

JOHN HAZELTON:

A Memoir.

BY

W. J. STYLES,

Author of

“A Manual of Faith and Practice,” &c., &c.

“A Beloved Brother, and Faithful Minister in the Lord.”—
EPH. VI. 21.

LONDON:
ROBERT BANKS AND SON,
RACQUET COURT, FLEET ST.

—
1888.



*Yours very truly,
E. M. Hazletton.*



P R E F A C E .

THE following chapters have been mainly compiled from materials supplied to the Author from various sources. His task has, therefore, to a great extent, resembled that of one who binds together into a bouquet, a number of flowers, chosen and culled by others.

His special acknowledgments are due to Mr. J. E. Hazelton, without whose laborious and indefatigable help, this Memoir of his beloved father could not have been prepared.

To the Rev. C. T. Rust, LL.B., of Westerfield, Ipswich, and the Rev. E. Spurrier, of Colchester, he is under great obligations.

His respected ministerial brethren, W. Barnes, of Walsham-le-Willows; S. K. Bland, of Ipswich; W. Brown, of Colchester; G. Burrell, of Watford; J. H. Dearsly, of Clapton; W. J. Denmee, of Boro' Green; J. Griffiths, of Plaistow; W. Hazelton, of Lewisham; C. Hill, of Stoke Ash; and J. Thomsett, of Reading, have afforded him very valuable assistance.

He would also specially record his indebtedness to Mr. Henry Dadswell, who has not only revised the work in manuscript and in proof, but made several important suggestions for its improvement; and to Mr. W. P. Granville, who has kindly given permission to use the photograph, taken by himself, which so greatly adds to the interest and value of the volume.

Miss Stubbins, of Brockley; Mr. C. Wright, of St. Neots:

and his dear friend, Mr. Joseph Favell, of Cambridge, have also largely contributed to the accuracy of the following pages.

The many friends who have placed letters and other papers at his disposal, are cordially thanked for their kindness.

For the plan and arrangement of the book, the Author is solely responsible. He has done his best to blend the often fragmentary information, with which he was furnished, into a connected and consistent narrative, though he regrets the many deficiencies of his attempt to portray the character of one he so highly esteemed.

In submitting his labours to the Christian public, he craves permission to state that he has pursued them amid many engagements, and much weakness and pain. If, therefore, the conception of his work should appear better than its execution, he pleads that these facts may be generously taken into account.

Islington, August, 1888.

JOHN HAZELTON:

A Memoir.

CHAPTER I.

“A time to be born.”—Eccles. iii. 2.

MOST of us have stood at eventide on some tall cliff that towered above the far-stretching ocean, glowing with the reflected tints of the setting sun; while each restless wave, as it rose and fell, caught the golden glory. Then, as fresh beauties struck us—as new effects of light and shade, harmony and contrast, successively claimed our admiration—we longed for the skill of an artist to depict the scene, for our delight in coming days. The wish, though natural, was vain. The radiance departed from the solemn west; the darkness crept on and hid the distant prospect; and as the evening bell warned us of the flight of time, we wended our homeward way, with faint and fast-fleeting recollections of a vision of grandeur and loveliness.

Somewhat similar has been the case with not a few of the worthies of the great King. They served their generation wisely and well. They won esteem and love. But none were found on earth able or willing to relate their struggles and successes; and their names, which might still stimulate men

to holy enterprise and endeavour, have been suffered to pass into oblivion. Their sole "record is on high."

The story of one such life, however, it falls to the lot of the writer of these pages to do his best to perpetuate. Affection will, it is to be hoped, ensure a just and appreciative portrayal of his saintly character; candour shall repress all that is not strictly in accordance with fact; while reverence shall ascribe all glory unto "Him who sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

The good town of Colchester is one of considerable interest. Its relics of bygone ages attest to the activity and enterprise manifested by the generations of its inhabitants who lived in former times. In the civil war between Charles I. and the Parliament, it was besieged by Sir Thomas Fairfax, and the townsmen, after bravely holding out for eleven weeks, were starved into a surrender. In more recent times it has been an important commercial centre. The inhabitants are a composite race, exhibiting many of the characteristics of their mingled ancestry—Saxon, Norman, and Flemish; a company of men and women from the Netherlands having made it their home in the year 1571, when driven, for conscience' sake, from their fatherland.

To Colchester, long years ago, we cannot tell when or why, there came from far-off Dunkeld, in the Highlands of Scotland, some members of a family named Hazelton. Within the last few years, attempts have been made to discover their earlier history. Little, however, has been brought to light save the locality of their early home and the fact that their coat of arms was a lion rampant, surmounted by a crown, and surrounded with hazel leaves. The motto was, "*Pro patria uro*," I burn for my country. In Scotland solitary farmhouses, rather than villages,*

* There are lone farmhouses in Kent which are named in accordance with the Scotch usage, Shottington, Wingleton. Taylor's "Words and Places."

as in England, were distinguished by the suffix "ton." The family were, it may be presumed, originally *the* Hazeltons of Hazelton—the homestead of the hazels.

They appear to have settled, and married and inter-married with their Essex neighbours, till they became numerous and widely known. Some would seem to have possessed no small share of spirit and bravery. Smuggling was by no means regarded with popular disfavour, but as a commendable pursuit, in which all might engage with credit. The coast-guard was the object of universal aversion and scorn, and those who most successfully evaded its vigilance were the heroes of the village. Tales of cunning plans, midnight encounters, and secret hiding-places, wiled away many a hour by the glowing winter's fire. To say, therefore, that some of the Hazeltons had a share in these deeds of wild adventure, is by no means to reflect on their integrity, when judged by the standard of morality current in their day.

About a hundred years ago, one of them was living with his wife and family at Colchester. The times were hard; their means small; their offspring numerous. How they contrived to find bread for their sixteen children is not now our concern. We have but to state that one of their sons was, in early days, apprenticed to a wheelwright, at the expense of the parish. He afterwards occupied a house in Magdalen-street, where he pursued his trade, acquired a connection, and married. John, the eldest child, was born on June 6, 1822.

We always regard, with ineffable pity, those whose early years were not happy; who have no tender memories of kindly smiles that brightened familiar faces; gentle words, that awakened the better feelings of the heart; and loving ministries, which should make youth a time of almost uninterrupted gladness. The memory of some parents is associated with unspeakable affection and veneration. The recollection of our mother's love is fraught with fragrance and beauty.

Our fathers are recalled as genial, grave, and gentle friends; whose principles we still revere, whose example we solicitously emulate, and whose names we bear with proud and grateful hearts. Our home, though, perhaps, long dismantled, is the one spot on which the soft, sweet sunlight ever seems to rest, and its influence ever follows us.

Not such, however, were the first surroundings of him whose story we have to tell. Seen in the dim perspective of sixty long years, it appears most sombre and cheerless. His parents were plain, honest, industrious people, of fair capacity, and considerable force of character. Their reputation was good; their integrity was commendable. Their goodness, however, was devoid of kindness and gentleness. Of godliness they were ignorant, and they made no profession of religion. The sacred influence was lacking which relieves business of its sordidness, deprives affliction of its sting, and invests common-place duties with the dignity of obedience to the high commands of Heaven. The Bible was an unopened book. The language of prayer and praise was never heard. Holy conversation was unknown; and the home life was, as it so often is where the Lord is unhonoured, hard, cheerless, and unsympathetic. Little John received but scant consideration. As the eldest child of the family, he was made a domestic drudge; and in accordance with the brutal philosophy of bygone years—that the only way to secure filial obedience is to inflict pain—was often severely beaten.

In his after life these circumstances were recalled with keen sorrow. We remember that at one of his annual meetings, a speaker casually remarked that while oriental names were generally chosen on account of their import, this was not the case with us. "Your name, sir," he observed, turning to the chairman, "was probably not selected because it signifies 'the grace of Jehovah.'" As our friend sadly shook his head in response, it was evident that a painful chord had been struck.

His expression changed, and a sad, weary look overcast his countenance, and did not leave it for some time. It puzzled us then, but it is now explained. It occurred, if memory serves us, shortly before his father's death in 1880.

He received his elementary education at St. Giles' National School, Colchester. Here he was noted as being a boy of bright parts, and exceedingly good memory. To the last he vividly remembered how he used to stand on a seat at Church, in the garb of a charity boy, to repeat the longer answers in the Church Catechism, before the local magnates, and performing the task with credit.

"The child's the father to the man," is a familiar truism, which, in the present instance, is rather strikingly exemplified. It is evident that he very early began to think, and not with a boy's vague wonder only, but inquiringly and reflectively. The Catechism set him thinking, as did also many of the statements made in sermons from the parish pulpit. His secret and audacious comment on some of the words of the learned divines who preached, was this: "When I grow up to be a man I will preach better than that." On one occasion, the then Bishop of London, Dr. C. J. Blomfield, occupied the pulpit. The little *charity boy*, whose feet did not touch the ground, as he sat in the Church, eagerly anticipated the sermon. The text proved to be the Psalmist's familiar exhortation: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following." The preacher, who was an effective orator, applied the words to the Established Church. The boy, open-mouthed, listened to and considered every word—only, however, to conclude that the positions of the discourse were untenable. "This cannot, I am sure, be right," he thought to himself; "God could not have meant that text to refer to the Church of England."

What progress he made at school we do not know. Of this

we may be certain, that no opportunities were left unimproved. Probably, he could read an ordinary book with facility and pleasure; write a letter; and knew enough of arithmetic to perform all the common calculations that might claim his attention.

At fourteen years of age, when a bright-eyed, dark-haired boy, with an eager spirit and very affectionate heart, he left school, to commence the higher education, and undertake the graver duties of responsible life.

His early occupations were as various as uncongenial and unsatisfactory. His first work was that of leading horses attached to a plough, while his evenings were devoted to helping his parents—who, at that time, kept a small general shop—by weighing-up goods, and carrying them to their destinations. The basket that he used is still preserved. He then entered a shop at Maldon, in Essex, and ultimately found employment with his father in a distillery in his native town.

It is, however, certain, that the varied discipline of these changeful days told for good upon his character. During his engagement at the distillery, his father met with an accident, so severe as to necessitate his removal to an hospital, in which he remained several weeks. Admission was denied to his son, but with touching kindness, the lad would often run from his place of employment, during his brief dinner hour, and always felt sufficiently rewarded if he could but see his father at the window, and receive some responsive signs to his own signals of greeting. These were days of hard work. "He was," says one who knew him well, "of an ardent and inquiring disposition, and never still for a minute."

What this uncommon lad will do with himself in after years—or rather, what the Lord, whom, as yet, he knows not, will do *with him*—is to be told in our following chapters.

CHAPTER II.

I was a stricken deer that left the herd
Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd
My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by One who had Himself
Been hurt by the archers. In His side He bore
And in His hands and feet the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.
Since then, with few associates, in remote
And silent woods I wander, far from those
My former partners of the peopled scene;
With few associates, and not wishing more.

Cowper, "The Task," Book III.

THE salvation of a sinner is the result of divine arrangements which were made before the foundation of the world. The chosen of the Father were ransomed by the blood of the Son; and the power of the Spirit is continually engaged in silently but surely bringing redeemed men and women into a saving and experimental acquaintance with the grace and power of their Lord. "A wonderful operation is therefore perpetually going on in this world. God is arresting the minds of sinners, opening their hearts, imparting the principle of godly fear to their breasts, bringing them personally and gradually into His presence, and assisting them by His Spirit to open their mouths in prayer before Him, and whilst they are doing so, He stretches His wings over them, and claims them all, saying,

‘This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise.’”*

In these operations the supremacy of God is very observable. “Christ knows where His people are, if all others are ignorant of them. Hence He can gather them (at His pleasure). Whether they are in India or Greenland, He (can and) will apprehend them. He requires no information from us, no creature-urging, in connection with this great and gracious work. If men do not come to hear the Gospel preached, God will send the Gospel to them. He will see that the Spirit of Christ shall go to them, and gather them and take them into a saved state.”†

In communicating vital and experimental religion to His people the Lord also invariably exercises His prerogative of sovereignty, and performs His saving operations in the manner which His own good pleasure dictates. He is the Lord of *time*, and can do *as* He wills, and *when* He wills. He is the God of *providence*, and can originate such circumstances as will co-operate with the fulfilment of His ancient purposes of grace. He is Lord over all the *powers of the human mind*, and can inform the understanding, enlighten the conscience, and bring the rebellious will into harmonious allegiance to Himself, whenever it seems good to Him so to act. His various *methods* of procedure are also adopted in accordance with His unerring wisdom, and never fail to accomplish the high and holy ends that He has eternally had in view. He can arrest sinners by the most varied means, convey saving and sanctifying impressions by the most varied instrumentality, and reveal His majesty and mercy through channels of the most varied character.

These truths are strongly exemplified in the awakening to

* Hazelton's Sermons, Vol. III., 8.

† Hazelton's Sermons, Vol. II., 2.

spiritual solicitude of John Hazelton. Up to the period to which we were brought in the closing words of our last chapter, he appears to have had no distinct religious impressions. Naturally humorous, and full of youthful buoyancy, he was too often led to turn religion into ridicule, and to mock the people of God. An inoffensive old couple were in the habit of reading their Bible together and worshipping God in their cottage-home, every evening. This furnished an opportunity for practical joking, and again and again the reckless youngster discharged handfuls of gravel at their window, and greatly enjoyed their discomfiture and alarm.

That this was culpable none will deny. The heart must have been utterly graceless which could find pleasure in such foolish and undignified conduct; which, however, might have proceeded rather from the recklessness of youth than a deep-rooted desire to pour contempt upon the godliness of those worthy persons.

There is, moreover, reason to think that this was the culminating transgression of his irreligious life, and that he was mercifully kept from the commission of graver sins. Still, the recollection of his unrenewed days was such as to emphasise his appreciation of Kent's noble lines:—

“Indulgent God, how kind
 Are all Thy ways to me,
 Whose dark, benighted mind
 Was enmity with Thee!
 Yet now, subdued by sovereign grace,
 My spirit longs for Thine embrace.

“Preserved in Jesus when
 My feet made haste to hell;
 And there I should have been,
 But Thou dost all things well.
 Thy love was great, Thy mercy free,
 Which from the pit delivered me.”

How the sovereign grace of God effected his merciful and

marvellous deliverance, it is now ours to tell. One night he retired to rest under ordinary circumstances, and with his prayerless heart unstirred by any unwonted emotion. In the solemn silence of the night, as, weary with the day's toil, he slumbered soundly, he had a dream singularly resembling that which is described in the "Pilgrim's Progress." It was terribly distinct and vivid. The dread terrors of the judgment-day were presented to his mind; his own name seemed to be uttered by an authoritative voice, and he imagined that he was impelled to draw nigh with fear and trembling to the book and bar of God. His anguish at length awoke him. He leaped from his bed bewildered and awe-struck, and groping about the darkened room, with difficulty assured himself that he had not been an actual spectator of the solemn occurrences which had passed in vision before his mind.

The impressions thus produced proved to be as permanent as they were salutary. "Deeply" indeed on his "thoughtful heart" were "eternal things" impressed. The sun had set on a sinner devoid of any true concern about spiritual things. The returning light found him stricken with the blow of an unseen hand, overwhelmed with remorse and guilt, and bowed with apprehensions of the wrath of God.

Spiritual life invariably seeks spiritual light. The quickened sinner, bewildered by his strange condition and circumstances, longs for the aid of such as he supposes may be able to direct and relieve him. We are therefore prepared to find this youth, with whom the Holy Spirit had dealt so signally, wending his anxious way to the sanctuary of God.

The Church which assembled within the walls of Eld Lane Chapel, Colchester, adhered to its ancient faith and order longer than many others belonging to the Baptist Denomination. At the time to which our narrative brings us, the wholesome doctrines of sovereign grace were proclaimed from its pulpit, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the primi-

tive and prescribed manner. Its pastor, Cyprian T. Rust, was called by grace through the ministry of John Stevens, and had been nourished and brought up under the solicitous care and spiritual instruction of that eminent servant of God. Their union in holy things had become affectionate, strong, and spiritual, and the great preacher regarded the movements of his "beloved son in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ," with the tenderest interest. When his desire to preach the Gospel first became known, his pastor and fellow-members had given the matter their gravest and most prayerful consideration. In order to prove his gifts, he had preached on four consecutive Lord's day afternoons, from texts furnished by his pastor, after which it was decided by the vote of the Church that he should be at liberty to minister where Providence led him, with their full sanction and approval. He had accordingly accepted and fulfilled a considerable number of engagements; and had recently responded to the invitation of the Church at Colchester, with his pastor's cordial approbation, and ready promise to take a prominent part in his ordination services. This, however, a transient bodily indisposition prevented, and he therefore sent, in an epistolary form, the "charge" he had hoped to deliver, which was publicly read as a part of the solemn proceedings of the eventful day. This happened in March, 1838, and rarely has a young pastor commenced his labours under more auspicious circumstances. The Church had been in a low and divided state: but all hearts turned to him with affection and hope. The "pastoral letter of advice to Mr. Cyprian Rust on his being ordained over the Baptist Church at Colchester," (which was afterwards published) is one of the noblest productions of its distinguished author's pen, and must have stimulated him to whom it was especially addressed to the highest emulation and effort. His people, therefore, on the one hand, were filled with eager and prayerful desires for the success of his ministrations. He, on the other hand, was in the flush and joy of his first love

to his first Church. He was twenty-nine years of age, and buoyant, sanguine, and enthusiastic; and he commenced his stated labours with most earnest expectations that Heaven's blessing would attend all that he undertook. It was at this time that he and the subject of this memoir met in the highway of life.

Space must be here found to introduce the name of another Christian, whose holy life and humble efforts for the Master's glory claim the most appreciative recognition at our hands.

Variety characterises all the works of the Creator. This is evident in the material world. One star differeth from another star in glory. His wisdom is manifested in the structure of the cedar of Lebanon, and the hyssop on the wall. All sustain an harmonious relation to the one great design: while each, in its unique and individual beauty, witnesses to the infinite resources of Him for whose pleasure they "are and were created." Unity and variety are thus discernible in all the productions of His power and goodness. Equally so, they are apparent in His gracious and saving operations. The vessels of mercy, though all "afore prepared unto glory," and all made the recipients of the grace that will meeten them for their high destiny—differ greatly in their capacities. The road to heaven is trodden by valiant warriors, and weary way-faring men. There are captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, in the Lord's army. The lamps that illuminate the temple of God vary greatly in their lustre,—yet Christians are all alike bidden to shine as lights—and to fight the good fight of faith, and to go forward as strength is given.

To Isaac Wenlock, the high praise may be given that he did what he could. He was butler to George Saville, Esq., of the "Old Heath"—the proprietor of the distillery of which mention has been made, and was regarded as the family's faithful and attached servant. He was a member of the Baptist Chapel, gave out the hymns; and such was the kindness that his pastor received from him, that in a letter written fifty years

later, he mentions his name with the greatest respect, and designates him "one of the warmest, most devoted and faithful friends he ever had in Colchester."

He does not appear to have possessed any peculiar talents, but by wise and well-directed efforts he was favoured to effect much real good. The energy of his large and loving heart was directed to the moral and spiritual welfare of the lads in his locality. He sought their confidence by acts of kindness: and endeavoured to win them over to what was good. "His untiring patience, his boundless pity"—we are again quoting his pastor's words,—“saved many, and held more back from reckless folly.”

John Hazelton's condition of mind soon became known to this worthy man; and he gave him all the sympathy and help that he could command.

“When the Holy Spirit, by an act of Almighty Power, has implanted the seed of immortal life in the heart of a sinner, he quickly becomes, in a manner, altogether unaccountable to himself, the subject of new appetites, new desires, and new fears, such as he finds the whole creation insufficient to relieve. He is overwhelmed with a sense of his lost and ruined condition, to the terrors of which his eyes are now opened for the first time: he feels that his life has been one continued scene of rebellion against God: that he has not one plea to urge against the fiery curses of His law: nor ability to render in a single instance, an obedience adequate to its demands. In short, he feels himself to be a lost and undone sinner, and were it possible for him to be left in this condition, he must inevitably sink into despair. Now when the Gospel comes with convincing energy to the heart of such a man, it proves, indeed, spirit and life to his soul; it tells him of an atonement for the whole multitude of his crimes; of an obedience sovereignly imputed to him without respect to his duties or deserts; of an ability laid up in Christ, which shall always be found equal to his exigencies, the effects

of which he already begins to understand, when, in his new-felt strength, he gradually throws off the yoke of his old master, and turns into pleas at his Father's footstool, those exceeding great and precious promises, which the Gospel puts into his lips."*

These weighty sentences, which had been penned by the minister of Eld Lane Chapel, almost four years previously, forecast with singular accuracy both the condition of John Hazelton's mind at this juncture, and the benefit which he was to derive from the writer's ministrations.

That he drank in every word spoken in public with keen avidity we cannot question. The same grace which constrains the heart to cry, "What must I do to be saved?" invariably opens the ear to receive all that may be advanced respecting the grace, the greatness, and the glory of Emmanuel, and the nature of the things which accompany salvation.

For a considerable period, however, the peace of God did not flow into his soul. His solicitude deepened and increased, and ere long manifested itself in his dejected and despondent appearance. This his friends noticed, and attributed to the fact that he had been observed to frequent the House of God. "John," they expostulated, "religion will drive you mad." "Not so; but the want of it I fear, will," was the mournful reply.

In after years, he was wont to seek to comfort stricken and self-condemned sinners, by urging with great tenderness and fervour a verse of the immortal Toplady's:—

"The time of love will come,	Not only that He shed His blood,
When we shall clearly see,	And each shall say, FOR ME."

The assurance so confidently expressed, was based on his own personal experience, at the time of these early manifestations of the mercy of God to his soul.

' The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him: to the soul

* "Zion's Trumpet." Vol. I., page 51.

that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

This he was now to prove. The darkness passed away, and the Lord shone into his heart.

"Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee," were the words which came with Divine authority and gracious power to his soul, and assured him that God was his salvation.

"I often quote them," he observed, forty years afterwards, "because the Lord spoke them to me when I was bowed down, and going as I feared, to hell; and I shall never forget them. If my references to them appear frequent to you: bear in mind that it was by them that the Lord raised the preacher out of darkness, guilt and condemnation."*

It was not his ordinary custom—when an established and acceptable preacher—to take his hearers into his confidence as to the fluctuations of his religious experience. Eternal truth, rather than transient emotion, was the theme on which he loved to dwell. To his first deliverance from the burden and bondage of sin he, however, often referred with the most solemn expressions of gratitude to the God of his salvation.

His call by grace at so early an age ever elicited his most profound thankfulness. "It is (he remarked, in 1881) a mercy to be under the saving influence of religion when one is young. I remember (and forgive me for adverting to my sinful self), that when I was about sixteen years of age, I made a public profession of my faith in Christ, the Lord having called me when I was about fifteen. I now look upon the first fifteen years of my life with peculiar emotion. Such was my buoyancy of mind, strength of spirits, recklessness and love of sin, that if God had not laid His hand upon me early, it is impossible for any creature to say into what depths of evil I might not have gone." He loved to recall the circumstances under which he obtained mercy.

* Hazelton's Sermons, Vol. II., 19, and III. 10.

“Can I ever forget the period when my conscience was vitalized and made sensitive and tender, and I first had some just apprehension of my danger as a guilty wretch in the sight of a holy and heart-searching God! I waited, till at length a blood-bought pardon was sealed on my soul. I remember the holy and heavenly moment when the atonement came between my conscience and the burden that was on it, and left in my heart a sweet trust in the doing and dying of God’s dear Son.”*

His experience at this juncture also, it cannot be doubted, furnished the foundation of the following fine and characteristic paragraph, which is as beautiful as it is pathetic and true. Having referred to the lines from Cowper’s “Task,” which we have chosen as the motto for this chapter, he thus expands the opening words, “I was a stricken deer that left the herd.” The wounded animal, with an arrow or a bullet in its side, leaves the herd, and seeks retirement, while the herd moves on. Thus, when the arrow of Divine truth enters the conscience of a poor sinner, that sinner stops, and the world moves on, and leaves him behind, and he seeks a secret place in which to pour out, before God, the new experience and wants of his mind—the new feelings of his heart. He is bleeding, for his conscience is lacerated; God is not disappointed. Heaven’s purposes are not to be frustrated. God aimed at him, and the arrow of Divine truth entered his heart, and he is separated from the world for ever. The world may go on, it *if* has left him behind: he is a new creature: he is in a new position: he is asking his way to heaven with his face towards that glorious world. “What is the matter with him?” enquire his former friends, “he has lost all his vivacity: he is not jocular: he used to be a good companion; but now it seems as if there were a burden on his mind.” They are right; there *is* a burden on his mind: there *is* something in his heart: God has put it there. He will never again be what he has been.

* John Hopeful’s Note-book.

God has saved him. He is a penitent weeper in the sight of that God who has saved him, and into whose presence he will shortly enter. (Sermons, Vol. I., 8).

The following glowing words recount his joy and emotion when the secret of God's eternal love in Christ, through atoning blood, was first made known to his soul:—

“I never shall forget the happy, the heavenly, the unspeakably blessed moment, when the burden fell off, when my guilt was removed, when I leaped into liberty, when the light of heavenly joy broke in upon me, when God came to me and said to me, ‘Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven.’ I was called at the time a *fanatic*, and I do not know what besides. Yet if such experience is a lie and a fraud, a vain and baseless delusion—it is the most useful, beneficial, sanctifying and precious fraud that the world or the devil ever invented.”—*Gospel Herald*, 1879, p. 194.

In another instructive paragraph he recurs to the same important subject:—

“When the sinner comes *to* the cross, he is where the peace was made and the rest established: but when our souls passed *through* the cross into the sweet enjoyment of Gospel rest, we felt we were in a wealthy and fertile place that stretched away between our feet and heaven, and we felt as if we should have liked to die, being satisfied that we should have gone to heaven. I have sometimes wished I had died then: but then I should not have preached the Gospel” (Sermons, Vol. II., 25).

That his was a true conversion, all whose judgments are sound and spiritual will admit: and it strikingly exemplifies the vital and essential characteristics of the work of the Holy Spirit in all chosen and blood-bought hearts. Others, however, must not give way to despondent thoughts, if their experience should have been greatly different when first the Lord revealed Himself to their immortal minds.

“ How wise, yet varied are the ways
 Our Saviour doth pursue,
 When dealing with His chosen race,
 And forming them anew.”

None could be more careful than our friend himself invariably was—when dealing with stricken and sorrowing sinners—to avoid insisting that *any* particular depth or character of experience—save “ a broken heart and a contrite spirit ”—is essential to the presence and progress of a work of grace in the soul.*

In due course he expressed his desire to connect himself with the Church, before which, on June 8th, 1838, when convened for the purpose, he appeared to relate his experience.

An entry in the Church book, referring to this meeting, states that “ he was first made to reflect on his lost and sinful state by a dream of the day of final judgment, and further by a tract put into his hands, containing an account of the religious life and death of a young person.†

Good testimony having been borne concerning him, the Church agreed to receive him, only requesting that brethren Beaumont and Tillet should see his father previously.

On August 19th, 1838, he was baptized by Cyprian T. Rust—the only other candidate being John Verlander, the old man whom he had been wont to annoy when in prayer, but a few months before.

Thus he put on Christ: resolving in His strength to live to His glory; and going on his way rejoicing.

* His biography of Mary Cobb, to be found in a later chapter, is a happy exemplification of his manner of treating this momentous subject.

† This was not improbably the *Gospel Herald* for March, 1837, which contains a brief, but well written, memoir of Mary Ann Scott, a member of the congregation of Eld Lane Chapel, who died rejoicing in the Lord Jesus when about fifteen years of age, after severe suffering borne with exemplary patience.

CHAPTER III.

"Put thou thy trust in God,
 In duty's path go on;
 Fix on His Word thy stedfast eye,
 So shall thy work be done."

THE example of our Lord and Master not only gives to the scriptural rite of baptism by immersion its highest and most solemn sanction; but His sacred experience exemplifies the wonderful privileges often conferred upon Christians who loyally and lovingly follow His holy example. As He went straightway up out of the water the heavens opened, and the Spirit, like a dove, descended upon Him; and there came a voice from heaven saying, "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." In like manner it not unfrequently happens that as one of His faithful followers rises from the liquid grave, in which he has been laid to symbolise his union with the Lord in His death and resurrection, he receives the sweetest and most impressive assurance of divine adoption. "Behold, God is my salvation," is accordingly the language of his grateful and glowing heart. "The darkness is past."

"The opening heavens around me shine
 With beams of sacred bliss,
 While Jesus shows His heart is mine,
 And whispers, I am His."

This is no imaginary picture. In thousands of instances His people have proved that in keeping *this* commandment of their

Lord's there is great reward; and that He has signified His approval of their obedience by imparting unspeakable joy to their souls.

Such appears to have been the experience of the young man whose baptism at Eld-lane Chapel, Colchester, we related in our last chapter. Nor was his wonderful and mysterious happiness transient. For a considerable time he walked in the hallowed and inspiring light of the love of God.

In after years he loved to refer to this period of his spiritual history, which he was wont to designate the time of his first love. "Let us," he observed in 1875, "recall it. Let us look back to the time when we first loved Jesus for the sake of His own dear person and precious blood, and realised the fact that we were His. Our hearts were enlarged, and full of spiritual life and vigour. Our affections were strong, and we were near to the dear Redeemer. The world had no charms for us, and no influence whatever upon us. We could see its vanities then, without being at all influenced by them. We could view worldly objects at that time without their stirring a single sympathetic thought in our minds, for our eyes and hearts were filled with the beauties of Christ, and we sang:—

"Let worldly minds the world pursue,
Earth hath no charms for me."

These tender words were doubtless suggested by the preacher's personal reminiscences of the period to which our narrative has now brought us.

He was still employed at the distillery at the Old Heath, near which at this time he lived. Such surroundings would scarcely strike one as congenial to the development of spirituality of mind in a young and ardent Christian. John Hazelton, however, indisputably found that through grace it is possible to be fervent in spirit, and to serve the Lord without being slothful in business. These days were full of joy and peace in believing; and each recurring Sabbath

was a season of great and growing delight. He was wont to rise betimes that he might be in time for the early prayer-meeting, which commenced at seven. In two hours he was in the Sunday-school, at which again he filled his place in the afternoon. He attended public worship at the chapel thrice, with the utmost regularity; save when he occasionally accompanied a friend to some village service.

He is remembered as having been singularly gentle and considerate to the aged members of the Church, whom he loved to accompany home from the house of God, often lending his strong arm to such as were feeble and tottering.

The fellowship of Isaac Wenlock continued to prove an unspeakable blessing. He possessed a large reference Bible, then a greater rarity than now, which in the seclusion of his pantry he studied for several hours nearly every night with his young friend, whose younger brother would sleep on a bench till the time arrived for them both to return home.

As the name of this excellent man will now drop out of our narrative, we may relate that he continued in honourable membership with the Church till his death. After leaving the distillery he engaged in farming, with but scant success. He ended his holy and useful life in an almshouse, on January 8th, 1885.

John Hazelton's attention was not, however, exclusively devoted to the things which pertain to life and godliness. He was naturally prudent and provident; and always viewed thoughtless recklessness in others with pain. Observing the thriftless indifference of his fellow-workmen, especially in relation to the contingency of sickness, against which it never occurred to them to provide, he began to consider in what way he could assist them.

A benefit society, or club, suggested itself, and single-handed he set to work, procured a book, thought out the principles on which the affair might be worked, canvassed the men, and soon

collected enough money to float the concern, which for some time was very successful. When he resigned his engagement it was in a prosperous condition.

Very peaceful and purposeful do these few months appear to have been; nor did he fail in later years to recall them with sacred delight.

Not long before his decease he referred to this period of the Christian's career in a discourse based upon the encampment of the children of Israel at "Elim, where were twelve wells of water and threescore and ten palm trees" (Ex. xv. 27). He spoke of the *place*, a green and fertile spot, shaded with palm trees, and provided with wells of water. Of its *situation*; it was an *oasis* in the midst of the sand and sterility of the wilderness. Of their *arrival* there, after their deliverance from Egypt, and the disappointment of Marah. Of their *encampment*, for they were permitted to remain for a season in this place for rest, refreshment, and recruitment; and of the *lessons* which arose from the subject.

Elim is suggestive of the happy period which follows our conversion to God. It was neither Egypt nor Canaan, but between these, and occurred early in the journey of the Israelites. We encamped at Elim in the days of our early love to the Saviour. In the appropriate order of Christian experience there is, at first, more feeling than faith. The transient sojourn at Elim preceded the giving of the manna, the smiting of the rock, the conflict with Amalek, and the passage through Jordan into Canaan. We, too, go from strength to strength. To Elim we are never to return; it is not needful that we should. The children of Israel were otherwise supplied; and we do not again require the nourishment which was so essential to us in our spiritual infancy. Thus Elim is behind many of us, while the promised land is before us; but Elim is a *remembered place*.

To one whose condition these words so beautifully describe,

an intelligent, Christ-exalting, and experimental ministry is of inestimable value. Such, as all attest, was that of the genial and gracious gentleman to whose sermons our friend then listened with eager avidity. We can discover no printed sermon or magazine article, produced *after* his settlement at Colchester; but some of his views of divine truth had, as before stated, been given to the world. In a poem published six years previously, which is worthy of a Toplady in his happiest moments, he expresses his sentiments on the Atonement, the central theme of the Gospel. These doubtless permeated his entire ministry, and therefore afford no dubious insight into the character of the pastoral teaching which at that time nourished and built up our friend's Christian character. The truthfulness and beauty of "Calvary" plead for the introduction of some of its stanzas:—

O Calvary, thou wondrous spot!
 Whose mysteries drown a seraph's thoughts,
 Yet cheer the feeblest soul;
 The scenes of whose one dreadful day,
 Heaven's loudest songs shall ne'er portray,
 While endless ages roll.

* * * * *

'Tis when whole ages backward roll,
 When heav'nly visions warm my soul,
 I love to think of thee;
 When through that scene of cheerless gloom,
 I feel the rays of mercy come,
 Which set my spirit free.

* * * * *

'Twas not enough, though He had seen
 The gathering storms their forces join
 To burst upon His head.
 When trembling at the fearful war,
 "Father, oh! if Thou canst—forbear,"
 Th' astonished champion said.

Twas not enough, that He whose hand
 The weight of heaven and earth sustain'd,
 Had owned a creature's aid;
 When pressed with agonies unknown,
 Great drops of blood ran trickling down,
 While prostrate there He prayed.

But He must stand at Pilate's bar,
 His hand the mimic sceptre bear,
 His head the thorny crown.
 Scourged, spit upon, the grov'ling crowd
 Cry "HAIL" and mock the Mighty God,
 Whose *look* could crush them down.

And now the dreadful hour is come,
 To buy a chosen world from doom,
 The weighty curse to bear;
 My soul! one portion of that ire,
 Had scorched thee with eternal fire,
 Which spent its terrors there!

The sun, astonished at the scene,
 Drew his resplendent glories in,
 And blotted out the day:
 Sin, art thou now a trifling thought
 Which God may overlook or not?
 Let this dire moment say.

* * * * *

And heaven—no cheering smile was there,
 But all her fiery engines bear
 Their fiercest tempest down:
 The dregs of that tremendous cup
 Scorch ev'ry vital moisture up,
 And loosen ev'ry bone.*

* *Calvary* consists of two parts, the first of which appeared in "Zion's Trumpet" for June, 1834; the latter at some subsequent period. Both are included in *Fragments in Prose and Verse* by Cyprian T. Rust, with the omission of one verse, the sixth in the above. Hymn 326 in a *Selection of Hymns* by John Stevens, edited by J. S. Anderson, 1878, consists of six stanzas from the First Part, the verse above referred to not being given. This was a favourite of John Hazelton's, who was wont to quote, "My soul, one portion of that ire," with pathetic emphasis. We give *thirteen* verses from the First Part, our fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth, being from the second. The ode, as a whole, is of almost unparalleled beauty.

“My God! my God! how can it be?
 Oh, why hast Thou forsaken Me
 When most I need Thine aid!”—
 “I thirst”—and this heart-rending call
 They mock with vinegar and gall,
 A sponge full on a reed!

Earth, didst thou such a scene behold,
 And not thy yawning jaws unfold,
 To dash the rebels through?
 It could not be—He cried, “Forgive—
 Oh, Father, let the murderers live,
 They know not what they do.”

Dark conflict! where the prince of hell
 Was vanquished when the Conqueror fell,
 Crushed by His arm alone!
 When schemes four thousand years had laid,
 With hideous ruin on His head,
 One moment shatter'd down.

Those cries which rent the rocks and made
 The sick'ning graves give up their dead,
 The tragic mystery end;
 “'TIS FINISHED,” and the work must stand
 For ever—“Father, to Thy hand
 My spirit I commend.”

Jesus, Thou Rock of Ages, where,
 When stung with guilt and press'd with fear,
 A worthless worm, I fly;
 How shall my tongue Thy triumph tell,
 Salvation from the jaws of hell,
 To glitt'ring crowns on high.

* * * * *

Who, who is like to Thee, oh, Lord,
 Among the gods? Be Thou adored
 In justice and in grace;
 Thine own right hand and holy arm
 Have gained Thee victory—now form
 A people for Thy praise.

Dear Saviour, didst Thou die for me,
 To cleanse my guilt, and set me free
 From Satan's iron reign?
 And as the apple of Thine eye,
 Dost Thou with gentlest sympathy
 My right and cause maintain?

Thy victories—how they cheer my heart?
 How shall they cheer me when I part
 With life and all its charms?
 In that dread hour, dear Saviour, come
 Thyself to take my spirit home,
 For ever to Thine arms.

* * * * *
 I'll praise Thee with my latest breath,
 'Till, chill'd with the cold damp of death,
 My pulses beat no more;
 Then in the realms beyond the stars,
 Where ev'ry saint perfection wears,
 Thy matchless grace adore.

Is not *this* the view of the sufferings and triumphs of the Redeemer, above all others, adapted to save a sinking sinner from despair?

To the author of these lines no further reference will be made in this volume, but it may interest our readers to know that his health utterly broke down in the latter part of the year 1842, and total cessation from ministerial engagements was imperatively enjoined by his medical men. He afterwards sought ordination as a clergyman of the Church of England, and has for many years been the Rector of Westerfield, near Ipswich, in which capacity he is highly esteemed as a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, of pronounced evangelical views.

He and our friend did not meet for many years after his resignation of his charge at Colchester. At length, however, an interview occurred at the Baptist Chapel, Blakenham, near Ipswich, in which John Hazelton had been preaching. They were left alone in the vestry, and Mr. Rust, breaking the silence, observed, "In years gone by, I should have called you 'John.'"

“Call me John *now*,” was the reply; and the estrangement of years was forgotten as our friend, putting his arm round his former pastor’s shoulder, drew him to him and *kissed* him. A long conversation followed, which must have been blessed to both.

This digression was, we felt, imperative. We now resume our narrative. John Hazelton ere long left the distillery, and apprenticed himself to a wheelwright named Lee, who was a competent tradesman in a large way of business,-but unhappily not only a godless but a very rough and inconsiderate man. John applied himself to his new employment with characteristic eagerness, and soon became an expert and skilful workman. As time rolled on he grew to be the leading man in the establishment, and was often called by his employer to compete with a picked man from some rival establishment, and with invariable success. An individual who worked at his bench when circumstances led him to vacate it, attests to the fact that his superiority was universally confessed. To the last he took a keen interest in the trade, and was wont to declare that if he were what he once was, he could make a wheel or a cart as well as any man.

Facts like these exemplify, while they add lustre to true religion. There have been men whose piety appeared to spoil their usefulness, and to lead them to drivel away their energies in useless sentimentalities. A young Christian man, whose youth had been hampered with a thousand drawbacks, who began life by leading a team to plough, who was courageous enough to bind himself to a fresh trade at an age when many young men are eagerly anticipating gaining their liberty and enjoying the world, who by hard, honest, patient toil, achieved in a few years the reputation of being the foremost man in his trade, and who sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness amid it all, is worthy to be enrolled among those who have attained emolument and honour by indomitable self-help.

He lived at this time at his place of business, at which he was continually exposed, as a quiet and consistent Christian, to the persecution of his master and the gibes of those around him. Through the grace which had saved him he, however, remained unshaken, and these keen blasts only caused his religion to take deeper root, and gave strength and solidity to his character.

We can well perceive that He whose wisdom cannot err was by these events preparing him for the great and momentous change in his life which was at this time impending. Little did he suspect that the business, a knowledge of which he was expending so much pains to acquire, was ere long to be exchanged for the highest vocation which can claim the energies of a ransomed sinner, till when about eighteen or nineteen he received the first intimation that he was to engage in the work of the ministry.

He was at that time known as a staid and God-fearing young man, of more than ordinary intelligence and earnestness in spiritual things, and a devoted and useful worker in the Sunday School, in which his earliest attempts to serve the Master he loved were made.

It not unfrequently happens that the intimate friends of a young Christian man are impressed with a prevision that he will, at a future time, receive a Divine call to preach the Gospel, long before such an idea occurs to his own mind. Paul encourages "his own son in the faith," to war a good warfare, by reminding him of the prophecies that "went before on" him; in allusion, as Dr. Gill supposes, to good reports made of him by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium, who foresaw and presaged his future usefulness. Similar predictions are related to have been uttered respecting Job Hupton, John Stevens, and Charles Hill. Richard Knill, the saintly and warm-hearted missionary, was resting, one Sabbath afternoon, in the arbour of a venerable Independent minister, for whom he was preaching, when

his little grandson, a dark-haired, bright-eyed boy, came running up to him, and climbed upon his knees. Interested in his intelligent talk and winning ways, the good man kindly fondled the child, and at length told him "that if he lived, he would preach in the largest chapel in the world." Years rolled by, and this remarkable prediction was verified in the erection of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, for the accommodation of the crowds who followed the most popular and honoured minister of his age. In like manner the wise and far-seeing members of the Church at Eld-lane Chapel, Colchester, marked with interest the advancing intelligence and spirituality of John Hazelton, and foretold that the Lord would, ere long, call him to preach the Gospel to his fellow men.

It is remarkable how many able ministers have been beguiled into making their first attempt to proclaim the grace of God in public. A few hours before, nothing was further from their thoughts, but being entrapped into circumstances, which admitted of no refusal, they prayed for divine help, trusted the Lord to open their mouth in honour of His dear Son, and in His strength broke the silence, and did their best to deliver a message to the people. The story has often been told of the way in which C. H. Spurgeon, when quite a lad, was induced, with kindly craft, to go with a friend, one Sunday evening in 1850, to a village service at Teversham, near Cambridge, under the impresson that his companion was to be the preacher, only to find that the brother *could* not and *would* not attempt anything of the kind, and that there would be no sermon unless he endeavoured to address the people himself. In a somewhat parallel way John Hazelton was first led to speak to a Christian audience.

A service was, at that time, conducted on Lord's-day evenings, at Wyvenhoe, by some members of the congregation of Eld-lane Chapel; Mrs. Penney, a Christian woman, having opened her cottage for this purpose. One Sunday, when the

school was closed, a young man, named John Fitch, with a few others, invited him to accompany them, no mention being made of the brother who was expected to speak. He willingly consented, suspecting nothing, and the party were driven over in an old cart. The room was full; and after a pause, he was gravely told that he would have to address the people. He stoutly refused, and would have left the meeting, but this they would not hear of, and constrained him to go the head of the table. He accordingly read and prayed, when, suddenly, there flashed through his mind the words, "And in His name shall the Gentiles trust" (Matt. xii. 21). Thoughts and words flowed freely, and he spoke with the utmost liberty for about half-an-hour. On the following Sunday evening he again walked over with his friend John Fitch, and addressed the little assembly, his remarks being based on Rom. xvi. 20.

Ere long he became known as an acceptable village preacher, and was invited to minister at several places in the locality. This could not fail to interest his fellow-members, and at length we find that the matter was officially brought before them, as appears from a minute in the Church book, bearing date, March 2, 1843:—"It was agreed to request brother John Hazelton to preach before us, with a view to our giving him our sanction to his occasional preaching, if it should appear that God has given him talents for the work."

For a reason, now unknown, this ordeal was postponed for about a month, when the matter was again brought up, and the request of the Church expressed in a rather more peremptory and definite form; for we find, that on March 30, 1843, it was agreed "that brother John Hazelton be requested to preach before the Church, but not to the exclusion of the congregation, on Lord's-day evening, the 16th of next month, and again on some Wednesday evening, when convenient to himself."

There is a gracious deliberation about all this that reminds one of puritanic times. How brother John Hazelton received

this request cannot be told, but it is possible that he had a somewhat vivid recollection that his Master had testified that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country.

Certainly the following extracts,* from the minutes of a Church meeting, held on May 4, 1843, subsequently to the probationary efforts above referred to, is remarkable rather for its caution than its cordiality. It expresses no recognition of the goodness of the Lord of the harvest in sending a young and ardent Christian to labour in the field, while it contains but scant encouragement for the brother himself.

It states "that the Church having heard our brother Hazelton three times, is fully prepared to come to a decision in his case, which they would thus express: That our brother's youth, his consequent inexperience and imperfect development of gifts, render it impossible for the Church to come to any present conclusion as to whether he be called to the ministry, aye or no. But at the same time they think to encourage him in the occasional exercise of such talents as the Lord has given him, provided always that he submit such engagements to the judgment of our pastor, that through him he may have the approval and consent of the Church."

The explanation of this reserved and half-hearted encouragement lies, we believe, in the fact that the Church at Eld-lane were already wavering in the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel, and verging towards the views of Andrew Fuller, and the Rev. Robert Langford, their new minister, evidently sympathised but little with the original principles and practices of the cause, which, during his pastorate, changed from a Strict and Particular Church into one of a very different character. It is not, therefore, difficult to divine the reason for the cold and suspicious way in which they treated a zealous young cham-

* The above extracts from the Church book were made by the Rev. E. Spurrier.

tion of the doctrines of sovereign grace and the practice of close communion.*

Greatly to John Hazelton's credit he was not caught in the downward current, but remained steadfast to his convictions amid all discouragements. Nor did he question the validity of the call to service which he deemed the Lord had given him. How far he complied with the requirements of the latter part of the Church's resolution, and submitted all engagements to the pastor is not said. Certainly his reputation increased, his engagements multiplied, and his energies were taxed to the utmost.

While his leisure was thus employed, he was pursuing, with characteristic ardour, the trade by which he then hoped to live. It frequently happened that when in the midst of his toil, his employer would tell him to go down to the gate, for someone wanted to see him about preaching, and all begrimed with work as he was, he would hold the desired interview.

Why he should trouble himself with religious engagements was also a mystery to the family. "John," they would exclaim on Saturday, "what a fool you are; we shall have a hot leg of mutton for dinner to-morrow, and you will be out all day after your preaching, and lose it."

He thus itinerated in his Master's service for some time, and his labours manifest an earnestness and a power of endurance which have been rarely equalled. His hours in the workshop were usually from about six in the morning till ten at night, with but brief intervals for meals. On Saturday they were no shorter, and he commonly continued to work till the usual hour without allowance for the unwonted labours of the Lord's day.

* In 1848 thirty godly members left the Church, on the ground of the changes in principle and practice which had taken place, and formed the nucleus of the congregation now worshipping in St. John's Green Chapel, under the ministry of our brother William Brown.

When the Sabbath morning dawned, regardless of the weather or the season of the year, he was wont to rise at five or six, and at once drive fifteen, or even sometimes thirty miles to his engagements. Breakfast being often very hastily partaken of, he went to the chapel, generally preaching three times. As soon as the evening service was concluded, he bade his friends adieu, returned with all the expedition he could, often not reaching his home till ten or eleven at night; and yet, notwithstanding the unwonted strain and fatigue, never failing to take his place at his bench at the usual hour the following morning.

Many places, near and remote, were thus visited, and large crowds gathered to "hear a *boy* preach." It cannot, however, be questioned that his sermons must have manifested more than mere precocity and volubility. Few now living are able to state in what their power lay, but their intelligence and savour were remembered long after he had left the neighbourhood for ever.

Two incidents only have escaped oblivion. The scene and surroundings of the first are picturesque and uncommon. It occurred at East Mersey. A large congregation had gathered to witness a public baptism in the sea, and were grouped around the minister, Mr. Rogers, who was to perform the solemn ceremony. This was preceded by an address, which was delivered by a young man, with black hair, bright eyes, and a rapid, eager delivery. In a moment he riveted each eye, and as the waves of the German Ocean softly murmured on the sandy shore, his striking thoughts, and blunt but true eloquence, not only commanded attention, but swayed all hearts. An aged man who was present, to this day loves to dilate on this *special* and *powerful* effort of the young wheelwright from Colchester.

At another place, a noted prize-fighter and village rowdy, who kept a small public-house, was one Sunday afternoon induced to

go to the chapel. The Lord met with him under the sermon : he abandoned his evil course, and ultimately became an honourable member of the Church, and ended his days as the deacon of a suburban chapel.

These and other tokens for good, the record of which is reserved for the disclosure of the last great day, stamped the approval of Heaven on the labours of this period.

Ability so remarkable could hardly fail to excite general attention ; and it is recorded that some appreciative friend suggested that he should seek admission to Bradford Academy, and undergo a course of training for the Baptist ministry. This he declined : and, viewed in the light of his subsequent career, his decision cannot be regretted.

Thus some months rolled on, his reputation steadily increasing as practice and experience developed his gifts. His popularity is curiously indicated by the vehicle he employed to convey him to his more distant engagements. When reviewing these times in his latter years, he often smilingly recalled the fact that at first he travelled in a hired donkey cart ; then the donkey was exchanged for a mule ; next he was able to obtain a pony and trap ; and lastly, a fast trotting nag and gig. He seems to have invariably journeyed alone, and his hands being employed in driving he could not protect himself from the rain by an umbrella, and was frequently drenched to the skin, while his feet were soaked in the pool of water that collected at the bottom of the conveyance. The time of his attaining to the dignity of the nag and gig was probably that of his first continuous engagement.

Mount Bures is a village situated some eight miles from Colchester, and contains about 600 inhabitants. In this spot a small and very primitive Baptist Chapel had been erected, a few years before the time to which our narrative has brought us, through the instrumentality of Charles Cock, a sound and saintly man, who had gathered the congregation when preaching for

many months in a cottage. He had just resigned. John Hazelton was ere long introduced to the little pastorless flock. A union of heart was created, and strong desires were expressed that he should become their minister. This, as his apprenticeship had not expired, and they were far too poor to maintain him, he declined to do; but consented to serve them stately till the will of God should be more obvious.

The labours were much blessed. Crowds were attracted by the youthful preacher: whose fluency was remarkable, and whose growth, both in grace and in pulpit ability, was evident to all. His appearance could not have been very clerical, for his Sunday garb usually consisted of white trousers or ducks, a coat of pronounced blue or brown cloth, and a coloured stock.

His remuneration is worthy of remark. During each year he travelled nearly a thousand miles, and delivered one hundred and fifty sermons—and received the hire of his conveyance, AND NOTHING MORE. Surely the fire of Divine love must have burnt vehemently in this stripling's heart!

Incessant manual and mental labour began at length to tell adversely on his never too robust frame; not improbably also laying the foundation of much subsequent physical weakness and pain. His position in his employer's abode, which had never been congenial, became almost intolerable. A change was therefore imperative, and this our heavenly Father, who "knoweth the way that we take," was pleased to bring about in His own mysterious way.

The report of his able ministrations had travelled northwards, until it reached the ears of Samuel Collins, of Grundisburgh, who sought and obtained an introduction. Struck with his grace and talents, his newly found friend at length persuaded him to withdraw from his secular avocation, and give himself wholly to the work of the ministry. "I will see about a position for you, John," was his kindly assurance. The step was no unimportant or trivial one, and to be contemplated only after

fervent and prolonged prayer. Light at length was vouchsafed, and the young wheelwright sought an interview with his master and told him of his decision. The latter entreated him, but in vain, to reconsider the matter. Ere long he left the scene of the labours he had grown to love, and cast himself on the kindly providence of Him whose service was henceforth to be the sole work of his life.

For a time he continued to minister to the little Church at Mount Bures ; but held himself in readiness to move in any direction that providence might indicate.

Thus an important epoch in his history was brought to a termination.

CHAPTER IV.

“I desire to *follow* providence, not to *force* it.”—DR. DODDRIDGE.

“Happy the man who sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that chequer life!
Resolving all events, with their effects
And manifold results, into the will
And arbitration wise of the Supreme.”

Cowper.

THE county of Suffolk will ever be regarded with interest by those to whom the Gospel is precious and important. Here pure and undefiled religion has long found illustrious exemplifications. In thousands of its cottage homes God has been honoured and His precepts obeyed. Its places of worship have often been associated with deeds of truest heroism, and with patient and prolonged efforts for the salvation of men, that were grand in their tenderness and enthusiasm. Here the truth has been proclaimed by some of its noblest champions: and error has been exposed and resisted by many of its most dauntless foes. No one has yet given the world the brave story of their struggles and triumphs, nor can the present writer do more than relate a few facts which immediately concern our narrative.

Bungay is a town of some importance, situated on the river Waveney, and containing about three thousand inhabitants. Its chief industry at that time was the extensive printing establishment of Mr. John Child, which was known through-

out the kingdom.* In the order of Divine providence a number of Christians, belonging to Baptist Churches in other localities, had removed thither, and the existing chapels not providing the ministerial instruction they desired, they had sought and obtained the help of the Suffolk and Norfolk Home Mission. Services had, for some time, been held in the commodious Corn Exchange, and were well attended. The nucleus of a Church and congregation was ready to hand, and the permanent ministrations of a gracious and gifted man were urgently needed.

The name of John Hazelton naturally occurred to Samuel Collins. The existing engagement—as we have seen—did not look promising. The following characteristic letter was therefore penned to introduce the new effort to his notice.

*Grundisburgh, near Woodbridge,
Feb. 20th, 1846.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your letter came to hand very providentially, as I was wanting to write you on the subject of going elsewhere. Respecting the Bures case, I think you need not hesitate much. You, from necessity, are forced to a conclusion. Leave them for a time to feel their feet.

Now I want to know if you can go to Bungay for two Lord's-days, either to stop the week, or to go on the Saturday and return on the Monday; but it would be much better, if you could, to stop the week and spend two Lord's-days, and preach in the villages on the week-day evenings.

There is at Bungay a most interesting and rising interest. The place they have hired, and in which they meet, is the Corn Exchange, a most convenient and commodious place; the con-

* Much information concerning the town of Bungay, at a period a year or two antecedent to the events narrated above, will be found in Mr. J. Ewing Ritchie's interesting *East Anglia* (Clark & Co., 13 and 14, Fleet-street). He perhaps unduly exalts his own *Independent* friends, and hardly "gives honour due" to his *Baptist* brethren. *Vide* Chapter V., on Bungay and its People, in which all above stated about Mr. Child is elaborately confirmed.

gregation good. Last Lord's-day I think there were 400. It is at present, and will be, partly supported by the Home Mission, but the people manage the affairs, &c.

From my recommendation the people wish to hear you two Lord's-days, with a view of your going six months to make a trial. For the two Sundays they will pay your expenses, and if you continue they can give you 15s. or 16s. per week for the present. Besides this, they are a very excellent people, judicious, and godly, and anxious to obtain a man of God.

Write me directly, and say if you can go and make trial, and, if possible, I should say "go."

Affectionately yours,

SAMUEL COLLINS.

I have had great affliction in my family for nearly two months, and have now a lovely daughter very, very ill.

The following letter, from his friends at Bungay, was addressed to him about a month later, while he was temporarily serving them. It is eminently wise and holy, and augurs well for the future success of the brother whom it so tenderly and earnestly solicits to cast in his lot among those whose signatures it bears:—

Bungay, March 25th, 1846.

DEAR BROTHER,—We have for some long time been waiting to hear what God the Lord will say to us in the voice of His kind providence respecting one of His faithful servants to proclaim among us the unsearchable riches of Christ. The vision has tarried to the present, and for aught we can tell it may still remain in the same position, yet we cannot but think that the bud is unfolding itself, and we trust that He who has defended, supported, guided, and blest us through all the stormy scenes and tempestuous nights of past experience, yea, that even He will still continue to smile on our endeavours to promote His glory, by seeking the advancement of His kingdom.

From what we have seen of you, during the short time you have been with us, the way in which you seem to have been directed hither, combined with the manner in which our minds

have been led, we feel ourselves bound to ask you whether or not you will (God willing) supply us with the ministry of the Word, at least for the next six months. Our means, at present, are rather limited, having had to press on amidst a flood of difficulties, which at times have so reared their monstrous heads as seemed to threaten immediate destruction, but through them all we have been safely borne (to the honour and praise of God be it spoken), and we desire to cast anchor upon the promise that "He who has been with us in six troubles will not leave us in the seventh." The expenses have in a great measure fallen upon a few individuals, who, through the grace of God, have been enabled to bear the burden and heat of the day. We cannot at present see how we could give you more than 15s. per week, as we stand at the rate of £15 per annum for rent and lighting; but at the same time, we will pledge ourselves to make use of those means which may be considered necessary to augment the sum we have offered, it being our earnest desire, as far as lieth in our power, to promote the temporal comfort and happiness of any servant whom the great Head of the Church may place amongst us. May we seek counsel at the hands of Him who giveth liberally and upbraideth not, and receive from Him that direction which we need in this important matter, whilst it is our earnest prayer that you may continue firm for the truth as it is in Jesus, determined by divine help to know nothing among men but Him and Him crucified.

Whilst thus preaching the pure unadulterated Gospel, you must expect to meet with many enemies; yea, the combined forces of the world, the flesh, and the devil will assault you with all their bitterness and animosity, but remembering that these are the vanquished foes of our incarnate Lord, who triumphed over them when He rose, you need not fear, for the promise is written as with a sunbeam: "My grace is sufficient for thee, My strength shall be made perfect in thy weakness." May you constantly feel your dependence upon the divine power and blessing, and be hourly supplied with that oil which will enable you to continue bold as a lion, wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove, fortified with all the defensive armour from grace's magazine. May all necessary wisdom be imparted, enabling you so to wield those glorious weapons that you may become a comfort

and blessing to the true Israel of God, whilst you prove a terror to those who are its enemies. Commending you to the care and keeping of a triune Jehovah,

We are, dear brother,

Yours sincerely in Christian bonds,

WM. BAKER,	MRS. TILLY, SEN.,
CHAS. TILLY,	MRS. TILLY, JUN.,
GEO. COLBY,	MRS. HALLOWS,
RD. DUNN,	MRS. REVELL,
EDWD. HILL,	MISS CRICKMORE,
MRS. BAKER,	MISS CANE.

To Mr. Hazelton,

Mr. Cane's, Bungay.

In response to this frank and affectionate communication he undertook to serve them continuously for six months.

On Lord's day, July 12th, 1846, nineteen persons were formed into a Gospel Church on Strict Communion principles—the membership of sixteen being transferred from Beccles, two from Halesworth, and one from Wortwell for this purpose. The interesting services were conducted in the Corn Exchange by George Wright. A month later, before the probationary six months were quite expired, John Hazelton was unanimously invited to become their pastor. He assented, and his dismissal from Colchester having been applied for and obtained, he was received into the Church, and simultaneously assumed the ministerial office. No ordination or any public recognition of his settlement appears to have been held.

Great success attended his earlier ministrations in his new sphere of labour. His very first sermon, from the words, "Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood" (Rev. v. 9), was blessed to Miss Elizabeth Stone, who was then in great darkness of mind: and a subsequent discourse upon "the plant of renown" proved the means of her spiritual emancipation.

Another evidence that the word was prospering is afforded by the fact that on Lord's-day, August 23rd, our brother

publicly baptized two believers in the river Waveney. This being the first time that this ordinance of our Lord had ever been administered in the town, upwards of a thousand spectators were present. The address was based upon the words, "Why baptizest thou then?" (John i. 25). The proceedings were decorous and solemn, and it was felt that many minds had been profitably impressed.

The young person above referred to was lame, and therefore did not put on Christ on this occasion. She was, however, baptized by her future pastor on November 8th, at Pulham-St.-Mary, the chapel being kindly lent for the occasion.

Thus it was evident that the blessing of Heaven was resting on this young and struggling cause.

John Hazelton remained its minister for more than two years, an important epoch in his history, and fraught with very mingled experiences. The sunshine was frequently intercepted by gathering clouds. Difficulty and perplexity often deprived success of its delight.

His stipend was pitifully small—not half as large as the wages he had easily earned at his secular calling. He lived in humble apartments and spent much time alone.

It may indeed strike the reader that both previously and subsequently he appears to have been an isolated man, threading his solitary way through an unsympathetic crowd. In more recent years he was wont with mingled playfulness and pathos to liken himself to "a sparrow, alone upon the house-top—observed of all, in association with none." However true then, the words have pathetic relevance to the period of his career which we are now relating.

His pastorate at Bungay was an era in his mental history. His education, as we saw, was of the most elementary character. Years of intense manual toil had left him no leisure for improvement, and it is not surprising to learn that his ministry at this time, though remarkably intelligent and spiritual,

betrayed his almost total ignorance of rudimentary knowledge. Of this he was unconscious till a circumstance opened his eyes.

A schoolmaster in the town, a worthy man, who loved the truths of the Gospel, was in the habit of bringing his boarders to the Corn Exchange on the Lord's-day. The preacher's educational deficiencies were, however, so palpable, that one day he was taken aside by his hearer, who while gratefully acknowledging the blessing he had personally experienced, complained that the scholars made so many comments upon the grammatical blunders which occurred with such frequency in the sermons, that he should be reluctantly compelled to discontinue attending. He recommended the young preacher to study English grammar.

"What is grammar?" he enquired, with some surprise. Further and fuller explanations followed. The schoolmaster introduced a treatise to his notice, which he carefully studied. Slowly the consciousness of, to use his own words, "how little he knew" dawned upon him. But his feet were by this time firmly planted on the lowest round of the ladder of knowledge. He borrowed more books of his generous friend, and began to master the facts and principles that lie at the basis of all sound learning; and determined that he would persevere till he had succeeded in the hard task of educating himself. Books were imperatively necessary, but his limited means seemed to preclude the possibility of obtaining them. Providence, however, was kind. He procured the greater part of Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Holy Bible from the shop of a grocer, to whom it had been consigned as waste paper. Some of his people were employed at the printing establishment mentioned above, and it occurred to him that by their intervention, proof sheets, which were of no further use, might be secured for him instead of being destroyed as useless. This was done, and he thus became the possessor of Hume's "History of England" and Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman

Empire." These he had cheaply bound, and then thoroughly studied them. They adorned his study shelves until the day of his death. Thus slowly but surely he grasped the subjects to which he gave his attention.

He frequently spent the whole night in study, his landlady never suspecting but that her lodger was in bed. His pursuits were as varied as they were thorough. He practised penmanship till he acquired the clear and beautiful handwriting with which many are familiar. He managed to buy a very old dictionary cheap, and began to reflect not only on the spelling of words, but upon their significance and delicate shades of meaning. Some other books came into his possession in a dismantled condition: these he rebound with his own hands. Little by little he acquired the power to utilise his knowledge of grammar, and to avoid his former errors. He studied English composition; acquainted himself with the laws of language; and thus, by dint of indefatigable exertions, laid the foundation of his correct and fluent style, afterwards to be considered.

It was a period of solemn discipline. He was perhaps, unconsciously to himself, learning at this very time, other and higher lessons than books could teach him. He was tasting the sweetness and sorrows of a pastor's life: experiencing the pleasure and peril of success: and obtaining an acquaintance with the mingled characteristics of Christian people. In silence and solitude he was communing with his own heart: testing the power of the religion he preached to inspire and sustain his own soul; and we doubt not in his communion with God receiving divine communications, which at one time humbled him in the dust, and at another lifted him above all local surroundings into the light and joy of heaven.

At Bungay he was also called upon to endure the furnace of physical prostration and pain. His latter life at Colchester had enfeebled his frame, and he became subject to dangerous

attacks of inflammation of the bowels. On one occasion, so severe were the symptoms that his life was despaired of. An immense quantity of blood was drawn from him by leeches. He appeared to be dying, and he heard those who were round his bed softly whisper that he was "sinking fast."

This however, he knew was not to be the case, for a verse from the Bible—memorable from its having been applied to the soul of the immortal Wickliffe under somewhat similar circumstances—came with divine power to his mind, "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord."

He slowly recovered; but the severe treatment which had been adopted, it is to be feared, permanently weakened his constitution.

At Bungay also, as the Church was under the care of the Suffolk and Norfolk Home Mission, it was part of his duty, doubtless very cheerfully performed, to preach the Gospel in hamlets and lonely villages, two or three evenings in each week.

His labours in his study must soon have begun to tell for good in his sermons. None however, were preserved, but in a letter written shortly before leaving Bungay, he gives some thoughts from one that he had recently delivered. "The Lord," he says, "enabled me to speak boldly in His great name." I preached from Romans ix. 23,

"VESSELS OF MERCY."

1st, Their formation; 2nd, The place in which the Lord keeps them; 3rd, What they contain; 4th, What God intends to do with them.

I. God formed them or chose them out of the great mass of mankind. I stated that when God viewed all the world in one awful mass of ruin, without one spot of beauty, He erected a throne of sovereignty in its centre; He sat upon it and waved the arm of electing power, and picked up whom He would, and having made choice of them He called them "Vessels of Mercy."

God formed their number and size.
 He formed them of enduring materials.
 In experience they pass through a Triune God's hands.

II.—As to the place in which they are kept—
 It is where God keeps Himself, "in Christ."
 He chains their interests to His own throne.
 He has registered them all.
 He preserves them by love and blood.

III.—Their contents are the juices that exude from the fruit
 that falls from the tree of life.
 They carry the writings of heaven.
 They have the image of their Maker stamped upon them.
 They carry all the graces of the Spirit.

IV.—God's intention is to bring them into tribulation,
 To disappoint Satan by them,
 To ornament and adorn His heavenly house with them.

But little can now be ascertained concerning the other events of this period. He kept the Church book himself. The minutes were as precise and brief as could be, and he introduced his own name as seldom as possible.

How it happened that the peace of the Church was broken is not now known, but towards the end of 1847 its condition became painful in the extreme.

Great indeed was their young pastor's anguish of heart. George Wright was appealed to, and this wise and holy man did his utmost to adjust the differences, but in vain. They "oust the authority even of the Beccles' Master of disputes," sadly wrote John Hazelton in a letter to a friend. In another communication he expresses his conviction that "the explosion would shake that 'Hill of Zion' most materially, and darken all her sky." "O, how my soul wonders," he continues, "why her unerring Monarch should have made me one of His watchmen. I have to stand upon my tower in the dark, cold night,

fearing the contents of every crowding hour, expecting that every day will witness the downfall of almost all my hopes, and the dispersion of the materials of that building which was once so formidable on account of its peace."

On January 2nd, 1848, he tendered his resignation, and it was received at a Church meeting, the minutes of which still exist in his own familiar writing. Thus his first pastorate, which began so happily, terminated. It was, however, by no means a failure. God suffers no earnest and honest labour in His vineyard to come to naught. In so short a time, and in the face of such manifold discouragement, the membership grew from nineteen to thirty-two. Some precious souls were savingly gathered to the Lord, and in spite of the fury of the storm at the time of his resignation, his memory was fragrant as long as any who remembered him were on earth.

That all that was anticipated was not realised is conceded, nor are the reasons difficult to divine.

One cause was doubtless the character of the Church itself. Many and peculiar difficulties were connected with such an effort. They were a heterogeneous gathering of persons from other chapels, and brought their preconceptions and prejudices with them. Many had for a long period been out of effective membership with the communities to which they nominally belonged, and but little spiritual cohesion existed. They had no precedents to appeal to. Rules for the guidance of their affairs there were none. Much that might have repressed independent and inconsiderate action was therefore lacking, and opportunity was given for the development of much that was undesirable among those to whom the order and restraint of holy fellowship were un congenial. It was almost inevitable that the career of such a Church should at first be troublous.

A second explanation of the early decline of hopes so eagerly entertained, may be sought for in the inexperience of the minister himself. He was young. The Church to which he

had belonged was at that time far from a model of discipline and order, and he had enjoyed few opportunities of observing the operation of those wise and holy principles and practices which are essential to the welfare of Zion. Discretion comes only with years, and he may have been unduly eager, impulsive, and self-reliant. We are none of us born with an intuitive knowledge of the human heart. He that "knew what was in men did not commit Himself unto them:" we, in our unwisdom, are prone to take all men on trust till we discover by bitter experience how foolish such universal confidence is.

"Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart:
A broken reed at best; but oft a spear;
On its sharp point peace bleeds and hope expires."

This in many men takes a life-time to learn, and that one who had but recently left a workshop; who was only just beginning to feel his feet; who could not have known how vast and varied were the claims on his prudence and energy which his sphere of labour presented—should have found himself unable to cope with his delicate and difficult duties—is surely little to be wondered at.

A third cause was perhaps the peculiarities of his senior brethren in the ministry.

Their idea of the way in which a young minister should be treated was as singular as it was unkind and injudicious. They expected him to force and fight his way alone and unaided: seemed to grudge him his prosperity, and spoke in terms of cold and measured commendation of any success he might achieve. Grass must be mown to thrive: trees must be pruned to become fruitful: and a junior brother must be snubbed for his soul's health, and his ministerial advantage. To keep him down, "clip his wings, prick his conceit," and crush the first risings of what they deemed self-complacency—these they considered the highest manifestation of kindness. Thus, too often, when he longed for sympathy he received slights; when

he hungered for gentle counsel and comfort he met with a jocular rebuff, amiably designed to make him small in his own eyes.

That some such conduct was pursued to John Hazelton we have not the slightest doubt. His pride was wounded, his sensitive nature grieved. Conscious that his gradually developing powers were not inferior to those of his elder brethren, their treatment chafed and chilled him. These things isolated him from men who, without question, had his real interest at heart, and prevented his seeking from them the sanction and support which would have been of inestimable benefit to him.

Indisputably, though he never took his most intimate friends into his confidence, Suffolk was not in after years a fragrant memory to him.

To two brethren, however, he invariably referred with warm and grateful affection: George Wright, whom he loved to the last, and Charles Hill, for whom he ever retained the most cordial regard.

At Earlham, near Bungay, there resided at this time a Mr. Pulford, one of his truest friends, who with his affectionate wife tenderly nursed him during one of his dangerous illnesses. From their hospitable abode he addressed the following letter, on February 16th, 1848, to W. Newsham, Esq., J.P., with whom he was shortly to be more closely associated.

Negotiations for his settlement at Guyhirn, his subsequent charge, were pending, to which he thus refers:—

“Oh, my dear brother, I do hope the step may be registered in heaven, and that God and angels may look upon us thus engaged—that God may say, ‘I have need’ of this union, and angels rejoice to see Christians acting according to God’s will. A settled gloom is on my countenance, a fixed anguish in my bosom—this world is not our rest. O God, reveal Thy face, and speak to my rising fears.”

In another letter on the same subject, dated three days later, he thus writes:—

“I shall be glad when I get settled, and the *knowledge of it* becomes spread. I am every morning expecting letters from two other destitute Churches, and I am afraid of their importunity, backed, as I know they are, by dear brethren in the ministry, whom I much esteem. I hope you will believe that I am quite firm in my intentions; and having earnestly thought and prayed the matter over, I am prepared to say, *God’s voice is heard, speaking to Guyhirn people and myself.*”

In a further communication he gives the outline of what must have been a very remarkable sermon, preached by him at Bungay on a Sunday afternoon:—

REV. V. 2: “A WHITE HORSE.”

I. *The Horse.*—This denotes the Gospel. White horses are refused in the field of battle, because they make their riders marks for the enemy. White is a mark of purity and victory. Thus Christ’s Gospel is despised and refused, yet pure and victorious, and with and by it He intends to conquer His foes. A horse because of its strength and swiftness. Nothing can kill this horse, nor can any disease render it unfit for its race or work. It rose out of free-grace designs, stopped at Calvary to take up its Rider and blessings, and then openly commenced its race, and Christ, the Rider, will guide it from east to west, north to south; and when the white horse of the Gospel stops, time will stop, and the end shall come. He carries in His bags letters from God’s council-chamber.

II. *The Bow.*—This denotes Christ’s power in His Gospel. The arrows which Christ launches into sinners’ souls are—Divine light, prayer, little hope, a godly hatred to sin, faith, and then the arrow of felt interest in Christ—the arrow which makes an avenue for our souls to come through into heaven. Illustrate by Christ’s ascending His Gospel horse and drawing His bow, and pricking 3,000 in the heart at once at Pentecost.

III. *The Rider’s Character*—Christ *crowned.*—Remarkable

that everything is contrary to our notions of war. We should say, Put a helmet on to go into the field with. But no, a crown, denoting the certainty of victory. 1. Christ is a King, and reigns in His Gospel, and by the Spirit sends it where He pleases, and when He pleases. He should also reign in the conscience. 2. He goes forth to receive the obedience of His subjects, and to make them obey. 3. As Christ is crowned in His Gospel, He is King there. Then His Gospel must contain those rules by which His subjects are governed, a king always supposing a statute book and subjects. The Gospel not the Law. He must reign till all enemies are His footstool.

IV. *Christ's Work, Conquering and to Conquer.*—1. He conquers His foes from age to age. 2. In His people, He conquered their lusts yesterday, and is conquering them to-day. 3. Having conquered our hearts by grace, He had to conquer our antipathy to the great leading truths of the Gospel—election, effectual calling, &c. 4. After conquering all His elect, He will bind Satan, and before assembled worlds cast him into the abyss.

In the same letter, addressed to his friends at Guyhirn, he says:—

“I think it would be well to go round the village for children for the Sabbath-school, but think of teachers too.”

Once again he wrote to them, on Feb. 24th, 1848:—

“Glad of the special prayer-meeting. I hoped you would have one. It is very strange, I am going to have one next Monday evening, and while Guyhirn Christians are sending their prayers to heaven for themselves and me, the good people here will be mingling theirs with them, for they are going to commend me to God.”

In relation to the Sabbath-school he writes:—

“‘In due time they shall reap, if they faint not.’ Go on! Go on! and may God prosper your endeavours. If you get 60 children, bear in mind that seven children are enough for one

teacher, or eight at most. We not only teach the letter of the Bible, but endeavour to impress upon their attention the vast importance of the Bible's contents. In these matters I like to take young persons by the hand, if possible. When I come, my heart will be with you in your undertaking. It is so now."

Thus, with the fullest conviction that his work in Suffolk was done, he turned his steps to the new sphere of labour, to which he was sure his Master had directed him. Bungay had been a hard school for one so impetuous and eager, but the discipline had been fraught with profit. He had acquired knowledge that can only be learned amid scenes of disappointment and sorrow; and now, a sadder but a wiser man, he was prepared to cope with yet greater difficulties, and perform far more important work.

CHAPTER V.

“ Along my earthly way
 How many clouds are spread!
 Darkness, with scarce one cheerful ray,
 Seems gathering o'er my head.

Yet, Saviour, Thou art love;
 Oh, hide not from my view!
 But when I look in prayer above,
 Appear in mercy through.

And, O! from that bright throne,
 I shall look back and see—
 THE PATH I WENT, AND THAT ALONE
 WAS THE RIGHT PATH FOR ME.”

“ OUR lives through various scenes are drawn.” So writes the great poet of the sanctuary; and his words find exemplification in the narrative we are relating; the next scene of which is laid in the heart of the Fens of the Eastern Counties.

This district was originally one of those immense forests which abounded in our land, broken at intervals by spaces which had been cleared, in which were farmhouses, surrounded by land either under tillage or pasturage. In course of time, however, the aspect of the country was changed. Storms which raged from the East raised the sea to a greater height than usual, and inundated the whole expanse, till gradually the woods and homesteads were destroyed, and the place which had been so fair and fertile became a vast dreary plain, sixty miles in length, and nearly forty in breadth, com-

prehending the North of Cambridgeshire and adjacent portions of Buckinghamshire, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk. The soil was for the most part spongy and boggy, and the putrid and muddy water, which often stood in pools that never dried, was the cause of numerous forms of disease. The whole was ill-drained, and especially the Eastern portions near the sea, was frequently flooded. Being so undesirable for the residence of man, it was thinly inhabited. Travelling was ordinarily difficult, often dangerous; and it was no uncommon thing for a belated wayfarer to miss the beaten path across the rank and sedgy grass, and plunge into a swamp and be drowned. Even so late as the middle of last century some parishes existed in which there were not two houses communicable with each other except by boat; and it was no uncommon experience even in more favourable localities, at certain seasons of the year, for the flood to rise so high that haystacks were swept away, the stock drowned, and the lower dwelling rooms in the houses half filled with water.

Unpicturesque as the region may appear in the eyes of strangers, it has a beauty entirely its own, and is associated with stories of romance and enterprise as interesting as any that are connected with more familiar spots in our island. We, however, are not now to describe its plains dotted with windmills, its long lines of pollards and its green tracts covered with sleek cattle, or to tell how King Canute listened to the sweet singing of the monks of Ely; or repeat the oft-told tale of Hereward and the Camp of Refuge, and the base betrayal of the brave men who had there sought shelter; but to relate how a company of godly fugitives here found, what their native land denied them, a peaceful home and liberty to worship God in the way they deemed right.

These were some of the French Protestants, whose steadfastness in the faith through long years of bitter and relentless persecution was so marvellous and heroic. In 1685 the

Edict of Nantes, a clement and considerate measure, issued in 1598 by Henry IV., which had granted full liberty of conscience to the Huguenots, as these godly people were styled—was revoked by his infamous successor, Louis XIV. The results were immediate and serious. They were absolutely forbidden to worship God according to their simple and scriptural method. Their humble sanctuaries were closed by law, and they were commanded to attend mass in Popish Churches. Persecution followed, and their condition became intolerable. Though not allowed to quit France, some at least contrived to escape, and found their way to England, toward the end of the reign of James II. Though this period was a dark one with the godly in our own land, Providence was kind to these noble refugees. In the then Duke of Bedford they found a valuable friend, who permitted them to settle on Thorney Fen, a portion of his extensive estate near Peterboro’.

The immense work of draining a considerable tract of marsh land to the North of Cambridgeshire, had been inaugurated about forty years before by this nobleman’s father, Francis, Duke of Bedford, and he himself was now bringing the work to a conclusion with great enterprise and ardour. Trustworthy and experienced labourers were imperatively necessary. These had been obtained from Holland, in which country such operations were common. He soon had the sagacity to perceive the character of the men to whom he had granted an asylum, and offered to engage them to assist in the great undertaking. Pleased with the prospect of employment, they cordially assented, and ere long were busily engaged with others in this toilsome but important work. The Duke was thus able to accomplish his purpose, and the tract of land thus reclaimed is to this day known as the Bedford Level.

Further and more scientific efforts have been subsequently made, and though much even to the present day remains to be done in certain localities, an almost inconceivable improve-

ment has been effected in the whole district. Immense value has been given to lands which were formerly swamps and wastes. Farmers, through the skill of more modern engineers, can prosecute their calling with profit ; and enjoy the fruits of their industry in health and comfort. The *first* organised and successful attempt to render the fens fit for the habitation of men, will however, while time lasts, be associated with these Dutch engineers, and brave Huguenot settlers, though the latter are too often overlooked by ordinary historians.

Their labours must have somewhat resembled that of the navigators or "navvies" of our day, but far different were their characters and capabilities. They came of a noble race and were not degraded by their toil. Not only were they diligent in their business, but they were sincerely and conspicuously godly. Wherever they went they formed themselves into Christian congregations, erected chapels, and appointed holy brethren to conduct divine worship.

The son of one of their number, David Culey, became a minister of great local eminence. Devout, thoughtful, and thoroughly original, he gathered a Church, which he served as pastor, and became the head or leader of a people, with some distinctive features, long known as Culeyites. Their principles were emphatically evangelical. A curious little volume of 212 pages is still to be met with, containing an embodiment of the theological views of their founder. The sect as such having served its purpose has long ceased to exist, but it cannot be questioned that for many years it did much to extend and foster true religion over a large area.

David Culey's chapel was at Guyhirn, near Wisbech, and continued to be the home of a little religious community for about a hundred years after his decease, their doctrines and practices much resembling those of the Huntingtonians or the Calvinistic section of the Independent denomination in our day.

For many years the congregation was affiliated with another

at Wisbech, the same minister, a Mr. Field, officiating by turns at each place. Not long after the death of this worthy man, in 1847, the causes, however, separated by common consent, the Guyhirn Church hoping to be able to support a pastor of its own.

It should here be noted that at this time the principles and practices of the Strict Baptists were extending rapidly in the Fen district, a fact which was doubtless owing to the many eminent ministers of this persuasion who were then labouring in the locality.

Of these George Murrell, of St. Neots, enjoyed the widest popularity; Thomas Sutton, of Cottenham; David Irish, of Warboys; W. Cattell, of Ramsey; Daniel Ashby, of Whittlesea; William Palmer, of Chatteris; and William Bull, of Over; though men of very varied gifts, exercised a far reaching influence. The writings of John Stevens (whose first two pastorates were at St. Neots and Boston), with other works of a similar character, were widely read, and developed a wonderful measure of religious intelligence. Many a plain farmer (like Thomas Bonfield, of Chatteris) was a masterly theologian. Many a worthy housewife (like the Mrs. Tolton,* to whom the first letter in the Memoir and Remains of John Stevens is addressed), though busy from morning to night in the dairy or the farm, thought deeply on religious questions. Agricultural labourers would discuss points like "Pre-existerianism," "The law or the Gospel our rule of life," or "Whether Job's wife was a godly woman," on their way to work.

* Many of the elder women smoked. The late Israel Atkinson informed us that he had frequently indulged his favourite habit in the company of the above-named Mrs. Tolton, who used a long clay pipe, and puffed with evident enjoyment on the other side of the wide, open fire-place. The prevalence of ague in these marshy districts necessitated the custom, which was immeasurably preferable to the reckless use of opium which has superseded it.

The Church at Guyhirn originally, as we have seen, consisted entirely of Independents, but at this time many of its members were Baptists, and their desire was to obtain the services of a Baptist minister, it being agreed that all who henceforth expressed a wish to join the community should be required to be immersed on a profession of their faith.

John Hazelton appears to have visited them at the commencement of the year 1848, his first sermon being based on the words, "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound." One who heard, writes, "We had a feast, for we were very hungry and enjoyed it much." He produced a most favourable impression, which the labours of a second-Lord's day considerably augmented: as is evident from the following frank and cordial letter:—

Guyhirn, Feb. 7th, 1848.

DEAR BROTHER,—Having taken a retrospect of your past visit to Guyhirn, and seeing the unity of the people in favour of your ministry, and how profitably they have heard while you pointed to the Rock of Ages, also the field which appears to open itself in this neighbourhood, and also feeling persuaded there will be a way opened for your coming amongst us; we therefore, as deacons, on behalf of the Church at Guyhirn, give you, with great pleasure, an invitation to come amongst us for three or six months, which time you feel the most disposed to accept, trusting that at the expiration of either of these times you may become our pastor.

We now stand as a Church without a pastor. Mr. Wilkin [who for a short time succeeded Mr. Field.—AUTHOR.] having resigned, we held a Church meeting yesterday. His letter was read, and the Church accepted his resignation. Therefore we now stand separate from the Wisbech Church.

JOHN BRADLEY,
WILLIAM NEWSHAM, } *Deacons.*

On the following Lord's-day he again occupied their pulpit,

and the blessing which was universally realised prompted them to forward a more definite communication:—

DEAR BROTHER HAZELTON,—At a Church meeting held on the 13th day of February, it was unanimously agreed to give you an invitation for twelve months. We, as deacons, on behalf of the Church, do with exceeding great pleasure make known unto you the mind of the Church. We have all heard you with great comfort and satisfaction. Should you be led among us, we hope your ministry will be blessed to the souls of God's people, and bringing others to a knowledge of themselves and a knowledge of the way of salvation.

We remain, yours in Christ,

JOHN BRADLEY,
WILLIAM NEWSHAM, } *Deacons.*

Guyhirn, Feb. 15th, 1848.

In these events our brother evidently saw the hand of Him who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. He therefore acceded to their request, doubtless hoping that he would find a peaceful and permanent sphere of work in the midst of an united and affectionate people. Long before the twelve months had expired it was unanimously felt that it would be unnecessary to prolong the probationary engagement, as all hearts were decided as to their final choice. The views of the Church are thus enthusiastically expressed:—

OUR DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—It is with feelings of the greatest pleasure and thankfulness to our covenant God, that He who has all things under His control and manages all our affairs, has been pleased to direct your footsteps to this part of His vineyard, to watch over the plants already rooted in Zion, and to sow the seed of eternal truth, that others may spring up and bring forth fruit, feeling certain the Lord has been pleased to bless your ministry amongst us; and in tracing all things which have transpired since you have been with us, we have every reason to feel assured that Zion's mighty Monarch has been with us. If we look at our congregation, *it is nearly four times*

larger; if we look at the Sabbath-school, it is beyond our most sanguine expectations; if we look at the new-born cause at Murrow, it appears the Lord has created a spirit of hearing, and we hope a hungering for the bread of eternal life. Looking at this state of things, we are led to exclaim, "What has not God wrought!"

We feel every encouragement to give you a pastoral call. As a Church of Christ holding strict principles, we do intreat you to accept the pastoral office over us, this invitation being unanimous. We do hope that you may hear the Head of the Church say unto you, "This is the way; walk ye in it."

May every spiritual blessing rest upon you. May Zion's King favour you with frequent visits, and lead you to contemplate the joys that shall be revealed, when life shall be extinct, is the prayer of the Church at Guyhirn.

WILLIAM NEWSHAM, }
JOHN BRADLEY, } *Deacons.*

July 23rd, 1848.

What true minister of Jesus Christ could withstand so earnest and pathetic an appeal? Our brother forwarded an affirmative reply in a characteristic letter, a few sentences from which will be read with interest:—

"May Zion's Head shed upon us His selectest influence; may the utmost peace and prosperity attend us; may that barren and sterile waste become as the 'garden of the Lord,' and oh, may the plants of Zion receive heavenly dews and sunshine again. I hope you will attend to village stations. I hope to see a Sabbath-schoolroom, therefore, I think the vestry had better be fitted up. You must know I want every wheel turning where I am, as I have always lived amongst a little ZEAL. See the friends, and write me soon. Grace, mercy and peace.

"I am, dear brethren,

"Yours truly in our lovely Christ,

"JOHN HAZELTON."

The union was thus consummated, and all hearts were glad and hopeful. The position was one, in some respects, of

delicacy and difficulty. The most cordial unanimity was, however, manifested; although it is not improbable that the composite character of the assembly, before referred to, was the cause of some little friction in succeeding months.

No clouds at first, however, darkened the young pastor's horizon—and he appears to have commenced his stated labours with great zeal, and the most sanguine expectations of realising the manifest blessing of Heaven. He was now twenty-six years of age. His character had formed; his powers developed; and his principles were beginning to be matured. His early enthusiasm was now becoming modified by his growing discretion; although, perhaps, he had still to learn the wisest way of utilising and repressing his uncommon energy and ardour.

The letter which follows was penned shortly after his settlement on August 7, 1848. He was away on a holiday, and having listened to an unsatisfactory sermon, he thus states the reflections to which it gave rise:—

“I hope my worship made me desire more than ever to unfold God's clean things, which are Christ's Person, work, covenant enactments, and the Church's unalterable safety, together with the imperishable basis of a poor sinner's hopes. Oh! how indestructible is religion, I mean that which centres in the great acts of a Triune God, and whose highest note will be for ever—‘Unto Him that loved us!’ I hope, when I return, to contend for this, to explain this, to encourage this, and also to detect it in God's little children.”

In the same letter he says:—

“I hope we may be able to cause the Edomites at P— to fear. I intend (D.V.) to try to get my foot and my voice into that Arminian nest, and should there be any young nestlings who require dove's food, may it be my honour to find them at that place until they are fledged, and able to fly over to *Guyhirn Dove-cot*.”

There are also allusions to the necessity of preaching stations,

to grants of Sunday-school books, to his preaching an anniversary sermon in Suffolk—in short, the letters of this period are those of a Christian of abounding energy.

But few persons survive who were then intimately acquainted with him. To the kindness of some of these, we are, however, indebted for a few reminiscences which cannot fail to be generally interesting.

He resided with an aged housekeeper, in the little house connected with the chapel. Here he prosecuted his studies with all his former ardour—his sermons manifesting not only considerable breadth and boldness of thought, but a careful elaboration in detail and finish, which could only have resulted from patient and prolonged preparation.

He is remembered to have had a pet cat, which was so attached to him, that it would walk up the village to meet him when he was expected home, and return in triumph upon his shoulder. Occasionally it is said that puss would even find her way into the pulpit.

He was, at that time, stout, and seemed vigorous and healthy, though his complexion had not much colour. His hair was quite black, and he wore it long. He dressed in the fashion of an ordinary dissenting minister. His whole appearance betokened confidence and energy. His address was loud and outspoken; and he struck strangers as a man of “bold and fearless dash.”

From a letter written by a lady, who was, at that time, governess in the family of one of the deacons, and who, therefore, had frequent opportunities of seeing him, we gain an interesting insight into his life and labours at this period.

“In company with Mr. ———, we used to leave home early on the morning of each Lord’s-day, and drove about two miles, so as to be in time for the opening of the Sunday-school. It assembled in a very unpretending little room attached to the chapel; and the instruction was conducted on very simple lines

of Bible teaching. Myself and one of the daughters used to take our dinners, of which we partook in Mr. Hazelton's humble little parlour, in order to be ready for the afternoon school, which was held before the service.

I was not a member of the *Church*, and therefore knew nothing of those little matters which too often manifest that God's children, in spite of what grace has wrought within, are frail and erring creatures. My impressions and recollections are therefore of the public services only, the memory of which is still very interesting to me. The perfect freedom from everything like fashion or show in that quiet little cause, with its homely village manners and customs, is very refreshing to look back upon.

"I was much instructed and encouraged under Mr. Hazelton's ministry. I especially remember two sermons, which were the means of good to my soul. The first was delivered on a week evening, in a cottage at Murrow, or Parson Drove, I cannot be sure which. Both were small villages. The text of the first was Proverbs xv. 29: 'The Lord is far from the wicked; but He heard the prayer of the righteous.' Though I cannot distinctly recall the address as a whole, I remember the seat on which I sat, and the influence which the word had upon me. One leading thought, however, remains with me to this day, often taking my mind back to the spot on which I first obtained it—namely, I was sure that some righteous persons had prayed for *me*. I did not doubt but that their prayers had reached heaven, and would be answered *even for me*. A hope was thus produced which I never before possessed, nor have I, perhaps, ever quite lost it.

"The other discourse, which was made specially useful to me, was based upon Psalm lvi. 8: 'Thou tellest my wanderings; put Thou my tears into Thy bottle; are they not in Thy book?' I well remember the emotion I then experienced, and some kind words that were addressed to me, after the service, by a member of the Church, a poor but good old man. He was a shepherd on a farm, and so well taught of God, that although he had none of the education of these days, he was well able to cheer the faint and help the desponding."

While at Guyhirn he formed one of the most valuable friendships of his entire life. The name of George Murrell, the minister of East-street Chapel, St. Neots, will long be remembered. He was a saintly and much tried man, and a preacher of almost unique power. His voice was thin, his diction plain, and he never made the slightest attempt at rhetorical display. His sermons were well conceived and thoughtful, but their charm lay less in their intellectual ability than in their rare and subtle spiritual pathos. Without working upon mere natural emotion he could appeal at will to the sympathies of heaven-born men, and draw tears from all eyes by a few gentle words.

His congregation was large and influential, and at this time numbered some who had called John Stevens pastor, when the Church assembled for worship in a room in the yard of an inn.

To John Hazelton an introduction to George Murrell was an interesting and important event. Their attachment was mutual, frank, and abiding. The "old man eloquent" regarded his younger brother in the ministry with solicitous affection, and counselled and comforted him as only a veteran in the Master's ranks could: and his influence must have been of unspeakable good to the young and ardent preacher of Guyhirn.

Ere long an interchange of pulpits was arranged, and our friend for the first time visited St. Neots.

Happily we know the texts chosen by him on the occasion. The morning sermon was based on 1 Cor. xv. 25, "For He must reign till he hath put all enemies beneath His feet:" and he dwelt on the *reign* of Christ and its *results*. His *reign* is based on three-fold right—natural, mediatorial, and acquired—and its *results* will be the subjugation of all His foes. In the evening his discourse was based on Psa. cxxxv. 6, "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and in all deep places." One sentence only has fastened itself upon the mind of the correspondent to whom we are indebted for these reminiscences. The subject of God's sovereign

choice of His people came under discussion, and he remarked that none question His right to elect angels, but when a minister contends that the Scriptures assert that He has acted in a similar way to the human race, the opposition and enmity of natural men, and even of some reputed Christians, are at once aroused. The congregation was a critical one to address. The chapel was well attended. The people had been trained to think. A decidedly favourable impression was produced by these two memorable discourses, and as years rolled on, our friend was always enthusiastically welcomed, and his printed sermons found a ready sale among his old and attached friends.

The receding years soon grow too dim to be accurately delineated, and the accounts of the Guyhirn pastorate are so few and fragmentary, that it is difficult to arrive at a clearer picture of this period than that with which we have now presented our reader. We behold a pastor, ardent, intelligent, and industrious, laying out all the powers of his renewed manhood for the benefit of an attached flock, a crowded sanctuary, successful village meetings, the blessing of God manifestly resting on labours undertaken for His glory, sinners saved, the Lord's people comforted, and in a word, almost every conceivable token of spiritual prosperity.

Further details we cannot obtain, save that his sermons were striking and original, and that he was somewhat fond of odd texts, which, however, he always turned to useful account. "On one occasion," writes a correspondent, "he preached from a most singular portion of the Word of God, though I regret that no record of the sermon appears to exist. Its subject was 1 Chron. xi. 22, 'Also he went down and slew a lion in a pit on a snowy day.'"*

* Possibly our dear friend *spiritualised* the text, and made *Satan* the lion, the *Lord Jesus* Benaiah, and the wintry day the period of the Redeemer's sufferings. This method of teaching the Old Testament Scriptures he almost abandoned in later years. A. G. Brown, sermon

Thus for some time the Lord signally blessed him. The chapel was renovated, a gallery erected, and all hearts beat with loyalty and love to their pastor and friend.

* * * * *

Very significant and solemn is the fact that matters of the most trivial character often lead to the most serious sorrow in the Churches of Jesus Christ. Words that might allay irritation are unspoken. Offence is taken where none is intended, and mountains are made of mole-hills. Circumstances of a personal and paltry character, to which prudent men should attach no importance, are magnified and distorted.

Thus "roots of bitterness spring up," and many are defiled. We cannot fully explain these things, otherwise than by resolving them into the inscrutable wisdom of the Divine arrangements, in the development of which it frequently becomes manifest that by events like these, the steps of His servant are directed to extended fields of usefulness.

These observations suggest a clue to the causes which resulted in our beloved friend's removal from a sphere of labour in which he had been so greatly blessed. Their exact nature we do not know; but it is certain that the state of things was such as to interfere most seriously with the peace and harmony of the Church and impede the course of divine blessing.

No blame was attached to the pastor, who had done his utmost to secure unanimity and concord. He simply yielded to the force of circumstances which he was unable to control; and, to the regret of all, placed his resignation in the hands of

No. 55, applies it as an incentive to Christians to do and dare great things for Jesus, the antitype of David. We believe, however, the point to be—the wise use of opportunity. Had Benaiah met the lion on a *plain in summer* he could not have killed it. He therefore waited till the beast was benumbed with cold in its pit (or den) on a snowy day, and thus was able to slay it.

his Church. It appears to have been accepted without much demur, and John Hazelton considered himself at liberty to look elsewhere for a ministerial settlement.

Ere long, one seemed to present itself. The Church which met at Eden Chapel, Cambridge, was without a pastor, and hearing of his circumstances, sought his services for a Lord's-day. Power accompanied this and a few subsequent engagements, and considerable union of heart was created between him and the people. Their minds, however, were set on Samuel Marks, a godly and savoury preacher, who had first ministered to them in May, 1850, and paid them frequent subsequent visits. A formal invitation to the pastoral office was, at length, conveyed to him. With this he could not comply, and on October 13, 1850, it was decided by the Church "to request brother John Hazelton to supply the pulpit during the month of December, with a view to a further call." On January 19, 1851, a special Church meeting was also held, when "it was proposed and carried by a large majority" that he should "have a further call for three months." We believe that our brother filled these engagements with pleasure, and indulged in a *secret hope* that this might prove the sphere of his permanent ministry. This none will wonder at. To live and labour in Cambridge could hardly fail to be an object of natural ambition to one to whom knowledge was unrolling "her ample page," "rich with the spoils of time;" while to serve an affectionate and united Church in so important a locality must have presented itself in an attractive light to a young minister who was wearied with the petty bickerings which could only occur in a rural congregation. This, however, was not to be the scene of his permanent labours. Our brother Marks was still the preacher whom the Church desired; and he was induced to accept an invitation to preach once more in Eden Chapel. Negotiations were re-opened. He re-called his former decision, and commenced a peaceful, happy, and useful pastorate, which he did not resign until

May, 1870, retaining the esteem and affection of all till the last.* Thus the unerring hand of our covenant-keeping God guided the steps of a faithful under-shepherd to this bereaved flock; while, with equal wisdom, our dear brother Hazelton was in due time led to the sphere of his future ministrations.

He therefore returned to Guyhirn, without knowing what course to take. His friends there, however, were impressed with the idea that the course of events indicated that the Lord had further work for him in this place. Interviews were held, the mind of the people ascertained, and at last a formal communication reached our friend, begging him to resume his stated labours among them. He was prevailed upon to consent, and for a few months the old relations were resumed.

It would assuredly be easy to forecast the result. The evil might have been smothered for the time, but it was not stamped out, for in twelve months' time the condition of things was as bad as ever. Saddened, though in all probability not greatly surprised, John Hazelton handed in his second and final resignation, and toward the close of 1851 it was publicly known that it was his determination to seek another charge.

His reputation was unsullied. To this day his name is honoured and loved by the surviving members of the congregation, though the Church has been disbanded, and the chapel long disused. It is to be wished that the Lord would again plant a Christian assembly in a spot where once He was worshipped and served with such ardour and simplicity.

To a man of his temperament this must have been a season of peculiar anxiety and sorrow. The *past* was unhappy, the *present* presented but few hopeful features, the *future* was uncertain and dark.

* A short but succinct memoir of this dear and excellent Christian minister, from the pen of our attached friend, Joseph Favell, senior deacon of Eden Chapel, Cambridge, was inserted in the *Gospel Herald and Voice of Truth* for 1870, page 186.

He appears to have visited different destitute Churches before he finally bade farewell to his Guyhirn friends.

To this period probably belongs the following incident. A certain Church was nearly riven asunder by the bitter contention of two parties of nearly equal strength. He was invited to serve them on a Lord's-day evening. Representatives of each section privately waited on him before the service, both entreating him to introduce some sentences into his sermon which might serve to bring the others into ridicule and contempt. Far wiser, however, was the course he adopted. Selecting for his text, "On His head were many crowns" (Rev. xix. 12), he made strenuous efforts to exalt his beloved Master very high. Great blessing accompanied and followed the sermon. The congregation was moved and melted; several were specially benefited, and a woman rescued from the blackest despondency. It was also the means of greatly ameliorating the condition of things in the future.

The best of men are men at best, and the course of events caused him, we believe, no light disappointment. In after years he solved the problem which then baffled him. Little did he think that these chequered scenes were the prelude to a long, happy, and most honourable pastorate, for which they formed the Divine preparation. By degrees this, at length, he proved. "Happy is the man that endureth temptation." Until expectations have been crossed, long laid plans frustrated, and our own poverty of resource realised, we may *sing* but we shall fail to *feel* the deep, the solemn truth of the poet's pathetic words—

"God moves in a mysterious way,
 His wonders to perform;
 He plants His footsteps in the sea,
 And rides upon the storm.
 Deep in unfathomable mines
 Of never-failing skill,
 He treasures up His bright designs,
 And works His sovereign will."

CHAPTER VI.

“He that believeth shall not make haste” (Isa. xxviii. 19).

“Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be;
O lead me by Thine own right hand
Choose Thou the path for me.

Smooth let it be, or rough
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight it matters not,
It leads me to Thy rest.

I dare not choose my lot,
I would not if I might:
But choose Thou for me, O my God,
So shall I walk aright.”

OUR narrative brings us to the year 1852. A curious lull followed the closing of the Great Exhibition of 1851, which some had considered as the pioneer of the reign of anti-christ, and others as the harbinger of the millennium, but dreams of universal and unbroken peace were soon rudely interrupted by the fierce conflicts of contending politicians at home, and rumours of war in foreign lands. The religious world, however, was calm. No wide-spread controversy agitated the different Protestant denominations, while the fear of Papal aggression tended to unite many evangelical Christians, of divergent views on matters of doctrine and ritual.

Several of the greatest and most popular preachers of the nineteenth century were at this time before the public, nor had lovers of the doctrines of distinguishing grace any cause to be ashamed of the prominent men who were earnestly contend-

ing "for the faith once delivered to the saints." Learned in a secular sense few of these indeed were: but under the tuition of the Spirit of God they had acquired no inconsiderable acquaintance with the truths which the Puritans so loved; while their conscientious application, and varied and versatile gifts, rendered their ministry of the greatest spiritual value.

James Wells, "lord of the lion heart and eagle eye," indisputably lead the van. Passionately attached to the doctrines he preached; a sworn enemy to free-will, * and a close student of his Bible: shrewd, witty, devoted; a fluent speaker, with a wonderful command of words; he delivered his remarkable sermons with rapid and eager utterance. They were a most curious blending of common sense, great gospel thoughts, allegorical interpretations of Scripture, and sarcastic invectives against Arminianism and Fullerism. He possessed a thorough acquaintance with the truth-loving public of his time, and could sway them as he pleased.

John Foreman was also at this time at the height of his popularity and power. Time and experience had somewhat modified and mellowed the character of his ministry. His richly-stored mind still retained its early vigour: the flight of years had chastened and developed, but as yet had not diminished, his wonderful capacity for presenting the truths of the everlasting Gospel in their adaptability to the requirements of the living believer. There was in his sermons a fulness, a variety, a manly honesty, and a vein of the tenderest and truest sympathy, conjoined with spiritual sobriety and savour, which combined to render his words peculiarly weighty.

Young and old alike, when in his presence, felt that they were with one who had received authority from the Master Himself. He could not truckle or temporise. He could be cheerful with the young and happy, and weep with the sorrow-

* A Prayer Book by J. Wells, 1832.

ful. To the ignorant but honest enquirer, he could speak with unaffected simplicity, while a thoughtful Christian theologian could touch on few points which had not received his earnest attention, and it is the concurrent testimony of all who knew him best, that, take him for all in all—as preacher, theologian, pastor, counsellor and friend—it will, in all human probability, be long before the Church is favoured with his like again. The engraved portrait, with which many are familiar, was published in the previous year.

Other useful brethren were likewise employing their gifts with great profit to their hearers. William Palmer, afterwards of Homerton-row, was then at Manchester. George Wyard, a savoury and interesting preacher, and an intelligent but not profound writer, was at Soho. John Bloomfield was commencing his pastorate at Meard's-court : Philip Dickerson had long been established at Little Alie-street Chapel, and was employing his pen to great advantage in the *Gospel Herald*: W. H. Bonner was fulfilling a probationary engagement at Keppel-street, which did not however, lead to a permanent pastorate. John Andrews Jones, then in his seventy-fourth year, retained much of his old force and fire: and was still vigorously engaged in preaching at old Jireh Chapel, Brick-lane, and in bringing to a conclusion his Bunhill Memorial Series—a collection of choice samples of the divinity he loved. Charles Box, while conducting an academy in Featherstone-street, maintained his reputation as a spiritual and suggestive minister at Enon Chapel, Woolwich. James Woodard, grave, thoughtful, and scholarly—beloved of all for his brotherly and unselfish spirit—was labouring at Ilford; his strange fondness for subtle niceties, and out-of-the-way-topics, somewhat retarding the success which his painstaking efforts deserved. Frederick Silver, of Jewry-street, a refined and exact, but withal savoury preacher; William Allen, of Cave Adullam, Stepney; Joseph Sedgwick, of Brighton, ere long to be suddenly called to his eternal home; John Stenson, of Pimlico;

Christopher Woollacott, of Little Wild-street; Daniel Curtis, of Homerton-row; Samuel Milner, of Pell-street, Stepney, with many others, all men of honest report and great boldness in the faith, were serving their generation by the will of God worthily and well when John Hazelton came to the metropolis.

Space must also be allotted to one who proved an instrument in the hand of God in directing his steps to his future sphere of labour.

Charles Waters Banks was, in 1852, the pastor of a Church, now long dismembered, which then assembled in Crosby-row. He was a peculiar though powerful preacher, a quaint but interesting writer; and in the conduct of his magazine, the *Earthen Vessel*, unquestionably displayed very high ability. His whole powers were consecrated to the cause he loved, and his services were as freely and unselfishly rendered as they were widely sought.

Conflicting as were the opinions entertained respecting *some* of the incidents in his long and chequered career, none could deny his unfailing and unaffected kindness of heart. It cannot be doubted that he felt real pleasure in endeavouring to serve his ministerial bretheren, many of whom were under great obligations to him for introducing them to pastorless Churches. His generous help, in this direction, proved of great value to our brother Hazelton.

After an interview at a country anniversary, Mr. Banks wrote to him respecting a small and recently-established interest in London, to which he had himself ministered in a very kind and generous manner.

Its story was interesting. In July, 1851, a few Christians in the neighbourhood of Clerkenwell withdrew themselves from the sanctuary in which they had previously worshipped, and for some months wandered from chapel to chapel unable to find a spiritual home. Two of their number having casually met in the street, a gathering of all the brethren and sisters who had

been separated from Church fellowship, and were thus scattered abroad, suggested itself to their minds. It was accordingly arranged to make the matter known, and to convene as many as could come for social converse and prayer, on the following Monday, at the house of Richard Minton, a worthy house-decorator.

None up to this period had entertained any idea of their formation into a distinct body, nor did any foresee the consequences of this first important meeting, which was held, as arranged, on the evening of August 4th. About twenty brethren and sisters were present, and the time was spent in the way proposed. The presence and power of the Holy Ghost were largely enjoyed. Ere they parted they agreed to reassemble at the same spot on the following week. This they did, and finally determined to hold similar gatherings statedly on the afternoon of each Lord's-day, and on Monday evenings, if a suitable room could be procured. One was at length found at an academy in President-street, King-square. Here they met for the first time on Lord's-day, the 17th of August, and the brethren were led to offer very earnest petitions for divine blessing and guidance. Here, too, their first collection was made, amounting to 2s. 6d., which paid the hire of the room.

Their numbers increased, and the limited accommodation proving insufficient, they again met at Richard Minton's, when it was determined to seek a place more suited to their requirements.

A larger school-room was accordingly obtained in Corporation-row, Clerkenwell, in which, on Lord's-day afternoon, August 24th, a goodly number of friends gathered with one accord, and all hearts were warmed by the Saviour's presence. They again assembled in the evening, and continued to meet twice on the Lord's-day and on Thursday evenings until September 7th. *

* *Earthen Vessel*, 1850, page 274.

The name of C. W. Banks now for the first time occurs in their history. Though pastor of the Church at Crosby-row, he had during the previous year assumed the care of a small congregation assembling in Ebenezer Chapel, Mason's-court, High-street, Shoreditch. He undertook no more than to preach on Lord's-day afternoons and Monday evenings, and to provide supplies for the other services, and with this understanding he had been actually recognised as pastor of the Church on November 4th, 1850, by P. W. Williamson, William Allen, and James Wells. The arrangement had not proved successful, and J. T. Messer had accepted the oversight of the little flock.*

The labours of C. W. Banks on the afternoon of the Lord's-day and on Monday evenings had thus terminated; and finding that he was desirous for another door to be opened elsewhere upon these occasions, and being themselves in circumstances of need, the little band of Christians who were meeting in Corporation-row were led to view the providential hand of God in this as an answer to prayer. They accordingly invited him to preach for them on Monday evening, September 8th. He came, was well received, and continued to conduct regular services at the above times, till the congregation so increased that it was again necessary to seek some more commodious place to meet in.

A little chapel in Nelson-place, City-road, suggested itself as suitable for their purpose. It had been long disused. On examination it proved to be in a filthy and dilapidated condition, and would cost at least £40 to renovate. This, to so small a congregation, was a serious undertaking; but after prayerful deliberation they decided to take it, Richard Minton generously agreeing to do the necessary repairs and to trust for payment. While these were in progress, they, of course, continued worshipping in the place in which they had experienced so

* *Earthen Vessel*, 1851, page 293.

much blessing, the last services being arranged to be held on the morning and evening of Sunday, September 28th.

A good congregation was desired, as collections were to be made to defray the incidental expenses of their meetings. C. W. Banks accordingly suggested that John Hazelton should be invited, and it was understood that he engaged to come. Bills were printed and circulated, but, to the disappointment of all, James Fenlon, a worthy brother of very ordinary gifts, appeared in lieu of the preacher whom they so eagerly expected. Who was to blame, is not now known, but the event was overruled for good. In all probability, had their future pastor paid his first visit before they were formed into a Church or had settled in their future chapel, a permanent union would neither have been suggested nor effected.

On the following Sabbath they met for the first time in their newly-renovated Mount Zion. No minister was present, and the time was spent in prayer and praise. On Monday, October 6th, the place was publicly reopened for the worship of God, three sermons being preached by John Foreman, W. Allen, and C. W. Banks. A report of the proceedings of the day, evidently from the Editor's own pen, is given in the *Earthen Vessel* for November, 1851. The sermons were good and appropriate, and we are told that "at the tea-meeting all seemed cheerful and united in the great things which had been preached *unto* them." Much true enthusiasm evidently prevailed.

On Tuesday, November 4th, their new chapel was the scene of a yet more significant service—the formation of thirty-four baptised Christians into a Church of the faith and order of the New Testament. R. Alldis, Israel Atkinson, and other pastors, took their share in the important proceedings of the day, the nature of a Gospel Church being explained, and the usual questions asked by George Wyard. In response, the lucid and interesting statement which appears in the *Earthen Vessel* for December, 1851, was read by its writer, George Burrell, as were

the articles of faith which were to compose the doctrinal basis of the union about to be consummated.

John Foreman proceeded to address those who had requested him to perform this impressive duty, requiring them all to stand, and join hand-in-hand, and thus express their oneness in the truth and ordinances of the Gospel. He next called upon each to lift up the right hand, in solemn vow to their covenant God, by the help of His grace, to stand fast in the faith they had publicly professed, and to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; concluding by giving the right hand of fellowship to two of the brethren in the name of the rest.

The simple but sublime service was brought to a close by the administration of the Lord's Supper, in which several friends from sister Churches united.

In a few days, the Church, thus scripturally organised, elected three of its numbers, Richard Minton, George Burrell, and William Akerman, to serve it as its deacons—a step which was signally crowned in the future with the Lord's evident blessing.

In January, 1852, John Hazelton yielded to the solicitations of his friend C. W. Banks, and consented to become his guest, and to serve the little Church. He therefore came to the metropolis, and it is remembered how weary and dispirited he seemed when he at length reached his destination in the Bermondsey New-road.

On the second Lord's-day in this month he occupied the pulpit for the first time. The impression produced was most favourable. His manner was earnest and solemn; and his two discourses thoughtful and able. Christ was exalted in the morning—the text being Zech. vi. 13; and in the evening he preached from Dan. iv. 35—his theme being the sublime doctrine the absolute sovereignty of Him who “doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth.” The Word was blessed to the hearts of the people.

The week passed. He attended the Thursday evening prayer

meeting, and on the Friday was introduced to some of the friends at R. Minton's hospitable home. On the following Lord's-day he again supplied the pulpit—and the services proved profitable to many. Understanding that he was at liberty, a unanimous wish was expressed that he should be invited to minister in Mount Zion for three months. On the following Wednesday evening a special prayer meeting was held to entreat the Lord to direct the movements of the Church, and to incline the heart of His servant, if agreeable to His will, to accede to their request.

The following letter to their Brother Hazelton was submitted, approved, and forwarded:—

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD—We, as a little Church of Jesus Christ, meeting for the worship of God in the above place, can, and do sincerely and affectionately hail you as a brother beloved in the Lord.

In looking back upon the past eventful footsteps we have trodden, under the gracious leadings of our good and great Shepherd, we are constrained gratefully to say, "What hath God wrought!" We have as a little flock to record His mercies, having been the subjects of His tender care and covenant regard. He has kept and preserved us in peace, led us into a little fold, and often met and fed us there with His own rich provision; our souls have been comforted and edified by means of the supplies we have had from time to time. Yet our desire has been to the God of our mercies, that He would, agreeably to His word of promise, in His own good time and way, graciously be pleased to raise up and bring amongst us one of His own sent servants, "a pastor after His own heart," who shall feed the Church which He hath purchased with His own blood, with knowledge and understanding. Having heard you for the past two Lord's-days to our unanimous satisfaction and soul profit, and finding you are at liberty to be removed from where you now stately labour, we do hope it is of the Lord in bringing you amongst us.

We cannot but feel thankful to our covenant God, that He has raised you up and endued you with grace and gifts for so solemn and important a work, and enabled you in a soul-edify-

ing and instructive manner to open up and set forth the great truths of the everlasting gospel. We likewise do feel very thankful that He has been pleased graciously to preserve you, not only to speak the truth, but to live the truth, in a consistent, upright, and God-fearing walk, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in the midst of this gainsaying and evil generation. And looking above by prayer and supplication to our gracious Leader, we do as a Church unanimously invite you to break the bread of life to us for three successive months, commencing the first Lord's-day in April next, by which time we trust, labouring together in prayer and watching thereunto, we shall be able better to understand what is the will of our gracious covenant God towards us. Praying that great grace may abound towards you and us in directing all our steps, we beg to remain, dear brother, yours in covenant bonds of indissoluble love.

(Signed on behalf of the Church),

GEORGE BURRELL,	} <i>Deacons.</i>
RICHARD MINTON,	
WILLIAM AKERMAN,	

January 21st, 1852.

This frank and affectionate communication caused its recipient no small embarrassment. His heart was not drawn to the metropolis as the sphere of his future labour, and he indulged the hope that every post would bring him an invitation to become the minister of Meopham Chapel, Kent, to which he must have paid some visits, of which no record exists. No such communication arriving, after some days' delay, and, as we may judge, with peculiar and conflicting emotions, he penned the following reply to his friends in London:—

*To the Church of Jesus Christ, meeting for the worship of
God in Mount Zion Chapel, Nelson-place, City-road.*

DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS IN GRACE RELATIONSHIP,—
I have received a unanimous invitation from you to serve you in the Gospel for three successive months, signed by your deacons

on behalf of the whole Church; and as I am requested to reply before I leave town, I sit down this morning for that purpose. Our God is in the heavens, and He hath done whatsoever it pleased Him—to watch the hand of God is one great part of the Christian's work. You have been mercifully called out of the world and are united as a part of Christ's visible Zion. An infinitely wise God has permitted and brought about a concurrence of circumstances which have placed you at Mount Zion for the purpose of spiritual worship. You have been supplied with the Word of Truth by God's sent servants from time to time, and at length, in the order of Divine providence, my steps were directed towards you. I came to London reluctantly. I confess that I prayed against it, spoke against it, and indirectly wrote against it, but was after all obliged to come. I entered Mount Zion on Lord's-day morning, January 11th, with no common feelings of reluctance. On seating myself in your vestry, I was sweetly led forth with a good brother in prayer. I entered the pulpit and preached Christ as well as I could, and it was with some holy feelings; but in the evening I felt, "Surely the Lord is in this place." It appears the Word was blessed, and knowing that I am leaving my charge at Guyhirn, you have invited me for a time. O that we may act holily and uprightly! I feel,—I cannot but feel, my dear friends, the great importance of my present position. God's glory is involved in it,—the peace of my own mind to a certain extent is connected with it. Your interest and edification are involved in it. Friends are anticipating. Enemies are watching. Is God smiling? I certainly believe He is. Do those circumstances under which we mutually appear, to any satisfactory extent open up the will of God? I am obliged—cheerfully obliged, to confess they do. In humble dependence upon that dear Jesus who hath hitherto helped me, I venture to accept your invitation, and with you, my dear friends, I pray that God will reveal His will as we mutually go forward, prayerfully watching His hand. If the Lord will, my labours at Mount Zion shall commence on the first Lord's-day in April.

I hope I am thankful I have a warm interest in your prayers. Let prayer ascend to God for me. Brethren, pray for me. My prayer is, that "I may come amongst you in the fulness of the

blessing of the Gospel of Christ." I shall aim to preach Christ to you. May you grow up into Him, be conformed to Him, and have grace to represent Him here below. May we together suck honey out of the Rock. May clusters of grapes from Eshcol refresh us. May hidden manna fall. May streams from the smitten Rock follow us. May enemies be defeated. May trials be overruled for our good. May you have great peace and real prosperity, and may it fully appear that your invitation and my acceptance (and it is cordial), are according to the good pleasure of God's will. Brethren, the Lord be with you. So prays yours in the Lord of life and glory, to serve affectionately and to the best ability God giveth, in the best of causes,

J. H.

The very *next morning* the long delayed letter from Meopham arrived, containing the expected request. It was of course too late; for the decisive step, which committed him to a term of service in London, had been taken.

Thus on apparently trivial circumstances momentous issues depend—and the God of all grace glorifies Himself by the wonderful fulfilment of purposes unalterably settled before the foundation of the world.

All human events are managed by His wisdom. Chance is a creature of the imagination, a falsehood, an illusion. It has no existence in the moral government of God.

“ Our life's minutest circumstance,
Is subject to His eye.”

“ An invisible hand is at work in connection with every step which we take, in a manner which will glorify God and secure our endless happiness and rest. In connection with every painful and every pleasant circumstance of our course here there is a deep laid and concealed purpose. A divine and golden thread connects them with the name and honour of Almighty God.”*

*John Hazelton's Sermons, Vol. I., pages 14, 15.

“The cloud” a few months subsequently led Isaac Lingley, who was just then leaving Colnbrook, to the vacant sphere in the Kentish village, while John Hazelton reluctantly accepted the Divine indication that his life-work was to be performed amid the rush and noise, the sins and sorrows of the million-peopled city.

During the interval which elapsed between the reception of this kind and characteristic letter, and the commencement of the probationary engagement in April—the congregation continued to increase, and a few were added to the Church—tokens for good which were gratefully welcomed by all.

On Lord’s-day, April 4th, according to engagement, the three months’ labours commenced. Mr. Hazelton preached in the morning, afternoon, and evening, after which he broke bread to the Church for the first time. It was a good day. Three friends were received into church fellowship, and the hearts of the people were encouraged and strengthened.

These indications of the Divine favour were continued and multiplied. On Tuesday, May 18th, another prayer-meeting was held, specially to implore Divine guidance, and on the 9th of June a Church meeting was held at which it was decided—in accordance with the rules of the Church—to proceed to a ballot; when it proved to be the unanimous wish that John Hazelton should be invited to accept the pastorate.

The following letter was therefore forwarded:—

*Mount Zion Chapel,
Nelson Place, City Road,
June 9th, 1852.*

DEAR BROTHER HAZELTON,—The time of your probation amongst us, dispensing the word of eternal life, having nearly elapsed, we as a Church have met together, and after united prayer and consultation on the all-important matter which lies before us, have come to the following unanimous conclusion. And first we can, and do, sincerely bless the Lord our God who in

His all-wise arrangements of Divine providence directed your way unto us. Our united prayer was, that our great Shepherd would according to His gracious promise appear for His little flock, and send amongst us one who would instrumentally feed our souls with knowledge and understanding. In this we believe our request has been graciously granted, and upon your coming amongst us we did earnestly desire that you might be brought amongst us in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. In this also with gratitude to our covenant God we acknowledge we have been heard and answered to the joy and satisfaction of our souls. Him whom our souls love, and in whom our wishes meet, and hopes centre, we have rejoiced to find the sum and substance of your ministry. Christ, Alpha and Omega, all and in all, has been set forth, and we can gratefully bear witness that it has proved to our souls an edifying, comforting, and fruitful ministry. Our desire has been, and is, with you to make Christ and His cross all our theme; so that in this respect, thanks to our God, we are one; and while we have been praying for some token of our Lord's approval and smile upon our proceedings, we have endeavoured to watch His good hand, and are encouraged to find, not only in the Church, but from many of those persons who are now stated hearers in the congregation, and who have been blessed under the ministry, a desire that you might continue amongst us.

We may say, in looking back upon that short period of time that has elapsed since you have been with us, we have had many sweet seasons in the house of God. We have felt the presence of the Lord, and our hearts have flowed together in sweet Gospel union, and the God of peace hath still maintained peace and unanimity in our borders.

We have been anxious to know and do the will of God, and our eyes we trust are still up unto Him, and all our future expectations are from Him: we have therefore after prayerful consideration, come to the conclusion, and that unanimously, to invite you, at the expiration of the three months, to accept the pastorate over us, and the Lord grant, if His holy will and pleasure, our will, and mind, and way, may be one, and *that* the mind and will of our God.

Praying that the all-wise God may direct both us and you in this important step, we remain, dear brother, yours most affectionately in Christ.

RICHARD MINTON,
 GEORGE BURRELL, } *Deacons.*
 WILLIAM AKERMAN, }

In spite of this most encouraging letter he hesitated to send an affirmative reply. Happily he took the lady, whom he afterwards married, into his confidence. To her the indications of the leadings of Divine providence seemed much clearer than to him. She wrote urging him to consent, "for if he did not, the Lord would make a Jonah of him."

In due course, therefore, he sent a letter accepting the invitation, prayerfully and hopefully. This was returned to him at his request to copy; was mislaid and lost; so that no record of it was entered in the Church book. It contained, however, a cordial and affectionate response to the Church's request, and breathed earnest desire and prayerful solicitude for the continuation of the Lord's manifest favours, which had been already so unmistakably apparent. The pastorate was entered upon at once, without any public notice or recognition, except the recognition of God. We are sure that the union was spiritual, and formed by God Himself; seeing that it was followed abundantly by tokens of Divine favour and approbation.

It is remarkable that our brother, who assisted at the settlement of so many of his ministerial brethren, on which occasions his words were ordinarily most weighty and encouraging, never once had any service of the kind in relation to his acceptance of either of his charges.

We believe, indeed, that though he rarely declined, he rather shrank from such engagements: as he too often had occasion to observe that recognition services of the most jubilant and

enthusiastic character were followed by coldness, collapse, and disunion.*

On the following Lord's-day he was prostrated by an attack of marsh ague, a predisposition to which he doubtless acquired while living in the Fens, and which the anxiety of these critical days may have accelerated.

This happily transient indisposition, however, only served to draw out the sympathies of his people. The complaint left him, and the following week, being in a great measure restored, he preached twice.

The evening discourse was specially thoughtful and suggestive. It was based on the comprehensive words, "The Lord reigneth" (Psa. xcvi. 1). His divisions were:—

- I. The declaration.
- II. The present obscurity.
- III. The exhortation.
- IV. The vindication of the Divine character.

It was felt that the sickness which had laid him aside had not been without its precious fruit.

But few records of his sermons at this period have been preserved, yet these, though but imperfect and fragmentary jottings, show that he gave the utmost possible preparation to the labours of the pulpit.

Two discourses, delivered on the morning and afternoon of Lord's-day, April 25th, 1852, were considered especially memorable, the text on both occasions being Mal. iii. 17, "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."

* He regarded such as *recognitions* and not *ordinations*. In this he differed from the older English dissenters, who very earnestly believed in the scripturalness of ordination by the laying on of the hands of the properly ordained ministers who were present.

The divisions of the first sermon were as follows:—

- I. Who are the Lord's jewels?
- II. Where they are found.
- III. What their condition.
- IV. Who their finder.
- V. Their value to their Proprietor.
- VI. Their safety and security.
- VII. Their casket.

VIII. Their brilliancy—they glittered, when and how? At the throne—in trouble (when sanctified), in death, through eternity.

The second sermon had two main branches, and was thus divided:—

- I. The PROPRIETOR of these jewels—"THE LORD OF HOSTS."
 - The Lord—His supremacy.
 - The Lord of Hosts—the hosts of angels, men, and devils.
 - The Lord of Hosts, for their protection.

The Lord above all—and able therefore to keep and care for His jewels.

- II. Their MANIFESTATION—"When I make up."
 1. By regeneration.
 2. In death.
 3. In the day of judgment.

The following divisions of a sermon, delivered on the previous Lord's-day, are also very characteristic:—

"But rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke x. 20).

- I. The family register.
- II. Some of the prominent features of the registered names.
- III. The believer's ground of rejoicing.

"It was a God-honouring and blessed sermon," adds the correspondent, to whose kindness we are indebted for both of the above.*

* These notes were most kindly furnished by our brother George Burrell, of Watford, from whose "History of the Church at Chadwell-street Chapel" much information has also been obtained.

Encouraging results soon began to follow this hard and honest Gospel work. The congregations so increased that considerable inconvenience was experienced. Three hundred people were frequently crammed into the little building, while others could not gain admission. The Church was therefore brought to the gratifying but very serious difficulty of confessing that their present accommodation was utterly insufficient for their requirements. They therefore sought divine direction. A committee was formed for the purpose of raising the requisite money to build or procure a larger place of worship. £3 were collected there and then to commence with. Enquiries were at once prosecuted in every direction in adjacent parishes, but nothing suitable could be found.

In August, 1852, their pastor paid a visit to the scene of his former labours. His object was a happy one. Some months previously he had formed an attachment to Miss Jane Johnson, a member of the Church at Guyhirn, and on the 12th they were married at the Baptist Chapel, Ely-place, Wisbech.

Many distinguished ministers of the Gospel have displayed a singular lack of wisdom in their choice of helpmeets, and their whole future career has been hindered by the incompatibility and uncongeniality of the women whom they imprudently took to their hearts and homes. Mutual disparity in purpose and pursuit has embittered and marred their whole lives.

This union, however, through many chequered years, proved all that could be desired. Gentle and unobtrusive, the lady he loved possessed a very clear insight into human character, and an almost intuitive perception of what was right and befitting in conduct. Firm and judicious, keenly interested in her husband's important work, but never obtruding herself, kind, calm, domesticated and devoted, his heart safely trusted in her, and his people found not only a wise counsellor, but a safe and sympathetic friend. She cheered him in times of depression, shielded him from the petty vexations which are

incidental to the happiest pastorate, and which so tend to rob a minister's spirits of elasticity and earnestness. One in spiritual things, they ever shared their holiest confidences, and their love, like a calmly flowing current, gathered strength as time rolled by.

A perceptible improvement in some important features of our friend's official character is perceptible from this period. He had never lacked enthusiasm in his calling. He had invariably laboured with transparent singleness of heart. His work had been solid and laborious, and he had spared no pains to attain polish and perfection. An almost indefinable impetuosity, an impatience of restraint, a wild eagerness that too soon subsided into weary depression, had, however, marked, if they had not marred, his public life. A new and subtle influence now began to correct and develop his character; and the calm purposefulness, the habitual repression, and the steady determination which were such important factors in his subsequent usefulness, gradually became habitual to him.

Meanwhile the Church were not unmindful of the paramount necessity for a more commodious place of worship. On the 22nd of September a public meeting was held. A report of the proceedings of the committee was presented, and cards and books were issued with a view to raise money for the necessary object. A prayerful and hopeful spirit prevailed. This was a period of great mercy to the Church. Constant additions were made to their numbers, and their little sanctuary, in the hot summer weather, was crowded to the very doors.

Some months rolled on, till on the night of December 31st, 1852, what is sometimes called a watch-night service was held. The gracious conduct of God was gratefully reviewed, the blessing that had followed the ministrations of their "dear brother and now beloved pastor" was cordially acknowledged, and "the continuation of the Lord's great lovingkindness and manifest favours" in the future was earnestly entreated.

* * * * *

These scattered people were thus gathered together under the care of one of the wisest of under-shepherds. In these days, when Churches are so apt to give rash and unwise invitations to untried men, and ministers are so prone to make hasty pastoral engagements which cannot but terminate in sorrow and confusion, the preceding account of the prayerful caution so solicitously manifested by this infant Church is fraught with important lessons. They took no step without the light, and therefore did not stumble. "In all their ways they acknowledged the Lord," and "He directed their paths." The peace and prosperity of following years had the most intimate connection with the holy prudence of these early days.

John Hazelton's settlement in London is also not unworthy of consideration on more than one account. Happy as the issues proved, it was a step which he himself was most reluctant to take. Thirty-one years afterwards he recalled the circumstance to his attached and affectionate flock. "I am sure," he said, when preaching on Isa. xlix. 16, "I had no desire to come to London. I wrote and schemed and planned against coming, as some of my hearers know, but the bounds of our habitation are fixed, and the 'purpose of the Lord, it shall stand.' It was the intention of the great Redeemer that I should come and labour here, and here I have been sustained through a period of twenty-nine or thirty years" (Sermons, vol. iii., p. 102).

It is also instructive to recall the chequered and circuitous road by which he was led to the spot in which he was hereafter to be so abundantly blessed. It happened to him, as to the majority of men of marked individuality, that he did not at first find his appropriate sphere of pastoral labour; but Bungay and Guyhirn, bitter as were the sorrows associated with them, sustained no unimportant relations to Chadwell-street. Thither too he was guided by God's unerring hand at the right time, a time most auspicious for him, most advantageous to his

people, and most opportune for his section of the Baptist denomination. Few can study the history of our Churches at this period without perceiving that a cultured, sober, affectionate, and spiritually-minded man, who could think clearly and act decisively was at this very juncture sorely needed to occupy a prominent position in the metropolis.

The advent of our dear brother was a singular blessing to all who had the interest of a full-orbed Gospel at heart. How he was helped to establish his position, how his influence widened and extended till he became, in his own peculiar way, as truly a power for good as any of the eminent men whose names are mentioned above, it will be the object of the following pages to show.