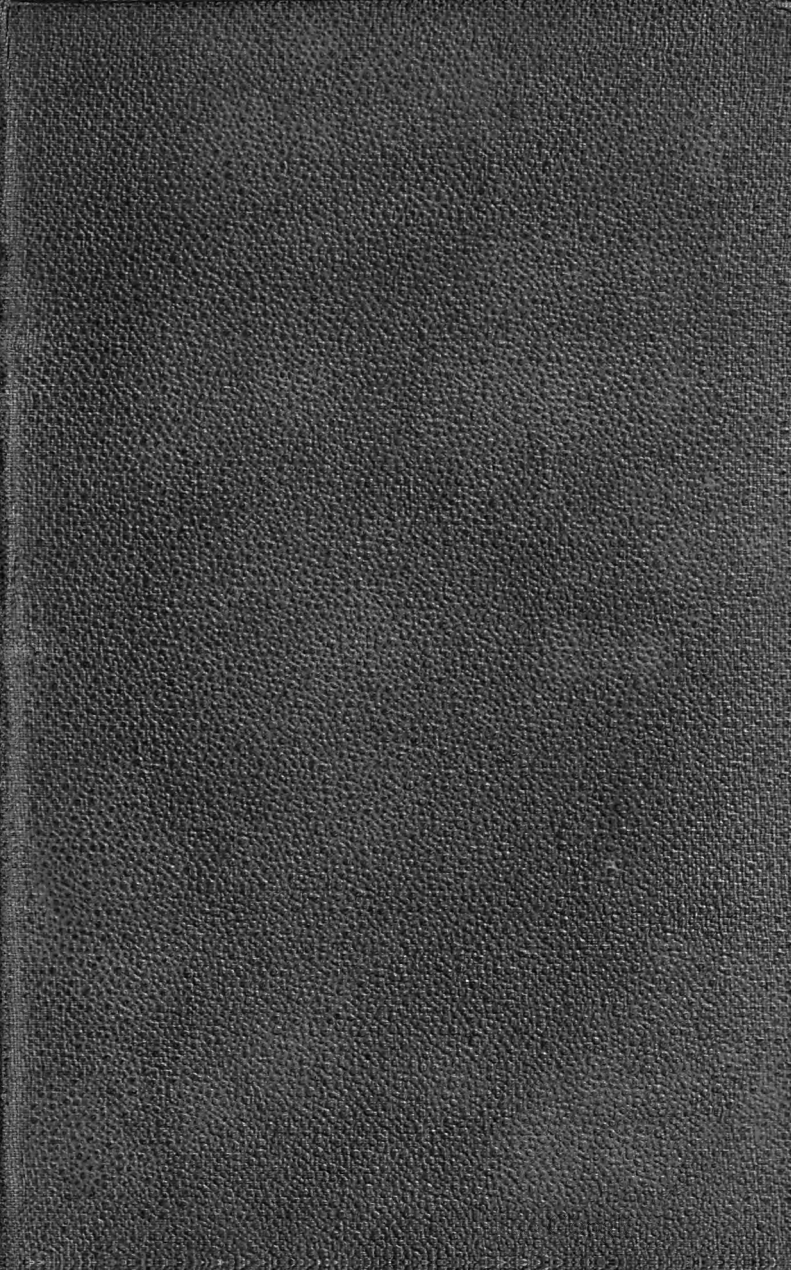

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THE GOSPEL AMONG THE MASSES;

OR

*A Selection of Remarkable Scenes,
Incidents, and Facts, connected with the Missionary
Village Work and Experience of the*

REV. ROBERT KEY,

*Now a Superannuated Minister of the Primitive
Methodist Connexion.*

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

SECOND EDITION.

"BUT GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY, SAVE IN THE CROSS OF OUR
LORD JESUS CHRIST."—*Gal. vi. 14.*

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PREFACE.

I HAVE been repeatedly and urgently requested by many whose friendship I have for years possessed, to put into print some of the most striking circumstances connected with my missionary labours, that so they might be preserved to the Christian public, and to future generations. I have ever felt a strong antipathy to writing, especially about myself, believing that my *forte* was not the press, but the pulpit and the platform. Being now, however, past active labours, and free from the anxieties and cares of a station, I have yielded to their continued entreaties, have selected some of the most striking incidents of my missionary life, and now give them to the Christian public generally, hoping they will be made an extensive blessing to the ministers and people of my own beloved denomination, and to other pious readers into whose hands they may fall.

Some may be led to think that the facts here recorded are so striking, and of a nature so extraordinary, that they must necessarily be overstated. I beg most respectfully to inform such of my readers, that some of the incidents given are so far from being coloured, that many of them would have admitted of a much deeper colouring than they

have, and further, that many things connected with them are intentionally suppressed. Others may be startled at the sudden effects produced, and the falling down under the word. I would only say, that we attach no importance to any mere physical effects that may be produced, but to the moral change in the life and conduct alone. I have simply chronicled facts, and the reader must keep in mind two things in reading this book. First, the character of the people among whom the narrator laboured. They were, for the most part, persons who had never previously heard the gospel, living a mere animal life, ignorant of God, and many of them being awfully depraved. The material was of the roughest cast, and of the lowest type. And second, the character of the missionary who laboured among them. He was like a red-hot bolt, shot out of heaven, scattering the dense clouds of neathenish darkness, and making an opening for the Sun of righteousness to shine forth. It should further be remembered that, to the masses of the people, all was new and unheard of, striking amazement and conviction into the hearts of hundreds, and perhaps thousands.

One inducement to send forth this little volume was, that a vacancy in the history of Primitive Methodism in the Eastern Counties might be supplied, and that a few of its past triumphs might be rescued from oblivion, with the hope that it may be made a blessing under God to our young ministers, and to many who may yet enter our ministry. I am deeply convinced that the want of the times

is, a ministry clothed with power from on high, whatever other attainments may be possessed. There may be learning, talent, eloquence—and we do not undervalue these—but nothing can ever qualify a man for extensive usefulness in the church and in the world except the Divine “anointing,” the “unction from the Holy One,” “being filled with the Spirit,” the Holy Spirit poured upon them without measure, sanctifying the intellect, pervading all the powers of the soul, penetrating all the muscles of the frame and all the members of the body; exciting within deep compassion, burning zeal, and flaming love; producing unwearied effort, undaunted courage, and deep travail of soul, for the salvation of the world; sparks will then go out at every touch, virtue stream forth from every pore, and power and life attend every act and every sermon. The “unction from the Holy One” will elevate all that is low, and dignify all that is lofty in man. The burning heart, the longing soul, the panting mind, will move the hand to act, the eye to look, the feet to move, and the tongue to speak for Christ. I earnestly pray that the baptism of fire and power may descend upon our rising ministry, and that they may be able ministers of the New Testament. Amen.

ROBERT KEY.

Heigham, Norwich,
April 10th, 1866.

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THE GOSPEL AMONG THE MASSES.

SWANNINGTON.

SWANNINGTON is a small village, containing between three and four hundred inhabitants, lying nine miles from Norwich, and between three and four from Reepham. The people in this place were exceedingly ignorant and proverbially wicked. Thieving, poaching, and drinking, were their peculiar characteristics; hence it was a common saying, that "they would take nothing they could not carry away." There were not many barns or fowl-houses in the neighbourhood, but some of them had been visited, much oftener than the parties concerned desired.

I entered this village in the month of May, 1830, for the purpose of arousing its inhabitants from their deep sleep of sin. I took my stand near the public-house, and commenced singing; most of the people in the place began to move and flock around me.

After singing and prayer, an awakening discourse on the day of judgment was delivered, with much power and great effect: many who

had never shed a tear for sin before, wept then. Although they were exceedingly ignorant and deeply depraved, there were no symptoms of opposition or noise. At the close of the service I commenced singing,

“‘What have I gained by sin,’ he cried,
‘But hunger, shame, and fear!
My father’s house abounds with bread,
While I am starving here.’”

A poor, but good-natured man, cried out, “Well, if you like to go home with me, I will give you a piece of bread and cheese.” He thought I was the prodigal, “starving in a foreign land.”

I went home with him, and found the family to consist of himself, wife, and one daughter about fourteen or fifteen years of age. They did not appear to have the least conception of the religion of Jesus Christ. I talked with them, and prayed with them. The woman then, very kindly, invited me to accept a bed for the night, which I very thankfully did, and retired to rest, leaving the family still up.

After I had gone to bed, the poor man’s mind became severely exercised: it struck him, very powerfully, that I was a bad man; and he said to his wife, “I have heard there is a class of men that go about the country, and get into people’s

houses; and at midnight they go down, open the door, and let in a gang of thieves, who strip the house of all its furniture; and you may depend upon it, that this man is nothing but the ringleader of a gang of robbers."

He not only said so, but felt so, and expressed his determination not to go to bed that night. "I will take this great stick upstairs," he said, "and lay down outside of the bed with my clothes on; and when he goes down to open the door and let the thieves in, on his attempting to return upstairs, I will stand on the top of the staircase, and break his head with this stick."

I had no knowledge of what was going on until several months afterwards, when the woman showed me the stick, and related to me these facts. She further told me, that at midnight I shouted out, "Glory be to God!" "There!" said her husband, "he is now going—listen!" "No, no," replied the woman; "you may lie still; I think he is a good man; he will not rob the house." Some time after, the same shout was heard—"Glory be to God!" "There, there!" the man cried out, "he is going now, he is now going down!" The woman replied, "No such thing; you may lie still, he will not rob the house." However, he got through the night, though not so well as I did, and found the house and its

furniture in the same plight as he had left it on the night previously.

About a fortnight after I paid another visit to the place. The day being exceedingly wet, I secured a house in which to conduct the service, and it was soon filled to overflowing. I commenced, and after speaking for a few minutes, a large part of the congregation were in tears.

But I was brought into such dreadful conflict with the enemy of souls, that I was afraid to open my mouth; my jaws actually appeared locked, and the house seemed filled with dense darkness. Having, however, had a long conversation with the venerable H. Bourne, a few months before, on this same subject—and he was, in my opinion, second to no man in the kingdom on the power and struggle of faith—the dear old man said, “Brother Key, did you ever know a preacher to get shut up, while preaching, by the power of his own faith?”

I was then but a novice in the work: I replied, “No, I should rather think it would be for the want of faith.”

He then laughed heartily, and said, “If you were to take a broomstick and strike into a wasp’s nest, don’t you think they would come at you?”

“Yes,” I replied. “no doubt they would.”

“Well,” said the blessed man, “suppose your faith should dislodge the powers of darkness from your congregation, don’t you think they would make an attack upon you as their last effort?”

His doctrine, however, was too strong for me at that time; but I was soon called, by experience, to know what he meant. His conversation now came fresh up in my memory. I knew there was something great done already, although I felt so awfully bad, and that something greater was at hand. I stood the onslaught of the enemy as well as I could, and after about twenty minutes’ hard fighting, the enemy was completely routed, the powers of darkness scattered like chaff before the wind, a flood of divine influences fell upon the congregation, and in a minute after about twenty hardened sinners fell to the floor, and a general cry for mercy followed.

An old lady, perhaps near seventy years of age, cried out aloud, while trembling violently, “O dear me! what is the matter? O dear me! what is the matter? if this be ranting, I will have no more of it.”

She had a little grandson with her from three to four years old. She rushed with the child to the door, and got about a hundred yards from the house, when her strength left her, her eye-

sight failed, and she fell to the ground unable to rise. Her dear little boy stood over her, with his hands clasped, crying, "But why don't you pray, granny? why don't you pray, granny?" The little fellow appeared to know more about praying than his grandmother did.

The next morning, she came down to the house where I was staying, and with tears gushing from her eyes, told me all the circumstances of the case. Among the number that got good, was a man by the name of J. Bond, who had a little before eaten six pounds of bacon at a meal, for a wager; the man before-mentioned, his wife and daughter, received good, and the daughter is a member with us till this day. Her father and mother have long since gone the way of all flesh. A number that night professed to obtain the pardoning mercy of God; others could neither eat or sleep.

They now begun to hold prayer meetings every night in different houses; but they had a way of conducting their worship which was peculiar to themselves; from twenty to forty of them would all engage in prayer together, then rise and sing one of their old song tunes to our lively hymns; all would then fall upon their knees again, and at the top of their voices, go off together; consequently, not a single sentence

could be distinctly heard. One night I went into the house, when they were all hard at it; and at the close of the meeting, I said, "I think you might be more orderly, and one of you pray at a time; the rest should say amen, for a good hearty amen is both reasonable and scriptural."

They looked at one another much confused; at last one, who had been in Norwich castle several times, replied,

"We can get on best our way, Sir."

"How is that?" I asked.

"Why," says the poor man, "the people say that we make so many blunders when we pray; and if we do make a few when we all pray together, no one can hear them."

I have heard some strange things said in prayer by new beginners, that I do not feel disposed to record.

A large society was now formed, two local preachers raised up, and after various changes, two or three years ago, a handsome little Connexional chapel was built, under the superintendency of the Rev. T. Lowe, which, I hope, will be the birthplace of many souls.

REEPHAM, BOOTON, AND WHITWELL STREET.

REEPHAM is a small town in Norfolk, containing about eighteen hundred inhabitants. I entered this place during the summer of 1830, took my stand in the market place, and commenced singing,

“Turn to the Lord, and seek salvation, &c.”

A large congregation soon came together, and while engaged in prayer, a stone was thrown at me which broke my head; the said missile, it was asserted, was thrown by the hand of the clerk of the parish church. Here I encountered a great deal of open hostility, which assumed a new phase, when compared with the persecution I had endured in other places. A large proportion of the labouring classes were in favour of the preacher, and the opposition was chiefly confined to the middle and upper classes of society; persons who called themselves “respectable.”

When one of our preachers was speaking, he was knocked down from his stand by a number of these self-styled respectable tradesmen of the town. This act of brutal violence so roused the indignation of the working men, that we were

almost compelled to bring the parties to justice, to appease their anger.

But I soon received a strong proof of their respectability, in their arts and tricks, to evade the law; the final dismissal of the case, and the amount of abuse which was poured upon me. The magistrates told me that I had no business to preach in the market place, for that I disturbed the peace of the town, and if I did so any more, they would bring the water engine to play upon me. I simply replied, that I had no desire to annoy or injure any person living; my object simply was, to turn people from sin to righteousness; and that, in the discharge of what was conscientiously my duty, I was not the man to be intimidated by threats, or driven by violence; for were I driven out of Reepham by brute force, I might be driven out of other places in like manner; and that, as I was an English subject, and broke no English law, nor stopped up any public thoroughfare, I should still pursue my work, regardless of all consequences; being neither afraid of water engines, nor of losing my life, if they were not afraid of the results. A gentleman present then said to the magistrates, "You had better be careful as to what you are doing, for the people are coming from all the neighbourhood round to

defend him ; and if the engine is brought out, it will be dashed to pieces, and the pipes cut, and without doubt, blood will be shed." So we parted, for I had had quite enough of clerical magistrates, and parsons' justice, to satisfy me for fifty years to come ; and resolved that henceforth I would commit my body, soul, and life, into the hands of Him to whom I belonged—whose glory, and whose cause I was striving to promote ; and that, if I were called to suffer, or even to lose my life, I should never again appeal to a court of justice for protection.

This will account for my conduct in other places afterwards, where I took all as it came, leaving the results with God, and went on with my work. The next time I went to preach at Reepham, the muster was immense ; from most of the surrounding villages the roughs came up by scores, some of them armed with large sticks, and other weapons of war ; for it was a common feeling among these ungodly men, that I was a good man, and that my object was to do them good ; and they avowed their determination not to have an innocent man run down by these respectable blackguards. Some cried out, "Where is the engine ? Let them bring it out, and we will break it into a thousand pieces, and cut the pipes into shreds." The persecuting parties,

however, acted wisely, for no engine was brought out, and the service passed off peaceably and orderly.

Not long after, one of this respectable party robbed his master of a considerable sum of money, and it was said, bribed the constable who had him in charge. Another of the same respectable ilk fled the country, entered on board a ship, and got out to sea; a swift-sailing vessel pursued the ship in which he had taken flight, although not with the design to effect *his* capture, but that of another person; he, however, expecting they were pursuing him, went down into his cabin and cut his throat. Such was the tragical end of his "respectable" life.

One night, while preaching on the outskirts of the town, some of these so-called "respectables" employed a lad, a sort of merry-andrew, to annoy me. He got upon a gate, directly fronting me, putting himself into such unnatural postures and positions, and indulging in such grimaces, that one might have supposed he had been trained for these special "*poses plastiques,*" by some master-spirit from the bottomless pit. It was with much difficulty that I could retain my gravity; his antics and grimaces causing roars of laughter among the crowd, entirely neutralizing all that I could say. This was

much more mortifying to me than open violence, or hot persecution.

Under the first sermon I preached here, a man by the name of Wilkin received good; he was about to open his house for the sale of beer, but as he returned home he said, "I am black enough now, and I shall be blacker still if I get my house licensed to retail beer; I will not do it." He soon, however, opened his house for a prayer meeting, and lived to manifest the christian character for many years; and at last finished his course with joy. His son Robert came to hear me at WHITWELL STREET, a distance of a mile from the town of Reepham; I was singing as he came up,

"We have found the rock, the travellers cried, etc."

The moment he saw me, conviction seized his slumbering soul: he came fully out for God, and became a useful local preacher on the plan for many years, and died a short time since, in the full assurance of faith. Samuel, another son, was brought to God; united with us, and died in peace. Rebecca, a daughter, now Mrs. R. Neale, of Docking, felt the attraction of the Saviour's dying love, and found redemption in the precious blood of Christ. A good cause was established, and many persons were brought to

a knowledge of the truth. A chapel was soon built, and here the ark of God rested.

A small village called BOOTON, lies just out of Reepham, being scarcely a mile distant. I entered this village one Sunday morning, an entire stranger, having never seen the place before. It was pouring of rain, and as I walked up the street, I saw the door of a house open, and immediately went in. I met the mistress just inside the door, and said to her, "I am come to preach in your house to-day." She looked rather confused, but I made myself quite at home, taking a chair, and drawing up to the fire. By and bye the master of the house came home—a robust, rough-looking customer, and I told him the same tale; but concluding from his appearance that I should soon have to walk. He made no objection, however, and the woman began to prepare for dinner. The table was spread, the dinner quite ready, and they sat looking at each other, but said nothing. I saw it was pouring of rain outside; and there were but two plates on the table, neither of which was intended for me; so after sitting for a time, I thought I would invite myself to dinner, as they did not invite me; and drawing up to one of the two plates I said, "Come, let us have a piece of dinner." The woman immediately got another

plate, and we soon commenced with a good appetite. After dinner I said to the man, "I am going to preach at Reepham Moor, and you must go with me." He replied, "So I will." I then told the woman that I should come back to tea, and that she must go and tell her neighbours I should preach in her house at six o'clock that night.

Soon after leaving the house, we met a man carrying a pail of water in his hand. I took hold of him and said, "Stop, my friend, I want you to go with me." The man looked confused, and said, "Let me carry my water home first." He did so, and came off with us. That afternoon he received good. This man and the inmates of the house told me afterwards, that they all felt as though they had no power to resist me, but were compelled to do as I told them.

I returned in the evening, and preached to a large congregation. God blessed His word to the conversion of the man and woman in the house, and a number of others. The night being very wet, I told them I must sleep there, to which they readily consented. Should my readers ask the question, What induced you to pursue such a course? I can only reply, I do not know: it is as contrary to my natural turn of

mind, as darkness is to light. I was led into it in a mysterious way.

One night after preaching at this place, a man and his wife came up to me and asked, "Will you be so kind as to come up to Reepham to-morrow, and take dinner with us?" After making necessary inquiries respecting name and residence, I accepted their invitation; but before I had got into the house the next day, I was attacked by the enemy in such a powerful manner, as I never experienced before.

I was so affected that I could neither eat, nor drink, nor talk, nor pray; I dare not go until I had prayed, and pray I could not. The devil suggested to my mind, if I prayed there, I should alarm all the people in the neighbourhood; the man would throw me out of doors; his master would certainly discharge him for allowing me to be in his house, &c. This was a most painful struggle, and it continued for more than two hours. I wished the man to go, but he did not; I wanted to go myself, for I had many miles to walk, but I dare not leave. There I sat and felt like a fool. How I looked, and what they thought, I could not tell.

At length, I got an opening by gently saying a few words to a little girl about being good and saying her prayers to the Lord. The cloud in

an instant began to break, and grace began to flow. I at once pushed the battle forward, and directly proposed prayer. The man and woman, the child and myself, kneeled down; I had scarcely spoken ten words, when down came the woman, and began to shout aloud, "Glory, glory, glory! I have got it! I have got it! this is what I wanted; O, this is what I have been praying for! this is what I got you here for!" etc. The man began to cry out aloud for mercy, penitential tears freely flowing; but he did not enter into full liberty at that time.

I arose from my knees, took up my hat, and left them on the floor to think about it, and shouting victory through the blood of the Lamb. A good cause was established at Booton and at Whitwell-Street. Some years afterwards, a Connexional chapel was built at Reepham, and the two societies, I suppose, became amalgamated.

LENWADE.

LENWADE is a large but scattered parish, containing a population of six or seven hundred souls. It is ten miles from Norwich, and fourteen from Fakenham. The Wesleyans had a small, feeble cause here at the time I visited the place. Two or three of their members, who had heard me preach at other places, asked me to give them a sermon or two at Lenwade, their object evidently being to get me there to give them a stir; but my object was, to establish a Primitive Methodist cause.

I entered the village in May, 1830, and after a few visits, one Sunday morning the work broke out. Several cried for mercy, and one was brought into glorious liberty while I was speaking. I got down from my stand, and made a large opening, and a very powerful course of prayer followed, during which three or four more professed to obtain mercy.

As several had received good under my labours, I thought it wise to bag my own birds, and to save other people the trouble of booking them. I did not want members from other churches, nor did I feel at all disposed that they should gather up the fruits of my toils. So,

after the meeting closed, I took out my pencil and put down the names of those that had received good, and of those who felt a desire to unite with us to get their souls saved: a goodly number came forward heartily, and that morning we commenced a cause that continues to this day. This proceeding of course gave offence to the parties who had invited me, but that I could not help; it was most unreasonable to expect that I should toil there, as a Primitive Methodist home missionary, merely for the benefit of other christian churches. A place was soon fitted up, and used to conduct our religious services in, and the work went on powerfully.

An old man, by the name of Billham, a small farmer, came up while I was preaching in the street. He had been, it was said, a very cruel man to his horses, both in feeding them and using them, so that it had become a common saying among the people, that Billham's horses would never have another master once he had possession of them, for he generally finished them by cruelty and starvation: the old man bawled out, "What the devil are they up to here?" Some one told him that a man was preaching. He drew near, and stood with mouth, eyes, and ears open, and not long after his tears began to flow, and his knees, stiffened in the way

to hell, trembled. The old gentleman received good, reformed his conduct, and became altogether an altered man. But his intellectual powers had become so much enfeebled, that I could not come to any certain conclusion about the real state of his soul. Sometimes he would express himself clearly and satisfactorily, at other times with much ignorance and uncertainty. His state, however, was a very hopeful one. He united with the society, and, for aught I know to the contrary, continued with us until his death.

One day, as several ungodly men were drinking together in a public-house, during their conversation they brought up religion—(some people are very full of religious talk when half drunk). One of the company said that “he had no doubt but these ranters, so-called, were the false prophets spoken of in the Bible.” Another said, “they never did any good anywhere;” and another, “that they never would do any good.” At last, one of the party said, “I know that they sometimes do good; therefore, do not say anything against them; it certainly is a blessed good job for old Billham’s horses, for I am sure they have done them good; they look much better than they did; they are better fed, and better used, since the old man turned ranter!”

Yes, the religion of Jesus Christ is good, even for old horses ; for "the merciful man is merciful to his beast."

A young man of promise, by the name of W. Dann, was brought to God at this place, who afterwards became a travelling preacher. Several have made a good finish, and a good cause remains to this day. To God be all praise and glory. Amen.

SPARHAM.

SPARHAM is a small village of between three and four hundred inhabitants, and is twelve miles from the city of Norwich, twelve miles from Fakenham, and four from Reepham. I entered this place in 1830. Nothing very striking took place, until one evening I took my stand against the church-wall. A large congregation soon collected together, many of whom came from the surrounding villages; and while pouring forth a torrent of burning-hot truths upon the people, a woman, of the name of Fish, who was standing outside the congregation, came rushing through the crowd, and fell down in front of the chair on which I was standing, and a few minutes after rose with her soul made unspeakably happy. Another, a man by the name of Curson, laid nearly an hour on the ground, groaning for redemption, and then rejoiced in the God of his salvation. He afterwards became, and still remains, a local preacher.

Many, under this discourse, were aroused from their sleep of sin. At the close of the service I returned to a friend's house, followed by a man and his wife, who were under deep concern about their souls' salvation. After talking with them

a few minutes on the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, I felt that God was present to heal, and that they were both on the brink of the troubled waters. I proposed prayer, and told them then and there to look to Christ for a present salvation. In a few moments the waters of life flowed in a high tide, and carried away the banks of unbelief and sin from the man's soul; he rose, and danced about the room, clapping his hands, and shouting aloud for joy. His conversion was remarkably clear and striking; his countenance beamed with delight, and his soul filled to overflowing with the dying love of Christ. His wife was standing, weeping under her load of guilt, exclaiming, "O, that is what I want! O, that I could feel that!"—that is, what her husband then enjoyed. I told her to kneel down, and God would save her in less than two minutes, (for I felt certain that salvation was present, realizable by her, and as many other persons as were in the same state of mind). She immediately bowed before "the Mighty to save." I had uttered but a few sentences ere she fell to the floor, and in a few seconds sprang up, shouting victory, through the blood of the Lamb. Blessed be the name of our God for another glorious triumph over sin and Satan! A good

cause was established, which continues to this day.

This was the birthplace of the Neale's family. Mr. T. Neale, the elder, was a very respectable, honest, sincere, good man, and one of the first members in this society—who, after maintaining an unspotted character for several years, died, leaning his dying head on the bosom of his Redeemer, and found, in His smile and gracious presence, an antidote against the fears of death.

Mr. Robert Neale, his son, became one of the first local preachers on the plan, and is now a local preacher and the circuit steward of the Docking circuit; is generally its delegate to the district meetings, and has several times been a delegate to conference.

Mr. W. Neale, another son, is a local preacher on the East Dereham circuit.

Miss S. Neale, a daughter, now living as teacher in the Primitive Methodist family of E. Reeve, Esq., of Harford Hall, has been a steady, useful, pious member for many years, at Lakenham, Norwich.

Mrs. H. Eggett, another daughter, is a stable, pious member of the Connexion at Lyng, on the East Dereham station.

A few years ago, a handsome Connexional chapel was built, under the superintendence of

the Rev. T. Lowe, which has already been the birthplace of many souls. It gave me much pleasure to take part in the opening services, as I had not visited the place since I left the station thirty years ago. The chapel was crowded almost to suffocation, and divine influences were richly and abundantly shed forth upon the congregation. May the good work go on until the end of time! and at the last day, may it be found that hundreds were born for glory there!

HOCKERING.

HOCKERING is a village in the county of Norfolk, with a population of about four hundred souls. It is ten miles from the city of Norwich, and five miles from East Dereham. Its inhabitants were in a very low state of mental ignorance—shrouded in darkness, steeped in sin, and covered with pollution. There was not at that time, as far as I could learn, or hear of afterwards, one christian man or woman in the parish. There were two persons who had light—Mrs. Hatley, who had formerly sat under the ministry of the Wesleyans, and W. Copling, who had been a hearer among the Baptists: these were the only two individuals that I could find, or hear of, that had any fear of God before their eyes.

I entered the village late in the summer of the year 1830, and endured one of the most awful conflicts with the enemy of souls that I ever experienced. Prior to the service, I got into a dry ditch covered over with briars and thorns, and for hours wrestled against principalities and powers; the conflict was so horrible, that I was afraid at one time I should lose my reason. I opened my pocket-Bible on Psalm

cxxi., and read it; and while reading the last verse, the snare was instantly broken, the powers of darkness were scattered, and hell's legions routed; my soul was, in a moment, filled with light and love.

I at once commenced my work. Seeing a piece of waste land before a respectable house, I knocked at the door, and asked an old lady to allow me the use of it for an hour, on which to preach the people a sermon. The old lady, very abruptly, replied, "Go away with you; I and the parson are good friends." I replied that I did not want to break off the friendship existing between her and the parson; I only wanted to stand on the waste piece of land to tell the people about the Saviour. "Go away with you!" the old lady shouted out, and was about to shut the door in my face. I then told her that I was a servant of Christ, and if she shut the door against me, my Master might shut the door of mercy against her. But the door *was* violently closed, and a little time after I was informed the old lady was a corpse. I make no comment here; I only chronicle the fact.

I went a little further, met a man, and told him I was going to preach. "Preach, preach!" shouted the fellow, "if you have got a barrel of beer to give away, I will come." I took my

hymn-book from my pocket, and commenced singing through the street,

“Turn to the Lord, and seek salvation,” &c.,

with a number of children running after me, which, I must confess, was rather humbling to human pride, (but I was quite willing to be counted a fool for Christ’s sake). I then took my stand on a large stone-heap for a pulpit, and the greater part of the inhabitants forming a congregation. A more wild, wicked, rough, uncultivated lot I think it would be difficult to find in the back settlements of America, or the wilds of Africa; but no violence was used, although there was quite enough of noise and clamour.

There lived in the village a man by the name of William Lane, who was not present when the first sermon was preached; but his wife had attended the service, and when she returned home, W. Lane said,

“Well, have you been and heard the parson?”

“Yes,” replied she.

“What did you think of him?”

“I think that he is a very nice man.”

“Ah!” said William Lane, “but I will keep him out of my bacon-pot.”

This man was a very extraordinary character; he was a terror to the neighbourhood, and a pest

to the place. He told me that "he actually did not know that he had a soul," although he evidently possessed a mind of the first order.

About a month after the first sermon was preached, he fell into the agonies of a wounded spirit, and while thrashing in the barn, God set his soul at liberty; and as he thrashed, he prayed and shouted aloud the praise of God. He was one of the first that united with us in that place, and a few months afterwards he began to exhort publicly, and became a laborious and successful local preacher. The mind that had been for years buried in the mire of sin, and embedded in the hard rock of unbelief, was so roused to action and exercise by the power of divine grace, that many who heard him were astonished at the intelligent remarks he made—his originality of thought, and the occasional bursts of real soul-moving eloquence, which would roll forth from his lips like streams of fire. It was the opinion of some good judges, that if he had been blessed with a religious training, and properly educated, he would have ranked among the first-class men of his generation.

An exciseman, a Wesleyan local preacher at Watton, once said, "that he had heard Dr. Clarke, Richard Watson, and other great men of the day, but they were far below W. Lane for

originality, depth of feeling, and burning zeal for the salvation of men." This great and good man laboured hard, lived hard, and suffered much for the cause. He would often walk twenty or thirty miles on the Sabbath, and preach, two, three, or four times, without a farthing remuneration for his toils. I will relate one incident connected with his history.

Mr. Lane went one Sunday to preach at Barnham Broom, where we had endured a great deal of brutal persecution; and a Sunday or two before his visit, one of our members by the name of Field, a poor old woman, was put into the stocks, and kept there for hours for simply standing by the preacher. Shortly after he had commenced his discourse he was seized by two constables, conducted to a public-house, and held as a prisoner. He immediately opened the window of the room in which he was confined, and commenced preaching to the crowd outside of the house. His preaching soon became too hot for the constables; they made haste and took off, leaving their prisoner and his congregation to do as they pleased.

He finished his course several years ago with much peace and triumph. I have been led to make these remarks, because no memoir of him ever appeared in the *Connexional Magazine*.

One of his sons, I am informed, is a local preacher with us, on the Brandon or Swaffham circuit.

But, to return to our narrative, a house was soon provided by W. Copling, in which public worship was regularly conducted. While preaching here one Sunday morning, a very large measure of divine influence fell upon the congregation; some made all possible haste to get out of the house. Copling, while sitting by the fireside, had his fetters dashed off, and his soul filled with all peace and joy through believing. The good man said, "It was as hot as a burning billet within me;" and he put his hand under his waistcoat, to ascertain whether he could not feel it outside as well as within.

A large society was formed, and a great awakening took place. Some were seized with deep conviction in their beds, and others in the fields and barns; others of course mocked, and some became very much afraid: some said that I was a wizard, and carried some charm about with me in my waistcoat pocket, and that I threw it upon the people and bewitched them; and so much did this feeling prevail among a certain class of persons, that I have actually seen some whom I was about to meet, cross over to the other side of the street, to avoid catching the contagion.

One night after preaching, I announced that the class would meet, and invited those who were desirous to get their souls saved, to stay. Mr. Hatley and Mr. Nelson, were present at the preaching service; they left the house at the close; but after a few minutes, Mr. Hatley said to Mr. Nelson, "Let us go back and see what they are up to in these class meetings." He had been a sad reckless character, and he intended to play off a trick upon the preacher. He told his companion that he would make old Key believe that he was a very godly man; and he began to get his fine tale ready, as he said.

They re-entered the house, took a seat, and soon found out what was going on. Mr. Hatley kept trying to get his tale ready. I went on leading the class, leaving these two gents till the last. I went to Mr. Hatley, who was leaning his head upon his hand, with his tale all ready to come out. I laid my hand upon his head, and thundered out, "How is it with thee!" The moment I touched him the thread of his tale was broken to pieces, and deep distress seized his soul; he fell upon his knees, and began to pray mightily to the Lord to have mercy upon him. After a severe conflict for about half an hour, mercy lifted off his load and made him unspeakably happy. He had never, according

to his own statement to me afterwards, had any light, or religious feeling, before that night.

After calling over the names of the members, I said to Mr. Hatley, "Do you wish to unite with us?" "Yes," replied the new-born saint, "with all my heart, and will give you all the money I have got in my pocket to begin with." He went home; his wife began to reprove him for being out so late, expecting he had been to one of his old haunts, the public-house. He immediately fell on his knees, and began to praise God aloud for what He had done for his soul. This so deeply affected his wife, that she was stirred up to seek the Lord in good earnest, and found Him to the joy of her soul.

Mr. Hatley was by trade a baker, and like many others, he had foolishly thought that he could not live without Sunday-trading; but as soon as this gracious change took place, he made the trial, closed his shop and oven on the Lord's day, and resolved to follow Christ, whatever might be the consequences.

The parson, hearing what had taken place, paid him a visit, and the following conversation took place between them:—

"Mr. Hatley, I understand you have left off baking on the Sabbath day."

"Yes, sir; I have."

“I am very sorry for that; you should bake the people’s dinner on the Sunday, then they can come to my church.”

“Yes, sir; but what is to become of the poor baker?”

“Oh! you must look out for that.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Hatley, “I have looked out for it; and by the grace of God I intend to look out for it; I will bake no more on the Sabbath for any man.”

Another incident connected with his history I will relate. The morning after his conversion he met some of his old pot-companions, who accosted him thus: “Hatley, we hear that you got converted last night; is that true?”

The good man clasped his hands, and looking up to heaven, with a heart glowing with love, and a countenance beaming with delight, exclaimed, “Bless the Lord! I am new all over.”

The society now became very powerful, and soon produced nine local preachers and one travelling preacher—Mr. Robert Lingwood, who laboured hard for several years, and then, his health failing, was necessitated to resign his work. He is now a useful local preacher on the Yarmouth circuit.

Mr. Hatley and his wife both became local preachers. He also became the circuit steward,

and was elected the station's delegate to the district meetings, and sometimes was appointed a delegate to the conference. He maintained, from the day of his conversion, a spotless character, paid off his old debts, and became very highly respected by all who knew him, especially so by the preachers of the Connexion, whom he sincerely loved, and whom he was always ready to defend and support in maintaining the right. His warm and kindly heart, his gentlemanly appearance, and his noble, manly conduct, secured him friends wherever he went. He finished his course with joy, and died, full of peace and assurance in God his Saviour.

There is another incident that I will chronicle in connection with this place. A poor, depraved man, by the name of W. Brighty, a fiddler, who attended fairs and public-houses, heard me preach on the Sabbath day, and could afterwards find no rest. His mental distress became so intense, that it unfitted him for his daily labour. On one particular occasion, he went into a wood to give utterance to the pent-up feelings of his bleeding heart; but obtaining no relief, he went to a public-house to try and drown his misery in beer; but even there he became worse than ever; and in the afternoon he went to work, filled with deep distress, having for a companion

a man recently brought to God. Their work was to rake quicks, or grass, together, to burn.

About three o'clock I passed by the field where the two men were at work. Brighty said to his companion, "There goes Mr. Key; I wish I could go and ask him to pray for me; I think I should get good."

"Go," said his fellow-labourer.

"But what will my master say if he comes, and I am not here?" He, however, soon hit upon a plan; he took up his rake, and broke it against a clod, and said, "There if my master comes during my absence, tell him I am gone to get a nail or two to mend my rake with."

He came into a house I had just entered, and looked as if the mark of Cain was stamped upon his brow—a perfect picture of deep mental agony. I exclaimed as he entered, "Well, Brighty, how is it with thee?"

He muttered out, choked with sobs and groans, "Black enough! black enough!"

I shouted out, "Upon your knees with you!" (for I had only one remedy for all complaints). He did so, and the chair against which he knelt was literally covered with his tears. Oh, the deep distress—the bitter groans of that poor soul! But after ten or fifteen minutes, he obtained relief, and rose from his knees, having

both a different colour and expression upon his face. He got a nail or two with which to repair his rake, and went off to his work. At night, he buried his fiddle in his garden, and became a new man in Christ Jesus.

The society at Hockering, a few years later, suffered much from emigration. A number of its best members and local preachers went to America. Mr. Hatley and William Lane died in the prime of life. William Guymer, another hard-working and useful local preacher, removed to Lynn. A few years ago, however, a gentleman built a chapel for the Primitive Methodists in the village, and made it secure to the Connexion for ever.

EAST TUDDENHAM.

EAST TUDDENHAM is a village of between five and six hundred inhabitants, nine miles from Norwich, and about six from East Dereham. I missioned this place, in the depth of winter, early in the year 1831. I visited the place, and obtained a house in which to conduct religious worship. The first sermon that was preached produced a very extensive awakening among the people. A society was soon formed, which rapidly increased both in numbers and power.

There are several striking incidents connected with the history of Primitive Methodism in this place that I will record, to save them from oblivion. On one occasion, I paid a visit to Mr. W. Vaser, a farmer of the parish, and while sitting in his parlour, conversing on the nature and necessity of the new birth, and of a present salvation, by simple, childlike faith in Christ, there and then to be received, he became deeply affected, and suddenly a large measure of divine influence fell upon him. He rose from his chair, leaped about the room, shouting for joy, and exclaiming, looking at his hands, "My flesh is all changed." His conversion, of the reality of

which I had no doubt, was very singular and striking.

In the afternoon, he went to the barn-doors, to a man of his by the name of Mace, who was thrashing, and said, "Mace, I want you to-night to go with me, and hear Mr. Key preach."

"Yes, sir," replied he. But his master, knowing that he was a very slippery customer, managed to detain him till the time of service, and took him with him. The service commenced in the open air, or rather, just in Mr. Thomas Child's blacksmith's shoeing shop. The congregation was very large, a part of which filled the shop, but the greatest part were in the open air. It began to grow dusk when I commenced the service. There was a large, robust man, by the name of W. Child, standing outside of the yard, who had said that I "ought to be put into the midst of fifty fir faggots, and set on fire." I had not been speaking long before the slain became numerous, and the shaking of the dry bones general. The man, who was standing outside, at a distance, on a sudden rushed through the congregation, and over the bodies of the slain, and fell down all along on the ground before the chair on which I was standing, and roared out like a lion, "O Lord, surely the world is about to come to an end!"

I ceased preaching, and made a large opening, or ring, and got the mourners inside. It was now quite dark, and the ground very wet. When the people were told to go upon their knees, Mr. W. Vaser, who was standing by the side of his man Mace, said, "Now, Mace, go you upon your knees."

"Yes, sir," replied the man. But his master, thinking that he would be off and gone as soon as his eyes were taken off him (and in this he was probably right), resolved to prevent this by a little scheme of his ; therefore, as the man was on his knees, his master gathered up the flaps, or tails, of his coat, and kneeled upon them. The precaution was not unnecessary, for as soon as his master's eyes were off him, he looked about and made an effort to bolt ; but, to his surprise, he found himself fast behind. A few minutes afterwards, deep conviction seized his guilty soul. He, Mr. J. Chapman, a publican, and numbers of others, professed to find mercy. This Mace was a drummer ; he went directly home, and knocked the head out of his drum, and he and his wife came out on the Lord's side. It was now two or three hours after dark.

When the meeting closed, many who had received good, and others who had previously been brought to God, went singing through the

street to their homes. A man and woman, by the name of Pease, were sitting in a room by the fire playing at cards. Conviction seized their minds, with the cards in their hands. The man threw his into the fire, and cried out aloud, "Them people are going to heaven, and we are going to hell!"

The society now became mighty, both in numbers and spiritual power, and possessed a number of christian men and women of the first order—Mrs. T. Vaser, Mrs. W. Child, Mrs. T. Child, Mr. E. Thaine, Mr. C. Reeve, Mrs. J. Thaine, &c., &c. The last-named came to Mattishall, and heard me preach a present salvation on a high key, from the leper, Luke v. 12, 13. The word "immediately" fastened upon her, and she soon found the pearl of great price. She was a woman of considerable abilities, and soon began to exhort sinners to turn to God, and became a very acceptable local preacher on the plan.

One of the most powerful camp-meetings I ever attended was held in this place, in a meadow belonging to Mr. Thomas Vaser. We commenced about nine o'clock in the morning, and kept on throughout the day, with but little intermission, till between ten and eleven o'clock at night. The congregation, for an agricultural district, was very large. There were estimated

to have been between two and three thousand persons present, from many different places for miles round.

While I was speaking in the morning upon "the loss of the soul," the work broke out in different parts of the congregation. A warm-hearted man, recently brought in, standing by a person that had just fallen to the ground, said to a few praying people, "Come here, here is a little job that wants to be done ;" and they took him up by his head and feet, and carried him to a distance from the preaching stand. A number of others joining them, a permanent praying company or two was established, that kept at their work the greater part of the day, while the regular preaching and praying services were being carried on, which constantly supplied them with new work.

In the evening we commenced a love-feast, on the ground in the open air; but we were soon compelled to close the speaking, and begin our old work again, praying with mourners, who were very numerous, and in the deepest mental agony. Some of the roughs, who stood mocking, were suddenly smitten to the ground, and increased the number of the slain. Some of their old companions, seeing them among the mourners, made an attempt to break through into the

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ring, swearing one minute, and down among the seekers the next, praying for mercy.

I laboured till ten o'clock in my shirt-sleeves, and with my neck naked, and was then compelled to leave the field because I could do no more, being scarcely able to utter another sentence. Then I left a number on the ground, groaning for redemption.

The effects of this meeting were felt in all parts of this neighbourhood. I found afterwards, when I enlarged my mission field, a number of persons, as far even as ten or fourteen miles from the place, who were awakened at this meeting. I can form no idea how many were set at liberty on the ground ; some said there could not have been less than fifty.

This place, a few years afterwards, suffered great loss from emigrations. One of our missionaries from America told me a few years ago, that my name was frequently spoken of in their love-feasts. Many have died in the faith, and are gone to a better country. May I, and you, dear reader, meet them in the land of rest and peace.

MATTISHALL.

MATTISHALL is a large village, containing near a thousand souls. It is eleven miles from Norwich, and about five from East Dereham. One morning in the depth of winter, after preaching at Hockering the previous evening, I rose before daylight, and went for a ramble, to ascertain what parishes there were in the regions beyond. While wandering through Mattishall street, and going on the Garveston road, nearly a mile from Mattishall town, I saw a chapel with the windows almost all broken, and being altogether in a very dilapidated state. I made enquiries about it, and soon learned that the chapel was built by or for the Wesleyan Methodists. They had tried to establish a cause, but failed. It was then occupied by the Independents, but they did not succeed. Then a notorious female impostor, by the name of M. S., took possession; but of course the end was marked by disgrace. The chapel had now got a name, as bad as a mad dog, and it was the opinion of many that nobody would ever get on in it. I laid the matter before the quarterly meeting at North Walsham, and was

advised to have nothing to do with it, as it might prove injurious to the mission.

I thought the matter over, prayed about it, and came to the conclusion that, however disreputable a name the chapel might have, there could be nothing objectionable in the bricks and mortar of the building, and resolved to try it, and said, I would sell the coat off my back to pay the rent if it were necessary. The chapel was hired in 1831, and I planned myself for the first two or three Sundays.

The first Sunday morning things looked very gloomy, not more than twenty persons being present. In the afternoon there were a few more; and in the evening the place was nearly full. One man was awakened that day, and a few months afterwards died a very triumphant death. Before I had finished the Sabbaths for which I was planned, the work broke out gloriously. A number of very bad characters were brought to God. The chapel soon became too small, and it paid its way from the first without the least trouble to any one.

One Sunday, after a very powerful camp-meeting held at North Tuddenham, a love-feast was held in this chapel of a very remarkable character. A very wicked man, at the public-house on that day, laid a wager that he would

be at the love-feast. He came, much the worse for drink, with a number of others of the same class, and forcibly passed the two men appointed as door-keepers. I told him to go out.

He replied, "I will not."

I said, "My friend, you had better go home, and go to bed."

He replied, "I shall not for you."

I then calmly went down from the pulpit, told the door-keepers to open both doors, and taking the fellow by his breech with one hand, and my fingers fast hold of the back of his neck with the other—and as the chapel stands a few feet above the level—I sent him spinning to the other side of the road into the hedge; (and he felt no disposition, ever after, to fall into the grasp of my hands. But a few months afterwards Parnell became a changed man, and a steady member of the society).

Immediately commencing the love-feast, such a scene followed as I never before witnessed. The cries of the mourners, the loud shouts of liberated captives and pardoned criminals, with the loud bursts of praise from those that were sanctified, continued for hours, though not a sentence could be distinctly heard. Numbers found pardon, and a goodly number professed to obtain a clean heart. Two men who were at

that meeting, and who sat it out all the while, without manifesting either pleasure or displeasure, left in their sins. The ensuing Sunday morning one of them fell down dead in the public-house, which circumstance struck terror into the hearts of many of the ungodly.

Mattishall chapel now became the rallying-point for many places that laid on the south side, and which we had not as yet reached. A number came from Runhall, Barnham Broom, Garveston, Whinburgh, Welborne, Westfield, etc., received good, and introduced the cause into their own parishes. The society became very powerful, and Mattishall was made the head of a large and strong circuit.

Some years ago, the Episcopal parson bought the chapel, and gave our people notice to quit, expecting, without doubt, to get them out of the place. But if this was his object, he was sorely disappointed, and his expectations cut off; for a gentleman, hearing of the circumstance, built us a chapel within a few yards of the church wall; and a good cause exists at Mattishall to this day. May it go on and prosper till the end of time. Amen.

NORTH TUDDENHAM.

NORTH TUDDENHAM is a village four miles from East Dereham, and containing between four and five hundred souls. I entered this place in 1831, and obtained a house, in which we conducted divine worship. There were several good men in this parish, who were members with the Baptists at East Dereham. Nothing striking took place here for some time after my first visit, except that the congregation steadily increased, and a great spirit for hearing the word was manifested.

At length, however, a great awakening took place among the people, and a powerful revival of religion followed. A camp-meeting was appointed, and held, at which a more than ordinary degree of divine influence was shed out upon, and realized by, the congregation. The work broke out under the preaching about eleven o'clock in the morning, and the slain became numerous: many found peace, through believing, and rejoiced in a sin-pardoning God.

At another time, when preaching from the words, "If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be made whole," my mind was awfully tried for the first fifteen minutes. I was afraid to open

my mouth, lest I should say anything wrong. The people all displeased me; I felt as if I could turn them all out of the house; no one sat right, and none did right; and, moreover, I was horribly tempted to blaspheme. Oh! the anguish of my mind! what pen can describe it? what words can express it? what mind can conceive it? After struggling for about fifteen minutes, the enemy was completely routed; the power of God came down in such a wonderful manner as actually to make *me* look on with astonishment. My mind became instantly calmed; the people began to fall in all parts of the house; many passed into glorious liberty; some professed to realize the all-cleansing power of the Saviour's blood; others were filled "utterably full of glory and of God," and the work became exceedingly mighty.

One night, after preaching, I went home with Mr. Elliott, a farmer of the parish, and while praying with him and his wife, the man fell all along on the floor, and his wife by his side. Both went into the fountain together, and came out washed from the leprosy of sin. I think I had more of the power of God that night than I ever had before. I could put the man up or down as I pleased, by merely articulating a word or two, though he was a man of very large proportions.

At another time I was walking on the road, and fell into conversation with Miss Rhoda Baker, who had been with the Baptists—a very sincere young woman, but who did not understand the way of salvation by simple faith. She was very anxious to have a little conversation with me on the subject. I immediately entered into it, and laid open before her the way of simply believing in Christ, then and there. In a few minutes the darkness of her mind was scattered, hope sprang up, faith took hold on the “mighty to save,” and she was instantly filled with all peace and joy in Christ Jesus. She soon began to exhort, and became a local preacher on the plan. She was a christian, too, of the highest order, and lived, I have no doubt, in the enjoyment of entire sanctification for years, died a very triumphant death, and passed away to a better country.

A man by the name of Z. Sapy, on one occasion came under the word, and conviction seized his slumbering conscience. He soon, however, by faith in Jesus, obtained a sense of pardoning mercy. But after his feelings had subsided somewhat, the enemy told him it was all a delusion, and that he had been deceived. Giving way to the suggestions of the enemy, his mind was brought into darkness and doubt. In his

perplexity, he said to his wife, "I will go to Mattishall to-night, and ask Mr. Key whether I am converted or not." He came the three or four miles, as he proposed, but I was in the pulpit when he came into the chapel. My discourse that night was connected with the very subject about which he came to enquire. While sitting with mouth, eyes, and ears open, the snare was broken, and his soul filled with light and love. He put his hand to his bosom, and exclaimed, "I have got it here snug enough; I need not ask Mr. Key about it now!" This man became a hard-working, useful local preacher, and possessed a mind almost equal, for originality and power, to W. Lane, of Hockering.— (See *Hockering*.)

Mr. E. Reeve, now of Harford Hall, Lakenham, Norwich, was brought to God in this place; as was also his amiable wife, and other parts of their family, who are now members with us, in this city; and it is my prayer that they may be an unbroken family in the kingdom of heaven. A chapel was soon built, and a large society established. This society, however, soon sustained serious losses by the emigration of many of its best members to America.

Another incident connected with this place:— I went, on a certain day, to a friend's house to

take dinner for the first time. Just as I rose from my knees after dinner, a female gipsy came to the door with cabbage-nets for sale. I gave her a side-glance, and said, in a low voice, and with "manner mild," "Can you tell fortunes?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Come in, come in, and shut the door."

She came in, saying as she approached me, "You shall have good luck."

In a moment I shouted out, "Upon your knees with you!" She fell upon her knees before she well knew what she was about, and I was praying with her the same moment. After remaining in that position for a few seconds she turned pale as death, and bolted out of the house as if it were on fire. Whether the word had any lasting effect I cannot say.

I fell into conversation with another of the same tribe on another occasion, who had just previously duped a young man possessing more money than brains. The old woman saluted him with, "Young man, I will tell you your fortune, and it shall be a true one; put a piece of silver in the middle of my hand." The young flat did so. Grasping the money, the old woman said,

"Three times seven are twenty-one,
And you'll know better for the time to come."

and off she went, leaving her dupe, it is to be hoped, wiser than he was before. She then fell in with me, but found a tougher customer to handle. "Shall I tell you your fortune, sir?" said she, making a dead stand, and looking me full in the face.

I replied, "Yes, you may if you please; but I am a fortune-teller myself."

"Are you?" said the old woman; "I did not think that; you do not look like one."

"Oh yes, I am; and I will tell you yours if you have no objection."

"Well, so you may," was the answer.

"But we must not charge anything; we must do it free on both sides."

"Oh yes!" said the gipsy, "all free."

"Well, I will begin then, shall I?"

"Yes, you tell mine first."

"Well now, mind what I am about to say; you may be sure what I tell you will be the truth."

"Very well."

"Then, if you do not leave off lying, repent of your wickedness, and give your heart to God, you will soon be in the bad place; that is as certain as that you are now here."

But the old woman's heart was a hard rock to plough upon, for with all the good humour

imaginable, she replied, "And if you do not mind your own business, and let mine alone, you will soon be in the bad place: that is your fortune."

I gave her to understand that that *was* my business, and that I went about the country for the express purpose of putting people right who had got wrong.

GARVESTON.

GARVESTON contains nearly four hundred inhabitants, and lies five miles from East Dereham, near the Thuxton railway station. I entered this place in 1831, and found its inhabitants in the deepest, grossest ignorance. I could not find one God-fearing man or woman in the place. One dark, dismal mantle covered the whole, and the devil had it all his own way. A good work was speedily commenced, and became very powerful.

As I was walking on the road one day, I fell into conversation with a man by the name of Fellows, who told me that "he had heard me preach a few days previously, and had had no rest since." I began to describe the feelings of his heart, and, I suppose, the thoughts of his mind also. I opened to him the way of salvation, the fulness and sufficiency of the atonement, and the nature of faith: that God connected pardon with the act of faith, and the moment the act of faith took place in the penitent sinner's heart, that moment the act of pardoning mercy took place in the mind of God. Light instantly broke in upon his mind, hope sprung up in his bosom, his faith took hold on the "mighty to

save," and his soul bounded into glorious liberty. We had a thorough primitive shout on the road together. He at once came out in the Master's service, without passing through the stages of babyhood, a full-grown man, and became a pious, stable, useful member and leader amongst us.

A little time afterwards, one of his daughters was led to see a beauty in Christ, embraced Him to the joy of her soul, and became a useful public speaker on the plan. His wife was a good-meaning woman, but could not understand our movements, and had a strong objection to a little noise. Not long after the conversion of her husband, I called at their house, and took tea with her. She soon began to lecture me about what she thought our extravagances and noise, and said, "If I were to get converted, I would keep it to myself, and not make so much noise about it as you do."

I said, "If God gets hold of your heart, you will no more keep it to yourself than you will keep fire without smoke." She could not believe that, she said; so we went off to the preaching service at Whinburgh, an adjoining village. I commenced the service in a small meadow. The congregation was large and attentive: the power of God came down mightily;

it passed over from one side of the congregation to the other, where Mrs. Fellows was standing. She immediately felt its force, and began to tremble from head to foot. She left the ground, and entered her sister's house. When I called in as I was going home, there were a number of persons in the house, and the poor woman was in the deepest distress. I spoke a few words to her, and she fell to the floor, and exclaimed, "O, do not laugh; it is real, it is real!" This was only about two hours after she had been lecturing me about the noise; now she made more than all of us put together.

But to return. There are one or two incidents connected with the work of God in this place that I will relate. I was preaching under an apple-tree in an orchard, on Whit-Monday, in the afternoon. Two men were present, much the worse for drink, one a publican, and the other a tailor by the name of Smith, who thought he knew almost everything. They took their stand opposite the chair on which I was standing, and but a few yards distant. They had come with the intention to confute me. The tailor had an open Bible in his hand. He looked at the Bible, and then shouted out at the top of his voice, "That is a lie, Key!" I took no notice, but kept on, trying, at the same time, to

get as fully charged as I could. He again looked at the Bible, and bawled out, "That is another lie, Key!" I thought, "You shall know in a few minutes whether it is a lie or the truth, so soon as I can get the steam well up." I took no more notice of them than though they were not present, for I had been so well schooled in noise and clamour from rabble mobs, that it did not in the least annoy me. He looked at the Bible the third time, and roared out like a maniac, "That is another lie, Key!" In a moment I turned upon them, and with a voice of thunder, and a power all but overwhelming, I said, "Five minutes in hell-fire will take all the conceit out of you, my men"—with a few more sentences of a similar character in quick succession. The word went as an arrow shot from a bow of steel, that pierced them through and through. The tailor's hands immediately began to tremble, his knees knocked one against the other, and the big tears began to roll down his depraved-looking face. They were both sober enough in a few minutes. Both made a profession for a time; but the publican, I suppose, found that religion and his calling did not well agree, for he fell back into his former habits, and died, I am afraid, in his sins. The tailor soon became a local preacher, and is a member with us to this day.

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The society rapidly became strong and thoroughly Primitive-Methodistic, and was often assisted from other places where the work was powerfully going on. On one occasion, a large and powerful party were holding a prayer-meeting in a man's house, whose son came home much the worse for drink, swearing and raging like a madman, resolved, as he said, to turn all the people out of the house. One of the young converts, who was fully in the work, shouted out, "All you that cannot believe for the young man leave the room immediately." Some left, but a number stayed, and commenced praying with a power that actually astonished me. The young man began to carry out his designs, and in a few minutes the persecutor was down all along on the floor, raving like a mad bull caught in a net. He professed to obtain mercy, and became a changed character.

A good cause was established, which continues to this day. A year or two since, a gentleman of this city built them a chapel, which I hope will be made a blessing to the place and neighbourhood.

BAWDESWELL.

BAWDESWELL is a village in Norfolk, containing upwards of five hundred inhabitants. It is fourteen miles from Norwich, and ten miles from Fakenham. I entered this place in 1832. Nothing very striking occurred during my first few visits. I was preaching, however, one Sunday, to the greater part of the inhabitants, numbers from the surrounding villages being present; the work broke out in an extraordinary manner; scores were deeply affected and roused from their slumber of soul, and a number were set at liberty at the prayer-meeting in the open air.

One poor, ungodly man came to hear, through curiosity, and the word took hold of his guilty soul. He returned home deeply affected, fell upon his knees, I suppose, for the first time, and earnestly prayed to God to have mercy upon him. The next day he went out with his team, fell off the shafts of the waggon, and was killed on the spot. This, with the mighty shaking the day before, produced a very extensive feeling of deep concern about the salvation of the soul. Twenty were added to the society that day, and a number more were awakened to a deep sense

of their guilt and danger. Several were also added to the societies at different places, the fruit of this day's toil. I think at least fifty persons, on that memorable day, made a start for a better country.

We held a very powerful camp-meeting in this place during the summer, that moved the neighbourhood. The speaking was very pointed, very powerful, and full of unction. While I was enforcing a present salvation, with all my powers of body and soul, a very sharp fire broke out in different parts of the congregation, and five or six were instantly brought to the ground. A powerful course of praying followed, during which several were set at liberty, and were led to rejoice in the God of their salvation.

The love-feast in the evening was of a very high order. One poor man rose, and spoke nearly as follows:—"Bless God! I have not far to go for my experience. I came upon the camp-ground, dark, blind, guilty, and lost; but blessed be the name of the Lord for ever and ever! He met me there, and brought me to the ground, and healed my poor guilty soul before I rose up; and now I am a happy man, bless His dear name for ever and ever! and if He be good enough to bring me to heaven, He shall never hear the last of it." This simple, artless state-

ment produced an electrifying effect; the cries of the mourners, the loud shouts of praise from pardoned criminals, liberated slaves, and forgiven Magdalenes, made the rafters and timbers of the old building shake. For two hours the work went on gloriously; numbers were set at liberty, and some washed in the all-cleansing blood of the Lamb.

The following information I received from W. Breeze. Several young men of a most daring character in this village, were in the fearful habit of going to a public-house, getting half-drunk, and then making the highest derision of the work of God then going on around them. W. Breeze would mount a stool, or chair, or bench, and say to his companions in guilt, "Now, I shall be Key. I will preach you a sermon." He would then begin to hold forth in imitation of me, and after a time, one of the party would fall to the floor. Breeze would then immediately leave off his preaching, get down from his stand, and tell the pretended penitent to believe—only believe—that he must believe; and after a little while, the fellow would rise, get upon his feet, clap his hands, and shout out, "Now I am converted—my sins are all forgiven." They would then commence singing,

“My soul is now united
To Christ the living vine ;
His grace I long have slighted,
But now I feel Him mine.
I was to God a stranger,
Till Jesus took me in,
And freed my soul from danger,
And pardoned all my sin.”

Such daring wickedness is not often to be met with in a country village ; but it was practised in this place.

One night when I was preaching at Sparham, an adjoining village, W. Breeze came to hear ; and what he had often done in mockery, he soon felt in reality. The word took hold of him like a vulture, and laid him prostrate ; he roared out for mercy as if Satan himself was about to drag him through the dark doors of hell, and number him with the damned ; and, double-dyed as he was, with a mouth black with blasphemy, steeped in the lowest sinks of pollution, crime, and open rebellion, he obtained mercy. Yes, W. Breeze, the devil's champion in vice, the daring rebel in wickedness, the leader of scoffers and mockers, obtained mercy, and became a useful member and class-leader with us, and continues so to this day.

The society now became very mighty, both in

numbers and spiritual power. Mr. Purdy, a local preacher, and the circuit steward, was brought in, in this glorious revival. I have generally found, that those persons who are brought to God in a revival, and whose conversions were sudden or instantaneous, have been the most stable, and are invariably the best class of labourers with penitents. A good man—a Baptist, once said to me, “Mr. Key, I can neither understand you nor your converts; it takes us seven years to nurse up a convert, and then he is only a babe in Christ; but your converts come out at once, full-grown men and women, and never pass through a state of babyhood.”

“Oh,” I said, “that is very easily accounted for; we press them through the strait gate at once, and as soon as they get through we immediately set them to work; we do not feed them with a silver spoon for seven years, but give them plenty to do; and we find that this keeps them out of mischief, and rapidly promotes their spiritual growth. No, no, we cannot afford to keep rocking them in a cradle year after year; but we put them upon their feet, and tell them they must walk, and work hard, and do all the good they can. That is the want of the times—a working church, whose members are all employed to spread the religion of Christ.”

SHIPDHAM.

SHIPDHAM is a large village, containing between sixteen and seventeen hundred inhabitants. It lies five miles from East Dereham, and five miles from Watton. Shipdham, Watton, and East Dereham might have been matched against any three places in the kingdom, of similar size, for brutal violence and inveterate hatred of the truth; and of the three places, I think Shipdham was the worst, and maintained a determined opposition the longest.

A gentleman of the place told me, the first time that I visited it, that three parts out of four of its inhabitants never entered the house of God. Open immorality, profaneness, Sabbath desecration, drunkenness, and deep-rooted enmity to all spiritual things, were the most prominent features of their character. Camping and cricketing on the Sabbath afternoon was their common practice; and from their field sports to the public-house. No one ventured to raise a warning voice to rouse them from their slumber, and to show them their sin and danger.

In the month of June, 1832, I thought I would seize the bear by his beard, in his own den. I went upon the ground where the parties were

playing, in the centre of the parish, on the Sunday evening, and took my stand near the school-room, on one side of the ground occupied by the campers, and commenced singing,

“Turn to the Lord, and seek salvation,” &c.,

This soon drew off a large part of the lookers-on, to hear what the babbler would say. I was going on pretty comfortably with the service, when suddenly the ball was sent at my head, with such violence, that it must have fractured my skull, and probably have dashed my brains out, but it passed harmlessly by me, fell upon the tiles of the school-room, and the broken tiles came rattling down behind me. But I kept on with my work, without being in the least dismayed or discouraged; and fixing my eyes upon a fine, strong, robust young man, who appeared very active in the service of Satan, and very prominent among his companions in vice, I thought he would make a good champion for Christ, if we could but get him out of the hands of his old master. On a sudden, I singled him out, and poured forth a flood of red-hot truths upon him in quick succession. The word fastened upon his conscience, tore away the dark shutters from his guilty soul, and held him with a Sampson-like grasp. He could not shake it

off, but left his old companions, and came out manfully for Christ and His cause, and became a useful local preacher on the plan.

The rabble, however, nothing daunted, kept up their cruel practices for several years; and even when we had obtained a house to conduct divine worship in, we were constantly annoyed. Sometimes the rabble would besmear the door and windows with a mop dipt in the soil taken from water-closets; at other times rush suddenly into the house during service, and blow the lights out, beating the people about the head, and behaving most indecently. At other times, the preacher would be hooted through the village. Their hearts were like a burning mountain, hot within them, and boiling with rancour and cruelty, heaving and swelling, and pouring forth imprecations, threats, and obscene language.

One Sunday, Mr. W. Hatley, from Hockering, was preaching outside of the house, in the open air, near the window, and the rabble took hold of him, and pushed his head and shoulders through the glass. But in the midst of all this tumult and rage, cruelty and opposition, souls were saved, and a good cause was established, which continues to this day. Several local preachers were raised up, and a number have died in the faith, and passed away to a

better country. Some of the poor members suffered much for the cause they had espoused. A poor old Frenchwoman, whose husband had gone the way of all flesh, was shamefully put about and basely treated, because she dared to say that she "was a thorough Prim-i-tive Methodist." She would neither bend nor flinch from her profession; was among the first that united with us, and has been a pillar ever since.

A few years ago, a good substantial Connexional chapel was built, under the superintendency of the Rev. J. Scott; and I had the pleasure of taking a part in the opening services. The inhabitants of this place, I am informed, are much improved in their moral habits within these last few years; and the prayer of my heart is, that they may know the day of their visitation, and be led by divine grace to choose the good part that shall not be taken away.

SAHAM.

SAHAM is a large village, numbering between twelve and thirteen hundred souls, and distant about one mile from Watton. I entered this parish, as a missionary, in the month of June, 1832. On my way to the place I entered a field, and under a hedge I wrestled with Him "who is mighty to save," that success might crown my enterprize, and felt a powerful persuasion in my own mind that great good would that night be effected, although I had never before seen the place that I was going to claim for my Lord and Master.

The day was beautifully fine; the sun was shining in his splendour. I entered the place big with expectation, full of confidence in the promise of Him who said, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world;" with you, to give efficiency to my word, to make it quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. I soon found a spot upon which to stand, and commenced singing. Numbers flocked around me to hear "this strange man;" but before I could announce my text, unexpectedly it commenced, as we say, pouring of rain. The congregation began to disperse in all directions.

My confidence and expectations were most fearfully assaulted by the enemy. I was thrown into a severe mental conflict; but grasping my shield afresh, I shouted out, at the top of my voice, "I hope some person will be kind enough to let us into a house, or barn, or any other place, that will give us shelter from the storm."

One man cried out, "You may have my house, if you please, sir." This was the old workhouse, and would, perhaps, hold nearly two hundred persons. The greater part of the congregation and the preacher entered, and the house was soon filled to overflowing. I commenced speaking immediately, but all appeared as hard as marble, and as dark as Egyptian night, without the least religious feeling or spiritual power. After speaking as well as I could for about twenty minutes, the cloud of dense darkness began to part, and rays of divine light shot through the parted cloud. At the same time, a deep religious feeling seized the minds of many, and in a few minutes afterwards several fell to the floor; while others, as angry as demons, rushed out of the house as if it had been on fire, and its flames ready to seize upon them. I ceased preaching, made an opening in the middle of the room, and invited those that felt their need of mercy to come in. One man

immediately entered; but how he got in I cannot say; he appeared to come in head foremost, over the shoulders of those who were upon their knees. He was partly in the pool, and the waters were already troubled when he came forward. I said to him, "How long do you think it will be before you are saved?"

He replied, "Not long."

I said, "You will not be a minute;" and in an instant he was made unspeakably happy.

I then looked round, and seeing a great part of the congregation in tears, immediately set this new-born soul to work praying with another who was in deep distress, for we had by this time a ring full of seekers. Several were set at liberty; but as I had no efficient help, I soon became entirely exhausted. Never did I feel before the worth of a few good, skilful labourers, who knew how to lead a penitent straight to the cross. If I had had but a few of that class with me, I have no doubt but that a great part of the congregation would have been saved that night.

This mighty shaking among the dry bones greatly displeased a class of men who professed religion. Some of these would-be-wise men said "it was blasphemy to tell the people that God was ready to save them then and there." But we should like to know when God is willing to

save if not *now*. The commands and invitations of the gospel have all a present force and obligation. God, nowhere in the whole Bible calls upon men to repent and turn to Him to-morrow; it would be a reproach to His government. If it ever be a sinner's duty to embrace Christ, it must be his duty now; whatever excuse he may make, whatever temptation may allure, cannot destroy this obligation. If this duty can be suspended or relaxed a day, then it may be for ever. But God "*now* commandeth all men everywhere to repent." "Repent and be converted." "Repent and believe the gospel." "Be ye reconciled to God." The commands are plain and positive; they are absolute and universal in their extent, and contain not the slightest allusion to the future. Christ invites the sinner *now* to come to Him, and take His yoke, to take up his cross and follow Him; and nowhere does He invite him to do this to-morrow. Christ says, "To-day if you will hear his voice," &c. "Seek first the kingdom of God," &c. "Acquaint now thyself with him," &c. "All things are *now* ready." The feast is prepared, the table is spread, the invitation is given—"Come, for all things are *now* ready." "*Now* is the accepted time, and behold, *now* is the day of salvation." There is no command in the Bible to which the ever-blessed God

attaches so much importance, or urges with so much strength and tenderness, and to which He has appended such tremendous sanctions, as that which requires a present consecration. There is no doctrine in the book of truth that sets forth the glory, the power, the sufficiency, the efficacy, of the atonement like it; and none hits so hard, and bears so powerfully upon the kingdom of Satan, as a present faith on a present Christ.

But to return to our narrative. I preached again the following Sunday morning, in a barn, kindly lent for the purpose. The congregation was very large, and many were deeply affected. After preaching, I got down from the stand, made a large opening or ring, and invited all to come in who felt their need of a Saviour; and after a short but severe conflict, several found peace.

This was the second discourse that I had delivered in the place; and, as many persons had found the Lord, I formed a society, when twenty-three gave in their names. But there were a great many more who were seeking mercy; in fact, a great part of the inhabitants appeared to be under a religious awakening and concern about their souls' salvation. The work from the first went on, and soon became very mighty. All the following winter, sometimes ten, fifteen,

twenty souls professed to obtain mercy after a Sunday's toils ; so that the society soon rose to nearly one hundred members. Some of the worst characters in the place were brought to a knowledge of the truth, and several soon began to exhort, and became useful local preachers.

One man and woman, who had been living together as man and wife, and had a family of nine children, were awakened from their deep sleep of sin, and soon were seen going off to the church to get married, and some of their children were brought to a knowledge of Christ.

Another, who had kept a beer house, pulled down his sign, rolled his beer barrels out of the cellar, and became a pious, useful member, and local preacher. The following summer, a Connexional chapel was built. This place has maintained its ground, with a few fluctuations, from the first. It became the head of a circuit, called the Saham and Watton circuit. But it had not sufficient strength, nor was there room enough to enlarge its borders so as to make it a good station ; it was therefore attached (with the exception of Shipdham) to the Brandon circuit. This will account for the smallness of the Mat-tishall (now Dereham) circuit, as compared with what it formerly was ; all the places on one side of the station have been taken from it. Saham

has, however, kept its numbers up, from about eighty to a hundred and twenty members. The Rev. George Stacey went from this place into our ministry; and Saham is now, I suppose, the best place on the station to which it belongs. To God, and God alone, be all praise and glory, both now and for ever. Amen.

WATTON.

WATTON is a pretty little market-town in the county of Norfolk, and contains upwards of thirteen hundred inhabitants. It is twelve miles from Brandon, ten miles from East Dereham, ten miles from Attleborough, and about nine miles from Swaffham. Several ineffectual attempts had been made, at different times, to introduce Methodism into the town. A gentleman, residing at Watton, informed me that "a Wesleyan minister, a few years previously, took his stand in the town, for the purpose of warning its inhabitants to flee from the wrath to come, but was so brutally handled by the mob, that he only escaped with life, as it were by the skin of his teeth." Our people from the Brandon circuit (which then included the Rockland circuit) had also made one or two attempts to establish a cause in the town, but failed.

I took my stand in the market-place, August 16th, 1832, and received very rough handling from the infuriated rabble; but, being made of rather tough material, I was not to be driven out by force, or frightened out of the field by brutality and violence.

The following account, taken from one of the Bury papers, will give the reader a faint and partial view of the scenes which took place on that memorable night.

“WATTON, August 16th, 1832.—This place was thrown into a state of unusual excitement by the following circumstance. One of the Primitive Methodists, or, as they are generally called, ranters, took his stand in the market-place, for the purpose of giving the people a sermon. Singing and prayer were suffered to pass off quietly. The preacher took his text from Gen. vii. 1, and, while proceeding with his discourse, the assembly collected together, began to show symptoms of disapprobation, and such an uproar followed, produced by blowing of horns, ringing of bells, beating tin kettles, &c., &c., accompanied by such shoutings and yellings of the people, as quite precluded the possibility of the preacher (though of very powerful lungs) from being heard. This clamour continued, and the utmost confusion prevailed, during the whole time of the sermon. The preacher was twice thrown down from his stand to the ground, but with unabated zeal as oft resumed his labours. During these proceedings, several cans of beer were distributed, in order to stimulate the zeal of the misguided assailants. Common report says, that this attack on the poor ranter was directed by one or two of the principal persons in the town, and that they had also a Church of England parson for a prompter, acting behind the scene. How far this may be correct, I pretend not to determine; the parties so charged can easily set themselves right with the public, *if* the report be groundless. But I leave it to every candid reader to make his

own comment on these statements, and shall content myself, for the present, with offering a word of advice to both parties, the opposers and the opposed. To the former I would recommend less clamour, and to the latter more prudence. To the ranter: I would direct his most serious attention to the apostolic injunction contained in 1 Cor. xiv. 40—‘Let all things be done decently and in order.’ To his opposers, I would recommend the sage advice of Gamaliel, recorded in Acts v. 38, 39—‘And now I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this counsel, or this work be of men, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply, ye be found even to fight against God.’ If these counsels are attended to in future by both parties, my neighbours will not have their heads made to ache, the town will not again be disgraced by a scene of tumult and disorder, nor will further observations on the subject be necessary.—*From a Spectator.*”

What this good-meaning man intended by “prudence,” I am not able to say. I have thought for many years that it was prudent to get a soul saved anywhere, and by any means in our power. But such were not the views of many professing christians in this county upwards of thirty years ago; it was neither prudent nor respectable, in their judgment, to obey the Saviour’s injunction, “Go ye into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring hither the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind.” We will, however, take our leave of this *spectator* and his prudence together,

only staying a moment to inform him, that eagles can see further than owls.

My readers will, I doubt not, be very anxious to know how these scenes terminated, and what were the results. For myself, I never felt before, or since, as I did on that glorious night; the fear of man, the fear of suffering, the fear of death, and the fear of hell were entirely taken away. I preached when on my feet and when knocked down, when I could be heard and when I could not, under a deep impression that God would make the people feel, if I could not make them hear. In the midst of the strife and confusion, a large missile was thrown at my head, which I think must have proved fatal had I not suddenly stooped—as it was, it but just passed over me, grazing the top of my head; many who were looking on thought, and said, that I must certainly lose my life, which I felt both willing and ready to do, for Christ's and the Gospel's sake. But in the time of extremity, God graciously interposed in my behalf; three or four of the ringleaders, much the worse for drink, suddenly coming over on my side, seized me by the collar of my coat and exclaimed, deeply affected, "You are right, sir, and we are wrong, and no man shall touch you." I was then marched through the mob by the side of my companions (who were

very active in warding off the rabble) as happy as a prince, singing,

“Wicked men I’m not to fear,
Though they persecute me here,” &c.

Persecution, that night, spent its force, and never rallied again to any great extent.

A retired tradesman by the name of Took, living upon his property, who received good a few nights before at Saham, but has long since gone to his rest, first opened his kitchen for worship, and then built us a small chapel in the centre of the town, which he afterwards sold to the Connexion. A good cause was established, which continues to this day; several travelling preachers have been raised up in this town, and some very excellent local preachers. A few years ago a second chapel was built, a beautiful though neat edifice, at a cost of about £500, and the old chapel was converted into a minister’s house. But what of these poor deluded men, the persecutors—what became of them—that is, those of them who did not yield to the claims of Christ? Some of them came to a premature death. Mr. Thomas Bowen, a very excellent young man, a native of Watton, who became a travelling preacher with us, when labouring with me on the Hadleigh station, gave me the following

information—"Only one person who was mixed up with that persecution ever made anything out in business afterwards; Mr. —, when coming from market, being drunk, fell off his horse, and broke his neck; Mr. — failed in business; Mr. — had to leave the country; Mr. C. remains (this is the man who supplied the parties with beer), and many eyes have been fixed upon him for years." There is nothing, however, like sticking to a good cause.

HADLEIGH.

HADLEIGH is an ancient town in Suffolk, ten miles distant from Ipswich, and about thirteen from Colchester. This town is said to have been among the first places in England that received the Gospel; it is also celebrated by the martyrdom of Dr. Rowland Taylor; here, that man of God laboured indefatigably to impress upon the minds of its inhabitants the great truths of Christianity; and here, the hell-hounds of Popery drank the sainted martyr's blood outside of the town, on what then was the Common: he went to the stake with dauntless courage and perfect resignation to the will of God, exclaiming, "Only a stile or two more and a field to cross, and I shall be at my Father's house."

Our people from the Ipswich Circuit had made an attempt to establish a cause in this town, but failed. The Wesleyans, formerly had a feeble interest also, but it gradually decreased until it died out. I entered the town in May, 1836, and took my stand in the street, but the prospects appeared so very gloomy and discouraging that I had some thoughts of leaving the place alto-

gether and going to Bishop Stortford or Haverill; after a little reflection, however, I resolved to give it a trial.

One Sunday morning, while preaching in the High Street, a lady was standing by her door listening to the word. The word of the Lord took hold of her heart and conscience, and she was taken into the house in a fainting condition. I was informed that she became a member of the Independent church in the town.

The Wesleyans having left the place, I hired the old chapel they had occupied—an old, antiquated-looking place, fitted to produce the impression that in the dark ages it had been a monkery or a nunnery. During the winter months I delivered a course of lectures, which drew many to hear; and before the course was completed, the soul-saving work broke out gloriously, and became mighty. Mr. G. Jones and his excellent wife were brought to God. He has been a pillar in the cause ever since, and sustains the office of circuit steward.

Four persons, who it was said had not heard a sermon for seven years, agreed to come and hear me on a certain Sunday evening—two young men and two young women, not very good characters as may well be imagined—all of them were roused from their sleep of sin, and apparently,

at the same moment. An old soldier was broken down under the word, and at the prayer-meeting after preaching, he offered up such a prayer to God for mercy as I should think was never heard before, or since; he told us in his prayer what he had done on the Sabbath in Spain, Portugal, and other parts of the world where he had been, giving a long list of the crimes he had committed in different nations. It was with much difficulty that I could retain my gravity; yielding, however, to the claims of bleeding mercy and dying love, he obtained salvation, and united with us. A good cause was soon established, several local preachers were raised up, and some years after a beautiful little Connexional chapel was built, which, becoming too strait, was enlarged under the superintendency of the Rev. J. Scott. Hadleigh became the head of a circuit in 1838.

Just twenty months from the time that I left Rockland station as a missionary to the borders of Suffolk and Essex, the mission was made into a new circuit with two travelling preachers. There were some excellent Christians in this town to whom I am much indebted for many acts of kindness; their record is on high, and their work of faith and labour of love is not forgotten by Him who has said, "A cup of cold

water given to a disciple shall not lose its reward." I will record a fact or two here to the honour of my good Master, who provided assistance in the time of great need. After preaching one evening in the street at Hadleigh, a person came to me and said, "Mrs. S. wants to see you in the morning." She was a Christian lady, residing in the town. I went at the time appointed, and was introduced to an excellent woman, full of kindness and good works; she said, "Mr. Key, I have been over to Bocking, by Braintree, and Mr. —, a Christian gentleman, told me he had heard of your extraordinary labours and great success in and around Hadleigh, and that his mind had been deeply impressed with the feeling, that a little pecuniary assistance would be very acceptable to you. I hope," continued the lady, "you will not be offended, he has commissioned me to give you this small sum" (at the same time putting two sovereigns into my hand). The gift, at the time, was very acceptable, and was not the only proof I received of the same gentleman's kindness—it was repeated. What the most surprised me was, that living at the distance of from thirty to forty miles, he should hear of, and feel a benevolent interest in, my labours.

In another time of need, while labouring in

this part of the country, I went and took breakfast with a Christian gentleman. After prayer, he rose from his knees deeply affected, and put a five-pound-note into my hand, saying, "The Lord bless you in your endeavours to do good!" I received it as if the hand of Christ had that moment given it me, and it produced the same effect on my mind. May the good work go on and prosper, till all shall know Him."

POLSTEAD.

POLSTEAD is a large and scattered village in the county of Suffolk, about four miles from Hadleigh; famed in the annals of crime for the murder of Maria Martin, in the Red Barn, by W. Corder. The moral state of its inhabitants was exceedingly low and degraded. I was informed that there were seventeen houses in the parish at which beer was brewed and sold without a license. For many years Polstead supplied a number of criminals for the county assizes, but few courts being held without some prisoners from this parish being there. Barns, malthouses, shops, etc., were often visited by a gang of armed men for the purpose of plunder.

I entered this village in 1837, and took my stand on the green, near the public-house. One Sunday morning, a man by the name of J. Beeston was in the public-house, drinking a pint of beer, when I commenced singing. He said to some one present; "I have heard a good deal of talk about this man; I will drink my beer, and go and hear him, and then I will come back and have another pint." He came, he listened, he felt, for I was pouring forth some red-hot



truths in quick succession, with an influence enough to make hearts of stone to melt and eyes of marble weep. He had not stood long before, as he said, "he began to pump, and could not conceal his tears, but became deeply affected ;" as also did a number of others as black as himself. He went in the direction of home as soon as the service was closed, saying, "he did not want any more beer that morning." A considerable awakening took place among the people, some of whom had been a pest to the place and neighbourhood.

One day, after having walked about thirty miles without either dinner or tea, and preached in the evening at a new place, I failed to obtain a night's lodging. I had been to different inns, but could gain no admission, all pretending to be full. I had walked until the blood squeezed out at the top of my shoes, and I had torn out the linings of my trousers, and bound up my bleeding feet. About midnight, I got as far as Hadleigh heath. I could get no further. I knew a person living there, who had heard me preach once. I turned aside to see if the family were up, thinking if they were I would try them. I got to the front gate, and seeing no light my heart sank within me. What next to do I could not tell. After a few minutes' reflection, I

thought I would get into their straw stack standing close by. While approaching it for that purpose, however, I began to ask myself what the consequences might be were I found there. It was about the time the rural police-force was established, and I felt convinced that, should I be discovered by one of them, I should probably be taken up as a vagrant, and my missionary enterprize blasted. Leaning over the front gate, I wept like a child, and lifted up my heart to God. A powerful impression was made on my mind, and, as it seemed to me, an audible voice said, "Call them up, call them up; they can only deny you." So, screwing up my courage, I roused at the door. A voice thundered out from the front chamber, "Who is there?"

The window was immediately opened, and I said, "Will you be kind enough, for Jesus Christ's sake, to take in a poor, weary, and worn-out servant of His for the night?"

I distinctly heard the woman say to her husband, "That is that preaching man." She immediately dressed, came down and received me as if I had been an angel from heaven. She at once prepared supper for me, but I was so overwhelmed with a sense of God's goodness, that I could not partake of the provisions her hospitality spread before me, nor sleep when I

had retired to rest. That visit was a very successful one; both the man and his wife were powerfully impressed, and were soon brought in among us. The servant girl was led to embrace the Saviour, and united with us. The woman's father and mother were soon added to our ranks; and their house was open at all times for my reception, which I found to be a great accommodation, when homes were scarce and friends few.

We soon obtained a house on Polstead heath, where divine worship was regularly conducted; and the cause is much indebted to Mrs. Richardson to this day for her kindness and attention, ever meeting trouble without murmuring or discontent, and being always ready to make the congregation as comfortable as possible at all times.

One morning, during conversation after breakfast with Mr. R. Beeston (the person whom I had called up), he said, "Mr. Key, we want a chapel here."

I said, "Yes," but cast the idea aside, for I saw no prospect of getting a chapel up in the place.

He, however, repeated it, and said, with strong emphasis, "We want, and must have, a chapel."

I still paid little or no attention to his remarks, for, as a stranger in the county, I did not

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know where or how to raise five pounds. At last he said, at the same time putting his hand into his pocket, and bringing out two five-pound-notes, "I will give you ten pounds towards it; you must beg what money you can, and I will find you the rest on mortgage." I thought it was now full time for me to move. "I shall," he said, "go and purchase that piece of land—(referring to a small field of about one acre)—and you can take what you like out of it for the chapel."

After the land was bought, and preparations were made for building, I thought the matter over seriously. This being the first Primitive Methodist chapel in this part of the county, and the cause newly established, it seemed problematical whether the interest would stand or not; and if the chapel should at any time have to be converted into two cottages, I concluded that they would not be worth much without a garden; I therefore took one-fourth part of the field, about a quarter of an acre, and let for a garden what was not necessary for building purposes. The chapel was soon reared, and opened for divine worship, the cost being about one hundred pounds, fifty of which were raised by subscriptions and collections. Mr. and Mrs. Beeston regularly gave a shilling a week for their class, and ten shillings a quarter for their seats in the chapel.

A good cause was established in the village. Several very bad characters were brought to a knowledge of the truth, and a great reformation in the morals and habits of the people was apparent to all who had any knowledge of the parish. My prayer is, that the good work may go on until the end of time.

LANGHAM.

LANGHAM is a village in the county of Essex, about five miles from Colchester, and three from Dedham. I entered this parish, as a Primitive Methodist Missionary, in 1837, and took my stand on the moor. A large congregation soon gathered round me, and of quite a different class to that which it had usually been my lot to meet in Norfolk—more intelligent and refined, more civil and obliging. Although rather shy of me, being a stranger, for a time, their friendship, when gained, was warm and lasting.

After a few visits, a house was obtained, in which to conduct divine worship, and a society was formed. The work became very extensive and powerful, and the congregation steadily and constantly increased. In the following spring, I purchased two old cottages, with gardens (by the bye, without possessing any money with which to pay for them). I visited a friend residing at Hadleigh heath—a farmer, who had recently been brought in among us (the person I called up—*see Polstead*), and told him what I had done.

He smilingly said (for he guessed my errand), "Well, Mr. Key, but how about the money to



pay for them? I suppose you want me to help you?"

"Yes," said I, "that is the very thing I want."

He very kindly consented to my proposals. A few days, subsequently, however, I sold the old houses at the same price I had given for them, previously securing as much of the land as I required on which to build a chapel. Having thus obtained the land without cost, I went round the parish with a subscription list, and shortly obtained near £50. A chapel was soon erected, and opened on the queen's coronation day (*see West Bergholt*), and the work steadily advanced in power and in the number of its converts. Most of the roughs in the place became changed characters; and, that a thorough reformation of manners and habits had taken place, was evident to all. There were but few families in the parish but would at any time give me a kindly welcome, assist me heartily in the erection of the chapel, and also contribute freely towards the building of other chapels in other places on the station. I always knew where to go, in Langham, for a sovereign, if I wanted one for any needy chapel case, both among Church of England people and Baptists, as well as among my own people.

The most striking event which took place

connected with Primitive Methodism in Langham was the conversion of Mr. James Folkard. He had been a gay, sporting character, and a reckless gambler; had formerly kept a public-house, and report said a gambling house, in Colchester. But of course, his sporting habits, gambling associates, and general extravagances, soon ended in disgrace and ruin; and with his money, goods, character, and credit gone, he came to live on Langham Moor, at the time when the work of God was going on very powerfully amongst us in the place. Mrs. Folkard was very ill, and no one appeared to understand the nature of her complaint. She was almost reduced to a skeleton. She told the Rev. James Jackson that "her hands were so attenuated she could see the light through them." A friend came, and requested me to visit her. When I did so, I found her bed-ridden, and to all human appearances she could not continue long. According to her statements to the Rev. J. Jackson, the following is the substance of a conversation which took place between us.

"Well, Mrs. F., you are very ill."

"Yes, sir."

"Are you going to die?"

"Yes, sir; oh!" (a minute's pause, and a heavy groan or two followed).

"I hear that you have a very wicked husband."

"Yes, sir, I have."

"God can save him."

She faintly replied, "I believe He can." (Another pause, and a deep-fetched sigh.)

I then said, "Well, we will see about that; let us have a little prayer."

While engaged in prayer, God was graciously present, and a deep and powerful impression was made upon my mind. I rose from my knees, and addressing her, said, "Well, Mrs. F., you must look up, and trust in God; I believe you will soon get better, and God will save your husband in less than a month." (She thought me a very strange character, for I had never as yet seen her husband to my knowledge.) I continued, "We are going to hold a camp-meeting on the moor next Sunday, and tell him to be sure to come."

When Mr. Folkard returned home, she told him that a curious sort of man had been to see her, and what he had said to her. On the Sunday morning he said to his wife, "I will go to the camp-meeting."

•She encouragingly said, "Do, James."

He came, and when some of our people saw him they were alarmed, expecting he would make a disturbance. But he listened with much

attention, was seen to weep under the word, and at the prayer-meeting on the ground he went down upon his knees, to the astonishment of all that knew him. Some expressed their surprise by saying to each other "There is James Folkard on his knees; what do you think of that?" He came again in the afternoon; the impression was deepened, and he resolved to go to the lovefeast in the evening. When he came to the chapel, the door-keepers would not admit him, although the meeting was a public one. Some altercation taking place between him and them, one of the door-keepers came to the pulpit stairs and said to me, "That fellow Folkard wants to come in, but we will not let him." I immediately went down from the pulpit to the door, and saw Mr. Folkard, who was deeply affected, and leaning his head over the palings in front of the chapel. I shouted out (for I had got to know him during the day), "*Jemmy*, come here, you are the man I want." He came in; I marched him up the aisle, and directed him to take a seat in the pulpit-pew. The meeting went on gloriously. While relating my experience, he was deeply touched, and the recital kindled a hope of mercy in his guilty mind. "I thought," he said to me afterwards, "there was a similarity between your

former character and my own, which gave me reason to hope in God's mercy."

The meeting now rose into great power, and the seekers became numerous. One woman, in deep distress, was thinking, as she afterwards said, "If Mr. Key would only come this way, and speak a word to me, I believe I should get saved." At the same instant, I went up to the place where she was kneeling, and, laying my hand upon her, spoke a word or two, and in a moment her soul was made unspeakably happy, and she rejoiced in God her Saviour.

Another case: a young person was trembling violently from head to foot; and having been educated in the Church of England, she thought "she wanted confirmation." I laid my hands upon her, and said, "I can confirm you as well as any bishop in England." She instantly fell to the floor, and rose with her soul full of glory.

Several others professed to obtain liberty on that glorious night. Mr. Folkard trembled violently when I laid my hands upon him, directing him to roll his burdened soul, with all its guilt and pollution, on the atoning blood of Christ: through a simple act of faith on Christ, he found comfort, and that day made a start for heaven. At the close of the meeting he affectionately asked me to accompany him home, to

pray for him and his wife. He had his little daughter with him, and we went home together. We had not long been in the house ere he said to his little girl, and to the utter astonishment of his wife, "Come, my dear, kneel down, and this gentleman will pray with us before he leaves us." The next night, I was planned at West Bergholt, and he said to his wife, "I will go and hear him there."

She replied, "And I, too, will go, James."

Knowing that, humanly speaking, she was unable to leave the room, he endeavoured to dissuade her from the attempt. But she said, "I am able; I can sit in the cart." Her strength rapidly returned, and in a few days she was perfectly well in health, and happy in her soul. They came to the preaching service that night, and followed me to my appointments each night of that week. The next week, however, he was seized for debt, thrown into Chelmsford jail, and kept there about twelve months. The fact was, he could give no satisfactory account, either of the money he had spent, or the goods he had received from his creditors, and was, therefore, put back time after time during his examination. I felt deeply concerned about him, and often wondered how his religion would stand the trial

of a prison ; for no person, save myself, had any faith in his conversion.

Mr. S. Blythe, a gentleman-farmer, living in the parish, and a member among the Baptists, said to me, "Mr. Key, I am very thankful to God for the great work that you have been the means of accomplishing in Langham: you have been instrumental in doing more good in the parish in a few months than has been done in it for the last fifty years. But as to the conversion of that man Folkard, I do not believe anything about it." He thought that he was too bad to be converted, and many others were of the same opinion.

I replied, "Sir, if there be a work of grace in his heart, it will soon show itself in his life and conduct." Mr. Folkard found human justice tempered with divine mercy; for in his imprisonment he enjoyed the companionship of the celebrated Mr. J. Thorogood, of Braintree, who was cast into Chelmsford jail for refusing to pay church-rates, and was, if I am rightly informed, kept there for several years. Strange sort of apostolical religion that! to rob men of their goods, or cast them into a jail, because their consciences will not allow them to support what they believe to be contrary to the word of God, and injurious, moreover, to the souls of their

fellow-men. Was that an example left to the church by Paul or Peter? In Thorogood, Mr. Folkard found a friend, a teacher, and a father, who instructed him, enlarged his views, and contributed greatly to the maturing of his christian graces. Mr. Folkard ever cherished an affectionate remembrance of him, and spoke of him in the highest terms, blessing God that he ever met with him. He was a "Thoro' good" friend to him, being a sensible, intelligent, good man, and proved an excellent companion for him in the house of his bondage. When Mr. Folkard left the prison, he came out a better man than he went in; and, entering into business, a new man with new principles, new views, new feelings, a new heart, and a new Master, a kind Providence smiled upon him; he soon saved a considerable sum of money, paid off all his old debts, and *fully* met the demands of all his former creditors. He had obtained his discharge from the Court of Bankruptcy, consequently there was no legal claim upon him; yet he thought and rightly thought, that the moral claims of his creditors were binding upon him as a christian man. This noble, and, I am afraid, rare conduct, fully established his character, and gave him a large amount of influence both in the church and the world. He became one of the

most respectable sheep-dealers in the county. His conduct, after his conversion, was the most upright, and he was conscientiously punctual in all his business transactions and habits: he was never known to be five minutes behind in a business appointment, or a minute too late at a place of worship. I remember his telling me that, in his opinion, every man who professed religion ought to be strict to a minute, and in all his business transactions never to be behind the time appointed. These principles bore good fruit: if any person went into Langham chapel five minutes before the time to commence divine worship, he might depend upon seeing Mr. Folkard in his pew, either reading his Bible or his hymn-book; and at the time of his death, there were sixty members in his class. This good man pursued an even course from the period of his conversion to the close of his life: "his path was that of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day;" and then his sun went down without a cloud. He said to the Rev. J. Jackson, who was with him a short time before his death, "I can see my way clear up to the throne. I am happy!" adding, with an expressive smile, "I shall look out for you!" "He was a good man, and feared God above many." After he had established his character, and had

discharged all his old debts, Mr. S. Blythe, the gentleman before-named, became his intimate friend and acquaintance, and so highly did he esteem him, that, I have no doubt, had it been required, he would have endorsed bills to almost any amount for him: unlimited confidence and real worth acted together in perfect harmony.

The Baptist minister, resident in the parish, preached a funeral sermon at his decease from the words, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost." In the course of his sermon he asserted that "the best light in Langham was gone out."

Mrs. Folkard, now Mrs. Gardener, is still a member with us in the same society. In this parish I received a great deal of kindness from all, especially from Mr. and Mrs. Clarke and their amiable family, some of whom are still members and Sunday-school teachers with us there. I was always greeted with a smile and hearty welcome whenever I went; and my earnest prayer is, that they may, through divine grace, be an unbroken family in the better land.

WEST BERGHOLT.

WEST BERGHOLT is a village in the county of Essex, about three miles from Colchester. I entered this parish in 1838. When preaching at Langham, about five miles from West Bergholt, Mr. James Seaborn, being there on a visit to some of his relations, was one of my hearers, and invited me to mission Bergholt in the spring of the same year. Acceding to this request, I took my stand against his blacksmith's shoeing-shop, and preached to a number of rough-looking customers, some of whom appeared as if they had deserted from a prison; but I was enabled to speak with great liberty and power.

On my next visit, I preached in a cottage, with powerful effect. An extensive awakening was produced among the people, and a deep religious feeling seized the minds of many. The children, even, assembled together on the common to pray to God to save them; and some of them went from house to house to tell their neighbours to repent and turn to God, for the world was about to come to an end.

At another time, two old men came from Fordham, and were aroused from their long,

deep sleep of sin. While walking home together after the service, one of them told his companion how badly he felt, and what a great sinner he was. The other replied, "that was exactly how he felt; he had never felt so before in his life, and could not tell what to do, or where to go, to get relief." One of them, near eighty years of age, came down to the house where I was staying a day or two afterwards, to tell me what God had done for his soul. He said, "I got powerfully wrought upon under the sermon you preached a few nights ago, and went home with a load of guilt pressing me down to the ground, fearful lest every step I set I should drop into hell. I could find no rest anywhere. I retired to bed, but could not sleep; I got out of bed, fell upon my knees, and with loud cries and tears I begged of God to have mercy upon me. But I felt no better. I got into bed again, but sleep had departed from me. At last, I thought I saw Jesus hanging on the tree, covered with blood; He appeared to smile upon me, and in an instant my heart was as light as a cork."

The work now became mighty and extensive. While preaching one Sunday morning on the common, from the "Horrible pit and miry clay," a man fell down all along on the ground, and lay for a considerable time as stiff as an iron bar,

and, apparently, as unconscious as a corpse, but sprang up at length, full of light and love.

I was engaged, on the queen's coronation day, in opening the Langham chapel. Mr. John Wright, a respectable farmer, residing at West Bergholt, was going to a dinner-party at Colchester on that day; but, prior to mounting his horse, the thought occurred to him that, "if he did go, he might get too much wine; and it would, probably, be much better to go to Langham and hear Mr. Key preach, and give the presumed amount of his expenses to the funds of the new chapel." Acting under this thought, he came, and under the first sermon he was powerfully impressed. He returned for the afternoon service, and remained for the evening. At the close of the services he came and gave me a hearty shake of the hand, and asked, "When are you coming to West Bergholt?"

"Next Saturday week," I replied.

"My name," said he, "is John Wright; I reside at West Bergholt, and you will please come to my house. I shall be absent from home for the day, but Mrs. Wright will kindly entertain you."

Thanking him, I accepted his kind invitation. I went at the time appointed, and received a warm and hearty reception from Mrs. Wright.

A woman of kindlier disposition never breathed. The following Sunday I preached on the common, with great power. The awakening now appeared to extend over the whole parish, and a great reformation in the morals of the people was obvious. Mr. J. Wright was brought to the Lord, and united with us; the family altar was also built in his house. His amiable daughter, Maria, was soon led to see a beauty in Christ: the charms and attractions of the world were broken to pieces, and her soul was blest with a sense of God's pardoning mercy. The other daughter, Mrs. Howard, felt the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, and the necessity of religion, and came out for Him that died to save. Mr. George Wright, a son, was brought to see and feel his guilt and danger, and consequent need of a Saviour, and united with us. Mr. John Wright, jun., was soon called to exchange worlds, and I trust (with his sainted mother) found his way to heaven.

Miss S. Harvey, a farmer's daughter, from another parish, came on a visit to Miss Wright, and was thoroughly awakened to a sense of her guilt and danger. Accompanying Miss Wright in the pony-gig, they followed me to my appointments every evening during the week. We had tried, again and again, to help her through

the strait gate, but failed, until the Friday evening. During that day my mind became severely exercised and deeply agitated ere I could decide what course to pursue, and what subject to handle, calculated to drive the nail of conviction home, and bring her feelings to a right issue. After earnestly pleading with God for direction, the case of the Philippian jailor was applied to my mind with force and light. I concluded, therefore, to take up the subject connected with the enquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" and, while urging a present salvation with all my might, light broke in upon her mind, hope sprang up in her soul, and her faith rested on Him who can "save to the uttermost." She was made unspeakably happy before the sermon was ended, and rejoiced in a feeling sense of God's pardoning mercy. Although she was decorated as gay as a peacock, she at once put off her forms of finery, and became a neat, pious, steady Primitive Methodist. The gracious change wrought in her was like introducing a brilliant lamp into a dark room. She began to seek the conversion of her sister Dinah, who became powerfully impressed with divine things, was brought under the word, and made a partaker of the divine nature. Her brother James became a hearer of the word, and felt the powerful attrac-

tions of the cross. Her father and mother were also led to listen to the tale of Calvary, with blessed results, divine truth being applied to his heart while I was preaching from "the strong man armed, keeping his palace and his goods in peace."

The society now became large, numbering between forty and fifty members, several of whom had begun to speak in public, and the regular congregation was large and respectable. While conversing one day at the commencement of harvest with Mr. J. Wright, he said, "Mr. Key, what will you do with the people when the winter comes on? there is no place that will hold half the congregation."

I simply replied, "I do not know."

My friend—whom I shall ever esteem for his many acts of kindness to me personally, and for providing a place of shelter for the ark, and a sanctuary for worship in the time of our extremity—my friend said, emphatically, "We *must* have a chapel."

Where the money and land were to come from, however, were among the things unknown. I was a comparative stranger in the county, having been there but a few months. Still the work had been great, and the effects astonished many. Mr. Wright said, "We *will* have a

chapel, and we must set about it at once, and get it up before the winter comes on. Draw up a subscription list ; meanwhile, I will purchase a certain property, that you may have a piece of the garden. I will head your subscription list with fifteen pounds ; collect all you can in addition, and I will let you have the remainder on mortgage.”

I thought *that* a good beginning. I then visited T. Daniels, Esq., a very excellent christian gentleman residing in the parish, who had, with a part of his family, frequently heard me preach. I was received with very great cordiality, soon told my errand, and handed him my subscription list. On reading it, he said he was very pleased to see that his friend and neighbour Wright had come out so liberally. He was quite certain that a great reformation in the habits and conduct of the people had taken place, and he felt it his duty as a christian man, although a member of another denomination, to encourage me ; and, putting his name down for ten pounds, he wished me “God speed.” I thought these were princely sums at that period of our history.

Immediately after the harvest, Mr. Wright put a number of his men to work, clearing the land, digging out the foundations, etc., and, having a

considerable amount of experience in building matters, he bought all the materials, employed the tradesmen—superintending personally the erection day after day—and in the month of November, a good, substantial chapel was completed and ready for opening. Its size was about thirty-six feet in length, and twenty-two feet in width, and its cost about £160. Sixty I raised, and £100 was left on mortgage. By this timely interposition of Mr. Wright, the congregation was kept together, and a good house for God erected; a powerful church was ready to take possession of it, and a large number of attendants to fill it to overflowing.

Two other chapels were built this summer on this mission, Polstead and Langham, about £160 being collected towards meeting the demands by a comparative stranger in the neighbourhood, and whom no one knew until he made his appearance among them as a Primitive Methodist missionary.

The cause at West Bergholt is greatly indebted to my excellent friend Mr. Wright, for securing to us a most eligible site of land, the deep interest he took in, and the constant attention he paid to, the erection of the chapel, thereby easing the liabilities of the trustees at least twenty pounds; but, as he said, "God had well repaid

him for all he had done, in the conversion of his children." When persuading a farmer, in an adjoining parish, to take me in, he said, "I am quite sure that he will be made a blessing to your family, and leave behind him much more than he will take away."

Mrs. Wright was an amiable lady, but of a sorrowful turn of mind, subject to much mental depression, and could never apply the comforts of religion to her own mind; yet she was a sincere lover of good things and of good men. Her little granddaughter Nellie was taught by her to look upon and call me "one of God's men!" She had a thorough hatred to everything she thought sinful, and was kind as an angel, being ever ready to do good to those who needed her aid. She died, trusting in Jesus for salvation and eternal life, and I trust found her way to that "better land," where grief and pain are known and felt no more. Mr. Wright is a member with us at Mile End, on the Colchester station, where he now resides.

Some years ago, the chapel at West Bergholt was enlarged, and a new school-room erected. The congregation has been, from the beginning to the present day, large and respectable. The society, at one time, mustered the noble band of nine local preachers. Several have removed,

and others emigrated to America; but there is still left a number of useful, hard-working men. My prayer is, that the work may go on and enlarge, grow and extend, until all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

MISCELLANEOUS.

GRINDING OLD MEN INTO YOUNG ONES.

WHEN I was travelling in the Fakenham circuit (which then included the Briston circuit), I attended a missionary meeting in the Baptist chapel at Holt. The next day, I met an old man, a warm-hearted Wesleyan, who, making a dead stop, while his face beamed with delight, said, "Is your name Key?"

"Yes; what then?"

"I heard you at the Baptist chapel last night."

"Oh, did you? I hope you got some good."

"Good! good!" cried the old man; "I could compare your speech to nothing only to grinding old men into young ones."

I thought the comparison a very strange one. A few weeks afterwards, however, while holding a protracted meeting at Briston, I saw a beautiful illustration of the old man's idea. We had held a very powerful course of services; about seventeen precious souls had professed to obtain mercy. On the Friday evening, a poor old man, whose name was Willimott, and who was so lame and infirm, that it took him twenty minutes

to walk about two hundred yards, for he could get but a few inches at a time, hobbling on his two sticks, came up to me a little before the close of the service, and looking earnestly into my face, said, with all the simplicity of a child, "Do a little to me now, if you please, sir." He got upon his knees, and, after a few minutes of fervent prayer and sharp conflict with the enemy of souls, a sudden rush of divine influence came upon the meeting, almost electrifying the old man, and in a moment his load of guilt—a load of seventy years accumulation—was removed, and his whole soul filled to overflowing with the dying love of Christ. Carried along by the on-rushing tide of powerful emotions, he arose, clapped his hands, ran up the aisle, forgetting his sticks, and shouting at the top of his voice,

"My soul is now united
To Christ the living vine," &c.

This *was* grinding old men into young ones. He held fast his profession, and a few years subsequently died a most triumphant death.



SHOT THROUGH THE WINDOW WITHOUT
BREAKING A SQUARE.

WHILE missioning in the neighbourhood of Hadleigh, I made my way to Dedham (celebrated by the labours of Burkitt, the commentator on the New Testament), and succeeded in establishing a cause there. An old gentleman named Arnold kept a public-house with the sign of the Lamb, and had not heard a sermon for many years. One day, when at Colchester market, he told a person that a man by the name of Key had come to his parish, and crazed all the old women in it. Being appointed there one evening, I thought the old man should hear a sermon for once, whether he liked it or not. I went, and borrowing a chair, got under his sign-board, and commenced singing,

“Turn to the Lord, and seek salvation,” &c.,

The old gentleman became angry, and shut the door and windows to keep out the sound. But doors, bolts, dungeons, are of no avail when God works; and bonds, tortures, and death cannot destroy the force of divine truth. Feeling a little curious to know who was there, and what was

going on, he went upstairs and peeped out of one corner of a window. The word the same instant was conveyed with power to his soul, and aroused his guilty conscience. He immediately came down, and stood before me until the service closed; then, grasping me with both hands, and with tears streaming down his cheeks, he said, "I know you are a man of God: come into my house. I have a large room, which is seldom in use; you can have it to preach in at any time you wish; and you are perfectly welcome to anything my house will afford, and here is a bed at your service whenever you please."

"Well," I replied, "I shall stop, now I am here, for the night." After taking supper, I said, "Come, we must have prayer; I suppose you have not had much of *that* going on here."

"No, no," the old man said, "little else but swearing."

He and his wife went upon their knees; and probably it was the first time for many years, if ever before. A change was evidently wrought in his manner of life. A society was established in his parlour, and he became one of its members.

Some time afterwards, Mr. S. Blythe, of Langham, fell into conversation with him at Colchester market. Arnold had been accus-

tomed to the use of low, loose slang, but was now serious, cautious, and sedate. Mr. Blythe said to him, "I am very pleased, Mr. Arnold, to see such a change in you; how did it take place, and what was the cause?"

The old gentleman smiled—his face beamed with delight; and, with a heart beating high with gratitude to God, he said, "Mr. Key came one night and preached under my sign-board, and shot me through the window without breaking a square of glass."

"The right place to hit them is," as the Welshman said, "against the fifth button-hole." Some shoot too high, and some too low. A lady once said to me, "Oh, Mr. Key, I should have enjoyed your most beautiful sermon to-night, but you were so loud, you made my head ache."

"Ah, my good lady," I replied, "that is one of my blunders; I aimed at your heart, but have only hit your head."

HOUSE AND STACK BURNERS CONVERTED.

I TRAVELLED in the Cambridge circuit in 1846-7. The county had long been notorious, throughout the kingdom, for its numerous and destructive incendiary fires. While sitting one evening by the fireside of Mr. R. Wheaton, farmer, of Bluntisham, the old gentleman suddenly exclaimed, "Bless God! we can retire to rest to-night, without any fear of being burnt out of our house before the morning."

I said, "That is a mercy."

"Ah!" said the old man, "it was not always so; for we had a gang of vermin here who had plotted a scheme to burn a whole parish down, and these vermin succeeded in destroying seventeen houses, and burning seventeen families out of house and home. They concocted their hell-approved plans at midnight in a wood." The old gentleman's face lit up as he proceeded, and said he, "You may put these vermin into jail, and upon the treadmill, but they will come out the same devils they went in; but if the grace of God get into their hearts, it will change them, and that alone, for nothing else can do it." The

old man added, "It always cost me two shillings a night, during the whole winter, to pay a man to watch my premises; and even then, we went to bed full of fear lest we should be burnt out before the morning: we were in constant dread. But, thank God! it is not so now. Your people came here, and sung, and preached, and prayed about the streets (you could not get these vermin into a church or chapel); the word was brought to bear upon them in the open air; it fastened upon their guilty hearts, and they are now good men in your church." He then gave me a list of the names of the conspirators, which filled me with astonishment.

I simply replied, "I think, Mr. Wheaton, you ought, in common justice, to allow me a pension for life; for, according to your own statement, I have saved you fourteen shillings a week in cash, besides the fear, anxiety, trouble, and expense I have saved other people."

The old gentleman smiled, and said, "Well, bless you! I will give you ten pounds"—which acknowledgment I thankfully received."

The gospel is the only remedy for the world's misery, and the only thing that can make bad men good.

STRIKING CONVERSION OF A PROSTITUTE.

WHILE travelling on the Ipswich circuit, there resided in the town a woman, known by the cognomen of Pompy Neale, a polished, dashing prostitute, who had subsisted upon the wages of iniquity for years. She had had a pious, devoted father, a member of the Wesleyan community, who, when dying, gave his awfully-depraved daughter his dying charge. It was in few words, but to the point—"Mary, be sure your sins will find you out;" then, gathering up his feet, he departed to "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." The impression produced, however, was but momentary, for she continued in her sinful course for several years afterwards. She told Mrs. Key that she had not been to bed sober one night for seven years. While prowling about the streets one evening like a beast of prey, she passed by our chapel on the Rope-walk. Attracted by the sound of singing, it beginning to rain at the same time, she entered. In a few minutes after her entrance, I announced my text, "Be sure your sins will find you out." Like a bolt shot out of heaven, it fell suddenly upon her. She trembled violently from head to foot, and immediately rushed to the door. At the distance

of about a hundred yards from the chapel, overwhelmed by the terrors of her awakened conscience and feelings of remorse, she fell upon the pavement, weeping bitterly, and crying aloud to God to have mercy upon her. She came to my house the next morning, and related to my wife her awful history ; and such a relation, I should hope, is not often listened to ; necessity compels me to draw a veil over it. She enquired what she was to do, and what course to pursue, to obtain salvation ; for she had resolved, if there was mercy for a sinner like her, she would find it. She was thoroughly emaciated by disease and misery, but had become deeply and truly penitent, the genuineness of which was evidenced by her reformation of life. She was subsequently admitted to membership in the society. Notwithstanding that she found comfort to her distracted mind, and reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus Christ, the remembrance of her former life, the sins she had committed, and the youths she had ruined, was a constant source of grief to her ; a bitter cup always in her hand, and a dark cloud over her head. I met her, years afterwards, walking in the fear of the Lord ; and, as a brand plucked from hell, she is now among the great multitude, "who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb."

ON THE FIGHT OF FAITH.

THE following letter of enquiry was written to the venerable Hugh Bourne, one of the founders of the Primitive Methodist connexion, by a friend, and in the reply, given by him in the Magazine for 1835, some of the severe conflicts related in this book are referred to. I have been induced to select a part of it for the guidance and help of others, especially of my brethren in the ministry, and also to cast some light on several incidents that are recorded here. That friend wrote as follows: "Please to tell me one thing: in praying with convinced sinners, and wrestling in prayer with mourners, I have three times been overcome by some unknown agency or power. It is in this way, if I can describe it aright: as soon as I had prayed ten or fifteen minutes with a penitent, and got the person to struggle for himself, suddenly an awful and dark cloud has been cast upon my mind, and it seemed as if all the guilt that he felt passed from him and fell upon me; and I have been thus overcome several times, and have been obliged to leave the penitent and fight for myself. I believe if you cannot resolve me, no man can on

this side eternity ; but I believe you can." The following is a part of the reply to the above : "You speak of an awful and dark cloud suddenly cast on your mind by the enemy ; but you must consider you had previously made an attack upon him with success. You had, by the exercise of your faith, deeply wounded him and his hosts, and weakened his kingdom—the principalities and powers, the rulers of darkness in the world, spiritual wickedness—or wicked spirits—in high places, which we wrestle against. Eph. vi. 12. *Now*, if these hosts, or powers, or wicked spirits could not make themselves felt, and felt powerfully too, there could be no such wrestling. And could you reasonably expect anything else, but for him to make an attack upon you in return ? The assault the enemy made upon you would be, too, in proportion to the wounds you had given him. When two nations are at war, and their armies in the field, one army will not lie still to be cut to pieces by the other, but will attack the other army in return. The matter is plain from Eph. vi. 12. Instead of spiritual wickedness, the margin of the Bible reads, 'wicked spirits ;' and Mr. Wesley's notes on the place say, 'the darkness is chiefly spiritual darkness which prevails during the present state of things, and the wicked spirits are those which

continually oppose faith, love, and holiness, either by force or fraud, and labour to infuse unbelief, pride, idolatry, malice, envy, and hatred.' Adam Clarke says, 'Satan is termed the prince of the power of the air, because the air is supposed to be the region in which malicious spirits dwell, all of whom are under the influence of Satan, their chief.' He adds, that 'the children of disobedience are, emphatically, what our Lord calls them—Matt. xiii. 38—children of the wicked one; for they show themselves to be of their father the devil;' 'for they will do his works'—John viii. 44. A. Clarke further observes, that 'men, through sin, are become the very house and dwelling-place of Satan.' As Christ dwells in the hearts of his children—Eph. iii. 17—the enemy and his wicked spirits dwell in the hearts of others, through unbelief. Now, your work is to dislodge the enemy, and this can only be done by bringing the power of God on the people through or by faith; and no ministrations are of service any further than they are the means of accomplishing this object. When the enemy of souls and his wicked spirits are wounded, and the very house and dwelling-place is in danger, we may reasonably suppose that a violent assault would be made upon the praying people, and they, as you describe it, would find

an awful and dark cloud cast upon their mind, and would have to stand their ground, and believe against hope and feeling.

“In your letter, you speak of ‘having been overcome by some unknown agency or power.’ But that power is made known in Eph. vi. 12. You next describe the assault as ‘an awful and dark cloud coming on the mind.’ This, however, is a proof of success; a proof that the warrior’s or labourer’s faith hath prevailed, and the grace of God has descended through their faith, and has so wounded the rulers of darkness, or wicked spirits, that their habitation is in danger—a proof that the people are coming into a penitent state, or, if penitents, then they are rising into liberty, and on that account the enemy of souls is making his main attack, his desperate assault, his final effort; and that the battle is more than half won. In such instances the labourers should take fresh courage, look for a greater descending of the grace of God, believe against hope, and press through the cloud; when they do this, there is usually a heavenly out-pouring, victory is experienced, and their faith rests.*

“You further observe, ‘It seemed as if all the

* There is an illustration of this point in the Magazine for May, 1835, page 183. It begins with, “May 16th. Spoke at Swannington,” &c.

guilt they (the penitents) felt passed from them and fell upon yourself.' This will show, that 'Bear ye one another's burdens'—Gal. vi. 2, had its fulfilment in this respect, as well as in others; and Rom. xii. 15—'Weep with them that weep.' But, unless there were a participation, these could not take place. Also, a person who, from the sole of the foot to the head has wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores—Isa. i. 6, may be pressed down with a heavy burden; but if a sound person take up the burden and bear it, there is a greater prospect of lifting up 'the hands that hang down and the feeble knees.' Heb. xii. 12.

"Again, in national wars, when armies are in the field, if a soldier engages in single combat, and another—a more able warrior, comes up and engages the enemy, the first will be more at liberty. So, if a praying labourer take the battle, and bear the burden, the penitent is more at liberty, and rises into faith and strength; for that which hindered him is borne by others who are more able to struggle with it than the spiritually crippled is. It is true the assault, on some occasions, may be violent, and the feelings of the labourers distressing, but they must consider that the 'Captain of salvation' was 'in all points tempted like as they are'—Heb. iv. 15; and,

however deep may be the distress they may contemplate—Mark xiv. 33, 34, and Luke xxii. 44; and Paul had zeal to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering—Phil. iii. 10.

“You speak in your letter of having been overcome, and obliged to leave the penitents and fight for yourself: and in the June Magazine for 1835, page 223, one of our brethren, R. Key, speaks of being foiled by the powers of the enemy, and that he returned miserable enough. But when a person leaves the battle, as you did, it is giving way when you should stand fast. Mr. Wesley says, ‘Wicked spirits labour to infuse unbelief, pride, &c.’ This is correct, but the main point is to work unbelief. And their wiles are various. They try to discourage the labourer into unbelief in the midst of the conflict by suggesting that ‘there is nothing done, nor will be done;’ and that, ‘as he has no liberty, he had better give it up.’ But on the contrary, there has been a great deal done, and there is a great deal doing: a great deal has been done for the penitent already; he has been greatly wrought on and benefited, his prison-house has been shaken, and his fetters weakened; otherwise, the enemy would not have made such an assault. And if the labourer presses on, he will

prove it so ; the power or grace of God will mightily stream down, the horrid, dark cloud will be put to flight, the victory will be proclaimed, faith will centre or rest, the work will be established, and God glorified.

“Again, the enemy, as the accuser of the brethren, may attempt to discourage the labourer, by suggesting that ‘the person he is praying for has sinned beyond the reach of mercy ;’ but the labourer’s work is with his God, and the scripture says, Mark xv. 15, 1 Tim. ii. 1.

“On some occasions, the enemy will attempt to puzzle and discourage the warrior by suggesting that ‘he has made some mistake, done something wrong, or omitted some point of duty,’ although he himself is not conscious of any such thing ; and if he gives way to any such suggestions, he will be perplexed, and his faith weakened. It might be asked, whether he should not enter on an examination. But when assaulted by violent temptations, and so horrible a cloud is spread over his mind, it is hardly a time for examination. No, he can only overcome by the blood of the Lamb. And his one and only course is, to look immediately to the throne, with ‘Lord, heal me: put all right by Thy blood ;’ and he is that instant bound by the word of the Lord to believe that it is done,

for in Mark ix. 24, the 'Captain of our Salvation' says, 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them;' and you know, in war, the chief commander's orders must be obeyed to the letter. So, you will see, the whole war, as it respects himself, may be despatched in an instant, and would be no better were he to labour at it for years. Whatever may be his feelings, he is bound to believe, as far as he is concerned, it is done—put right by the blood of the Lamb; he must then lose sight of himself, be discouraged by no bad feelings, but push the battle on for the penitent, believe the power of God down more and more, until faith cuts through the clouds, the power descends, and the victory is won. In the conflict, when the dark cloud you speak of oppresses the mind, the enemy at times suggests to the labourer that 'he is losing, or has lost, his personal religion, and of course, had better retire and labour (or, as you say, fight) for himself.'

"I was once conversing with a very ungodly man, and dropped a word or two on religion; but in an instant I was filled with rage, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. Had I been unacquainted with this part of the warfare, I might at once have thought I had lost all my

religion. But I admitted no such thought. I knew the whole matter: I knew it was the man's burden I was bearing, and that it was my duty to wrestle against the enemy on his behalf. But the temptations were so strong, and pressed with such force, that for a time I durst not utter a word ; but at length the power of God began to move, the cloud gave way, and I began, in a gentle manner, to discourse with him on religion ; the vail was gone from his heart, and he received the word with readiness of mind. The man got fully into the way to heaven, and opened his house for preaching."

A
FAREWELL SERMON
TO THE
MATTISHALL CIRCUIT.

PREFACE.

It is now nearly four years since a kind Providence directed my feet into this corner of His vineyard. At that time there was not a member in what is now called the Mattishall circuit of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. The first sermon was preached at Cawston, on the 13th of April, 1830; and the first society was formed, in the same place, about two months afterwards. Since that time, "God has done great things for us, whereof we are glad." I have missioned a tract of land thirty miles in length, containing more than forty places, and have planted about forty churches. The station has now four chapels, four travelling preachers, thirty-five local preachers, and seven hundred and fifteen members, and without costing the parent-circuit five shillings. "This is the

Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." To His name be all the glory! In many families, where ignorance and discord once reigned triumphant, where the sweet incense of morning and evening devotion never ascended, where vice, profaneness, Sabbath-desecration, blasphemy, drunkenness, thieving, and poaching prevailed to an alarming extent, the voice of prayer is now heard, the Bible read, and children are trained in the way they should go. The ale-house is deserted for the house of God, the song of the drunkard for the hymn of praise, wretched hovels for comfortable dwellings, rags for decent apparel, disorder and confusion for peace and happiness, the enjoyments of home are relished, and the comforts of religion realized. To God be all the praise and glory, both now and for ever!

As my period of labour in this circuit will soon terminate, I have been induced to publish this sermon, from a humble conviction that the perusal of it may be profitable to those with whom I have "taken sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in company." I am aware that the following discourse is not free from imperfections, and therefore ask the indulgence and candour of the judicious and intelligent reader.

ROBERT KEY.

Mattishall,

April, 1834.

THE SERMON.

Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.—Phil. iv. 1.

THE conversion of sinners is a subject of pleasing import. It is the deliverance of souls from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, from misery to happiness, from death to life. "Let him know," says the apostle James, "that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." To observe a moral change in any one, is a matter of joy; but when an avowed enemy to Christ becomes a zealous defender of the faith, our pleasure and gratitude are excited to the highest degree. This was the case with Saul of Tarsus. He once "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against" the cause of Christ; but afterwards became its most zealous advocate. At one time he was mad against the disciples of the Lord, persecuting them unto death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women; afterwards he

called them "brethren, dearly beloved and longed for." Thus, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. It may not be amiss to observe, that the apostle Paul, in his missionary career, visited Philippi, a city of Macedonia. His preaching was not in vain, for Lydia and many others were converted, and a notable church was founded. None so readily supplied the apostle's wants as they. At Thessalonica, they more than once gave full proof of their liberality; and also, when prisoner at Rome, they supplied his necessities. This latter contribution was sent to Rome by Epaphroditus, one of their preachers, by whom the apostle returned a most affectionate epistle, wherein he declares his tender love of them, his care to prevent their stumbling at his sufferings, and his readiness to glorify God either by life or death. He exhorts them to a strict holiness of life, to an imitation of Christ in humility, to activity and seriousness in their christian course, to adorn their profession with suitable and mutual christian graces; he warns them against false teachers and fellowship with wicked persons, and in our text he most affectionately exhorts them to steadfastness in the Lord. "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly

beloved." Favour me with your most sincere attention while we notice the interesting fact implied, the important duty enjoined, and the ministerial affection expressed. And may that Eternal Spirit, without whose aid we nothing good can do, assist me in speaking, and you in hearing. Amen.

I. THE INTERESTING FACT IMPLIED—the Philippians were "*in the Lord.*"

The scriptures of infallible truth declare, that all mankind by nature are the "children of wrath," that the whole world is become "guilty before God," and that "all have gone astray like lost sheep." Ungodly men are condemned by the law of God, they are under sentence of death—they are cut off from God, from His favour, and from communion with Him. "Your iniquities," saith the Lord, "have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you." (Isa. lix. 2.) If, therefore, any man be "*in the Lord,*" he must have been brought by divine grace out of his previous state of enmity and alienation; this is evident from the whole tenor of revelation. Hence the people of God are frequently exhorted to call to mind their past condition, and the way in which God saved them. "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and

the Lord thy God redeemed thee." (Deut. xv. 15.) "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." (Isa. li. 1.) The apostle reminds the Ephesians that they were once dead in trespasses and sins, but that God in His rich mercy had quickened them. (Eph. ii. 1.) The Colossians were once under the power of darkness, but God translated them into the kingdom of His dear Son. (Col. i. 13.) The Philippians were without God, and without hope in the world, when the great apostle to the Gentiles walked by the river side, and preached the truth as it is in Jesus to the women who resorted thither: but they obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered them, and thus became "new creatures in Christ Jesus." A similar change must be experienced by us, or we shall for ever remain strangers to that blessed state of enjoyment implied in our text. It is a melancholy fact, that thousands think such a change unnecessary; but be it known unto such that they must be born again, or die to all eternity. This is a subject, my dear hearers, that I have repeatedly enforced on your minds, but allow me once more to call your most serious attention to it. It may be the last time, therefore hear me as if I were to leave this pulpit for the grave. It is more

than probable that I shall never see you all again in this world; our next meeting may be at the judgment-seat of Christ. Hear me, poor sinner—I shall not trouble you much longer; I am about to leave you; but if you die unconverted, you will be a great trouble to yourself. O may God, in His great mercy, visit and bless you at this time. I shall now endeavour, with all plainness, to make a few remarks on the glorious work of salvation, or the conversion of blood-redeemed sinners. Before a man can be “in the Lord,” he must,

1. *Have a deep sense of his lost and sinful condition by nature.*

The first step towards God is to be convinced that we are destitute of Him. “They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” (Luke v. 31.) There are thousands lost who know not their sad condition, who are under the wrath of God, but feel not their misery. They imagine their Sodom of wickedness to be a paradise of pleasure! But the incantation of sin must be shaken from the souls of men; they must see plainly that they have been “spending their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not;” they must reflect on their past conduct with deep remorse, before they will seek rest in Christ.

K

Those who are deeply convinced of their wretched state are led to exclaim,

“Where now, ye lying vanities of life,
 Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train,
 Where are ye now? and what is your amount?
 Vexation, disappointment, and remorse!
 Sad sickening thought! and yet deluded man,
 A scene of crude disjointed visions past
 And broken slumbers, rises still resolved,
 With new flushed hopes, to run the giddy round!—
 Father of light and life, thou God supreme,
 O teach me what is good, teach me Thyself;
 Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
 From every low pursuit; and feed my soul
 With knowledge, conscious peace, and virtue pure,
 Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss.”

Thus the awakened soul is led to cry out, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” “Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.” “Save, Lord, or I perish.” He brings forth fruits meet for repentance. “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of.” (2 Cor. vii. 10.) He ventures his all on the atoning blood, and believes with his heart unto righteousness. Hence, to be “in the Lord” implies,

2. *The knowledge of salvation, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

This inestimable blessing is received by faith in Christ. “Being justified *by faith*, we have

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v. 1, 2.) Those who have thus believed have received the "Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with their spirit, that they are the children of God, and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 15—17.) Such persons can say, "Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust, and not be afraid : for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; he also is become my salvation." (Isa. xii. 2.) Into this blessedness the Philippians were brought. They were "*in the Lord*"—in His favour, in His family, in His love ; they were blessed with His special presence and constant protection. All true believers are grafted in Christ, the good olive-tree. (Rom. xi. 24.) They are polished stones in God's spiritual temple. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) They are branches in Christ the living vine. (John xv. 5.) They are members of His mystical body. (1 Cor. xi. 12—27.) Their life is hid with Christ in God. (Col. iii. 3.) Having thus noticed the fact implied, we shall proceed to consider,

II. THE IMPORTANT DUTY ENJOINED—"Stand fast in the Lord."

The charge before us presupposes that the Christian is in *danger of falling*. Indeed, the most amiable Christians have need of warning and earnest exhortation against backsliding by temptation and deceivers. It is true, the apostle told the Philippians, that he which had begun a good work in them would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 6.) But he was equally certain that they had no scripture ground to expect this salvation only in the use of the appointed means of grace. This is evident from the many warnings, cautions, and exhortations which abound in the Book of God—a few of which we shall cite. "Let him that thinketh he standeth *take heed* lest he fall." (1 Cor. x. 12.) "*Take heed*, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." (Heb. iii. 12.) "Let us *labour* therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Heb. iv. 11.) "Let us therefore *fear*, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." (Heb. iv. 1.) "Now the just shall live by *faith*: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." (Heb. x. 38.)

The exhortation given in our text implies the

possibility of a good man maintaining his ground, notwithstanding the dangers to which he is exposed. He may be tempted to sin—affliction and tribulation may be his portion—the love of many may wax cold—men and devils may oppose him ; but as his day is, so shall his strength be—God will never leave the faithful soul. My brethren, you *may* “stand fast in the Lord ;” I entreat you to be “steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” Receive my charge. I speak to you, my children, whom the Lord has graciously given me. Steadfastness is indispensably necessary—it is connected with your happiness, usefulness, and safety. Allow me now to remind you, that to “stand fast in the Lord,” is to abide in the doctrines, privileges, and precepts of the gospel. Stand fast,

I. *In the doctrines of the gospel.* “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures ; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day

according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 1—4) "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.) The leading doctrines which you have heard from me are the following:—the innocency of man in his first state—the fall of man—general redemption by Christ Jesus—repentance—justification of the ungodly by faith—the witness of the Spirit—sanctification by the Holy Spirit, producing inward and outward holiness—the divinity or deity of Jesus Christ—the resurrection of the dead—the general judgment, and eternal rewards and punishments;—these are the principal topics upon which I have dwelt during my ministry among you. And I rejoice to think, that many of you have believed them; they have been made the power of God unto salvation. Hold fast your profession—"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." (Col. ii. 8.) Stand fast,

2. *In the privileges of the gospel.* The gospel is not only a system of *doctrines* to be *believed*, but a fulness of *blessings* to be *enjoyed*. It opens a storehouse of inexhaustible treasure more val-

uable than much fine gold, "sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb." (Ps. xix. 15.) All that we need as perishing sinners is made known to us in the bleeding love of a dying Saviour. The gospel of a crucified Christ is the word of salvation sent to bless the human family. It is the only infallible cure of human woe. Let us bind it to our hearts. What are nations without it? What are families without it? What are individuals without it? What were you when I first unfurled the blood-stained banner of the cross? Whither were you going when I first appeared in your streets and lanes, crying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world?" You were as travellers without a guide—as sailors without a compass—as a sick man without a physician—as criminals without pardon—as sheep without a shepherd. But, blessed be God, I can say, "our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Many of you have received the Holy Ghost. You are pardoned—you are regenerated—you are adopted into the family of God—you have the witness of the Spirit—you have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; you have divine power to support you, divine wisdom to guide you, and rich and constant supplies of grace to

save you. Stand fast in these privileges. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." (Col. ii. 6, 7.) "Stand fast in the Lord" implies

3. *A practical attention to the precepts of the gospel.* The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ not only reveals doctrines to be believed, privileges to be enjoyed, but *precepts* to be *practised*. Believers in Christ are not outlaws. They are under the strongest obligations to be obedient to their Lord and Master—obligations flowing on streams of mediatorial blood. Christ recognizes His *obedient* disciples as His friends. "Ye are my friends, if ye *do* whatsoever I command you." (John xiv. 16.) To *mere* professors He says, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say?" (Luke vi. 46.) If ye are justified by faith in the blood of the Lamb, your light will shine before men. He that loveth God, *keepeth* His commandments. He that says he loves God, and liveth in sin, is deluded by the devil. The design of our Saviour's manifestation in the flesh, was to destroy the works of the devil. Every one that nameth the name of Christ, is required to "depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

“They who profess the Saviour’s name,
Should from all sin depart ;
To save from sin the Saviour came—
Lord, write it on each heart.”

My brethren, think on these things, and “hold fast that which is good.” Be careful to maintain good works—“Herein is your heavenly Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit.” (John xv. 8.) Be “diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” (Rom. xii. 11.) “Let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.” (Phil. i. 27.) Remember, the crown of life is promised only to “overcomers.” “Stand fast in the Lord.”

Having thus noticed the duty enjoined, we proceed to remark,

III. THE MINISTERIAL AFFECTION EXPRESSED, “Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown.” Here observe,

I. *The affectionate appellation given*—“BRETHREN.”

This term is sometimes applied to the whole human race. We are all of one family. In this sense every man is my brother. “God hath made

of one blood all nations of men." (Acts xvii. 26.) Sometimes the term is applied to those of the same nation: "Sirs, ye are brethren—why do ye wrong one to another?" (Acts vii. 26.) Sometimes the term is applied to those of the same religion: "For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee." (Ps. cxxii. 8.) It is in this sense that we are to understand the term in our text. The saints are all "brethren." Philemon the *gentleman*, and Onesimus the *slave*, are brethren. They are all "begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. i. 3; John i. 13.) They are all of the same spiritual family—the family of God, "and of the household of faith." They are one in Christ—they are all redeemed by the same blood—arrested by the same mercy—enlightened by the same Spirit—justified by the same grace—adopted by the same love—supported by the same power. They are all dependent upon the same Father—guided by the same book—tempted by the same devil—persecuted by the same world—sojourning in the same wilderness—walking in the same road—members of the same society, and looking for the same heaven. Thus, my brethren, you see your spiritual relationship. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and

walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us." (Eph. v. 1, 2.) These words present us,

2. *With the endearing terms of ministerial affection*—"dearly beloved and longed for." See what a depth of affection is here displayed. Paul's love to the Philippians was stronger than death—"yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." (Phil. ii. 17.) It was *ardent* and *sincere*—*constant* and *impartial*. His language at all times was, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." (Phil. i. 3—5.)

Dearly beloved and longed for: as I am about to leave you, deem it not arrogance in me when I say, "I long greatly after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." I have not counted my life dear unto myself—I have spared no strength—I have shunned no cross—I have blenched at no persecution, nor hesitated in any difficulty. My love to you has been a constant flood-tide—you are dear unto my heart; most gladly would I spend and be spent for you. I first entered your towns and villages in love to your souls. I exposed myself to scenes of brutal violence, hot

persecution, and constant reproach and slander on your account. I have risked my life repeatedly for your sakes. You are among the first-fruits of my ministry. You are "my present joy," and will be my future "crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ." Go on, my dearly beloved, "fight the good fight of faith"—endure hardships as good soldiers. I hope, through grace, to meet you all where the parting sound shall pass our lips no more. "For now I live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." If ye love me, wound me not by want of love to each other, or by unfaithfulness in the cause of your dear Redeemer. My whole heart's desire and prayer to God is, that I may meet you all in heaven.

There are some present to whom I must particularly address myself—I mean my respected brethren the *local preachers*. You have stood by me in the good work. Continue in one mind. Remember, that although you labour without any worldly remuneration, there is a heavenly reward awaiting you. You shall "reap if ye faint not." Never leave the field. Receive this as my last entreaty—aim at saving souls in all you do. Preach the gospel, and live it—never lose sight of the doctrine of a present salvation. Receive my successors as from the Lord. Hold up their hands by fervent prayer; so shall your

circuit rise; and many whom I now leave in the way to hell, shall become the trophies of the conquering Jesus. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

There is a class of persons to whom I must speak a few words—I allude to *impenitent sinners*. I am now preaching my last sermon to you. Hear me, poor sinners—hear me for the last time. Oh! what shall I say your hearts to move? What shall I say to rouse you from your slumber? O for the aid of that Spirit by which Peter spake when thousands were pricked in their hearts. Careless, Christless, prayerless souls; I found you in the way to hell, and must I leave you in it? I found you in the arms of the devil, and must I leave you there? Alas, alas! I leave you three or four years nearer hell than I found you? You are riper for damnation now than

when you first saw my face! And oh! still more if you continue impenitent; all the sermons, warnings, entreaties, and invitations which I have given you, will only serve to make the chain of your damnation stronger, and the weight heavier, that will sink you deeper and deeper in blackness, and darkness, and misery! Must I leave you in this awful state of impenitency? O that I could weep tears of blood over your folly! But you must weep for yourselves. Weep now—pray now—believe now. The fountain is open, wash and be clean. May the God of all mercy pluck your souls as brands from the burning. Amen and amen. “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.”

Finis.

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