

WHEN GOD WORKS

*The Early Life of Thomas Bradbury and the
Fruit of his Ministry at Haydock*



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Yours faithfully,
Thomas Bradburn

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“And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”

Luke 14. 23

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PREFACE

For nearly fifty years Thomas Bradbury* (1831-1905) faithfully preached the doctrines of free and sovereign grace – first as a missionary to the coal miners of Haydock, and later for thirty-one years as a pastor in London.

At the heart of this interesting book, *When God Works*, is the remarkable account of James Turton, one of these miners blessed under Bradbury's ministry – “this display of glorious grace,” as J. K. Popham described it. The reason F. L. Rowell of Rochdale edited and republished it in 1970 was because he hardly knew of any life story so real, so honest, so remarkable and so interesting. Along with this account, *Turton's Pillar* as it was originally known, is the record of several more who lived around the village of Haydock, also blessed under Bradbury's ministry.

But who was this favoured man, Thomas Bradbury? *When God Works* gives us his early life, and concludes with two of his sermons and a few letters.

Thomas Bradbury's ministry gave “no uncertain sound” and is reminiscent of his honoured predecessor in the pastorate at Grove Chapel, Camberwell – Joseph Irons.

We hope the witness of this book to the power of the Holy Spirit's work in the salvation of sinners will be abundantly blessed.

B. A. Ramsbottom
October 2013

* He is not to be confused with Thomas Bradbury (1677-1759), a well-known, latter-day Puritan minister, stalwart for the truth.

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INTRODUCTION

In the year 1859 Haydock in Lancashire was largely dominated by the coal mining industry, and many of the inhabitants gained their livelihood by working in the mines. This included many young children too. Many were the accidents and disasters in those days, and yet God in the midst of the prevailing dangers, poverty and ignorance was pleased to call a few by His grace and bring them to a saving knowledge of Himself.

One of the means He used was a young man called Thomas Bradbury. Thomas had been born in Manchester and was brought up to attend the Church of England. The clergyman was a faithful, converted Roman Catholic called Patrick O'Leary whose ministry was made a blessing to Thomas, yet he seemed to be the only one of the children in the Sunday School class whom God was pleased to call out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Following his marriage to a like-minded girl who attended the same church, they began to attend another church, where they were both teachers in the Sunday School. But Thomas Bradbury himself was still being taught by the Holy Spirit, "line upon line; here a little, and there a little" and his teaching in the Sunday School was evidently a deep spiritual concern to him. There was one occasion especially in which he was to see the evidence of God's blessing afterwards.

The minister could see that Mr. Bradbury possessed considerable gifts for instructing others and it was through his instrumentality that he was engaged as a missionary in connection with the Manchester City Mission. He was only in his mid-twenties. Then in early 1859 the owners of some of the coal mines at Haydock applied to the Mission for a

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missionary to work among the colliers, and in February 1859 he was chosen for this work, with no formal theological training, but deeply taught in his own soul. The events that followed showed how God had overruled all these circumstances to fulfil His own purposes.

Mr. Bradbury's work was to visit others in their cottages and to set before them the truth of God's Word, and to hold meetings, often in the open air. As the months went by he saw that God was marvellously blessing his labours in making him the instrument in bringing dead sinners to realise their union with a living Christ. As part of his job he had to keep records of his work, and in doing this he wrote up accounts of the conversations he had had with those he had visited, and it was these which formed the basis of many gracious accounts of how God had turned sinners "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Some of these accounts were published years later under the title of "Strangers and Pilgrims", and all are both interesting and spiritually profitable.

Yet Mr. Bradbury did not find things easy. To preach the truth of God's sovereignty in salvation did not go down well with many who thought they should have a part in God's work, and he encountered much opposition. God's work was not thwarted however, and there were many who dearly loved his faithful testimony. Among these especially was a couple called John and Ellen Turton, and he spent many happy hours with them holding meetings and expounding the Word of God. God was pleased abundantly to put his stamp of approbation on Mr. Bradbury's work by calling by grace every one of their children, who at this time were in their late teens and early twenties. One of these children, James, had gone to work in the coal mines from an early age, and learned many evil ways and was a continual grief to his godly parents. But in the midst of a drinking frolic, caught, and in the act of

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planning to murder the officer who had arrested him, God intervened and stopped him. In due time he was brought to love Thomas Bradbury, the man whom he had despised, and the unity of spirit which bound them together was never broken.

After seven years and nine months at Haydock, Mr. Bradbury moved to Barrow Hill, near Chesterfield, where the same blessing rested on his labours. After another seven years and nine months he was called to the pastorate at Grove Chapel, Camberwell, London for the remainder of his life, another thirty-one years. Many of his sermons were published, but perhaps it is for the accounts of his work at Haydock that he is most remembered. And strangely, he did not seem to write accounts of others at Barrow Hill and London like he did of those at Haydock.

In his old age James Turton also wrote an account of God's gracious dealings with him, which was published under the title of "Turton's Pillar". Mr. Bradbury's "Life and Letters" were published in 1911, after his death. A book of tracts, called "Grove Chapel Tracts", is also extant as is a history of Grove Chapel. In reading through these accounts, and those in "Strangers and Pilgrims" there are many things which link them all together. And this is where this book comes in.

We have tried here to give an outline of the earlier life of Thomas Bradbury, taken mostly from his "Life and Letters" which was written by his daughter Mary, up to the time when he left Haydock. This has been edited, as the original includes many extracts from the accounts which appear in "Strangers and Pilgrims" - and these accounts which were written by Mr. Bradbury follow, roughly in chronological order. Then we have given the whole of James Turton's book, together with a few details of his death, as an independent testimony to God's blessing

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which rested on Thomas Bradbury's labours at Haydock. Finally we have included two sermons of Mr. Bradbury and some of the letters exchanged with his Haydock friends so as to give an idea of the preaching and conversations with each other which God made such a blessing to them. We hope that this arrangement will give added interest and show the interlacing of God's providence and grace in the lives of a few "of whom the world was not worthy." A bibliography is appended for those who would like to find more details from the original works.

Perhaps one thing that stands out about Mr. Bradbury is the way he was most graciously taught of God to stand fast for the sovereignty of God in choosing an elect people, in the Lord Jesus coming to lay down His life for them and them alone, in the special work of the Holy Ghost in calling them out of the world, and the certainty of all those chosen and called, enduring to everlasting life. Yet though so firm in the truth and suffering so much opposition, particularly from Arminians, he was never a man of a party spirit; he speaks so kindly of other ministers who were Baptists, Independents, Episcopalians. Indeed, it didn't seem to matter to him what label they bore; he loved them if they loved and walked in the same truths as he had had burnt in his heart. Perhaps it may seem unusual to us, a missionary for the Manchester City Mission, preaching in a Strict Baptist Chapel and encouraging other church people to go where the truth was preached! We would there were many in our day who both stood fast in the truth of the Gospel and yet showed that same love to all who love the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. We might add, if any think that holding such doctrines prevents the Gospel being preached as it should, let them examine the life of Thomas Bradbury, and God's witness which was stamped upon it.

**THE EARLY LIFE OF THOMAS
BRADBURY**

1. CHILDHOOD DAYS AND MARRIAGE

“Some of God’s dear children are drawn to Him in their youthful days, and by the power of His love and fear in their hearts, He keeps them from those depths of sin to which others are left to fall. Yet sooner or later, each and every member of the election of grace shall, and must, be brought by the cords of invincible grace to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Thomas Bradbury, the eldest son of John Bradbury, and Mary Ann his wife, was born in Manchester, March 26th, 1831. His parents were poor in this world’s goods, but “rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him.”

His father was, however, descended from the Bradburys of Ashbourne, in Derbyshire, who were, a few generations previously, a very wealthy family. The name may be seen on many tombstones in the churchyard there. It was there that he attended the funeral of his grandmother, as recorded on a subsequent page.

When old enough, he was sent to a day school, but was taken away at the age of eight years to work in the cotton mills. His father used to take him there at four o’clock in the morning, to work until late in the evening. As he grew older he attended a night school, for from his early days he was eager after knowledge; and so great was his love of learning, and so retentive his memory, that he made great progress in such subjects as were set before him. The Bible was always a favourite Book of study, even from his childhood, for his parents, desirous of bringing up their children in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” instructed them in the Scriptures, which they knew were able to make them wise unto salvation.

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They attended the church of St. Jude's, Manchester, where the late Rev. P. J. O'Leary was Incumbent, under whose ministry he was first brought to feel himself a sinner, and to a realization of the awful majesty of a holy and sin-hating God. His mother, whom he dearly loved, died when he was eight years of age. Referring to his early days, he says:

I felt it was God's mercy that my mother should take me in her arms when she did, and cause my young heart to thrill with her sayings and songs of redeeming love. That was a time I shall ever remember, on the 15th day of April, 1839, when I sat by her side, and looked into her face, but she noticed me not. Her eyes were closed, never to open again in this world. Her lips moved; she sang -

“And am I born to die,
To lay this body down?
And must my trembling spirit fly
Into a world unknown?”

That same night the mother left her boy in a cold and cruel world; but that time was in His gracious hand, and up to this time every step has been paved with mercy.

In another place he refers to an earlier period than this, when God began to attract his infant mind and turn it to Himself. He says:

I have known a few just men in my time, and whenever I think of them my heart grows too full to express itself. Dear old John Styan comes into my mind; I think I see him now. He had a patriarchal appearance, his grey hair hanging in profusion round the back of his head. I remember his taking me upon his knee, and repeating several things about the omniscience of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; especially that verse in Dr. Watts' "Divine and Moral Songs," which was full of meaning to me, and has had an abiding effect in me:

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“Almighty God, Thy piercing eye
Strikes through the shades of night;
And our most secret actions lie
All open to Thy sight.”

I was only a little over four years old then, and the old man and his verse still abide with me. This is not because of the good use I make of my memory, but because the Covenant Remembrancer thus befriends me.

Of a little later period he says:

When a little lad in the Sunday School of Old St. Jude’s, Canal Street, Ancoats, Manchester, my affections were won by that dear saint whose delight it was to speak well of the crucified One from the pulpit of the said Church. Under the force and power of that precious truth which flowed so eloquently from the lips of Patrick Joseph O’Leary, I first trembled under a sense of God’s righteous indignation and wrath against sin. The good seed of the kingdom was sown, which was to germinate and bring forth fruit in days to come.

He speaks of another time thus: “The clergyman of the Church (St. Jude’s) and his teachers would have the scholars commit to memory large portions of the Scriptures. Subjects were given to us, and we had to search for proof. One subject was, ‘The Immutability of God.’ I searched the Book, learned the texts, and trembled at the truth.”

A circumstance, the memory of which remained with him all his life, was that of being taken by his father to the funeral of his grandmother Bradbury; and when at the graveside his grandfather, an old man with flowing white locks, gave out the verse of the hymn:

“What is the world with all its store?
’Tis but a bitter sweet;

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When I attempt to pluck the rose,
A pricking thorn I meet."

A dear old man was he, who loved and preached the doctrines of distinguishing grace, and is now in glory, drinking in to the full of that enduring happiness which is found in Christ alone.

Referring to him Mr. Bradbury says:

The name of Robert Bradbury, my paternal grandfather, yields sweet fragrance to my spiritual nature, as I remember him repeating those words, meant for another upon whom they were lost, but which fell with abiding savour upon me: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3. 6). There is something very solemn and awful in the thought of these things even now.

He was favoured as he grew up into boyhood to have for his Sunday School teacher a man who loved his Bible, and who taught the boys to search theirs. It was a great pleasure in after years when this teacher, Mr. White by name, spent a Sunday at Grove Chapel¹, and heard with delight his former pupil preach two God-honouring sermons.

Writing of this period he says:

How is it the Gospel came into my neighbourhood and singled me out? I can tell you something in reference to that. There was a class of Sunday School lads, and we were a mischievous lot. There is no mistake at all about it. I was about the most mischievous of the whole class. Well, it is wonderful to me when I think about it. Not one of those lads ever was found giving glory to God, but one. This overwhelms me with gratitude to God. Why me? Ask John

¹ Grove Chapel, Camberwell, where Mr. Bradbury was later pastor for thirty-one years.

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Bradford. When he saw a criminal going to execution, he said, "There goes John Bradford, but for the grace of God."

When I was a child the history of Joseph had peculiar charms for me. Those around me little thought of the interest God was thus giving me in His blessed Book, or of the truth I then enjoyed, to be known and felt increasingly in days to come. Before I was in my teens God interested my mind with the truth of His sovereignty as opened up in the history of Joseph. Some may think this truth too high for young minds to reach, and to be interested therein; but if it were too high for me, I was not too low for a covenant God to teach. Blessed be His Name, from that day to this, "By the word of His lips, He has kept me from the paths of the destroyer." I know what I am talking about, for as a child I have known the Holy Scriptures, and though I have oftentimes to cry, "Remember not the sins of my youth," yet as a child I was the subject of deep convictions, sighing out my sins and sorrows in secret. From that time to this, a spiritual necessity has been laid upon me, so that I must draw near as a sin-convinced sinner, hoping for forgiveness and for the revelation of God's Christ in me as my salvation.

Quoting his own words again:

God's perfect knowledge of me was the very first truth which exercised my young mind, and all from the pages of divine inspiration. The very thought that God was always with me - saw everything I did, knew everything I thought, marked everything I felt, noticed every movement of my mind - filled my soul with terror and my face with confusion, and made me think, even as a little child, that at the winding up of all my affairs there would be nothing but hell for me. The world looked upon me as a "little innocent child," but I knew and felt something different from that. I knew I was a sinner deserving wrath, death, and hell. "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." By this I was confident that He could see no good in me. Paul's experience was

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that of my young heart: "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform, that which is good I find not." I tried to be good, and to banish all that was evil from my thoughts, but I was left to the experience of the very opposite, and there I was kept for many a long year. God could see me as I was in myself – a sinful creature; a creature full of sin, according to my standing in Adam the First, deserving nothing but His eternal wrath and indignation. But there He left me not. He would teach me something of His knowledge of me in my grace-oneness² with Him in the Son of His love. I was sinful, polluted, vile, when He brought me to the footstool of sovereign mercy to the feet of a precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who alone could wash away all my sin, and clothe me in His pure, white, spotless robe of righteousness. And this He was graciously pleased to do.

In after years he frequently loved to dwell on the days of his childhood and youth, and to trace out and recognise the loving-kindness of a gracious God in preserving and keeping him, teaching and educating him in divine mysteries through the instrumentality of many of His own sent ministers.

Speaking of one of these he says:

I well remember long years ago, when a lad, sitting in Old St. Jude's, Manchester. It was the morning of Christmas, 1847. Dear Daniel Foley was in the pulpit. He was brought up a besotted Papist in the wilds of Kerry. Sovereignly arrested by pure grace, he was brought out of Rome's dark confederacy to preach the gospel of Christ in the United Church of England and Ireland. He was afterwards Regius Professor of Irish in the Dublin University. That morning he preached most blessedly from, "They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being

² Unity through grace.

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interpreted is, God with us." "But," said Dan, "interpreted? We want the Interpreter here - the One of a thousand! He who has the eloquent speech, whose lips are full of grace. Interpreted? Yes, but not into or from Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. No! A reprobate Pilate could do all that. The interpretation we desire is in the language of Canaan, the language of the redeemed sinner's need."

Continuing his youthful experience, he says:

The subject of divine sovereignty is a very blessed and precious one to me. I was not taught it from any human system, but delighted in it scripturally before the relative terms Calvinism and Arminianism had a place in my understanding. From God's own Book He taught me that He was a Sovereign, and that His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. I knew God as the sovereign Elector to salvation, life, grace, and glory of all whom He likes and loves. I knew God as the Redeemer of all His elect, leaving all whom He would unredeemed. I knew very well that all those who were chosen in love and redeemed by blood would be called by grace, and regenerated by power in the times appointed in All-Wisdom. And I was scripturally sure that all for whom God designed these gracious things, would be eternally glorified with Him up yonder. And these were covenant verities and eternal realities to me before I knew anything at all about the doctrines of Calvin or Arminius. And sometimes I think it is a great pity that these terms should be used in the ministry of grace at all. Why? Simply because my own spiritual education seems to have been hampered and clogged with them. Sovereign grace was precious to me before I learned aught of the doctrines of men. The dear man, under whose ministry the Lord first quickened me into a spiritual apprehension of divine things, would have his young folk well instructed from the sacred Scriptures in everything they could learn concerning the existence and attributes of God. As I was thus led through my Bible, searching out the proofs of God's immutability, omniscience, and sovereignty, that was enough for me. I trembled at the thought of sinning

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against Him. I shuddered at the hint that I deserved to be eternally shut out from Him. I had to be satisfied to sit and listen and learn just as much from Him as He was pleased to give.

As years went by, Mr. O'Leary began to notice and draw out in conversation the youth in whom he saw some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel, and directed his mind to the Word as the source of all spiritual knowledge; and for many years he was privileged to sit and listen to this deeply taught child of God.

Of this time he writes:

During the month of September, 1849, Mr. O'Leary sent word that he wished to converse with me upon divine things. Upon my arrival at his residence, which lay in a secluded clough a few miles out of Manchester, he received me with the kindness and affection of a father. It seems almost an impossibility to forget the solemnity of that short season. From the overflowing of a heart warmed with the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, he counselled me against the temptations and follies peculiar to youth, and dwelt upon the only place of security and rest for a poor law-condemned sinner – a personal interest, through the grace and power of God the Eternal Spirit, in the love, blood, righteousness and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, "If Jesus is precious to your heart – Jesus, I say, not doctrines; Jesus, not notions – that same Jesus, whose agony and bloody sweat, whose fearful cross and passion alone settled the question of sin between a just God and a poor trembling sinner – if that Jesus who now intercedes for, and welcomes to his heart, vile sinners like us, is dear to you, my lad" – he paused for a moment, and then with emotion added, "you are dear to Him, you are blessed indeed." With the blessing of JEHOVAH, pronounced from the heart and lips of this dear saint, resting upon me, I returned home. My mind was ill at ease; sins pressing heavily upon the conscience proved to be the forerunners of that sweet peace and rest which was

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granted when the glorious truth was revealed to my heart that Jesus had settled for ever the question of sin between an all-holy God and me, a poor trembling sinner.

Towards the close of the same summer the congregation and schools at St. Jude's received the sorrowful news that Mr. O'Leary would shortly be leaving them. Amongst those who felt this sorrow the keenest were the subject of these pages and a young girl to whom he had been irresistibly attracted for many years, named Ann Tuley. They had attended the same Sunday School from childhood, and each had been singled out by Mr. O'Leary for words of loving admonition and counsel in his desire for their spiritual and eternal welfare. They were confirmed at the same time, and were both devotedly attached to Mr. O'Leary. On October 3rd of the same year they went together to a service held in Harpurhey Church, near Manchester. It was one of a series held in humiliation before God on account of the cholera scourge then raging. The preacher was Mr. O'Leary. This was their first appearance together at public worship.

On the last Sunday evening of the same year, Mr. O'Leary preached his farewell sermon in the pulpit of St. Jude's to an overflowing congregation, whose sighs and tears gave evidence of their love and attachment to him.

Mr. Bradbury gives an interesting account of his commencing as a teacher of the Word when about eighteen years of age.

Many years ago I was first placed in charge of a class of boys in St. Jude's Sunday School, situated in the densely-populated district of Ancoats, Manchester. A little band of never-dying sinners was placed under my direction, but who or what was I that a post of such vital importance should be conferred upon me, a poor sinner? This I was conscious of, but scarcely more. I knew there was a

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sweetness and preciousness in the Name and Person of Jesus which I experienced not. That dear saint, Patrick Joseph O'Leary, whose privilege it was to proclaim a Saviour's beauty, worth and glory in the pulpit of the adjoining Church, manifested such love to the Man of sorrows as caused the heart of many a tried and tempted one to beat with hope and expectation of one day seeing Him as He is, and rejoicing with Him for ever. But I was left to tremble at the thought of death, having no evidence that my iniquities were laid upon Jesus, or that in His death my sins were dead. Strange inconsistencies sometimes show themselves; so they did in my case. In the presence of my companions in sin and folly I was joyous and contented, in secret I shuddered at the thought of my sins, and feared to face the subject of eternal judgment.

"Oh, to grace how great a debtor!"

Every step was ordered aright, reflecting the highest honour and glory upon JEHOVAH'S name, while shame and confusion were my only due.

What was I to do with my youthful charge? I took my place with fear and trembling, anxiously longing for the knowledge of some scheme of teaching by which the attention of the lads might be won, thus causing them to look with some degree of pride upon their teacher. In ignorance, my own importance, and not the glory of God, was uppermost in my mind. Poor bankrupt nature would be something; my credit, not God's, was in the balance, and I must labour to maintain it. How wonderful, how gracious is the Lord to meet a poor sinner in all his weakness, blindness, and vanity, and lead him by a way that he knew not to a knowledge of Himself as revealed in the Son of His love.

I cannot remember a time when my Bible was not a treasure to me. I loved to read its sacred pages, and many times my feelings were moved with deep emotion by the narratives concerning Joseph, Moses, Daniel and others.

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Uneasiness filled my soul, and a fearful dread overwhelmed me whenever I read the account of the Son of Man coming in all His glory. The accounts given by the Evangelists of the God-man in "gloomy, dark Gethsemane," with the tragic scenes of the judgment hall and Calvary, drew out my sympathy, sometimes my tears; and more than once I can remember, with the shortsightedness of a Peter, I would, unwittingly, have frustrated the purposes of redeeming love by slaying the murderers of my gracious Saviour ere they could have slain Him. Rest for my troubled soul was much desired, but sought where rest is never found.

Perhaps it will not be out of place to conclude this chapter with further extracts from the account of Mr. O'Leary, which Mr. Bradbury wrote many years later:

Mr. O'Leary was born a Papist. Receiving his priestly education in the city of Rome at the feet of the Pope, he became a priest of that false and blasphemous system which is erroneously styled a Church - i.e., the Romish confederacy against the sovereignty of JEHOVAH and the privileges of His people. He ministered at her so-called altars until the year 1835, when it pleased God to work in a sovereign manner upon his mind. Entering his house one day, he saw on the floor a piece of paper, which proved to be a tract with this heading, "SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

A silent messenger had arrested him. An all-powerful declaration interested him. He read the whole verse and the whole verse read him. He soliloquised, "'Search the Scriptures?" that is contrary to the rule of our Church, therefore the rule of the Church must be contrary to Christ; "For in them ye think ye have eternal life." Ah! We teach the people not to think, but to let the priest think for them. Surely Rome is at issue with God. Eternal life in the Scriptures! This puts an end to all idea of sacramental efficacy. "They testify of Me." Rome testifies of almost everything but Christ. He was no longer a Papist. "The

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light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" broke in upon his poor dark mind, revealing to him the absurdities, idolatries, and superstitions with which he was surrounded. The perfection of the One Sacrifice, presented to the view of his opened understanding by the unerring power of God the Holy Ghost, allured his heart away from Rome's delusive counterfeits. Having publicly renounced the errors and vain notions of popery, he became a clergyman of the United Church of England and Ireland. Marten, a little village near to Blackpool, the noted watering place on the Lancashire coast, was the scene of his first labours as a Protestant minister. In the year 1837 he was appointed first incumbent of St. Jude's, Canal Street, Ancoats, Manchester, where he laboured with such acceptance and success as is rarely the lot of clergymen in poor and populous parishes. Crowds thronged to hear him, and were spell-bound as they listened to those words of grace and truth which he delivered with that dignity and eloquence peculiar to himself. Sensible sinners were brought to the Saviour's feet, and many found that true religion is something more than a name, or even a form of sound words, however sound that form may be.

"True religion's more than notion,
Something must be known and felt."

During his stay at St. Jude's he experienced the emptiness of all human associations, however fair or excellent they may appear, which were not in experimental oneness with a despised and lowly Jesus. Possessing a warm, and sympathising heart, he was frequently the victim of imposition and deceit. He trusted where he might have suspected; but the true identification of his exercised spirit with the Man of sorrows must be brought about, however painful the means might be to his sensitive nature. JEHOVAH, who must bring His loved ones through the fire, knows the path is all right.

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The children in the schools were devotedly attached to him. His presence, when not a word escaped his lips, had a salutary effect upon them, simply through maintaining the dignity of his position as a clergyman, a gentleman, and a Christian. He carried with him unceasingly an awful sense of the sacredness of his calling, and commanded respect from all by whom he was surrounded, without any attempt to elicit it.

Fresh in the writer's remembrance, as though its occurrence were but of yesterday, is a meeting ... [at which he addressed the children]. "You have all made a public profession of faith, but how many of you will stand testing before God in secret? To be confirmed by a bishop is one thing, to be confirmed by the Holy Ghost is another. You may submit to an outward ceremony, and be lost for ever; but if you experience the Spirit's inward work, you must be saved. Now, I might make theologians of you, but that would not keep you from sin, or out of hell. I might make you into Bible scholars, but many a man has gone down to the depths of eternal ruin having his head stored with Bible truths. That which the Lord delights to see in the sinner who approaches Him is a broken heart. I cannot break your hearts, neither can I give you broken hearts, God alone can do that. Where are the broken hearts to be found?

"Only at the cross of Christ. Now, if we have broken hearts, none but Jesus can heal them. If we have broken hearts; we shall hate sin, we cannot mix up with the world, we shall long to be often with Jesus, and many a time we shall want to go home, and be with Jesus for ever. My dear children, it is a fearful thing to go to hell; now nothing can keep us out of it but Jesus - Jesus' blood to wash away our sins, Jesus' righteousness to cover our persons, Jesus' Spirit to guide us, Jesus Himself to take care of us. See! down there is hell with all its terrors; but, if we are one with Jesus, we are safe, we are all right. I am a poor sinner with nothing to look to but Jesus, and with His love in my

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heart, I can cling to Him. Yes, as a poor lost sinner, I am clinging to the Rock, *I am clinging to the Rock, I am clinging to the Rock.* Only in the Rock of Ages am I safe."

Mr. Bradbury added, "What but a heart in living union with the Friend of sinners could express itself thus?"

2. EARLY MARRIED LIFE

“Our God is the God of salvation – salvation purposed by the Father in Christ before all worlds; salvation perfected by the Son on Calvary’s tree; salvation brought to the heart by the Holy Ghost in moments of doubt and darkness; salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

Soon after Mr. O’Leary left St. Jude’s, a series of events occurred which caused Thomas Bradbury’s removal from the place, and in which he said he saw the good hand of God in leading him to another sphere of labour.

This was St. Philip’s, Bradford Road, Manchester, where the Rev. James Bardsley shortly afterwards became Incumbent. Here he remained for several years, from about 1851 to 1859. On Easter Tuesday, April 13th, 1852, Thomas Bradbury and Ann Tuley were married. At this time they were both teachers in the Sunday School. The record of his work in this place will be given in his own words:

Here I found myself in charge of a class of young women. How to lay before them God’s truth in His plan of saving sinners I knew not. Prayers and supplications ascended to God from the thick darkness of my ignorance for grace and guidance, and an ability to communicate to my young friends that which He might make known to me. About this time the light of the glorious gospel of the ever-blessed God dawned upon my mind, bringing a sweet sense of JEHOVAH’S covenant love to poor unworthy me. God’s declaration that all His sanctified ones were perfected for ever by the offering of the body of Jesus, gave me a peace and joy to which many around me were strangers, and I was forced in a great measure to have my faith to myself before God.

Many were the precious seasons the Lord favoured me with in the class-room of St. Philip’s Sunday School, as He

Early Married Life

enabled me, feebly but faithfully, to expound the way of life from the blessed Book. The Lord gave me a fearful insight into the total depravity of human nature, and the desperate wickedness and deceitfulness of my own heart. Several with whom I had to do doubted my wisdom in enforcing these humbling truths. However, the Lord upheld me in the way, though my failures and imperfections were legion. The first chapter of Paul's Epistle 'to the saints and faithful brethren at Colosse' was sweet food to my soul during a succession of Sunday afternoons in the class. I remember well the fear and trembling I experienced on one occasion when Jer. 13. 23 came home to my heart as the message from God to my young friends. Satan's craft and the enmity of my heart to the truth, goaded me to lay it aside for something more in keeping with the capacities of my scholars. Ah, Satan, how cunning are thy devices! All the capacity that poor nature possesses is to listen with indifference to the covenant verities of the God of our salvation, or to discard them altogether. The snare was broken, my soul had escaped, and the Lord sent His message one Sunday afternoon from the words, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. 13. 23). More than ordinary interest was manifested, and at the close my heart went up to the Lord for a blessing upon the souls of those present. The lesson was talked over, but as to its acceptance at the time I knew nothing.

Sometime after this, Mr. Bradbury walking through Manchester met a fellow-labourer in the Gospel, who asked him if he knew a young woman named Ellen Wood. Receiving an answer in the affirmative, he said, "She would be very glad to see you. She told me it was through hearing you in the Sunday School explain those words, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?' that the Lord gave her to enjoy some liberty in the knowledge of His perfect salvation by Jesus Christ."

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Years passed before Thomas Bradbury was able to call upon her. When he did, she greeted him warmly, and in the course of conversation she told him that not only had she been much blessed through that Sunday afternoon's lesson, but another young woman, Annie Dineley³, was made to feel herself a sinner in the sight of a holy God. Speaking of this, he says: "I felt overwhelmed with a sense of JEHOVAH'S goodness and mercy in revealing His great love to the dear souls I had visited. Is there not great encouragement given in these two instances to sow the good seed of the Kingdom beside all waters? God's own Word from God's own mouth shall not return unto Him void.

'All victorious is its course.

Nothing can withstand its force.'"

Thomas Bradbury was greatly encouraged and established under Mr. Bardsley's ministry, and the following from his pen will show his love and veneration for this dear man.

Those who are most intimate with me have heard me speak of Canon Bardsley, of Manchester. His memory will be ever blessed to me. My wife and I sat under his ministry; we taught in his Sunday School. He was "mighty in the Scriptures," and rarely made a statement without referring to the Book. He was the first to hint that I should be a teacher of the Word. I objected. He said, "Thomas, you are not competent to judge for yourself; let those whom God has made judges in Israel judge for you. May the Lord enable you to lay this matter before Him, and to pray to Him for grace and guidance." After this he sent for me, and his remarks on the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to each member of His spiritual body were greatly blessed to me. Eventually, through his

³ The account of Annie Dineley is on page 70.

Early Married Life

instrumentality, I was engaged as missionary in connection with the Manchester City Mission with him in his parish. I remember one evening hearing him preach from the words, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." During the sermon, in which he clearly enforced the doctrine of God's election of His people in Christ Jesus, he said, "I know well that many of you will object to the truth I am stating, and to such I would give a word of caution. I heard you tonight address God in the scriptural language of our liturgy: 'And make Thy chosen people joyful!' What do you mean in asking God to make joyful a people whose existence you deny?" From that moment my objection to God's sovereign, eternal, unconditional election of His people was dead, and has never revived. Wonder not, then, at my love and esteem for his memory. None but those who were brought into familiar contact with him can truly testify to his unselfish devotion to his work, simplicity of character, benevolent activities, and unceasing aim to help all associated with him in the Lord. I know this is true, and have abundant reason to say so. For some years before his departure to his house of everlasting rest he was laid aside from public labour, but his heart and mind were as active as ever they were for the Master's sake. In May, 1886, he entered his "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

"The memory of the just is blessed." In the churchyard of St. Paul's, Kersal, Manchester, his ashes peacefully lie until the glorious resurrection morning.

Referring to one who took great interest in the work of the City Mission, Thomas Bradbury says:

I have had to thank God many times for a little advice given to me by an old merchant in Manchester, when it pleased the Lord to send me forth to speak in His Name. This was the advice: "When you meet with captious and carping controversialists, the Lord enable you to meet them with a plain, 'What saith the Scripture?' which is the most effective way to silence all opposers of God's truth

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and salvation." You may rest assured that this advice from the lips of Samuel Fletcher was not lost upon Thomas Bradbury. From that day to this, it has been my anxiety to find in God's most holy Word that which thoroughly substantiates, not simply an opinion given or an idea enunciated, but convictions deeply wrought in the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Through all his long career as a teacher and preacher of the Word his Bible was his daily companion, often for many hours in the day. These are his own words when speaking of the Scriptures:

What is our estimate of the holy writings? What estimate do we put upon the mind, will, purpose, and pleasure of God as revealed therein? Well, if you ask me what estimate I put upon the sacred Scriptures, I answer in the spirit of the words of dear old George Smith, of Barrow Hill, when I asked him what he was reading. He answered, "Th' yed book in aw th' wold." (The head book in all the world.) That ignorant old man was wiser than the learned old man at Rome. He knew the meaning of the Psalmist's words, "Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name." Dear old George could see no book raised to the same height of grandeur and glory as that of the Scriptures of truth. This is the Book for you and me. In it we are asked many searching and salutary questions. Christ asks, "Have not I written to thee?" We may well ask, Has the Father spoken to me? Has Jesus said aught to me? Has the Holy Ghost said anything to me concerning my salvation? And all from the Holy Scripture? To sound, spiritual, experimental Protestants, Holy Scripture contains all things necessary for salvation, succour, safety, security, and gracious guidance to eternal glory. Everything necessary for the knowledge of salvation is contained in the Book of divine inspiration. "Search the Scriptures," says Jesus Christ. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8. 20).

Early Married Life

When Mr. Bradbury commenced his work as a missionary a part of his duty was to keep a Journal in which he registered a full account of his visits amongst the poor. This he kept up for several years, and many an interesting account was entered therein, as others can bear witness, for it was the delight of his children to read its pages.

Some of the incidents recorded in this Journal were published by Mr. Bradbury in his book entitled, "Strangers and Pilgrims," which has been read with both pleasure and profit by many of the Lord's family. Some were also published as tracts.

In his preface to the book he says, "Living truth, or truth in the life, is set forth in these pages. This is always acceptable to living souls who enjoy the communion of saints and companionship with Christ. The narratives written by my own hand are true and substantially correct."

The following incident occurred during his mission work in St. Philip's Parish. He says:

Towards the close of the year 1856, when winter's icy mantle was thrown over the face of nature, and stern necessity made many a manly spirit bend, I was directed to a humble dwelling where, on a bed of affliction, lay an aged pilgrim. He was bound in poverty's strong chain, and few were the comforts of this world which he enjoyed. Having introduced myself, I said, "So you are very ill."

"Ay, and to all appearance it will be my last," was the quiet and patient reply.

"Do you feel prepared for the journey which is evidently before you?"

"Sometimes I do, and sometimes I do not. But however much I may change, God changes not."

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"We will read a portion of God's Word."

"Thank you."

Having read part of 2 Cor. 4, and after conversing a little, I said, "Shall I pray with you?"

Turning his weary head, with a look which seemed to pierce my very heart, the afflicted one replied, "Yes, you may, if you know what I want!"

Oh, what searchings of heart did this answer beget! Something admitted the justice of the reply, something rebelled most furiously against it. This was a damper to the zeal of the religious enthusiast. Poor fleshly pride was wounded to think that such a kind offer should meet with so cool a reception. Nevertheless, I have been constrained to thank God a thousand times for so timely and suggestive an answer.

"If you know what I want!" How those words tingled in my ears! Want! want!! want!!! The subsequent conversation drew out many of the wants of this old pilgrim, which were all of a spiritual nature. Sweet was the little communion we held together in union with Him in whom the Father has invested every supply to meet the wants of His poor and needy ones. This afflicted one confessed himself a stranger and pilgrim upon earth. Electing grace was his ground of hope, redeeming love his trust and confidence, quickening mercy his peace and joy.

A few days after the visit recorded above I went again, but the house was empty; my old friend was gone.

"Do you know where the people have moved to from this house?" I enquired of a neighbour who was passing.

"No, I do not," was the reply, "but I heard he has gone somewhere to die; they could not afford to stay here."

"Do you know his name?"

Early Married Life

“I cannot say; I never heard it. He was a queer man. They say he was one of Gadsby’s⁴ antinomians.”

“Be he what he may, he loved to speak of the things of God, of holiness, of heaven, and to hear of the good news of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ; and that is what many of you folk do not desire,” I retorted, as I passed away.

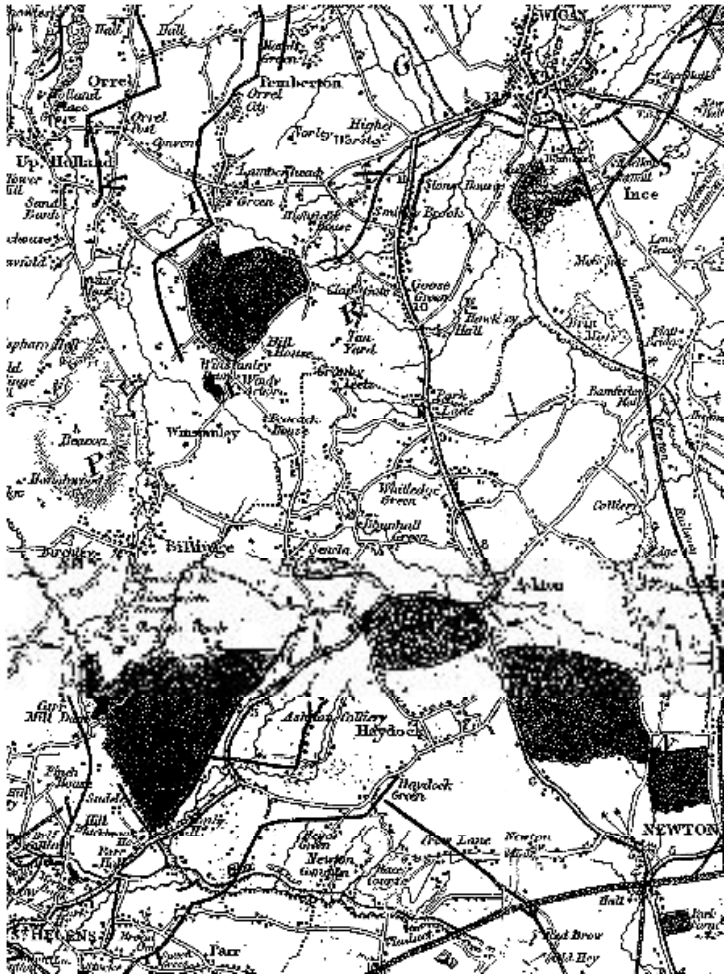
I never heard of my old friend again, but I hope to meet him “where the wicked cease from troubling,” and where JEHOVAH’S weary ones are for ever at rest, beyond the reach of mocking, insulting Ishmaels, and where persecuting Esaus have no place. Many are the lessons which the Lord has graciously taught His poor servant through the means of this little incident.”

It was during the same winter that he came across an old woman named Jenny Murphy⁵, the earliest of the “Strangers and Pilgrims” of whom he wrote.

⁴ William Gadsby (1773-1844) had been pastor at St. George’s Road Chapel, Manchester. See the first of Mr. Bradbury’s letters on page 313.

⁵ The account of Jennie Murphy is on page 83.

HAYDOCK



A Map of the Haydock Area

Taken from a larger map of Lancashire drawn in 1829 by G. Hennet.

Courtesy of Lancashire County Council.

(<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/oldmap/hennet/index.asp>)

3. HAYDOCK

“The gospel is God’s message of love and grace to His unworthy ones. It is a distinct and definite declaration of sovereign goodness to distinct and definite persons, who were fore-ordained to this glorious privilege. Those who are honoured by God to be entrusted with so rich a treasure, have simply to declare, proclaim, or preach it, but have no offers to make, and possess no power to apply it.”

Early in the year 1859, the firm of Richard Evans & Co., colliery proprietors, of Haydock, near St. Helens, Lancashire, applied to the Manchester City Mission for a missionary to work amongst the colliers. In the all-wise providence of God Thomas Bradbury was chosen for the work, and commenced his labours in February of that year.

The Evans were a God-fearing family, and took a great interest in Mr. Bradbury’s visits among the poor, often calling at his home at Holly Bank or asking him to visit them at their home, the Grange, to talk over his work. A Bagster Bible presented to him by Miss Ruth Evans bears abundant evidence of the use it was to him in his study of the Scriptures.

It was soon manifest that God had a special work for him to do in this place. His time was spent chiefly in visiting the poor in their cottages, preaching in the open air, and also in farm kitchens and cottages. It was his custom to walk many miles in his visits to the poor, calling at a cottage here and there on his way; sometimes, as he passed a coal mine, stopping and talking to the men on the pit brow, or halting a few minutes to have a chat with a man breaking stones at the wayside; always with the same object – that of leading their minds to eternal realities, and

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showing them that the way of salvation was through the work of Christ alone.

As the months went by, he saw that God was marvellously blessing his labours in making him the instrument in bringing dead sinners to realise their union with a living Christ. Looking back to this time in after years, he says:

Haydock! the very mention of the name will thrill through many a heart. Within its bounds JEHOVAH'S mercies and judgments have been solemnly displayed. Here the gospel of the grace of God has been sounded forth for many a long year, and weary pilgrims on the way to Emmanuel's glory land have been refreshed and comforted. At certain times, appointed by the Father, faithful ministers of Christ visited the scattered flock and dealt forth from a Spirit-wrought experience God's precious truth, which was blessed to the quickening, comforting, and establishing of many living souls.

Here dear old John Kershaw⁶ traced out the evidences of regenerating grace, and spoke so well of his Master that anxious souls were encouraged and established in the faith of God's elect. Here the uncompromising William Parks⁷ was heard at times contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Here I sojourned for seven years and nine months declaring the testimony of the Lord in weakness, in fear, and much trembling. Here the gospel of the grace of God is still loved by a remnant reserved according to the election of grace. Here, in the Particular Baptist Chapel, Zion's mourners find spiritual rest and sweet refreshment.

During the summer of 1860 Mr. Bradbury was asked to call and see an old woman who was ill, named Margaret

⁶ John Kershaw (1792-1870), pastor of Hope Chapel, Rochdale.

⁷ William Parks (1810-1867) rector at Openshaw, Manchester.

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Speakman⁸. She lived in a very secluded spot called the Old Smithies. This was a mile or two out of Haydock and surrounded with green fields and game preserves. Old Margaret had heard of Mr. Bradbury and the dangerous doctrines he preached. Those who hated them had taken care to poison her mind against him, and cautioned her not to allow such a dangerous man in her house. The comments above come from the account Mr. Bradbury wrote of Margaret Speakman, who was delivered from her prejudices and brought to highly esteem the man who she found she could see eye to eye with.

From the commencement of his labours at Haydock, and throughout the time of his stay there, he usually visited Edge Green (a little hamlet about four miles away) on the Monday in each week, holding meetings at the Ambrose's farm, but spending the greater part of the day visiting the people in their cottages, reading and expounding to them the gospel of the ever blessed God. In one of these cottages lived old Alice Banks⁹, an old lady who had been taught of God from her youth, but who had married one utterly opposed to her religion and had suffered much throughout her life on that account. The Lord had mercifully kept her soul alive under most distressing circumstances and her last days were often cheered by Mr. Bradbury's visits, and he himself was often cheered by her conversation.

Sarah Hatton¹⁰ was another whom Mr. Bradbury became acquainted with at Edge Hill. She was eighty-six years old, simple and guileless, and yet had lived all her life ignorant of the truth concerning herself and God. Yet

⁸ The account of Margaret Speakman is on page 96.

⁹ The account of Alice Banks is on page 109.

¹⁰ The account of Sarah Hatton is on page 121.

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God was pleased to bless the faithful preaching of Mr. Bradbury and she left behind a sweet testimony. Her last words were "Precious Jesus! Blessed Jesus!" Then, in a louder tone, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

In the first few months of his work at Haydock, Mr. Bradbury called on an old man, John Naylor¹¹, ill and to all appearances near his end, and utterly ignorant of God's way of salvation. Mr. Bradbury had but little encouragement; the only testimony one of his friends could give was: "Well, he's a poor dark sinner. He was telling a friend of mine last week that he was ready to die, for he had prayed three times a day as long as he could remember, and he had done nobody any harm. He's a poor blind Pharisee." But Mr. Bradbury was constrained still to go and the Lord was pleased graciously to open the man's eyes. The testimony he gave near his end was very different: "I cannot make you believe how thankful I feel that you read and spoke those things to me! They made me very uneasy: I thought you were robbing me of all that gave me a bit of comfort; but I think I see it all now - nothing but Christ will do".

A few days previous to visiting John Naylor, Mr. Bradbury was asked to visit another woman at Edge Green in very distressing circumstances. The woman was roaming about the house in a distracted state, crying, "I am lost! I am damned! The devil has me captive at his will!" He hardly knew what to do, but the Lord directed him and he had the comfort in due time of seeing "the lawful captive delivered" (Isa. 49. 24). Ann Simm¹² became a true

¹¹ The account of John Naylor is on page 134.

¹² The account of Ann Simm is on page 147.

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Christian companion of some of her neighbours at Edge Green.

Sunday morning and afternoon were usually spent by Mr. Bradbury in the Sunday School when he was not holding services in the open air; and during the whole of his time there, he superintended the school himself. He taught the children to search their Bibles, giving them subjects one Sunday to search out for the next, and often the greater part of the afternoon was spent by the children reading out and giving chapter and verse for the subject they had sought out. Often during the summer months he would dismiss the school rather early and walk over to Pemberton, a distance of nine miles, for the purpose of preaching in the evening at the Strict Baptist Chapel there, arriving just in time to have a cup of tea and go straight into the pulpit. He continued to preach at that place, at intervals, during the greater part of his life.

Frequently during Mr. Bradbury's stay at Haydock other members of the Manchester City Mission, whose teaching was in accordance with his own, would spend a few days with him. On these occasions they would visit together the houses of the poor and afflicted members of the one body, to whom it was his delight to minister in holy things. The friendship and sympathy of these gracious men was very encouraging and confirming to Mr. Bradbury in his work and labour of love. His discouragements were numerous, as he experienced much opposition from many who made a profession of religion. Man's inability and God's sovereignty were truths too humbling for them. The declaration that man could do nothing in the matter of his own salvation roused the offended dignity of these opposers of God's righteousness. Several who at first attended his meeting very soon

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absented themselves, but only to deride the doctrines of distinguishing grace.

It was very evident that the blessing of the Lord which makes rich attended the ministry of the Word continually during Mr. Bradbury's labours in and around Haydock, and that the Lord had sent him amongst the people in the fulness of the blessing of Christ. One after another of God's hidden ones were made manifest as he taught them from the Holy Scriptures the things which are able to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Mr. Bradbury writes,

During the summer and autumn of the year 1859, a course of outdoor addresses were delivered by the writer near the Old Fold, Haydock, St. Helens, Lancashire. At one of these meetings, in the month of June, the subject of the address was, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?" &c. (Jer. 13. 23). This raised the ire of a host of free-willers who attended, and the lies and misrepresentations which sprang from them were legion. Poor things! they could not help it - how could they? - when their whole nature was enmity against God and His truth. The message of peace, grounded upon the covenant love of an unchanging and faithful JEHOVAH, will make carnal reason rebel. The Gospel of the grace of God will either *draw* or *drive*. Proud, conceited ones were driven on this occasion; while others, in whose hearts the love of God was shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, were led into the way of truth, to "hold the faith in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." Love allured these weary souls to the deep, springing well of the everlasting covenant.

Perhaps it may not be out of place here to give a rather different account Mr. Bradbury wrote, showing both his faithful dealing with souls, and something of the opposition he met with.

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It formerly was my lot to proclaim the truths of God's blessed Word in a Colliery District, in South Lancashire. To read the Book of books, to publish "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory," to speak of "a finished salvation for finished sinners," to declare Heaven's own message of mercy and grace, was my best employment.

Great darkness met me at almost every step. The god of this world held the eyes of the great mass of the inhabitants in willing blindness. Many stood aghast at the plain statements of divine truths. Others manifested devilish opposition, while some gave evidence of guilt in respect to that sin which never hath forgiveness - "Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost."

The Word was blessed to some poor souls, while others were left in nature's darkness and callous indifference. Only here and there was found one whom "the Man clothed with linen, and the writer's inkhorn by his side," had marked as a sorrowful and sighing petitioner at mercy's door.

'Tis hard work indeed to speak and converse with Satan's brood, and especially with dead professors, concerning those things which are the life of the soul. A precious Christ finds no acceptance there.

I oftentimes stopped to speak to an old man [nicknamed "Old Crafty"]. He would willingly, ay, eagerly enter into conversation, and would soon introduce the news of the day. The very moment experimental godliness was mentioned, Old Crafty was mute.

He was so called, because with craft and cunning he would carry on his ordinary transactions. Old age and feebleness at last laid hold of him. Conscious that his end was drawing nigh, he asked me to call each week to see him. He wished for a large-typed Bible, and through the kindness of the Bible Society I presented him with a copy of the New Testament and Psalms. This he used daily, but

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to all appearance its precious truths were hidden from his view.

One afternoon I called to see him. I read part of the fourth chapter to the Hebrews, and endeavoured to draw the old man out as to his knowledge of his state before a just and holy God.

“Now, John,” said I, “suppose God were to call you and me to account this afternoon! If we were reckoned up in our thoughts, words, and deeds, should we be able to stand, do you think?”

“Well - you know - I am not ignorant. I live peaceably with my neighbours. I pray to the Lord as often as here and there a one, and I read my Bible every day. I do my best, and what more can I do!”

I replied, “If Christ, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, is your wisdom, then indeed you are not ignorant, but wise unto salvation. If you live peaceably with your neighbours, you manage your affairs better than many. If your desires ascend to the Lord from a heartfelt sense of your daily sin and need, you are one of a very small number of the people. You read your Bible every day? Well! that is good so far as it goes; but, Does the Bible ever read you?”

The old man was staggered. After some hesitation he said, “I don’t understand such talk as that. How can a book read me?”

“Ay, ay, that is the question. A question which every writer of God’s blessed Word well understood. The Bible is God’s Word - God’s testimony. It is unlike every other book. In the hands of the blessed Spirit it is quick and powerful. It searches, separates, convinces, and reads God’s children some very severe but beneficial lessons. It is by it that God the Holy Ghost convinces sinners of their undeserving and hell-deserving state. By it He searches the heart, and brings to light the deceitful works of darkness,

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and the devilish opposition to God and His salvation which dwells there. It teaches every quickened soul something of his wilful ignorance, of Jesus and His love. It shows that there is no living peaceably out of Christ, either with God or man. It tells us that we can no more pray aright without the grace and energy of God the Holy Ghost, than that we can create a world. It makes known to the anxious, inquiring soul, the necessity of bringing everything to its infallible standard, and that doing one's best only ends in confusion and damnation."

"If that's true, then nobody can be saved."

"This being true shows that 'with men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.' To those who are led by the Spirit of God, salvation is not only possible, but a grand reality. God's law convinces of sin, the Gospel reveals salvation. The law tells me what I can only do - sin. The Gospel tells me what Jesus can do - save. The law says the wages due to my doings is death. The Gospel says the reward of Christ's doings is life for evermore to every confiding, believing soul. My doings are sin. Jesus' doings are righteousness. The sins of His people were laid on Him - He suffered. The righteousness of Jesus is put upon them - they are saved. God's Book declares, 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.' We have nothing there about living peaceably with our neighbours, praying as well as here and there a one, reading the Bible, and doing the best we can. Oh, no! Just allow me to repeat a little hymn for you which will illustrate what I mean: -

'Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago.

'When He from His lofty throne
Stooped to do and die,

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Everything was fully done,
Hearken to His cry -

“IT IS FINISHED!” Yes, indeed,
Finished every jot;
Sinner, this is all you need;
Tell me, is it not?

‘Weary, working, plodding one,
Why toil you so?
Cease your doing, all was done
Long, long ago.

‘Till to JESUS CHRIST you cling
By a living faith,
“Doing” is a deadly thing -
“Doing” ends in death.

‘May He cast your doing down -
Down at His dear feet;
For IN HIM, in Him alone,
Sinners stand COMPLETE!’

“Well, well. That’s very nice. I intend to do my best, come what will!”

I saw the old man once or twice after this, and found him in the old spot - *doing his best*. “Who is sufficient for these things? Our sufficiency is of God.” Were it not for the strength which JEHOVAH imparts, who could deal out His truth? Almost every step of one’s journey reveals the innate enmity of the human heart to God and His Christ. Blessed Jesus! As a King Thou dost sit, and in Thy divine sovereignty dost deal out Thy bounties! Here a poor, weak, ignorant thing is taken, and taught from the Book of books all things necessary to life eternal and godliness, while the wise and prudent, the cunning and the crafty, are left to wander in the thick darkness of human nature. “Who teacheth like Him?” Ye babes - ay, babes in your own estimation, who “need not that any man teach you,” can ye not join in the thanksgiving rendered by your

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precious Lord to His Father for His distinguishing and discriminating grace in hiding these glorious truths from others while He has condescended to reveal them to you?

“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” (Matt. 11. 25, 26).

Among those brought to renounce their own doings and to flee to the refuge for lost sinners in the Lord Jesus was an old man called Jemmy Atherton¹³.

The law of God, brought home to his conscience by the gracious operation of the blessed Spirit, killed him to all hope of obtaining favour with God but through the merits of the risen and accepted Surety. He had a keen insight into the workings of his heart, which he knew by experience was “full of evil,” and madness was in it (Eccles. 9. 3). Being a man of few words he would sit and listen all the more when the doctrine of JEHOVAH’S free, electing grace was expounded.

When winter set in, one of the neighbours invited Mr. Bradbury into his house to hold their weekly meetings. Here they stayed until the beginning of the summer of 1860, when unmistakable signs manifested themselves that a free-grace Gospel did not make matters very comfortable there. Mr. Bradbury mentioned this to Jemmy Atherton, who invited him to hold the meetings in his house, and this arrangement continued as long as Mr. Bradbury remained at Haydock.

It was at one of the meetings at Jemmy Atherton’s that Mr. Bradbury first met a strange old woman named Peggy

¹³ The account of Jemmy Atherton is on page 173.

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Greenall.¹⁴ She worked with the men at loading coal carts, and amongst the boats on the canal, and of her Mr. Bradbury subsequently wrote a beautiful account showing how the grace of God is sometimes found in the most unlikely places.

But perhaps the case for which Mr. Bradbury is most remembered is his account of John and Ellen Turton¹⁵ and their family. He says:

One Sunday forenoon, in the autumn of 1859, I entered an old thatched cottage situate in Old Boston, Haydock, Lancashire, to see a poor afflicted man, and to read for him a portion of that blessed Book, the truths of which the Holy Ghost employs in the quickening of sinners eternally loved and elect of God, and for the instruction and comfort of the living family. Near the bedside sat Old John reading the first lesson appointed for the morning service, Jer. 35. He continued reading to the conclusion of the chapter, when he kindly said, "Good morning," and went on his way. After this, I oftentimes came across this dear old man as he was busily engaged in his daily occupation about the fields. A few words of precious truth always passed between us. One remarkable feature I noticed in him, was, he would invariably converse in the exact language of God's own Book. Little did I imagine on these occasions that such an interesting and affectionate bond of union would be formed, by the special grace and discriminating mercy of Israel's covenant God, as that which now exists between the members of Old John's family and myself in a precious Christ.

Mr. Bradbury was often found at the house of his friends, holding services and engaged in spiritual conversation. Over the next few years he had the blessing of seeing every one of John and Ellen Turton's children

¹⁴ The account of Peggy Greenall is on page 182.

¹⁵ The account of the Turton family is on page 160.

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called by grace. Of these, James had been a continual grief to his parents, having got into bad company in the coal mines and despising his godly upbringing. But in the midst of a drinking frolic, caught, and in the act of planning to murder the officer who had arrested him, God intervened and stopped him. After a period of deep distress under conviction of sin, the Lord in mercy appeared and delivered him, and his own testimony concerning Mr. Bradbury was this: "If there is such a thing as pure love down here, God gave it to that dear man and me. In the beginning of our love I wondered how he could come near me; for I knew he was conscious of all my devilism, and I felt loathsome to myself. But love covereth every sin; so it was. I could see nothing else in him but grace; yea, all in our home had great esteem for him. After a hard day of visiting and preaching, he would walk a mile to spend an evening hour with us in reading and prayer." As a testimony to both the grace of God as seen in the life of James Turton, and to the love which bound the whole Turton family to Mr. Bradbury in the Lord Jesus, James Turton's autobiography, "Turton's Pillar" is given later in this book.¹⁶

In those days very many of the colliers could neither read nor write, and to help those who would like to learn to do so, Mr. Bradbury formed a class at Pewfall, a little village on the outskirts of Haydock, which was well attended. One evening in each week, the men met in a large kitchen in one of the houses. At the commencement a hymn was sung, then a chapter read, followed by a short prayer. Then books, copy books and slates were brought out, and teacher and taught worked together for an hour or two, the men interested and eager to gain as much

¹⁶ Page 195.

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knowledge as possible in the time allotted. The class was concluded with another hymn and prayer. No wonder the men loved him, for he was always ready to serve them temporally and spiritually.

On the 20th of November 1859, his fourth son was born, and that night was one long to be remembered by many, as two coal pits connected with each other, the "Leigh" and the "Queen" caught fire. The former pit, with the flames ascending, was plainly seen from the front windows of the home at Holly Bank. With a heart full of thankfulness to God for a life spared and a life given, Mr. Bradbury passed the whole of that night on the pit brow helping with the poor sufferers as they were brought up. There were not many men in the pit at the time, but there were many horses which were so terror-stricken that it was very difficult to rescue them. And on into the morning the rescuers remained, helping as long as help was needed.

Whilst living at Haydock he became acquainted with the Rev. J. J. West, of Winchelsea, with whom he corresponded for many years. Although they never met in the flesh, a spiritual acquaintance was formed, to last through all eternity, and each could truly say, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Referring to this he says: "I well remember receiving a scribble from our now glorified friend, J. J. West, in which he said, 'If Christ's words are burnt into our hearts by the fire of God's furnace, neither sin, Satan, nor all the combinations of hell can ever obliterate them;'" and again, speaking of him, he says: "Dear West, of Winchelsea, oftentimes said, 'A broken-hearted Saviour well suits a broken-hearted sinner.'"

Mr. Bradbury also corresponded regularly with the Rev. William Parks, Rector of Openshaw, Manchester, whom he held in high esteem; and of whom he often spoke as "that

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valiant champion for the truths of God's discriminating and distinguishing mercy." They frequently met both in Openshaw and Haydock, where Mr. Parks often preached in the Baptist Chapel, and also in the Ambrose's farm kitchen at Edge Green.

Here he was also favoured with the friendship of the Rev. Basil Duckett Aldwell, who at that time lived within walking distance of Haydock, and of this he says: "In the autumn of 1860, a man said to me, 'A clergyman named Aldwell is to preach at St. George's Church, Wigan. I should like you to hear him. He is one of your sort.'"

That Sunday evening was miserably dark and wet. Rain something like a Scotch mist descended, with the murk peculiar to that part of Lancashire. The church was well filled and the service had commenced. We sang, "Jesus, Lover of my soul" before the sermon, which was very precious to me. He took for his text - Heb. 8. 10, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord," etc. That preaching reached my heart. So did the preacher. A short time after, I walked to Gathurst Bridge to see him, and received a welcome just such as a brother in Christ under the anointing can give. Our communion was heartfelt. Speaking of the Rev. William Parks, Mr. Aldwell said, "I would like to give him a good shake of the hand for his bold, unshaken testimony." The following Monday they met in the preaching room in the works of the Haydock Collieries, when Parks preached to the joy of many. After the service Aldwell said, "He shook my hand like an Irishman. What a glorious sermon we have had tonight." From that time to this our hearts have been blessedly one in Jesus, without one distant thought of each other.

The following letter to Mr. Bradbury from Mr. Aldwell, written many years after, will show the loving friendship which existed between them -

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St. Luke's Vicarage, Southsea,

December 26th, 1892.

My dear, true, old, and sincere Friend,

I have been exceedingly remiss in not having before this thanked you very heartily for the precious book you lovingly sent me - "Faithful Sayings." I read and enjoyed much its pages. It is sterling Truth. Coin from the Royal Mint. I have been often ill and in great pain since I wrote before. I am, thank God, very much better, and am able to preach now on Sunday mornings. I trust this next year, I shall have the pleasure of preaching once more at the Grove, if you have room for me.

Christian love to Mrs. Bradbury. Wishing you and yours a blessed Christmas in which my wife joins, I am,
Ever yours lovingly and sincerely,

BASIL D. ALDWELL

Many times during the last year or two of Mr. Bradbury's work at Haydock, his children would accompany him in his visits to the poor of the flock. On several occasions they walked with him on Sunday afternoon to Pemberton, where he was engaged to preach in the evening. After passing the night there with some friends they would set out soon after breakfast the next morning to walk to Edge Green, where Mr. Bradbury would spend the day visiting the cottages where lived old Alice Banks and others who loved him for his Master's sake. The work of reading and expounding the Scriptures to these poor folk he loved, and God blessed it abundantly. They usually arrived at Ann Simm's cottage in Edge Green Lane about tea time, for she looked upon it as her special privilege to have Mr. Bradbury's company at that meal. The refreshing tea and hot buttered toast, which she provided in her warm hearted hospitality, were much enjoyed after the day's long walk.

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An hour's talk after tea on the best of all subjects, and then it was time to go to the meeting at the Ambrose's farm, situated a little further along the lane, where for several years he was much blessed in proclaiming the honours of the Saviour's name.

After the service was over there was the walk home through the fields, part of the way being through Sir Robert Gerard's estate, to Haydock, a distance of four miles.

In Mr. Bradbury's rambles about Haydock he frequently came across an old man with whom it was a delight to linger and have a little talk. In listening to the dear old man recount his experiences, he found much comfort and encouragement, and thus speaks of these happy occasions in later years:

I loved to steal away from my home to Heyes Green, where lived one of God's own whom my soul loved. It was old Peter Cunliffe. Often have we sat together under the hedgerow, and as the dear old man dealt out of an exercised heart his spiritual miseries, and the mercies of his covenant God, I had to look in every direction but in Peter's face, for God-given tears filled my eyes, while heavenly love moved my heart. He would mourn over his enmity, while he would joy in the love of his blessed Redeemer. He would express his sorrow for sin, and heartfelt depravity, and forget not to rejoice in the consolations of the Holy Ghost. I remember, and some of my youngsters will remember also, old Peter Kingsley. He was a poor, but marvellously independent man. He never would drink a drop of our tea, or eat a bit of our bread. He would say, 'You have enough to do to provide for your large family, without providing for me.' His conversation was precious and savoury, ever revealing something of the beauty and blessedness of Jesus. Peter and Jesus are always associated in my mind. He saw his loving Saviour in almost everything. Were saints comforted? Peter saw Jesus. Were hypocrites confounded? Peter acknowledged

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Jesus. I remember upon one occasion preaching in the cottage of old Jemmy Atherton, when an Arminian dame was present. In passing away from our meeting, she expressed her utter disapprobation of all she had heard. Peter stopped and, looking her right in the face, said, "Bless Jesus! I would not give a straw for a sermon that would not raise the devil. He has been raised tonight. You may depend upon it, if God's truth is faithfully and feelingly declared, the devil will be nigh at hand to oppose it."

Poor old Peter Kingsley still lives enshrined in memories spiritual, heavenly and divine. Peter would rarely put in an appearance but Jesus was with him in the fragrance of His saving name, and the preciousness of His salvation. Jesus he acknowledged in all his ways. Jesus was the director of all his paths. Jesus was his companion in enforced loneliness. He feared not to rebuke the enemies of God's truth, but it was ever in the name and spirit of Jesus. He had a word for Zion's mourners, but Jesus was his theme. He could not take a little child on his knee without telling it something about Jesus. When my dear and now glorified friends, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Leech, of Rochdale, were about to reside in Southport, I told the latter about Peter, and asked her to seek him out if possible. Long time she sought him, but for some time found him not. Walking on the Parade one day, Mrs. Leech saw an old man conversing with another. She felt sure it was Peter, and tried to find him out by saying to him, "Do you know Mr. Bradbury?" He started and exclaimed, "Oh, bless him, I do know Mr. Bradbury, and I know his Jesus too." An acquaintance in the Lord was then formed, never to be cut, but to be renewed in all its blessedness in their own sweet home of love up yonder. Many a time afterwards I heard her speak of him through her God-given tears as "Blessed Peter Kingsley; Jesus was precious to him." That man has left a fragrance in my heart's experience which will never, no never, be lost; no, not to the ages of God's long, long eternity.

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During the month of July, 1865, Mr. Bradbury's father was taken seriously ill and one Sunday evening, whilst preaching at Jemmy Atherton's, his youngest brother brought the sad news that, if he wished to see his father before he passed away, he must go to him at once. He journeyed to Manchester that evening, to find the loved one still alive, and able to talk to him a little of the blessed prospect before him. He passed away the next day, after telling those around him that he was going "to be with Christ, which is far better." He died at the age of fifty-eight.

On the 30th of August, the same year, his youngest daughter was born. A dreadful epidemic of small-pox was raging in the village at the time, and to add to the anxiety there were cases next door on either side. But the Keeper of Israel who slumbers not nor sleeps, kept and mercifully preserved the Lord's messenger and all that belonged to him, although he had to carry the message of salvation to the sick and the dying, proving the truth of that recorded in the ninety-first Psalm, "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

For many years he was not privileged to see or hear anything of Mr. O'Leary, though he held "the dear man in reverential esteem." It was his custom to visit Manchester every fortnight on the Friday, returning on the Saturday evening. This was for the purpose of recording his work among the colliers at the City Mission. Mr. Geldart, the secretary at that time, used to speak of these records as the most interesting of any sent in, in connection with work done by the missionaries. It was during one of these visits that he met Mr. O'Leary once more, the account of which is here quoted from his own writings:

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It was in the month of December, 1865, the Lord made me a living witness to the truth of Job's saying, "Doth He not see my ways and count my steps?" (Job 31. 4). I left my home and went to Manchester on business. It was Saturday afternoon. I had sought here and there for the object of my errand, but disappointment attended every step. Many times has that humbling acknowledgment of JEHOVAH'S sovereignty ascended from my heart at the remembrance of these events, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Defeated in my purposes, and confused in spirit, I thought I would call and see a near relative, but with the thought my feet turned in an opposite direction, giving testimony to the truth of the Spirit's declaration by Solomon, "A man's heart deviseth his way, but the LORD directeth his steps." I wended my way along Oxford Road, scarcely knowing whither I went, when my eyes caught sight of a form which called up old associations, and moved the loving sympathy of that nature which God had discovered to me through the instrumentality of those truths which fell from the lips of my dear friend years before. It was Mr. O'Leary! I stopped. "Mr. O'Leary," escaped my lips.

He seemed confused; at length said, "I know that face. Let me see, what is your name?"

Upon my giving it, he continued, "I remember. You must pardon me, my memory is defective. Some time ago I had an attack of paralysis which has almost prostrated me physically and mentally. Where are you now?"

"Labouring as a missionary at Haydock, near St. Helens."

"What Church do you attend down there?"

"When I go anywhere it is to hear that despised man at Openshaw."

"What! Parks?"

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"Yes! I feel most at home in hearing God's truth from his lips."

"Strange. Can it be so? I have never seen you there. Would you walk with me a little?"

I gladly consented, and, as we proceeded, he said,

"You see, I want to meet with those who will converse with me upon eternal things alone. Salvation by Jesus, and Jesus my salvation, is all I desire to know. It is this makes Parks' preaching so precious to me. Parks honours his Master, and cares not for mortals. He preaches Christ—Christ as suited to poor helpless sinners. O my dear friend, Christ for my heart, and my heart for Christ, is all that I daily long to know and feel."

"Such a state indicates the presence of Christ, and shows forth fellowship with Him."

"Ah! but see. Do you and I know what fellowship with Jesus is? If I did, why should I think of Him so little? Why should my heart be so hard when I read of His fearful agony and dreadful death for poor lost sinners? Why should it be so? Tell me that."

These words were uttered with deep emotion, of such a nature, that I turned several times to see if we were noticed by those who passed us in the way. Happily this was not the case. I answered,

"Because the Lord will have it so."

"What! Do you mean the Lord will have me cold and careless?"

"The Lord has declared by His Spirit that our nature is 'enmity against Him.' The wonder then is, that we even think of Him at all. Sometimes the children of God accuse themselves of carelessness when their anxieties concerning eternal realities prove the contrary."

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He was silent for a short time, when, after a seemingly contemplative mood, he said,

“How few, how very few indeed, we meet who are willing to converse upon such things as these! I am forced to the conclusion, by what I know and see around me, that the mass of the people are hastening to hell. Look at all these people passing by, scarcely one of them has a thought of God and of heaven. They are rushing heedlessly down to perdition. What can stop them? Nothing but God’s powerful arm could stop me. The salvation of my black, sinful heart can be by nothing short of a dead lift from hell to heaven.”

“You are right, sir.”

“Am I? Then God has made me so; but how is it that in the face of mercy so full, so rich, so free, I am cast down? My days I pass so lonely, and my nights distress me sore. I seek the Lord, but I find Him not; I read His Word, but all is dark; I speak to those who ought, I think, to sympathise with me, but none seem to understand my case. O my dear friend, can you tell me why is this?”

“To be cast down is oftentimes the lot of God’s child. David was constrained to cry out, ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul?’ He says, in another place, ‘Day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me:’ and as to sympathy from God’s people, many times he sought it but found it not. He said, ‘I looked on the right hand, and beheld, but there was no man would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.’”

“But why should David be left in sorrow and anxiety when his desire was towards God?”

“Because he had to be taught what fellowship with Christ in His sufferings truly is. The sufferings of Christ must abound in him, and if we are taught by the same Spirit they must abound in us. The sufferings of the Head must be shared by the members. If Jesus were led of the

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Spirit to be tempted of the devil, the Spirit will lead the members in the same path (Heb. 2. 11). But here is the consolation: While he had angels to minister to Him at the appointed time, He, the angels' Lord, ministers to them in all their temptations. Jesus was forsaken of His God. This we must feel and mourn over, and the wild cry of desertion from the depths of our troubled spirits must be answered with heaven's own blessings. 'For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ'" (2 Cor. 1. 5).

"The Lord bless you, my dear friend," ejaculated the dear old saint. "I was very low in spirits, and was despairing of finding even a little comfort; but God has been so kind; He knew the words suited to my desolate heart (Psalm 143. 4). He directed every step of your feet to-day, to meet me, a poor sinner.

"Now and then, here and there, God cheers me with a sense of His love. He comforts my heart as I turn, the corner of the street; but it lasts not long - *only the length of the corner.*"

Tears, such as David and David's Lord once wept streamed from his eyes, as he repeated these last words - *"only the length of the corner."*

Reader, this is God's solemn truth, known by the saints of old who experienced the bitters and the sweets of true fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Jeremiah mourned because God was to him as a wayfaring man who only tarried for a night. "For a night." Groaning veterans know well what these words mean:

"They feel their latter stages worse,
And travel much by night."

(Joseph Hart)

The season was mournfully precious to my soul. God's hidden life was bubbling up from the depths of an

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experience which few understand and many hate. We halted. Mr. O'Leary said,

"I am glad to have met with you. God graciously designed it so that we must meet. It would be impossible for me to convey to you in adequate language the comfort and encouragement I receive from Parks' preaching. He enters deeply into the trials and conflicts of God's children, and traces out the gracious deliverances and helps by the way wrought in them by God the Holy Ghost."

"I was once struck very forcibly with a remark which fell from his lips; it was this: 'The honour and glory of God are dearer to the saint than his own peace and enjoyment, even in divine things.' While God's honour, as revealed in the work of our salvation, is the object of our faith, peace and happiness will not be wanting. When our own happiness engages our attention, sorrow is nigh at hand."

"A very nice distinction - but I must not detain you."

With these words he grasped my hand, saying, "The Lord bless you, my dear friend. When you can, send me a word or two by the post - do! I am a poor sinner, God help me! My daily prayer is that of the publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' I shall never get past that while I am in the flesh." Tears rolled down his face as he continued, "Nothing but the precious love and blood of Jesus can wash away sin so great as mine. Good-bye, the Lord be with you."

He still held my hand in his and sobbed out, "When your knees bend at the mercy-seat, remember a poor sinner who greatly needs your prayers, and who has nothing but God's grace, which is full, free, bounteous, to hope in."

The gentle, but firm, pressure of his hand ceased; he was gone. I hastened on my way to the train with a heart overflowing with emotion as I thought of God's wondrous care over me and my steps, in leading me to enjoy sweet

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and hallowed fellowship with the "Brother born for adversity," in company with one of His suffering members whom I loved so well.

There is no association so sweet to the living child of God as that enjoyed in loving union with the tried and tempted followers of the Lamb. The suffering members of His mystical body are endeared to each other as Jesus, and Jesus alone, is known and understood in their varied experiences. The discovery of spiritual oneness with "the Man of sorrows" in the sighs and fervent longings of a fellow-pilgrim, is a rich treat to Zion's mourners.

On Sunday, August 26th, 1866, it was my privilege to hear that dear man of God, the Rev. William Parks, dealing out words of comfort and consolation for the sorrowing souls who had gone that morning to Openshaw Church, hoping to meet with the Friend of sinners. The season was one of special refreshing to my soul; but mournful indeed would it have been had the Lord revealed the future to me. Never more did I hear the manly voice of the valiant William of Openshaw proclaim from the experience of a tried and faithful heart the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. The Lord's Supper was administered that morning. Many years had passed away since I was first moved to seek fellowship with Jesus in that commemorative ordinance. At my first approach to the Lord's table, Mr. O'Leary was the officiating minister, and the deep solemnity of his manner produced a lasting impression upon my mind. Now, we met again; it was his last public acknowledgment of love and devotion to his absent Lord. After service he grasped my hand as though he would not let me go, and great was his disappointment on learning my inability to stay with him during the afternoon. I was compelled to return home for service in the evening. He had reckoned upon my company and was determined not to be thwarted. On the Tuesday morning following, I received a letter from him, in which he expressed his regret at my leaving Openshaw so soon on the previous

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Sunday, and stated his intention to pay us a short visit the same day, Tuesday. Not long after, he arrived. His face was all smiles as he greeted me, while his whole deportment proved that the presence of the Lord was the longing desire of his heart. At his request, we went for a walk. Along a quiet, retired lane we strolled, surrounded by nature's pleasant solitudes. We were alone, and yet not alone - the Comforter was there. The subject of our conversation was the best of all - a sinner's experience of God's covenant love in Christ Jesus.

Mr. O'Leary came in search of comfort and consolation, but he little knew how God made him the comforter of his friend. His presence cheered and brightened the whole of my household, and his godly simplicity, joined with touching sincerity, was the means, in God's hands, of humbling my soul and laying me prostrate in spirit before the throne. Early in the afternoon, his poor weak tabernacle began to show signs of weakness, and he longed to return home. I accompanied him to the railway station, when, with the understanding that we should meet again, by the will of God, at the close of the following week, he entered the train, which soon hurried on its way to Manchester.

Towards the close of the year 1866, the Lord took me from Haydock to preach His truth at Barrow Hill, near Chesterfield. On receiving the appointment which I believe was in answer to his God-breathed petitions at the throne on the behalf of me and mine, I sought his company and counsel. He expressed his gratitude in unmistakable terms, and said: "I received a commission from Rome to minister at her altars. I duly received a commission from the Bishop of Chester; but you have what is better than all that, a charge from the Shepherd and Bishop of souls to preach His Word. My prayer for you is that He will keep you ever near to Himself, and when you go into the pulpit may you never be seen, and when you open your lips may you never be heard. May you be hidden behind His glory