

JOHN BRINE.

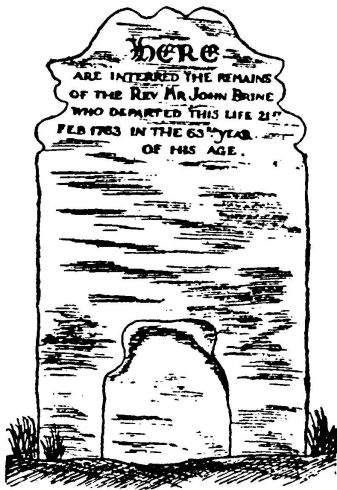
THREE rows west from the tomb of Samuel Rosewell is the head-stone of John Brine. The inscription can be read, but time is working its havoc, and unless attention is paid to it there must in due course be obliteration.

INSCRIPTION.

Here are interred the remains of the Rev. JOHN BRINE, who departed this life, February 21st, 1765, in the 63rd year of his age. His ministerial abilities were very extraordinary, and his zeal and faithfulness in asserting and defending the great truths of religion, equally conspicuous. Not long before his decease he expressed his sentiments in the following words: "I think I am of sinners the chief—of saints the least; I know that I am nothing, but, by the grace of God I am what I am."

It is somewhat surprising to find how little is known of the life of good old John Brine. Some writers have failed even to mention his name, and it would almost appear as if a conspiracy of silence had been entered into with respect to him. Yet he was one of the ablest and most gracious ministers and writers of his day, two of his works, "A Treatise on Various Subjects," and "The Certain Efficacy of the Death of Christ Asserted," being especially valuable.

John Brine was born at Kettering in 1702, and as his parents were poor people he had not the advantage of an early education. He was, however, a very studious boy, and read all the good works that he could. He was called by grace under his very firm friend and fellow-townsmen, John Gill, and he was baptised in his native town by Mr. Wallis. He was sent forth to preach whilst still there, and in due course received a call to the pastorate of the Baptist Church at Coventry. In 1730 he was invited to become the pastor of the Church at Cripplegate, which position he occupied for 35 years. By this time Gill was also in London, and he gladly welcomed his old companion to the world's metropolis. These two were very fast friends, as



their views upon doctrine and practice were in perfect accord. Brine is described by John Wilson, the historian, as being in his person "short and thick, and he had rather a strang ecoun-tenance that was not calculated to possess strangers in his favour; but he was a gentleman." He was a man of considerable attainment, and he excelled in his knowledge of the learned languages. He possessed good ministerial abilities, and was very faithful in the discharge of the pastoral offices.

Brine not only preached to his own congregation, but he also succeeded Gill as the Wednesday evening lecturer in Great Eastcheap, and took regular services at Devonshire Square Chapel. Indeed, he was considered to be one of the leading ministers of the Baptist Denomination in London, and there were few religious controversies in his day that he took no part in. He left strict injunctions that no funeral sermon was to be preached for him, but these were partially disregarded. Dr. Gill preached to his own people from the text, "By the grace of God I am what I am," and some months afterwards he repeated his discourse when preaching to the Church at St. Albans. It was then published. In it Gill remarks with respect to Brine :

"I am debarred from saying so much of him as otherwise I could do, we being born in the same place, and myself some years older than him, and from his being among the first fruits of my ministry. I might take notice of his natural and acquired abilities, his great understanding and clear light, and sound judgment in the doctrines of the gospel, and the great deep things of God; of his zeal, skill, and courage in vindicating important truths, published by him to the world, by which 'he being dead yet speaketh.' In fine, I might observe to you that his walk and conversation in the world were honourable and ornamental to the profession which he made, and suitable to the character he sustained as a minister of Jesus Christ, all which endeared him to his friends. But I am forbidden to speak any more."

The number of works which Brine published was stated to be forty, and as most of these only passed through one edition, they are very rare indeed.
