised I could not go to work, as I could not set my mind on natural things. The things of God and heaven quite overpowered everything; it was only my body that was on the earth, all my mind was absorbed with that which was heavenly. I stood and asked the Lord that if it was His will that I should go to work, the power and the abundance of what I was feeling might be lessened, to enable me to attend to my duties. If it could please Him to still bless me, I would not go, but would retire from intercourse with creatures that I might still be blessed with Himself. I then sensibly felt the blessing and power withdrawn, and could feel my bodily powers returning, and the cold air on my face and hands, and my mind conscious of earthly objects, but in my soul what love and peace was experienced, and I realised, "And truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." I could now enter upon my duties and have to do with other men in natural things, but what a gulf I felt between earthly things and heavenly things. I entered sweetly into the meaning of part of the prayer of Jesus, "I have given them Thy word: and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." I walked for some time in the comfort and sweetness of this visitation, and the things of this life were held in a right way, since my affections were set on things above. But I ever have had to prove that the day of adversity is set over against the day of prosperity, and that I was not to rest upon

any experience, but upon the unchangeable God, and I was emptied from vessel to vessel, that I should not rest upon my lees.

My carnal mind has ever been my trouble, and only as the Spirit's power and grace is realised can I mortify the deeds of the body. Many sad days of darkness and bondage have I had, and many temptations that my spot was not the spot of His people, and that after all the goodness and mercy the Lord had shown me, my heart was still as vile and evil as ever, causing me many times to say "Can such besetting evils dwell, In sinners born of God?" The words of David have been mine, "My wounds stink, and are corrupt because of my foolishness, I am troubled: I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from Thee." One day, I thought, I will look into the Word of God to see if I can see anything to meet my case. I usually carried a small New Testament in my pocket when at work. I paused for a moment in my work, and opened it, and the first words I saw were, "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened." That was a great relief. What tried me was the fear that I was not a child of God. It was not the trials of the way that were my greatest trouble, but the fear that I might find, when weighed in the balances of God, I should be found wanting, but when I could realise I was on the way to heaven, I could ask for enduring grace that I might endure to the end. The words I read although only part of a sentence, gave me to hope once more that the Lord would bring me through.

"BETTER TO OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MAN"

The bounds of our habitations are fixed, and the time was drawing near for me to leave the place where I had been so favoured in spiritual things.

In previous years, when deep snow came, I had always been excused Sunday labour, but one Saturday there was a heavy snowfall, and living near, orders were given to report for duty on Sunday morning at 6 o'clock. This I felt I could not do, as it was not a work of mercy or of necessity. On the Saturday evening I went to the foreman's house and told him that as it was the Lord's Day, and I felt the work to be done was not essential, and at the most, it was only for convenience, my conscience would not let me stay away from a place of worship on that account. He reminded me of

the view the surveyor would take of it, and that it would get me into difficulties with him. I told him that I had counted the cost, and I had come to tell him, so that he could make his working arrangements, knowing that I should not be there. The following Monday morning, as I expected, the surveyor came to me, and said, "I am surprised, that a man like you should set such an example of insubordination." I replied, "I have worked here for four years, have I ever failed in my duty?" He answered, "No." I then said, "I shall always seek to do my duty to you, except when your orders are against my duty to God. 'Whether it is better to obey God, rather than men, judge ye;' I consider the work yesterday was not a work of necessity or of mercy, and being the Lord's Day, it was not mine to use for a secular purpose." This reply made him angry and he then said, he would discharge me as soon as he could fill my place. He also reduced my rate of pay from the highest to the lowest, and at once put me to the hardest and most disagreeable work that he could. This caused me to cry to the Lord to direct me and help me. These words were given to me, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." The words that had kept me there when I wanted to move from a fleshly motive, were taken away, and I felt that my stay in that place had come to an end.

I felt directed to go back to the foundry that I left because of my weakened health. I went as soon as I could, the foreman received me kindly and said I could return at any time I wished, and if I would let him know the date, my place should be ready for me. I then gave in my notice to leave; the Surveyor was in the office at the time. He looked very surprised and said, "Where are you going?" I replied, "I am going back to my trade." He said, "Have you got a trade?" I said, "Yes, I only came here for health reasons, and as I have a home and a wife to care for, and you told me that you would discharge me as soon as you could, because I cannot do violence to my conscience, I have felt it right to leave, and go where I shall not be called upon to act contrary to what I feel is right before God." When my notice was worked out, I left the Birmingham Corporation and returned to my former employment.

I had more to learn of myself, of my sinfulness, more of the evil of departing from the Lord, in backsliding from Him, and how the transgressor is filled with his own ways: how Satan as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he may devour. On the other hand I was shown further, the unchangeability of God's purpose towards those whom he loves with an everlasting love; that though He will

Changes

never finally leave them nor forsake them, but will lead them about and instruct them, and keep them as the apple of His eye, so that they may know what is in their heart, and do them good at their latter end. I do feel deeply at times, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.”