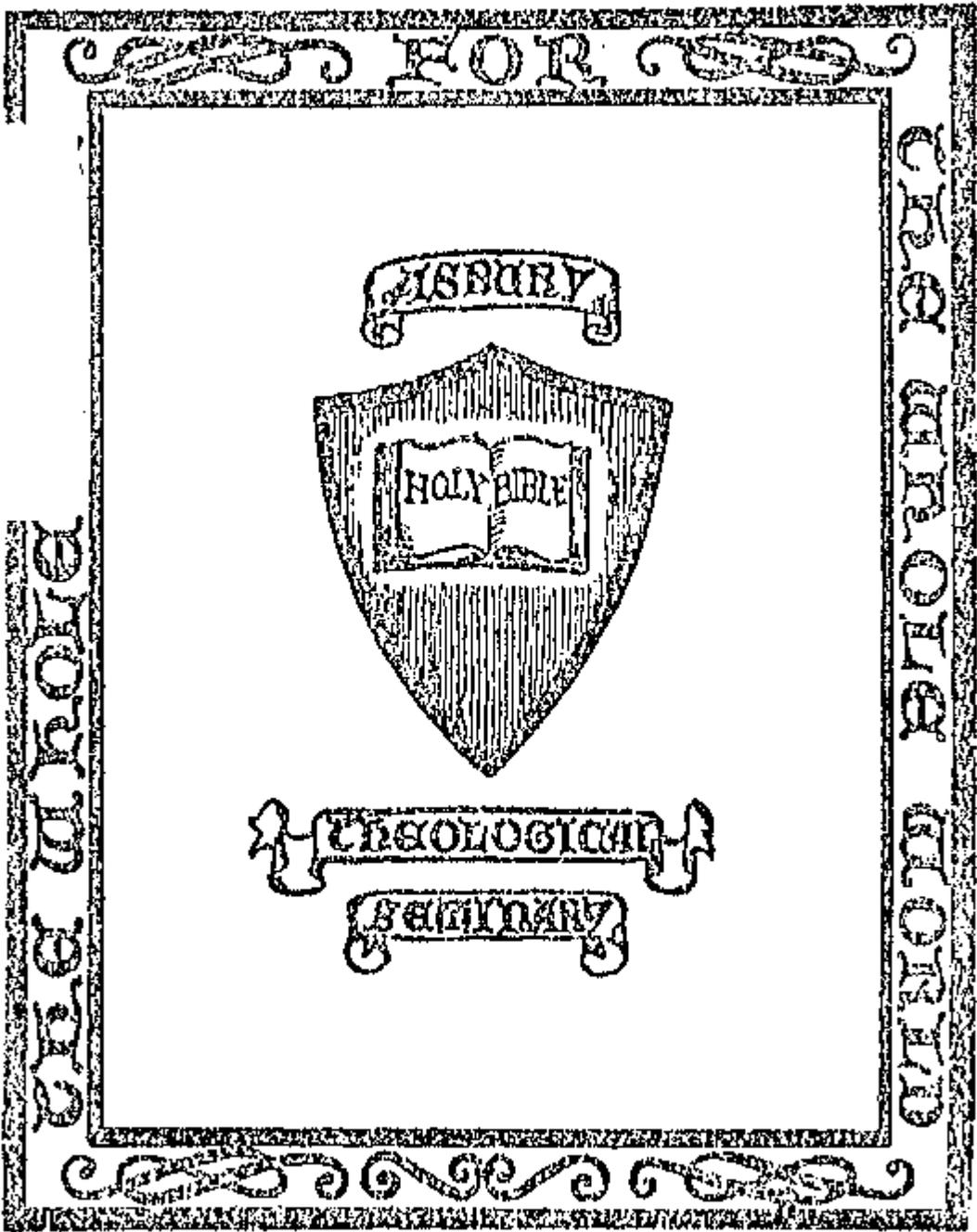


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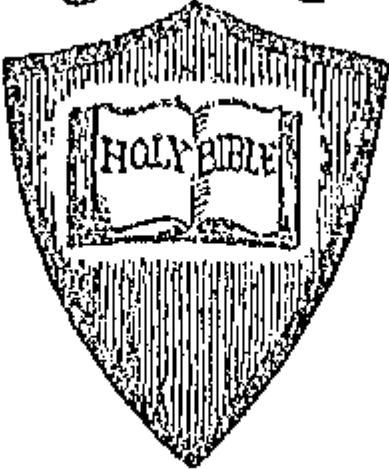
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A FLAME OF FIRE.

LIFE OF MR. WILLIAM BRAMWELL.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH—PARENTAGE—EDUCATION—APPRENTICESHIP.

THE subject of this volume, William Bramwell, was born in February, 1759, at Elswick, in the parish of Saint Michael, Lancashire, England. His parents, George and Elizabeth Bramwell, had a family of eleven children, of whom William was the tenth.

Mr. Bramwell's parents were warmly attached to the Established Church (Church of England); and, according to the light which they possessed, educated their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But their religious views were exceedingly circumscribed. Nor were they singular in this respect; for spiritual darkness at that period nearly enveloped England. The gospel light introduced at the time of the Reformation had dwindled away into obscurity; and "blind leaders of the blind" were too frequently the only guides of the people.

Mr. Bramwell's native village, and several other towns in Lancashire, were among the most benighted parts of England. The Roman Catholics composed a considerable part of the population of that country. The members of other denominations, therefore, assumed not a

little consequence from being styled *Protestants*. Without possessing greater spiritual light than their popish neighbors, they considered this name as the test of religion and the passport to sanctity.

A chapel of ease, called Cop Chapel, was the place of worship frequented by Mr. Bramwell's parents. It was situated about a mile from their house, but no matter what the state of the weather was, they were scrupulously exact in attending the service of the Church every Sabbath, with all their family. It was their earnest wish, that their children should be observant of every moral obligation, and attentive to all the duties of life. Beyond this, their ideas of pure religion had never extended. In love with the form of godliness, they were destitute of its power.

A rigid adherence to the ceremonies of the Church was the highest standard of their piety; and none of their children could be guilty of a more grievous offense against them than that of absenting themselves from the Church service, or resorting to the meeting-house of some other denomination.

From his parents, whose religious attainments, it is seen, were very limited, William imbibed the most profound veneration for the Lord's-day. And, indeed, what man ever attained to any eminence in piety who was not very scrupulous in his regard to the Sabbath?

As an instance of his extreme tenderness of conscience in this respect, it may be stated that, during his apprenticeship, he was much attached to botanical pursuits, and kept a number of curious plants and shrubs in the window of his lodging-room. Although some of them, from their delicacy, required particular care and

attention, yet if he had neglected to water them on Saturday evening, and found them drooping in consequence on Sunday, he would not by watering them commit an act which he considered a breach of the observance of that sacred day, but postponed it until the following morning.

By his parents, William was also instructed in a strict regard to truth. And this was not inculcated by precept or exhortation alone, but happily recommended by practice. His father, like the great Epaminondas, never told a lie, even in jest.

Of whatever importance the affair might be in which George Bramwell's name was mentioned, if it were known that he had sanctioned any thing by his affirmation, his neighbors considered his word to be decisive, and required no further proof of the authenticity of that matter. For the same humble imitation of the God of truth, his son William was equally distinguished. Even in his unconverted state, this was a virtue which he constantly practiced, and from the observance of which he never receded. On no occasion could he be enticed or intimidated to betray its interests or disobey its dictates; and, in certain instances, in which a person of less firmness would have wavered, fearless of consequences, he asserted the truth with the boldness of a lion.

Unimpeachable veracity is so rare among mankind, that the wicked themselves display a kind of supernatural respect for the manly character in which it is found. It is indeed a legible trace of the Deity, which commands universal admiration, and on which the most sublime virtues have a firm foundation. All these instructions forwarded the operations of Divine grace in his mind.

At the early age of seven years, while he was yet under the roof of his father, he was favored with the awakening visits of God's Holy Spirit; he had powerful convictions of sin, and deeply felt the necessity of a change in his heart and affections. These religious feelings never left him, till he experienced the great blessing of a sound conversion.

In his childhood, Mr. Bramwell was much afflicted with the ague and other disorders. He had the small-pox when he was six years of age; and such was the excruciating bodily anguish which he felt when this disease had reached its crisis, that, in a paroxysm of pain, he ran out of the house, threw himself into a pond and was completely immersed in the water. But He who "guards the sacred heirs of heaven," had His own gracious purposes to answer by him, and suffered no further evil consequences to ensue from this involuntary act, than some larger boils or blisters which arose on his skin, by which for some time nature endeavored to cast off her surfeit. These did not cause great irritation or pain, but were very troublesome; and while they remained he was ordered to be confined to his room. Much of his time was then spent in singing psalms in bed. At length all the bad effects of his indisposition left him; and he gradually recovered his former health and vigor.

Singing was always a delightful exercise to Mr. Bramwell. He was endowed with a fine mellow voice, well adapted to sacred music; until his subsequent excessive labor and exertions in the ministerial office had robbed it of its sweetness.

From his infancy he had been well instructed in Church psalmody, his vocal powers having early ren-

dered him a favorite among the singers at Cop Chapel. When a child he had a place given him in the singer's pew, where a stool was set to elevate him, that his voice might be heard by the whole congregation.

He received such an education as the means of instruction in the village of Elswick could afford. Knowledge had not in those days given itself that elastic bound, which it has since done. The qualifications which were then considered necessary for young persons in the middle ranks of society were not numerous, and few persons could enjoy even the whole of these advantages.*

The early part of his youth was spent at home. His father, who was a farmer, and possessed of a small landed property, employed him for some time in agricultural affairs; but when he had nearly attained the age of sixteen years, he was sent to Liverpool to reside with his eldest brother John, who was a merchant of great respectability in that town. It was intended that William should have been brought up to that profession; but after a short time his disinclination to that calling was so manifest, that his parents desired him to return home; and he was not backward in adopting their advice. His chief ground of dissatisfaction was, that the situation militated against his religious pursuits. His reason informed him, that the seductive dissipation of a gay seaport, and the opportunities which he would there have of indulging himself in its pleasures, were circumstances ill suited to promote the higher objects that he had in view.

As he was at this period very ignorant of vital godliness, he did not perceive how great a disparagement

*Mr. Bramwell, by diligent study, improved his education as he grew older, becoming acquainted with the classics.

it was to the grace of God to distrust its sufficiency in preserving him faithful and incorrupt in an honest calling, however numerous and great his temptations might prove. To the close of his life, he was accustomed to speak of his residence in Liverpool with horror and disgust; and always thanked God that he had been providentially called to escape from the snares and pollutions with which it abounded. He frequently said, that had he remained much longer in Liverpool, he would have been ruined forever.

Soon after leaving Liverpool, he engaged himself, with the approbation of his parents, as an apprentice to Mr. Brandreth, a currier, in Preston.

Mr. Brandreth, though not himself religious, placed the greatest confidence in his apprentice, and highly valued him for his unimpeachable honesty and integrity,—qualities of far greater importance in trade than the narrow-minded slaves of sin are willing to allow. An instance of the sterling excellence of these virtues occurred soon after he went into his master's employ. The person who acted as salesman and retailed goods to the customers, was in the habit of giving a more glowing description of his articles than plain truth would warrant. When those persons hesitated to receive his testimony, he generally appealed for a corroboration to any of the apprentices that were present.

The first time William Bramwell was applied to in this manner, he instantly replied: "No, sir. The quality of that leather is not so good as you have represented it!"

This anecdote was soon circulated; in consequence of which, his virtue was honored, and his character became established with all who knew him. He had also dis-

covered several malpractices among his fellow-apprentices, and, without hesitation or fear of the evil which the delinquents might practice against him, acquainted his master with the knavery. This procured Mr. Brandreth's respect and good will, and he was fully convinced that such an apprentice was invaluable, and that every act of his would be performed with a particular view to his master's interest.

The ardor and zeal of Mr. Bramwell's mind in perusing the Oracles of Divine Truth, could not escape the observation of any one who knew him. He prosecuted this study to a very late hour in the night, when he had retired to his chamber. To render these pursuits impossible, he was allowed no candles in the evening. When he was deprived of this resource he still persevered in the attainment of Divine knowledge, and when the family was retired to rest, laying himself down on the hearth, as near the fireplace as possible, by the remnant of the fire he read as long as the cinders afforded light. He often related this circumstance as one of the greatest privations he ever endured, and he urged others to make a right use of those privileges which were in this instance denied to him.

Yet opposition in all its forms was rendered very helpful to his improvement; as it caused him to be more solicitous in devoting every moment of leisure during the day to the reading of the Sacred Records and other books of instruction. He seized with avidity every opportunity of increasing his knowledge of Divine things; and this earnestness soon turned to good account.

CHAPTER II.

CONVICTION—CONVERSION.

ONE Sunday evening, while on his return from Elswick, where he had been to visit his parents, their great kindness to him was suddenly and forcibly brought to his recollection. At the same time he began to reflect, with the greatest shame and confusion, on his numerous acts of disobedience and ingratitude to them. Though he had been a most dutiful child, yet he was so overpowered at the view of the offences which his memory recalled, that he fell down on his knees in the lane, and there cried aloud to God to have mercy upon him, and to pardon his transgressions.

As soon as he arrived at his master's house, in Preston, he retired to his room, and rolled himself on the floor in an agony, like a person distracted.

These troubles of mind continued for some time, both night and day, without intermission. He was deeply humbled at the sight of his conduct, and could not be satisfied till he took the earliest opportunity of returning to Elswick, to confess his offenses in the presence of his father, and crave his forgiveness.

His father, who considered him one of the most dutiful of sons, was surprised and astonished at the power of these convictions, which he could not comprehend. "Dear!" said he, "what hast thou done to lay these heavy charges against thyself? Thou hast not murdered anybody."

At the same time he told William that so far from being undutiful and ungrateful, he had done nothing which required a parent's forgiveness. With this consoling assurance he returned to Preston greatly relieved in spirit, and formed a strong resolution to change the course of his life.

His repentance towards God continued deep and sincere, and he sought every occasion of manifesting it, by frequent acts of fasting, mortification, and prayer. He also attended the service at the parish church with the most scrupulous regularity; and showed his genuine zeal for the honor of God, and his hatred to sin, by reproofing the latter at all seasons, and in every company.

But while he was the subject of these Divine operations, he stood alone, and had no pious friend to whom he could disclose his feelings, or with whom he could take sweet counsel respecting his soul.

Of all the professors of Christianity in the neighborhood, the Papists were the strictest; and, to a youthful mind, they appeared to evince some due regard to the external forms of religion. Though he had been sufficiently well instructed to dislike the principles and general practices of that Church, yet the austerities, penances, and privations, to which its members occasionally subjected themselves, to him seemed highly reasonable; and at that period he had no doubt of such sacrifices being acceptable to God.

Laboring under the greatest concern for the salvation of his soul, he adopted several modes of mortifying the flesh, of the most ascetic and severe description, different in some external respects from those of the Roman Catholics, but the same in principle. To remind him of

his sins (on account of which he thought he was not sufficiently humbled), he frequently cut off the skin and flesh from the ends of his fingers, and would not for some time suffer the self-inflicted wounds to heal.

About midnight he often arose and stole down into the kitchen, while the members of his master's family were asleep; then sprinkling a corner of the floor with some of the roughest sand he could find, and uncovering his knees, he knelt down, and in that painful posture spent many hours of the night in fervent supplications for the pardon of his sins.

Whilst in this disconsolate state of mind, he sometimes wandered from Preston, after the labors of the day; and, walking as far as his father's house in Elswick—a distance of ten miles—he slowly returned the same night, without partaking of the least refreshment, or informing any of his father's family that an individual so wretched as himself was near their abode. After this walk of twenty miles, he was ready to commence his labor, the next morning, as early as any of his master's workmen.

His constitution was naturally robust. But had his flesh been brass and his sinews iron, the austerities in which he persisted, voluntarily, for so many months would have ruined his health. His friends perceived that his countenance became pale, and that his strength was quickly declining. Being concerned for his welfare, they applied for advice to two physicians, who, unable satisfactorily to account for the emaciated state of his body, called the undefined and hidden cause of his unhappiness "a nervous complaint."

But God, who is rich in mercy, shortly afterwards

effected for him a great deliverance. While in the act of receiving the sacred elements of the Lord's Supper from the hand of the Rev. Mr. Wilson, under whose ministry he had greatly profited, he obtained a clear sense of pardon.

All his bodily ailments soon forsook him, and his "spirit rejoiced in God his Savior." Darkness and gloom, guilt and condemnation, were at once removed in a manner incomprehensible to him, and utterly beyond all that he had ever been taught to expect or desire. The height of his joy was equaled only by the previous depth of his sorrow. He testified in every way his unfeigned gratitude to Him who had made him glad with the light of His countenance.

Yet at this critical period, his Christianity was of a solitary kind. He walked alone in the ways of God. To strengthen his newly-formed gracious habits and holy resolutions, he knew of no method equal to that of associating himself with the Church singers. He thought that no body of men upon earth approached in their spirit and employment so nearly to the occupation of "the spirits of just men made perfect," as these cheerful choristers. But he was doomed to disappointment.

There were other places more frequented by these rustic musicians than the church. To perfect themselves in their various parts, they considered it needful for the whole fraternity regularly to assemble at a rendezvous; and that most commonly was a large room in an ale-house.

By gradually imbibing the spirit and habits of his new associates, Mr. Bramwell almost imperceptibly lost the comfort and happiness which he had so recently

experienced. His religious feelings became dull and languid; and in this uncomfortable frame of mind he passed nearly three months.

About this period, one of his friends proposed to lend him the works of Mr. Wesley. He accepted the offer; but he soon afterwards returned them unread,—declaring that he durst on no account read them, as he was fearful of their corrupting effects, and of the tendency which they would have to destroy his religion.

Mr. Roger Crane, who was then a member of the Methodist society in Preston, had heard that Mr. Bramwell was so much in earnest for the salvation of his soul as to be almost “beside himself.” In consequence of this he took some pains to be introduced to him. He soon became acquainted with him, and gained his confidence; and this, after an interchange of many visits, was ripened into a strong and mutual attachment. Such an intimacy was peculiarly pleasing to Mr. Bramwell, and he perfectly acquiesced in all the religious views and statements of his more experienced companion.

At length, Mr. Crane concluded that it was his duty to invite his friend to hear a Methodist preacher, and assured him that he would find the truths which he loved explained in a clearer and more Scriptural manner, and with greater comfort to his own mind, than by his favorite clergyman. He always declined the invitations thus given; and as a full explanation of his resolution and the motives which influenced him, he told Mr. Crane that his father had exacted a promise from him, not to attend the preaching of the Methodists, and had warned all his family against any connection with such a despi-

cable community. He considered them an infatuated and deceiving body of people, like wolves in sheep's clothing.

This continued refusal caused a great shyness between the two young men. Their interviews became less frequent; friendship had no longer its former attraction, and in the end their intimacy entirely ceased. They kept apart from each other nearly six months, and, in the interim, Mr. Bramwell became more lax in his principles, and less scrupulous in his conduct. The alluring habits and maxims of the world, which he had hitherto firmly and successfully resisted, seemed almost insensibly to steal upon him. He drooped in spirit, and lost all sensible comfort.

He was in this unhappy frame when a conversation that took place between him and Robert Looker, one of his master's workmen, induced him to attend for the first time the preaching of the Methodists. Robert relates the circumstance in the following manner:

"I have now been forty years acquainted with Mr. Bramwell." He and I wrought together in the same shop nearly six years. I never knew his equal for strict morality. His parents were rigidly attached to the Established Church. When he received his first religious impressions, he became very zealous. I heard him reprove sin in all places, and the commission of it vexed his righteous soul from day to day. At that time he had neither heard a Methodist preacher nor attended any of their meetings. He was prejudiced against them, but yet not so much as his parents were.

"A very wicked old woman lived near my master's shop. She was a notorious swearer and blasphemer.

Mr. Bramwell's principles would not allow her to utter oaths and curses in his hearing without reproving her. One day when she had been exercising herself in her usual way, he wrote a note and sent it to her. It contained some appropriate passages of Scripture, and in the conclusion it was intimated that, as all profane persons had their portion in the everlasting fire of hell, she was evidently one of them, and must expect the same dreadful doom unless she repented of her sins and abandoned her evil practices.

"The old woman, knowing that Mr. Bramwell and I were intimate, came like a fury to our house, and with a dreadful oath called Mr. Bramwell (who was absent) 'a Methodist devil!' My wife, who was then a strict Roman Catholic, asked the reason of her warmth. She replied, 'He has sent me a note, in which he says that I am a wicked woman, and must burn in hell forever.'

"More chagrined at hearing him stigmatized for being a *Methodist*, than if he had been censured for open impiety, my wife* said, 'Jane, you shall not call him a Methodist, for I am sure he is not one of that sort!'

"When Mr. Bramwell called at our house in the evening, my wife began to relate the charge she had heard against him, by saying, 'William, Jane M. has been cursing you as a Methodist; and I told her that no one should give you that scandalous name in my hearing; for I hate it more than any other.'

"On hearing this, Mr. Bramwell turned to me, and said, with a smile, 'Robert, did you ever hear the people called Methodists?'

*Mr. and Mrs. Looker some years afterward were converted through Mr. Bramwell's instrumentality.

"I told him I had heard them sometimes in the fields near London, but knew very little about them, as I liked the Church.

"He said: 'I understand they have begun to preach in Preston; will you go to hear them?'

"I replied, 'I am quite willing.'

"He then said: 'My Bible tells me, "They that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution," and these people are much vilified and persecuted.'

"He told me he would make some inquiry about the time of preaching; and on the appointed day we repaired together to the small house where these outcasts assembled. We found not more than a dozen persons present, and the sermon was on the subject of the bond woman and the free woman. I liked the drift of the discourse pretty well; yet at that time it did not take hold of my heart. But Mr. Bramwell was like Lydia, whose heart the Lord had opened to receive the Word. When we went again we heard old Mr. Hooper, and having begun to meet in class, we were soon afterwards admitted into society. Mr. Longley gave us our first tickets."

About this time, his real friend, Mr. Crane, was told by a person with whom he was intimate, that Mr. Bramwell was afraid he had offended him by not going with him to hear the Methodists, although he had been repeatedly invited. He had told the same person that if Mr. Crane again desired him he certainly would not refuse.

Mr. Crane, therefore, once more designedly met him, and commenced a renewal of their former friendship, by requesting the pleasure of his company to hear a Meth-

odist preacher. He cheerfully assented to the proposal of his friend, and in the evening they went and heard Mr. Andrew Inglis. On their return, Mr. Crane asked him how he liked the sermon. "O!" said he, his eyes beaming with joy, "this is the kind of preaching which I have long wanted to hear. These are the people with whom I am resolved to live and die."

CHAPTER III.

CLASS LEADER—LOCAL PREACHER—SANCTIFICATION.

AFTER the expiration of Mr. Bramwell's apprenticeship his parents removed from Elswick to Preston, for the sole purpose of enjoying without interruption the society and converse of their son, for whose religious character they entertained the highest esteem. But how greatly were they mortified when they knew that he had begun to associate with the Methodists! They were so much exasperated that they threatened to render him no pecuniary assistance towards enabling him to commence business.

This, however, had no effect upon him; for he had been taught, that in order to be an approved disciple of Christ, it might in some cases be absolutely necessary to "forsake both father and mother." Yet being very solicitous to promote their spiritual welfare, he continually urged on them the necessity of a change of heart, and had strong and rational ground to hope towards the close of their lives that his labor had not been in vain.

About this time, Mr. Wesley visited Preston; and some of Mr. Bramwell's Christian friends took an opportunity of introducing him to that great and good man.

Mr. Wesley looked attentively at him and said, "Well, brother, can you praise God?"

Mr. Bramwell replied, "No, sir."

Mr. Wesley lifted up his hands, and smiling, said, "Well! But perhaps you will to-night."

And, indeed, so it came to pass; for that very night he found the comfort he had lost, and his soul was again enabled to rejoice in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

This interview was rendered beneficial to Mr. Bramwell. He received a clearer manifestation of the love of God, and was more fully established in the way of the Lord. His desire for the salvation of sinners was intense; and this impelled him to labor in season and out of season.

By his instrumentality prayer-meetings at five o'clock in the morning were established. He became the leader of a class; and so zealous was he to promote the best interests of his fellow-creatures, that he began to exhort them to flee from the wrath to come.

Very soon after Mr. Wesley's visit, Mr. Bramwell was appointed a local preacher. Not satisfied, however, with laboring to save souls at Preston, he preached throughout its neighborhood, and that part of Lancashire, comprising a considerable tract of country, called the Fylde. It is said that his first text was, "Prepare to meet thy God!" In visiting most of the villages in the neighborhood, he met with violent opposition and persecution, so that he might be truly said to have gone with his life in his hand.

He had frequent struggles concerning his call to the ministry, and the subject lay with such weight upon his mind, that he has been known to spend a considerable portion of the night in wrestling with God for Divine direction in this important matter.

His feelings may, in some measure, be conceived, from the following circumstance related by himself: He

was walking one day, with some friends, over Preston Moor, when one of them asked him if he knew the place where the Rev. Isaac Ambrose was accustomed to spend a month in retirement every year, and employ himself day and night in importunate prayer before God for the prosperity of his work. Mr. Bramwell replied, "No; but under a certain hill near this place I once spent thirty-six hours together in prayer to the Lord, that I might know His will concerning me."

Although he was thus the subject of much anxiety and temptation, yet he was often encouraged by seeing the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand. Under his sermons multitudes were convinced of sin, and many received a knowledge of their acceptance with God. Ann Cutler, or, as she was more familiarly called, "Praying Nanny," a woman remarkable for holiness, was one of the earliest fruits of his labors. She resided at a village near Preston, in which Mr. Bramwell frequently preached.

In the work of the ministry, he spared neither exertion nor expense. He sometimes paid five shillings* for the hire of a horse, on the Sabbath; and rode forty or fifty miles, preaching three or four times, and that very often in the open air. But it was his usual practice to walk on these occasions.

Striking interpositions of Providence were extended to him on many emergencies: Once, as he was returning from preaching, his horse fell and threw him over its head with great violence to a considerable distance. For a long time he lay senseless; but on recovering from the shock he rode forward to Preston, and preached the

*About \$1.12½.

same evening without any medical assistance. But the consequences of this fall had nearly proved fatal, for he became extremely ill, and his health was with difficulty restored.

Having experienced the pardoning mercy of God, he walked in the fear of the Lord, and enjoyed the comfort of the Holy Ghost. That he might more clearly perceive what was his Christian calling, and enjoy all the salvation purchased by the blood of Christ, he regularly perused the Sacred Volume and implored Divine direction. Being obedient to the teachings of the Spirit, it was not long before he was convinced of the necessity of a further work of grace upon his heart. He now saw that it was his privilege to be cleansed from all sin.

Miss Brew heard him relate the manner in which he received this great blessing of *entire sanctification*, nearly in the following words: "I was for some time deeply convinced of my need of purity, and sought it carefully with tears and entreaties and sacrifice; thinking nothing too much to give up, nothing too much to do or suffer,—if I might but attain this pearl of great price. Yet I found it not; nor knew the reason why, till the Lord showed me I had erred in the way of seeking it. I did not seek it *by faith alone*, but, as it were, *by the works of the law*.

"Being now convinced of my error, I sought the blessing by faith only. Still it tarried a little, but I waited for it in the way of faith. When in the house of a friend at Liverpool, whither I had gone to settle some temporal affairs previously to my going out to travel, I was sitting," said he, "as it might be on this chair [pointing to the chair on which he sat], with my mind engaged in various meditations concerning my affairs and future

prospects, my heart now and then lifted up to God, but not particularly about this blessing,—heaven came down to earth; it came to my soul. The Lord, for whom I had waited, came suddenly to the temple of my heart; and I had an immediate evidence that this was the blessing I had for some time been seeking. My soul was then all wonder, love, and praise.

“It is now about twenty-six years ago. I have walked in this liberty *ever since*. Glory be to God! I have been kept by His power. By faith I stand. In this, as in all other instances, I have proved the devil to be a liar: he suggested to me a few minutes after I received the blessing, that I should not hold it long—it was too great to be retained—and that I had better not profess it.

“I walked fifteen miles that night to a place where I had an appointment to preach; and, at every step I trod, the temptation was repeated, ‘Do not profess sanctification, for thou wilt lose it.’ But in preaching that night, the temptation was removed, and my soul was again filled with glory and with God. I then declared to the people what God had done for my soul; and I have done so on every proper occasion since that time, believing it to be a duty incumbent upon me. For God does not impart blessings to His children to be concealed in their own bosoms, but to be made known to all who fear Him and desire the enjoyment of the same privileges. I think such a blessing can not be retained, without professing it at every fit opportunity; for thus we glorify God, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation.”

This account is much in unison with the declarations of the holy and saintly John Fletcher, who confessed to having lost the experience by not testifying to what the Lord had done for him.

CHAPTER IV.

CIRCUIT PREACHING—A REMARKABLE DREAM.

MR. BRAMWELL was much blessed in his labors as a local preacher; and it was soon the unanimous sentiment of the Church, that he was calculated for a much more extended sphere of usefulness. Indeed, for four years after he was free from his apprenticeship, he had himself felt a powerful persuasion that he was called by the great Head of the Church to the exercise of the ministry. On this account he had purposely abstained from engaging in any secular employment for his own benefit, although he had an opportunity of doing it to a great advantage.

During the whole of this period he had been occupied in introducing the doctrines and the Discipline of the Methodists into many of the uncivilized districts around Preston, in a manner the most zealous and disinterested—his exertions being made entirely at his own charge. Such was the general impression which he had of his designation to serve God in the gospel of His Son. But with him, as with many other eminent heralds of Christ, this impression was subject to some fluctuating doubts; and it occasionally became the ground-work of Satan's buffeting and temptation. Yet it still retained its firm hold on his mind, and impelled him to continue his services in that best of causes, to which he considered himself devoted.

About that time some new places had been added to Liverpool Circuit. It therefore became requisite to have an additional preacher. Mr. Bramwell, having been recommended by the superintendent, was appointed by Mr. Wesley to go there and officiate as an itinerant preacher till the following Conference. He immediately complied; but he had not been long employed in this capacity before a strong representation was made by his friends at Preston, to induce Mr. Wesley to recall him, as the work of God in that town was then increasing, and Mr. Bramwell's labors were particularly required for its furtherance. To this request Mr. Wesley acceded, and Mr. Bramwell accordingly returned to Preston, to the great joy of those who had known him, and felt the power of his preaching. By this arrangement, his parents, who had almost given him up as a desperate seceder from their principles, were exceedingly gratified, and fondly hoped to regain their former influence over him.

He now thought his lot determined, and himself providentially settled for life in Preston. He therefore commenced the business to which he had served an apprenticeship. But the Lord had prepared for him a far more important station, in which he had designed him to act a most conspicuous part. Not many months after he had taken a shop and house, Dr. Coke wrote to him several times, and earnestly requested him to give up his business, become an itinerant preacher, and travel in the Kent Circuit.

This was a most important crisis in his life—being surrounded by his friends and relatives, and his business also engaged him—and his feelings on the occasion may

be more easily conceived than expressed. He earnestly sought direction from Heaven, and consulted his Christian friends. At length, believing he was called of God to devote himself entirely to the work of the ministry, he no longer conferred with flesh and blood, but immediately settled his temporal affairs, purchased a horse and a pair of saddle-bags, and rode to the Kent Circuit, in the winter of 1875, a distance of about three hundred miles.

When Mr. Bramwell reached Canterbury, he found the society in a very languid state, a division having taken place some time previous to his arrival. But his entrance into the circuit, with that man of God, Mr. Shadford, was the means of such a revival as had not been witnessed for many years.

The people regarded Mr. Bramwell as a messenger of God, and expressed an earnest wish that those preachers who should afterwards labor among them, might always manifest the same zeal, love, and disinterestedness in the sacred cause.

His genuine piety and affectionate concern for the welfare of souls, and for the prosperity of the work of God, were evinced in the whole of his deportment among the people; and he was so truly consistent that he never appeared to lose sight of his character as a Christian minister. Into whatever company he went, he seemed to carry with him a consciousness of the Divine presence, which influenced the whole of his conduct.

Levity and *trifling* could never appear in his presence. Frequently, when at prayer, so powerfully did he wrestle with God, that the room seemed filled with the Divine glory, in a manner the most extraordinary, which made

some persons ready to imagine that the very boards shook under them.

The prayer-meetings were generally held in private houses; and as he knew the spiritual condition of certain persons present, when the meetings were over, he sometimes detained the people, saying: "Stop, friends! Let us spend a few moments more for such and such a person. Probably such an one may be present, and yet unblest." At a meeting of this kind, while Mr. Bramwell was agonizing in prayer, a powerful effusion of the Spirit descended upon the people, as though a flash of lightning had darted into the room.

Like a faithful servant, he lost no opportunity of doing good whenever an occasion presented itself, although numerous dangers and difficulties might surround him in the attempt. Thus, when seven young men were condemned to be hanged at Maidstone, another young preacher and he, on hearing of the intended execution, were much affected, and thought that one of them ought to preach on the occasion. After mature reflection, it was determined that Mr. Bramwell should address the assembled multitude.

A large blockstone became his pulpit. When he began to speak to the immense concourse of people, the general cry was: "Knock that fellow down! Kill him!" At this moment, a gentleman on horseback rode among the crowd, and cried: "He is a good man! Let him alone! Hear him!" Through this stranger's manly interference he was permitted to proceed, and to finish his discourse.

In the same circuit he was forewarned, in a dream, of approaching danger. He dreamed that he was way-

laid in a certain road by some men, who wished to kill him. Having to go that way some time afterwards, his dream occurred to him; he thought that there might be something intended by it; he therefore determined to turn aside, and went another way. By doing so, he providentially escaped; for, as he afterwards found, certain men had been waiting for him at that very time, with a fixed resolution to murder him.

He was once desired to pray with an unhappy female, who was very ill, and who had been much addicted to drunkenness. Some time before, her husband had become pious, and had often invited Mr. Bramwell to his house. This woman had been raised several times in answer to prayers. He was sent for once more in haste from his circuit, to pray for her. When he arrived, he and her husband knelt down; and, after being silent a few minutes, he exclaimed: "I can pray no more! The Lord will not answer! She will now die!" and, in the course of a few hours, the unhappy woman died.

This was the first year of his itinerant ministry, during which he did not spare himself, but was "in labors more abundant." By the Spirit of God he was instructed in many things that concerned the great work in which he was engaged. He delighted in his sacred calling; and, from the success which attended his preaching, he was encouraged with increased earnestness to "do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of his ministry."

CHAPTER V.

MARRIAGE—HOME LIFE.

IT appears that Mr. Bramwell was to have been married on his return from Liverpool; but as Dr. Coke had repeatedly solicited him to go to Kent, he had the firmness to bid adieu to the object of his affections, and did not see her again until a year and a half had elapsed. Previous, however, to his acquiescence with Dr. Coke's request, he informed him that he could only go on condition that he might be married as soon as he returned.

What the Doctor said to him is not now known; but Mr. Bramwell always understood that he had obtained his promise and consent. He regularly corresponded with the young lady, Miss E. Byron, who was of a very respectable family; and on his return to Preston they were married, accordingly, in July, 1787.

At the Conference for the same year he was appointed by Mr. Wesley to labor in the Lynn Circuit; but, as Mrs. Bramwell could not leave Preston on account of the arrangement of some family concerns, he thought it was not his duty to go to Lynn, and wrote to Mr. Wesley to that effect.

Mr. Wesley did not think proper to appoint him to any other circuit, although he was earnestly requested to do so by Mr. Shadford and some other aged preachers, who regarded Mr. Bramwell as an eminently useful and holy young man. His name therefore remained on the stations for Lynn, but he continued at Preston.

To a man more inflated with an idea of his own consequence than Mr. Bramwell was, or less fervent and sincere in his wishes for the salvation of sinners, this second deferring of his hopes would have been most grievous and distressing. But, though he was naturally of a sanguine disposition, the grace of God had humbled his views, and made him willing to behold the glorious remedy of saving truth administered by any other hands than his own.

He did not rate his ministerial talents so highly as to imagine, with some weaklings, that, when he was quiet, the wheels of Christ's Church would not move or would only have a tardy motion. He considered it a high honor to have "a dispensation of the gospel committed to him" by Christ Jesus, and to bear some humble yet active part in the grand operations of human redemption. In the bare anticipation of this, he had rejoiced, when he was first called to Liverpool. And when he was so honorably remanded to Preston, to move in an humbler sphere, and preach the glad tidings of peace among his friends and relatives, he had felt the summons to be no small trial. Yet to that which he deemed a providential call, he had yielded a cheerful obedience.

He had now again dedicated himself wholly to the work of the ministry, and by an unexpected occurrence was compelled to desist from his labors as an itinerant preacher. This was a season in which Satan assailed him with heavy temptations; but, having committed nothing worthy of reproach, he maintained his wonted firmness of spirit. He did not, like many, sullenly refuse to lend his hearty co-operation to the cause of God;

but with pleasure embraced every opportunity of declaring the glad tidings of salvation.

It is not here meant to be insinuated that Mr. Bramwell showed throughout this affair any disposition of mind allied to stoical apathy. On the contrary, this proved to him a period of considerable anxiety. It called for the exercise of all the faith and patience of which he was possessed. Not knowing how to act, he sometimes thought that, after all, the Lord might still intend him to be a man of business. But he recollected the word of the Lord, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy path." He gave himself to prayer, asked counsel of God, and was always ready to say, "Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth." His way was soon made plain, and that in a manner which he could never have anticipated.

In order more clearly to elucidate this circumstance, we produce the following account, from Mr. James Gray:

"The Bristol Conference for 1786 appointed Messrs. Joshua Keighly and Edward Burbeck to labor in the Inverness Circuit. They met at Aberdeen, and set off for that circuit together. When approaching within two miles of Keith, on the high hill which overlooks it, in the dusk of the evening about sunset, they beheld, about twenty yards from them, a dark shade, like a screen drawn right across the road. They took courage, and rode up to it, which divided and opened like a two-leaf gate; and as they passed through it, an audible voice said, 'You may pass on to your circuit, but shall never return to England.'

"This prediction was actually accomplished in the

death of these two holy men of God in the course of the year. They slept at Keith that night, and next noon arrived at Elgin, where I then lived. I called at their lodgings, and found Mr. Keighly reading, and Mr. Burbeck had gone to bed, having rested none the preceding night, owing to the thoughts of the vision and the voice. Mr. Keighly then told me, solemnly and seriously, what I have related above.

“They continued to fulfill the duties of their ministry until the end of July, about the time of the sitting of Conference, when Mr. Keighly was seized with a brain fever, and died on the eighth day.

“Mr. Burbeck came, four days after, from Inverness, and lodged with me until he received his appointment from Conference, which was for the Blackburn Circuit. He seemed anxious to get out of our circuit, that he might defeat the prediction. In pursuing his journey to Keith, he was taken ill, four miles before he reached that village, and was carried thither sick of a fever, and died on the ninth day.”

Mr. Burbeck's box arrived at Blackburn, and the society were in daily expectation of seeing him; but they were afflicted with the intelligence that he had died in Scotland on his way to the circuit. This providence was truly mysterious, and especially when the circumstances that preceded it are considered. The society at Blackburn wrote to Mr. Wesley concerning it, informing him that they were without a preacher; and Mr. Wesley immediately replied by requesting Mr. Bramwell to take the Blackburn Circuit and labor in Mr. Burbeck's place.

To him and his friends this event appeared almost

miraculous, and no room was left for the reasonings of unbelief. He was now fully persuaded that he was called of God, and instantly prepared for his new station.

The society at Blackburn received Mr. Bramwell as an angel of the Lord. He left Mrs. Bramwell at Preston, while he labored in the circuit with his usual acceptance and success.

While on this circuit, he was exposed to the various persecutions which then raged against the followers of Mr. Wesley. In visiting some places, Mr. Bramwell was obliged to pass a tanyard, where several bull-dogs were kept. These were always let loose upon him, and he was obliged to defend himself from their ferocious attacks as well as he could. A large stick, pointed with iron, was his weapon of defense. It served also to assist in walking. Notwithstanding this, his legs were frequently torn in a dangerous manner by these animals.

We are now called to behold Mr. Bramwell in a different relation and summoned to fulfill other important duties in life. Having entered into the marriage-state with one who was in every respect suitable for him, he did not, like too many, relax in his zealous exertions, and become remiss in the discharge of his ministerial functions; but while he manifested the greatest kindness to her who shared largely in his affections, he seemed to feel the import of these words of the apostle: "It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; for the fashion of this world passeth away." On his return home from the circuit, his first inquiries in general were concerning spiritual things. He evinced the strongest desire to promote the best in-

terests of a wife whom he ardently loved. Whenever he was called to leave her, he commended her to God in earnest prayer.

At the Conference of 1789, Mr. Bramwell was appointed to Colne Circuit, in Lancashire. He traveled there two years, and the Lord blessed his labors during the whole of that time in an eminent manner. He resided at Southfield. Mrs. Bramwell was now called to endure all those privations to which the wives of the preachers were subjected in the commencement of Methodism. She had left her home and her friends, to reside among strangers; and instead of enjoying the society of her husband, which might have compensated for other inconveniences, so unremitting were his exertions, and so fervent his zeal, in promoting the interests of religion and the conversion of sinners, that he was never at home, excepting one night in the course of every six weeks.

Amidst all the outward difficulties with which he had to contend, "the pleasure of the Lord still prospered in his hand." "He went on his way rejoicing;" while, by reading, meditation, and prayer, he continued sedulously to qualify himself for the important charge with which he had been intrusted. By this judicious course, he "studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." His "profiting soon appeared unto all men." They perceived that "the hand of the Lord was with him." And while he improved in gifts and graces, the people of his care "rejoiced in the light which was thus transmitted."

CHAPTER VI.

PENTECOSTAL REVIVALS—SECRETS OF HIS SUCCESS.

AT the Conference in 1791, Mr. Bramwell was stationed at Dewsbury. Before that period, some very unpleasant disputes had existed among the society in that place, which resulted in the chapel being lost to the Methodist Connection.

On Mr. Bramwell's arrival, he soon found that religious animosities and foolish bickerings had nearly destroyed the religion of both parties. To a minister of Christ, whose only desire is to see Zion in prosperity, such a state of things would be peculiarly afflictive, and perhaps few could have felt it more keenly than he. He mourned in private before the Lord; and from the commencement of his ministry among that people, he resolved to enter into no disputes. His object was to win souls to Christ. With him, the possession of chapels was a thing of little importance. Adverting to the state of the society, he on one occasion writes: "I could not find a person who experienced sanctification, and but few who were clear in pardon."

Having witnessed the powerful effects of prayer in other places, he now began to supplicate the God of all grace. He exhorted the people to join him in this important duty; and, to afford them more frequent opportunities of doing this, he instituted prayer-meetings at five o'clock in the morning. The blessed effects of

these intercessions were soon seen. At a band-meeting, in November, 1792, four persons entered into the experience of entire sanctification.

About the same period, Ann Cutler was led to visit Dewsbury. It was her custom to rise between three and four o'clock in the morning, and wrestle with God for a revival, while Mr. Bramwell was engaged in the same exercise at that early hour in another apartment. It was almost impossible for any one to sleep, or be unrefreshed in spirit, while near two such zealous persons, who often relieved the burden of their souls by praying aloud. Mr. Bramwell remarks: "As I was praying in my room, I received an answer from God in a particular way, and had the revival discovered to me in its manner and effects. I had no more doubt. All my grief was gone. I could say, 'The Lord will come; I know He will come, and that suddenly.'"

He then says: "Nothing appeared very particular till, under Nanny Cutler's prayer, one person received a clean heart. We were confident that the Lord would do the same to others.

"At a prayer-meeting, two found peace with God; and in that week two more received the same blessing. On the Sunday morning we had a love-feast for the bands, when several were much concerned for sanctification. One young woman received the blessing of sanctification. On Monday evening, the bands met. A remarkable spirit of prayer was given to the people. Four persons received sanctification, and some were left in distress.

"Several, who were the most prejudiced, were suddenly struck, and in agonies groaned for deliverance.

“The work continued almost in every meeting, and sixty persons in and about Dewsbury received sanctification, and great numbers found pardon.

“The more I consulted the Acts of the Apostles and Church history, the more I was convinced that this was no new thing, either in manner or effects; but that in every great work of God similar effects were produced.”

The work there began to spread in almost every direction. In one quarter, about one hundred new members were added to the society, and many believers were quickened and excited to greater diligence and activity in the work of the Lord. Mr. Bramwell “rejoiced as one that had found great spoil.” To see sinners awakened, penitents pardoned, and believers enjoying sanctification, afforded him the most lively satisfaction. This great revival occurred during the second year of his stay in Dewsbury. The first he describes as “a year of hard labor and much grief.” It was the season of “his sowing in tears,” but in the second year “he reaped in joy.” Being a man “strong in faith, he continued instant in prayer.” While he waited on the Lord, he was of good courage, and the Lord strengthened his heart.

In order to be rendered more useful, he visited them from house to house, and advised, reproved, exhorted, or comforted them, as circumstances might require. In some instances, his great concern for the temporal as well as the spiritual welfare of the people, was instrumental in effecting the conversion of those who had before been careless and unconcerned about their personal salvation. His uniform conduct and his conscientious and undeviating attention to the important duties of the ministry soon rendered him extremely popular. And

even many of the rich and honorable frequently attended his preaching.

About this time, his intimate friend, Mr. John Nelson, had a remarkable dream: He thought he saw Mr. Bramwell standing on the top of a very high ladder, which appeared to be elevated in a perpendicular direction, its base resting on the ground; but it was without any support or stay at its summit. From this, Mr. Nelson inferred that Mr. Bramwell was placed in a most perilous situation. He immediately wrote and informed him of the dream, and, by way of caution, added that he appeared in that dream "to have mounted as high as he could get." "Yes," replied Mr. Bramwell, when he answered his letter; "but did you see me fall?"

Into whatever circuit Mr. Bramwell went, the people immediately perceived, from the zealous manner in which he discharged the duties of his sacred calling, that he considered the work of the ministry to be no trifling occupation. The simplicity of the method, "by which it hath pleased God, in His infinite wisdom, to save them that believe," excited his admiration. And, however it might be stigmatized in the view of human wisdom, as "the foolishness of preaching," he felt himself, and perceived in others, that the declaration of "Christ crucified" universally proved to be "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God."

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVIVAL FIRE SPREADS—PREVAILING PRAYERS.

MR. BRAMWELL was appointed, in the year 1793, to the Birstal Circuit. A revival of the work of God had commenced in the preceding year. On his entrance into this circuit, he did not use any extraordinary public efforts, but prayed much in private, sometimes whole nights, and exhorted every one in society to adopt the same practice. These nights were occasionally spent in intercessions before the mercy-seat of God in behalf of certain individuals, for whose spiritual welfare he felt an uncommon concern.

At the love-feast on Christmas-day, 1793, the Lord poured out His Spirit in a very remarkable manner. Many persons were clearly awakened, and not less than fifty souls "obtained redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins."

His colleague could not endure the apparent confusion which was frequent on these occasions. He therefore thought it his duty to oppose the revival, and his conduct influenced the leaders, who, for a time, maintained a cautious reserve, and kept at a great distance, not knowing what judgment to form about the strange proceedings.

One of the most judicious declares the change of his sentiments thus: "In the love-feast on Christmas-day, I had such a conviction that this was the work of God, as caused me immediately to close in with it, and to give

it my hearty co-operation. When I came out of the chapel on that day, several of the leaders gathered around me, and asked me what I still thought about it. I replied, 'We have long been praying for a revival of religion; and now, when it is granted us, shall we be dissatisfied, and oppose its progress, because it does not exactly accord with our weak ideas, and does not manifest itself in the particular manner in which we expected it?'

From this time, all the leaders joined heartily with Mr. Bramwell in the work.

The next love-feast, held on Easter Sunday, was also a time of refreshing from the Lord—other fifty souls were "turned from darkness to light."

It was customary with Mr. Bramwell, when in the country, to visit the different families of his hearers, and pray with each of them; and while thus engaged—*i. e.*, visiting—he would not converse on trifling subjects; but the most common theme of his discourse was, "What shall we do to praise the Lord more, to promote His glory, and to obtain greater blessings?" His mind dwelt on things above.

When opportunities offered, he occasionally held watch-nights in the circuit in private houses. In one, held at Little Gomersal, there appeared to be nothing particular at the beginning. At ten o'clock, Mr. Bramwell was about to conclude; but he commenced again, and continued engaged in prayer until twelve o'clock. At that hour he still felt unwilling to break off, and, like Jacob, said in his heart,—

"With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day!"

In a short time, a young woman cried aloud for mercy; several more were soon after in deep distress, and, before four o'clock in the morning, fifteen souls enjoyed a sense of pardon, and were made glad in Christ, their Savior.

"So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed," that, at the close of Mr. Bramwell's labors in the circuit, the number in society was doubled, without mentioning the multitudes of those who were still under serious impressions, but had not united themselves in Church fellowship.

The following simple narrative, by Mr. Thomas Pearson, Sr., affords some further details of this work of God in that village:

"In the year 1793 a day was appointed by the Government, to be set apart for fasting and prayer, in consequence of which prayer-meetings were held in our village. Religion was at that time at a very low ebb. The first meeting was held at our house in the morning. Many attended; and no sooner had we commenced the service than the power of God manifestly affected the assembly . . . The work gradually revived till Conference. . . .

"At this time, Mr. Bramwell was appointed to labor among us. . . . He came to us full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. His powerful preaching and fervent prayers were so mighty, through faith, that the stoutest-hearted sinners trembled under him. . . . Every place of worship in the neighborhood was crowded. Young persons, only ten years of age, were clearly awakened and savingly converted. This had such an effect upon their parents, that many of them were awakened. . . .

“When Mr. Bramwell preached at Gomersal, he generally remained all night at our house. As soon as dinner was over, it was his constant practice to pray in the family, and then to visit from house to house. In this way he generally called on seventeen or eighteen families before tea, and prayed in each of them with the utmost fervor. I was accustomed to invite a few of our friends, whose chief desire was to have their souls blessed, to take tea with Mr. Bramwell in the afternoon. Affectionate inquiry was then made into the state of each person’s mind. They who had not received the blessing of justification were urged not to rest until they had obtained it; and they who were justified, not to rest until they were sanctified. . . .

“I have been acquainted with many pious and holy persons, but one like Mr. Bramwell, for faith and prayer, I never beheld.”

While Mr. Bramwell was attending the district-meeting in Leeds, he accompanied Mr. John Nelson one evening to Kirkstall Forge, and preached out of doors to a large congregation. When the service was closed, a great part of the company retired into the chapel, to hold a watch-night. The Spirit of God was poured out, and many were awakened. While at prayer the next morning, a female in the family where he lodged, who had a great aversion against being converted in a noisy meeting, felt the power of God descend upon her; but, endeavoring to stifle her convictions, she fell down upon the floor, and remained four hours in a state of apparent insensibility, so that many said she was dead. However, on giving up her own will, and yielding to be saved in God’s way, she revived, and was made happy.

During his residence in Birstal, many of those who had profited under his ministry in Dewsbury called on him, and consulted him as an old and well-trying friend. On these occasions he always closed the interview by fervent prayer to God in behalf of the persons who were present, mentioning particularly the things about which he had been consulted, whether they related to the soul or the body.

Among others, who often availed themselves of this privilege, Mr. Thomas Jackson, who was a woolen-cloth manufacturer and a local preacher, observed:

“One Tuesday morning, as I was going to Leeds, I called on Mr. Bramwell at Birstal. Our trade was at that time in a state of great depression. I had many goods on hand, and was not able, during many weeks, to dispose of a single piece. I related these circumstances to Mr. Bramwell. Feeling much for my situation, he said, ‘Thomas, let us pray;’ and he prayed with such holy fervency, and such expressions of confidence in God, as I shall not soon forget. He spoke in faith, as if it had been actually revealed to him that my help was at hand. I set off from the house, and pursued my journey to Leeds, and I had not been more than a quarter of an hour at my stand before a merchant, with whom I had never before traded, purchased all the goods I had on hand. This answer to prayer proved to me, at that period, a most seasonable relief, and has encouraged me ever since to confide in the provident goodness of my Heavenly Father.

“I know several extraordinary instances of answers to Mr. Bramwell’s prayers. Take the following: One day, when at our house, a local preacher came in haste, to

request that he would instantly return with him and pray with a gentleman who was extremely ill and apparently in the article of death, yet unprepared for such a change. I united my solicitations with those of the messenger, to induce him to go; but, after all our entreaties, we could not prevail. Seating himself in a thoughtful posture, he appeared for a short time to be in a state of mental abstraction. He then said, 'Let us pray;' and he prayed in a most powerful manner. Among other strong expressions, which he employed, he declared, in all the confidence of faith, 'O Lord, we believe Thou wilt save the gentleman, about whom we have been talking!' The local preacher retired; and, I own, my surprise was great, when, a few days afterwards, I was told that the gentleman had very soon experienced the pardoning love of God, and had received a blessed assurance of favor Divine."

Mr. Bramwell possessed, evidently, the gift of discerning spirits; and his intimate communion and close walk with God entitled him to the appellation which was given to Abraham, "He was called the friend of God."

Mr. Thomas Jackson gives the first of the following instances, and Mr. Stones, a zealous itinerant preacher, gives the others:

"A woman, with whom I was well acquainted, and who had been a member of the Methodist Society many years, came to our house one day, when Mr. Bramwell was with us. He looked earnestly at her, and said, 'Woman, you are a hypocrite! and if you do not repent and become converted, hell will be your everlasting portion!' He then added, 'I know you will hate me for thus speaking the truth.'

"I was amazed at the abruptness of his manner, and the strong language in which he expressed himself, and not the less when I reflected on the person to whom all this had been said, because I entertained a high opinion of her religious character. But I was soon convinced of the truth of Mr. Bramwell's words; for the poor woman had departed, self-condemned and humbled, under a consciousness of her guilt.

"She sent for me late in the evening of the same day, and desired me to pray with her, as she felt herself in great distress of spirit. I found her calling to 'remembrance from whence she had fallen.' She was in a hopeful state of repentance and desirous of 'doing the first works.' I therefore complied with her request, and poured out my soul before the Throne of Grace in earnest intercessions. In the course of a few hours, the Lord was pleased to manifest His mercy to her, and by 'His Spirit bare witness with her spirit that she was a child of God.' Her joy was excessive; and she has been often heard to declare that, if she had died in the state of mind in which Mr. Bramwell saw her, she must have been eternally lost."

"One day," says Mr. Stones, "as he and I were going together, to visit the sick, we passed a public house, out of which came a man, just as we had got beyond the door. When we had proceeded a little farther, Mr. Bramwell groaned in spirit, and said, 'The Lord have mercy on that man! Do you know who he is?' I replied: 'Yes, sir. Do you?' 'No,' said he; 'but this I know: that he is a perfect infidel.' 'Dear, Mr. Bramwell,' said I, 'do not say so.' He replied, with increased emphasis: 'I am sure of it! He is a perfect infidel!' It is remark-

able that this very man, to my certain knowledge, was such a character for infidelity and profaneness as perhaps had not his equal in all Yorkshire, if in the United Kingdom.

“One night, as I was preaching at Birstal, a man (who was a stranger to all present), either in pretense or in reality, fell ill, and had to be taken out of the chapel. The account which he afterwards gave of himself was that he came out of Lancashire, was in search of work, had had nothing to eat for three or four days, etc. One of our friends took him home, and gave him a night’s lodging. The next morning, two of the friends came to me, and expressed a desire to beg something for the relief of the poor man; and they went around the village, to obtain what they could.

“In the meantime, Mr. Bramwell came home out of the circuit. I related the whole affair to him. He wished greatly to see the man himself; and I went with him to the house where the man had lodged during the preceding night. We found him within; waiting to receive the money which the friends were collecting for him before he took his departure. The man very pathetically related his tale of woe to Mr. Bramwell. . . .

“While the man was rehearsing his troubles, Mr. Bramwell had his eyes closed, and frequently groaned in spirit. At length he looked at the man with an eye that seemed to pierce him through, and said, ‘Tell me! Is there not a bastard child in all this?’ The man appeared to be thunderstruck; he began to tremble, faltered in his speech, and at length confessed that he had left home to avoid the payment to an illegitimate child which the law

exacted. Mr. Bramwell warned him of his sin and danger, and advised him to go home, desist from his evil practices, and turn to God with purpose of heart.

“The man expressing some reluctance about returning home; Mr. Bramwell threatened to have him arrested as an impostor if he did not leave the town immediately. We watched him out of the town, and were glad that he had gone away without his booty. Mr. Bramwell afterwards assured me, that (to the best of his recollection) he had never seen the man before.”

The revival of religion, of which a very imperfect detail has been given in this chapter, was felt, not only in Birstal, but in all the neighboring circuits. Many carnal persons, that had heard wonderful accounts about the individuals who, it was said, “had turned the world upside down,” went to Birstal out of curiosity. Their going up was sanctified to numbers of them, who, on their return, could say “with a glad heart and free,” “It is good for us to have been there!” They obtained pardon and peace, and “went down to their houses justified,” and praising the God of their salvation.

But this great work was as remarkable for the quickening and sanctifying of believers, as for the awakening and “justifying of the ungodly.”

The humble souls, who had gone up, in the simplicity of their hearts, “hungering and thirsting after righteousness, were not disappointed or sent empty away, but were filled with good things” of the kingdom. These were as the days of “the Son of man;” and long will they be remembered. The Holy Spirit wrought powerfully. Faith was in lively exercise both in the preachers and

the people. The weapons which they wielded were "not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."

The shaking among the dry bones was wonderful; and before Mr. Bramwell left that circuit, such was the extraordinary influence of the Spirit, that while he prophesied to them, they stood up "a goodly multitude, complete." The characteristics of this work were so striking, as to convince even the profane that it "was not of men, but of God."

Amidst all the fervor of the revival, it was Mr. Bramwell's constant cry, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the glory!" The greatest fear he knew, was lest any of the instruments whom the Lord had used in that cause, should forget their own littleness, and, beginning to think too highly of themselves, should neglect to ascribe all the praise to God, to whom it was entirely due.

Mr. Bramwell never acted more in the character of "a wise master-builder," than when he made careful provision for recent converts. By painful experience, he had known, in himself, the pernicious consequences which accrue from a want of early Christian tuition. After he had felt the first gracious visitation of the Holy Spirit, "no man cared for his soul." He had "stumbled about on the dark mountains" till at length he was favored with "the communion of saints." He was therefore well qualified to appreciate the value of Christian society and pious advice; and adopted measures in every place for insuring these benefits to all who were admitted within the pale of the Christian Church.

It was his practice to meet the converts of each sex

separately, to give them appropriate counsel respecting their conduct, point out proper books for their perusal, and to recommend, above all, the constant reading of the Scriptures, and a strict attention to personal religion and private devotion.

When he perceived them observant of these precepts, he invited their attention to the doctrinal works of Wesley and Fletcher. He disliked that wavering humor in religious opinions which some persons have thought fit to dignify with the high-sounding title of *liberality*. [And at this we are not surprised, for such is of the devil.—ED.] In this way he labored, not only to gain converts, but to form Christians and establish believers.

CHAPTER VIII.

PASTORAL WORK—ANECDOTES—LETTERS.

THE Conference in 1795 directed Mr. Bramwell to the Sheffield Circuit. He was quite unknown to the friends in that town. The reason of this appointment is explained in the following communication:

“Early in the year 1794, our revered father in the gospel, Mr. A. Mather, paid a pastoral visit to Sheffield. As he had been twice stationed in this circuit, he knew many pious individuals there, and felt for them an unceasing affection. He had recently visited several circuits in the north of England, where there was a revival of religion and a great increase in the societies; he had there caught the holy flame, and in every place endeavored with renewed ardor to spread its influence.

“In addressing the members of the Sheffield society, he told them, ‘that in all those places where the Lord had lately poured out his Spirit, it was in answer to earnest prayer. The preachers everywhere, after the usual services, held prayer-meetings; all who could conveniently remain, united to implore a general blessing; and the Lord, who had inspired the desire, granted their requests: it was done according to their faith.’ During this visit they had many refreshing seasons together.

“After his departure, Mr. Moon and Mr. Cooper continued to unite, in the same manner, with the people in public prayer. The good seed sown by Mr. Mather soon

appeared. On the day of the following midsummer love-feast, a shower of reviving, saving, and sanctifying grace descended, and the people were overwhelmed with its influence.

“Mr. Moon writes the following:

“In August, 1794, the Conference appointed Mr. Blagburn as Mr. Cooper’s successor. These two blessed men were well calculated by their zeal to promote, and by their wisdom to defend, this extraordinary work of the Spirit. The Sheffield people were anxious respecting a successor; and as the Conference of 1795 approached, Mr. Mather was requested to recommend, and if possible to procure, “a man after God’s own heart;” one who had witnessed a similar effusion of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Bramwell was sent in answer to prayer; and was everywhere received as an angel of God. The ground was prepared by his excellent predecessors “to receive the good seed” in some places, and in others “the fields were already white unto the harvest.”

“The people soon saw that Mr. Bramwell was a man come out from God; his words were accompanied with a Divine authority and a gracious unction.

“Plenteously anointed with holy oil, he proclaimed the jubilee of the gospel, the acceptable year of the Lord, the day of deliverance to all that believe. As his whole soul was employed in this work of preaching, so he required of his hearers their silent, fixed attention. Children might not disturb; the heart might not slumber, if observed; nor the eye of an individual wander. When these important preliminaries of usefulness were secured, he directed the mind to wait only upon God as the great fountain of blessings, and to look to Christ as the only

object of faith, 'that with meekness they might receive the ingrafted word which is able to save the soul.'

"Everywhere he preached 'Christ as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption,' and faith as the great duty enjoined in the gospel. He showed distinctly the proper subjects of saving faith, and that all such (and such only) as, in obedience to the command of God, attempt to believe, are enabled also to believe and receive instantly the answer of faith, the salvation of the soul; that salvation is wrought by the grace of God, through the exercise of faith; and that, though salvation has unlimited degrees, it has two leading characteristics; viz., JUSTIFICATION and SANCTIFICATION: that as we can not be justified from the guilt of past offenses but by faith, so we are sanctified throughout by the exercise of the same faith: that the accomplishment of the promises by faith is always *instantaneous*; and that such a faith in powerful operation is to be distinguished from that which is a gracious habit of the mind; a faith wherein we stand, and walk, and overcome the world.

"These doctrines Mr. Bramwell urged in almost every sermon; yet he did not exalt them and depreciate others. For as a Divine truth sweetly harmonizes when seen comprehensively, so he published every doctrine of the gospel, bringing 'out of the treasury things new and old.' While he was engaged in the pulpit, sinners saw their natural face as in a glass, and were deeply affected with a sight of their sinful deformity; professors beheld the awful difference between the form of godliness and the power; and the attention of saints was turned upon themselves as connected with their holy calling. The humble, the broken hearted, the thirsty for God, were encouraged

NOW to believe in Christ as a present and all-sufficient Savior. 'The hand of the Lord was with His servant, and many believed and turned to the Lord.'

"In promoting the work of the Lord, Mr. Bramwell employed the talents of the local preachers, leaders, and other individuals, in prayer; and they became important helpers to him in every place. The embers of love were kindled all around: and when he revisited the societies, he found them 'striving together for the furtherance of the gospel.' Opposition was broken down, lukewarmness was destroyed, a holy union was maintained, and the work of God in the town and country broke out in a flame of life, and power, and zeal. Itinerant and local preachers, with others, have come more than fifty miles in search of the blessing of a clean heart; and joining with him in the holy violence of prayer, have returned, glorifying God for the wonders of His saving power.

"As an overseer of souls, he frequently visited eight or ten families in the early part of the day. These visits were short and spiritual." Politics, fashions, the lodge, and society never found room for discussion where this man of God was. "If possible, he would have the whole family collected, and having ascertained the religious state of them all, he would pray for each by name, and implore blessings suited to their respective necessities.

"We have often felt on these occasions the influence of his affectionate solicitude, his penetrating look, and his pointed inquiries; and believe it was in vain for the formalist, the backslider, and the hypocrite, to elude detection by him.

"When a minister so fully discharges his pastoral office among a numerous people, he is in danger of neg-

lecting the diligent study of the Scriptures, and of making a superficial preparation for the pulpit. Mr. Bramwell, however, was not content to read the Inspired Volume in his vernacular tongue; but he diligently studied it in the language in which it was written. He sought for the Divine teaching in all things. And, without controversy, he was an able workman who needed not to be ashamed. The style of his composition was peculiarly his own.

“We do not know that he had any model set before him. His sentences were generally short and terse, containing much point, calculated to convey instruction and conviction directly to the mind. Sometimes there was a natural and beautiful abruptness elicited from the workings of his soul, which was burdened with the sacred message from God to the people. This operated as a two-edged sword, penetrating to the center, and dividing the joints and marrow. He was acquainted with the workings of the heart and the devices of Satan, and studied mankind in *man* as well as in *books*, witnessing in society all its variety of circumstances and fluctuations. He ‘rightly divided the word of truth, and gave to each a portion in season.’

“Mr. Bramwell delighted to press the people to believe, but he did not omit to inculcate the weighty matters of the law. He considered the religion of Christ as an empty name when it was destitute of love; that perfect, powerful, and operative principle which leads to acts of universal good will to man. He proclaimed, ‘Owe no man anything but love.’

“Mr. Bramwell was himself the example of all he recommended. The more intimately his private habits

of life were known, the more he was esteemed and venerated.

“He saw the possibility, that, ‘after preaching to others, himself might become a castaway.’ By stated fasting, by constant watchfulness, by habitual temperance in all things, he kept the body in subjection, and thereby increased his spirituality and power.

“In nothing did he approach more nearly to an imitation of our Lord, than in his benevolence. It can not be thought singular that he was courteous, and pitiful, and kind; for all the ministers of the gospel should exemplify these virtues. But he relieved the necessity of others, by making frequent sacrifices of his own personal comfort. We have known him to give his only top-coat in severe weather to one who had not a coat; nor would he spare the garments of his beloved wife for the relief of persons in extreme distress.

“On another occasion, while visiting a sick man, who was in extreme want and lying in bed without a shirt, Mr. Bramwell retired into a private room, took off his own shirt and gave it to the poor man. He was indeed a good Samaritan; he considered every suffering child of Adam as his brother or his sister, as flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, whom Christ had loved unto death; and therefore having a claim for his utmost efficient help. Often has he been ‘help in need,’ a ministering angel of mercy both to the afflicted body, the broken spirit, and the despairing mind. When therefore he enforced the most difficult and least palatable duties of religion, the people did not inwardly respond, ‘Physician, heal thyself.’

“He ceased not to warn every one, night and day,

with tears, and to teach every man, that he might present every man *perfect* before God.' ”

Another valuable correspondent gives the subjoined account of these glorious days:

“When Mr. Bramwell was announced as the preacher appointed for Sheffield, there was a degree of expectation excited in the society, that the Lord would come and revive the work of Divine grace by his instrumentality.

“He was no sooner heard than the genuine power was experienced. A kind of electric sensation was felt in the whole society. Present effects were looked for, and present effects were received. The clearness of justification and sanctification was decidedly and constantly preached. A present enjoyment of both of them was so ardently pressed, so unceasingly offered by faith, and faith alone, to be received, felt, and enjoyed *now*,—that the whole circuit seemed soon to catch the flame. Entire sanctification was pressed upon believers as their undoubted right. They were constantly pressed into the enjoyment of it, and numbers professed to enter into the possession of that state, and brought forth all its precious fruit.

“One of the most constant effects of Mr. Bramwell’s residence in any place, was ‘the spirit of prayer.’ Strong desires for the spread of the Redeemer’s kingdom, for the destruction of sin, for the advancement of holiness, and for the glory of the latter days, were felt and breathed out by numbers. They were answered by the Spirit of God, diffusing His own blessing and sealing the truth by His own power, so that the most sanguine hopes were entertained by the faithful, that great and glorious consequences would be produced.

“Mr. Bramwell preached a present and a full salvation through faith in the Redeemer’s blood; and thousands will have to praise God in eternity that ever they heard from his lips the sound of such a gospel. On the entire destruction of sin and the complete renewal of the heart in holiness, he preached decidedly: this was his constant, his favorite theme. To be cleansed from all sin, to be perfected in love, were the grand objects of his preaching, and the constant experience of his heart.

“Never did he preach with more energy, never did a greater Divine unction attend his word, than when he pressed the Christian doctrine of entire sanctification from all sin, the utter destruction of all inbred evil, and the restoration of the whole soul to the image of God! In this he was faithful to God and to the Scriptures, and showed all good fidelity to the souls over whom he watched, and whom he wished to present perfect before God. The author of this account knew, that Mr. Bramwell held this sentiment and felt this experience for twenty-three years before he died; and he believes that he was never conscious of enjoying it more sensibly, and never expressed himself on this subject more clearly than a few days before he expired.

“A select band that met early in the morning, once a week, was made an uncommon blessing. In that meeting the public and private conduct of every individual passed through a fiery ordeal. Their holiness in private, and their spirit and carriage in public, were severely and faithfully scrutinized. Their whole conduct underwent a severe examination, while they were incited to the most zealous exertion, and cautioned against any excess which could not be warranted by the Word of God.”

Mr. Bramwell’s zeal for the Lord, his utter indiffer-

ence to mere secular concerns, and his well-tryed prudence, engaged the affections of the people, and caused the Conference of 1797 to honor him by a third year's appointment.

Mr. Parker, of Woodhouse Grove, says of Mr. Bramwell:

"My acquaintance with Mr. Bramwell was occasioned by my removal to Sheffield, where he had been then above two years. At that time there was a remarkable revival, and at a single love-feast about one hundred persons were convinced of the necessity of 'working out their own salvation with fear and trembling.'

"The angels of God, we are informed, rejoice over one sinner that repenteth; but here they had to rejoice over hundreds. And they were assuredly there, rejoicing in our midst. Many besides myself will never forget the day when that hymn was sung which begins with

"Angels now are hovering o'er us,
Unperceived they mix the throng.'

"For if ever I was conscious of the presence of supernatural powers, that was the time. It seemed that there was but a thin veil between us and the invisible world, and that Satan, for a season, was bound in chains, and the Church militant admitted into the presence chamber of the Majesty on high. The strongholds of Satan fell, like Dagon before the ark. Whether angels were there or not, of one thing I am persuaded, that heaven was there; for

"My Jesus to know,
And feel his blood flow;
'Tis life everlasting, 't is heaven below.'

“That Mr. Bramwell was in an eminent degree a man of prayer, I have been frequently assured by my own personal observation. Seldom have I called upon him, but it was easy to perceive, from the devotion which he breathed, and the heavenly-mindedness which marked his manner and conversation, that ‘he had been with Jesus.’

“It has been my lot to mark Mr. Bramwell’s very exemplary conduct in the social circle. And in this respect, I must affirm that I never met with his equal. It was his aim in company, to direct his conversation and that of his friends to one point,—and that was a present and full salvation. Throughout the whole, he maintained the most jealous and vigilant eye lest the discourse should in the least diverge towards topics not equally definite and important. Nor was he contented with this: it was not long before this man of God, and the company with whom he was engaged, fell on their knees and wrestled in prayer, till

“‘The op’ning heavens around them shone
With beams of sacred bliss.’

“One particular instance of this, I will here relate: In consequence of being at the London Conference in 1804, I frequently met with Mr. Bramwell. On one occasion, he desired me to meet him in the afternoon, at a friend’s house in the city. On entering the house, the voice of devotion saluted my ear. Mr. Bramwell and the rest of his friends engaged successively in fervent prayer. At tea, he ruled the conversation, so that not a sentence concerning politics, the common topics of the day, the foibles of the neighborhood, or any indifferent subject was permitted to transpire. It was not long be-

fore a person present advanced something irrelevant to the single aim which this man of God held so tenaciously in view; but he suppressed it immediately by exclaiming, 'Now we are wandering from the point again!' After conversation on the best subjects had continued for some time, the company again joined in fervent prayer until the preaching hour arrived, and importunately pleaded for the realization of the great blessings which had occupied their attention.

"The life and zeal which shone in Mr. Bramwell, kept him at the utmost distance from formality. Instead of being content during divine service with the ordinary routine of singing and praying once before and once after the sermon, after having prayed at the close of preaching, he usually called on two or three persons to unite with him in supplication. At other times, whilst he was yet on his knees, and in the midst of his prayer, he would break forth into singing, in which he was immediately joined by the congregation. By such methods as these, the resolutions and impressions produced by the sermon were rendered, in many cases, much more effectual.

"From these several circumstances, therefore, we can not wonder that it pleased the great Head of the Church to crown Mr. Bramwell's ministry with an abundant blessing. While some were able to witness that God for Christ's sake had blotted out as a thick cloud their transgressions, others testified that God had power to 'cleanse them from all unrighteousness.' "

His respected colleague, Mr. Pipe, bears the following testimony to his piety and usefulness:

"In 1795 my lot was cast in the Bradford Circuit,

Yorkshire; and Mr. Bramwell having been stationed the two preceding years in the adjoining circuit, I had frequent opportunities of hearing the experience of those who had been benefited by his ministry. His zealous endeavors to promote a spirit of piety among the different societies, his powerful praying and wrestling with God early and late, and his invariable aim to induce believers to 'perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord,' caused him to be greatly noticed, and drew many to hear him from the neighboring circuits.

"The Lord had greatly refreshed His heritage, before he had received that appointment; but it might be said of him, as of Barnabas, that 'when he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord; for he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord; for he helped them much which had believed through grace.' "

"Mr. Bramwell did not believe, and very rightly so, in the marriage of the godly with the ungodly.

"A young gentleman who was a stranger to religion, paid his addresses to a young lady of great piety. She consulted Mr. Bramwell and other religious friends, all of whom dissuaded her from giving the least countenance to such a connection. Her reason approved of their arguments; but the youth exhibited wonderful attractions, and he often assured her, that instead of objecting to her religious principles, they heightened her charms in his eyes, and he loved her the more on account of them. To save appearances, he attended her to public worship on the Sabbath, a few times after they married,"

he having succeeded in his purpose. "But alas! too soon he threw aside the mask of duplicity; and proceeded from one act of hostility to another, till at length, with all the malicious and premeditated cruelty of an assassin, he made a desperate attempt on her life!"

How strongly do facts like this enforce the Scriptural injunction, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers!"

Mr. Bramwell was greatly concerned for the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, and it occupied little of his concern to know who were the instruments employed by the Almighty. However feeble the means might be, he was anxious that all the glory might redound to the Giver of all good. With these views, he greatly rejoiced to hear of the usefulness of Miss Mary Barrett, a pious female of Colne, who had begun to exhort in public, and had been rendered a great blessing.

Many eminent divines have entertained discordant opinions respecting female preaching. Mr. Bramwell thought that, in the accomplishment of the great work of human redemption, the Almighty had a sovereign right to make His own selection of instruments. To question the validity of any one's call whose labors were clearly sanctioned by the broad seal of Heaven, appeared, to him, a most unwarrantable act of presumption. Amen!

He regarded Joel's prophecy as containing an obvious reference to the gospel dispensation. A few women of great piety were accustomed at an early period in Methodism, publicly to warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come. They took up this cross because they believed it their duty; and in bearing a testimony for

Christ, they were sometimes called to suffer persecution. Their previous attainments and experiences, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, qualified them for this undertaking; and their pious exertions were greatly blest of the Lord. Among these female worthies was Miss Bosanquet (afterwards Mrs. Fletcher), who frequently engaged in this interesting employment; and, it being her desire to "abstain from all appearance of evil," and to do nothing by which a weak brother might be offended, she wrote Mr. Wesley, stated her case, and received from him the following wise reply:

"LONDONDERRY, June 13, 1771.

"MY DEAR SISTER,—I think the strength of the cause rests there,—in your having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded, has every one of our lay preachers: otherwise I could not countenance their preaching at all. It is plain to me that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of His providence. Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule of discipline was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation;' yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions; at Corinth in particular.

"I am, my dear sister,

"Your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY."

Similar to these were Mr. Bramwell's views. He considered that Miss Barrett had "an extraordinary call," and to him she appeared to be Divinely qualified for the work. He therefore gave her every encouragement to proceed in the path in which, by the blessing of God, she

had been rendered useful. With the subjoined letter to her we will close this chapter:

"SHEFFIELD, Saturday.

"MY DEAR SISTER IN CHRIST,—I live in much peace and love; but for a season am not able to declare it. I have seen His arm bare lately; but was forced to stop. I thank the Lord, He is with you. May a greater power rest upon you and upon the people! Your work is great; and the Lord can work with you.

"I should hold a love-feast at Mansfield next Monday. Is it possible that you can go in my place? I beg that you will return me an answer by the bearer. . . . I shall not rest, unless I can have a proper supply. . . .

"I am yours, etc.,

"WM. BRAMWELL."

CHAPTER IX.

REMARKABLE ANSWERS TO PRAYER.

NOTTINGHAM was the next scene of Mr. Bramwell's labors. The Conference of 1798 appointed him to that circuit.

From Nottingham, Mr. Bramwell wrote to Miss Barrett, and we give some extracts from the letter:

"I found things flat in Nottingham. Building chapels are hard times. Almost in every country-place I have seen the Lord work; and I do hope to see greater things than these.

"We all expect you immediately when you are set free. The Lord bring you soon, that you may cast your net into this deep sea of iniquity, and bring to land a few souls for His glory!

"I have found very few in this circuit that know anything about sanctification. . . . May we live every day to God!"

But though Mr. Bramwell always endeavored to preserve his spirituality untainted by groveling objects, and for this cause refused to intermeddle in the mutual railing, which was then a practice too frequent among those who had formerly been "brethren beloved;" yet it must not be supposed from this that he was, in the time of difficulty, a supine auxiliary. If he did not enter into wordy discussions that ministered to mutual aggravation, he showed by deeds that he was greatly concerned for the

welfare of the connection, and exerted himself most heartily to raise the necessary funds for erecting a chapel in Nottingham.* For this purpose he was diligent in collecting all the money he could possibly procure from his wealthy friends; and of these there were not a few to whom his ministry had been made a blessing. Mr. Henry Longden, of Sheffield, gives the following narrative of Mr. Bramwell's visit to that town:

"At that time, Nottingham and Huddersfield were peculiarly circumstanced, with respect to their chapels, and though Sheffield was not one of the circuits named in the Minutes of the Conference to be applied to for the relief of Nottingham, yet it was deemed proper to send Mr. Bramwell there as an advocate for both those places.

"We can never forget the first appearance of Mr. Bramwell at that time in Garden Street Chapel. He had given the people no previous notice of his coming. The sight of him, therefore, produced an astonishing and almost electrical effect upon the society. . . . The people could not sing, nor could their beloved minister preach or pray, without the most powerful efforts or frequent interruptions. Their joy was indeed ecstatic. When the object of his visit was known, the people vied with each other, and seemed as if they would pour in their whole store.

"Their bounty was so lavish that he had to restrain the feelings and limit the donation of many, till, oppressed with a torrent of love and gratitude, he suddenly left the town, to prevent the poor from exceeding the proper

*A number of members had joined the new connection, and the trustees of the Methodist Chapel had given it up, so Mr. Bramwell had to build a chapel.

bounds of their benevolence. Multitudes tendered their voluntary offerings without making any inquiry about the object to which it was to be applied. In this affectionate manner did they testify their love to a revered pastor."

While Mr. Bramwell was actively employed in Sheffield, he wrote to his wife a letter which shows how his mind was stayed on God. We give the following extract:

"Let us live every moment free from all the world. We never bring such glory to God as when we cast our all upon Him. O Ellen! trust in Him, pray to Him, work for Him, have no fear, rush through all to save a soul from burning. . . . May we all live as near to Christ as it is possible for the spirit in the body! Nothing shall in this world, for one moment, make us rest short of the mind of Jesus.

"I am sure you will see and know that I am with God in Christ Jesus. I am enabled, through grace, to love all more and more, and to love God in all. O! keep this recollection of soul; let nothing bustle the spirit; let nothing make you care; be always at His feet, waiting and longing to be with Him!"

A local preacher—Mr. Tatham—in Nottingham gives the following interesting item:

"The benefit which I derived from a close intimacy with Mr. Bramwell during his three years' residence in Nottingham, will, I trust, never be erased from my memory. His whole deportment and conversation were such as evinced that he constantly lived in the spirit of prayer and devotedness to God. On some particular occasions I have had the honor of entertaining him under my roof, when I have been a witness to his ardent sup-

plications at a Throne of Grace at the early hour of four o'clock in the morning; and this, I have been informed, was a regular practice with him, in winter as well as in summer.

“Some remarkable answers to his prayers have come within my observation. One or two instances I well remember. At the division of the Methodist body—1797—the society in Nottingham, being deprived of their chapel, had no place of worship in which to assemble; they were consequently under the necessity of erecting a new one, but they found it difficult to procure a piece of land suitable for the purpose; the boundaries of this town, being limited by the common right to the fields which surround it, vacant plots of ground in the interior of the town were scarce. For nine months we had been on the search, during which we made application for such pieces of land as we deemed eligible, but all without effect. No one would sell us any land.

“The most desirable situation was a paddock belonging to the John Sherwin, Esq., deceased, and various were the applications made in our behalf. But this gentleman also refused to accommodate us. Thus all of our attempts were frustrated, and our hopes apparently blasted. But our extremity was the Lord's opportunity; for, at the very time we were ready to despair, our friends, Mr. Henry Longden and Mr. Bramwell, came over from Sheffield to see us—May 28, 1798.

“The next morning I had a private interview with Mr. Bramwell, when he asked me if we had procured a piece of land for the chapel. I replied in the negative, assuring him that there was not one suitable place in the town for which we had not endeavored to make interest, and yet without success. He heard me with much at-

tention, and then said, 'Brother Tatham, let us pray about it.'

"In his prayer he said: 'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof—the cattle also upon a thousand hills. The hearts of all men are in His hands, and He can turn them as the rivers of the South.' He then most feelingly described our situation, crying, 'Lord! Thou seest their necessity, and I believe Thou wilt provide a piece of land for them, on which to build this chapel.' With increasing faith, he said, 'Lord, I believe Thou wilt find them a piece of land this day.' He repeated this several times, laying a particular emphasis upon 'this day.'

"After breakfasting at Mr. Bartholomew's, we agreed to search the town for some other piece of land. But in a short time I was called off upon other business, and could not meet with my friends, although I sought them the whole forenoon. I afterwards found that Messrs. Bramwell and Longden had gone to Mr. Sherwin's paddock, which we had despaired of obtaining. It will be necessary to observe that John Fellows, Esq., had a garden at the back of his house, adjoining the theater on one side and Mr. Sherwin's paddock on the other.

"Mr. Longden, on his return, stated that they had seen some land near the theater suitable for the purpose. I asked if it belonged to Mr. Fellows, to which he replied, 'I think that is the gentleman's name.' I then remarked, 'We have long sought in vain; and in some instances have endeavored to conceal our intention of building a chapel. We will now go openly. I will wait upon Mr. Fellows, and ask him if he will sell us a part of his garden as a site for a Methodist chapel.' I did so, and, after a short pause, he said, 'I will let you have it.'

"Soon after my return, I discovered that the land

which was promised to me, though the most eligible of any in that part of the town, was not the same as that on which Mr. Longden had fixed. He had seen Mr. Sherwin's paddock; and had considered it a most excellent situation, not knowing it had often been refused us. When he related the result of the search, he mistook Mr. Sherwin's name, and gave me to understand that, as well he could recollect, the lot of which he approved belonged to Mr. Fellows. But being a stranger in Nottingham, he had forgotten the name of the owner, and was quite undesignedly the cause of my going to Mr. Fellows, with whom I happily succeeded. And all this appeared to be [was] done, that the prayer of faith might have its accomplishment.

"Another instance of Mr. Bramwell's faith was at the time when a general alarm agitated our body respecting a bill which M. A. Taylor, Esq., was about to bring into the House of Commons, to abridge the religious liberties of Dissenters. Many at that season were led to plead with God mightily that our privileges might be continued; and, among others, Mr. Bramwell did not forget to offer up his fervent supplications.

"At the evening service, one Lord's-day, before a very crowded congregation, he got into an agony of prayer; and, after wrestling for some time, he said, 'Lord, Thou hast now told me that this bill shall never pass into a law,' adding, 'It is out of the power of any man, or any set of men, to bring it to pass!' Several of the congregation thought he was going too far; but in about a week afterwards the bill was quashed.

"In the great revival of the work of God, which broke out at Sheffield and Nottingham about the same time, Mr.

Bramwell took a very active part. At several of our meetings, the outpouring of the Spirit was so manifest, that a whole assembly have been wrought upon and powerfully affected at once. Such glorious displays of the Lord's omnipotent power, and of His willingness to save perishing sinners, I believe will never be forgotten. It seemed as if the Lord was about to 'sweep the nations and shake the earth, till all proclaimed Him God.'

"Mr. Bramwell was by no means of a censorious disposition; yet he had the gift of discerning the spirits and dispositions of men in a remarkable manner. I have frequently known him to detect impostors who have stepped forth to exercise in various meetings.

"On one occasion, when he was desired to visit a dying man, I went with him. We beheld the wretched object without a shirt to his back. The few rags which hung on him scarcely covered his body. His habitation was a damp, miserable cellar, and a woman was attending him who was represented to be his wife. For some time after our entrance into this dwelling, Mr. Bramwell remained silent; at length he exclaimed: "All is not right here! I am clear there is something amiss in this place!" Then, turning to the woman, he said: "This man is not your husband. You never were married to him; but for several years you have been living together in sin and wickedness!" His words went with power to their heart—they both wept exceedingly, acknowledged the charge to be true, and began to entreat the Lord to have mercy upon them."

Wherever Mr. Bramwell went, he endeavored to promote the comfort and happiness of all around him. When any of the members of the numerous families whom he

visited were in distress or affliction, like another Samaritan, his bowels of mercy yearned over them, and his benevolent arm was stretched out to their relief. In relation to these remarks, the following narrative of facts was given by one Mr. Greensmith, December 14, 1818:

“William Greensmith, son of Thomas Greensmith, of Watnal, near Nottingham, when about nine years of age, was severely afflicted with a scrofulous humor in his eyes, so that he was unable to bear the light even with bandages upon them. Mr. Bramwell was then in the Nottingham Circuit, and went in his regular turn to preach at Mr. Greensmith’s house.

“On one of these occasions, he remained all night; and previous to his departure the next morning he asked where the boy was who had sore eyes. Mrs. Greensmith replied that he was in a dark room behind the door. He wished him to be called out. He came and stood near Mr. Bramwell, who put his hand on the boy’s head, and looked upwards, as if in the act of ejaculatory prayer. He then went out, leaving the child standing; while the latter, as if conscious of an important change, pulled off his bandages, looked through the window, and asked if Mr. Bramwell was gone.

“On perceiving that his eyes were perfectly healed,* all the family were completely astonished.”

He was about thirty years old when this statement was made, and never afterwards did he have “any complaint in his organs of sight.”

The following important details were communicated by Mr. John Clark, who at the time lived at Nottingham:

“I was well acquainted with Mr. Bramwell during

*A clear case of Divine healing.

the three years on this circuit. I never saw him anything like duplicity or partiality. No; I believe he loved all men and feared none. . . . His discourses were plain, pointed, and experimental. They were generally accompanied with the demonstration of the Holy Ghost.

“I have often seen a congregation of two thousand people so affected under his preaching as to be unable to restrain their feelings, till tears have afforded some relief. It was impossible that any one could sit under him without being benefited.

“I attribute the greater portion of his success in the ministry to his diligence in prayer. It seemed as though, when he was closeted with the King of kings, he had the varied states of the people unveiled to him in a manner the most remarkable.

“Mr. Bramwell did not blend the doctrines of the gospel together, and thus form them into one confused mass which no one could understand. In a very masterly manner he displayed distinctly the attributes of God, the fall of man, the doctrine of free grace, the atonement of Christ, repentance toward God and faith in the blessed sacrifice of Christ, in order to be justified from the guilt of sin, and from the condemning power of the law of God. He was accustomed to maintain that a sinner who feels himself thus redeemed and justified, is ‘a babe in Christ,’ and only a babe. It was necessary, therefore, he insisted, that this incipient believer should hold fast the beginning of his confidence without wavering, and go on to be perfected in love, till he obtained the Divine nature, and recovered the blessed image of God.

“He never would address a lazy, insensible company. He would neither allow children to cry during the time

of service, nor any one to look around at the door and gaze on passing objects. If they did not appear inclined to give him their undivided attention, he would instantly desist, accounting it no personal mark of disrespect to himself, but a sort of contumely poured on the gospel. It was his expressed determination not to preach to a people who trifled with the Word of God.

“He labored to promote the sanctification of his hearers; and to accomplish this great object, he fasted, watched, and prayed, in season and out of season, both day and night. The fervency of his prayers and the greatness of his zeal were unparalleled.

“How often have we heard him in agony wrestle with God for the distressed! And when they obtained deliverance, he was filled ‘unutterably full of glory and of God.’ At such seasons, his countenance shone as with a heavenly radiance, his eyes sparkled like flames of fire, his whole frame was full of animation, and I have heard him say that he felt as though he could then lift up ‘all the apostate race of man’ to God.

“I was once attacked by a violent pleuritic fever, when all around despaired of my life. Many kind friends visited me in my affliction; and almost unceasing supplication was offered up to God for my recovery. But all prayers appeared to be without effect till Mr. Bramwell came home.

“He immediately came to see me, and on entering the room, was quite astonished at beholding such a wonderful change in my appearance. He thought I had all the marks of speedy dissolution upon me; and, giving me a look of the greatest sympathy, he raised my head a little higher by means of a pillow, and then went to

the foot of the bed, and began to pray to God in my behalf. He continued his intercessions with the greatest fervency; and in an agony asked, in submission to the will of God, that I might be restored. The Lord heard and answered His servant's prayers; for I immediately experienced such a sweet tranquillity and melting of soul, as I am unable to describe. From that moment my recovery commenced, and I was soon strong enough to resume my ordinary occupations."

Mr. Bramwell walked and talked with God—"his hourly communion was with his Maker."

"He detested slander in all its forms, and would, therefore, never allow any one to speak evil of an absent person."

CHAPTER X.

QUALIFICATIONS—TRIALS—TRIUMPHS.

IN 1801, the Conference was held at Leeds. Many of the friends in the town were desirous of having Mr. Bramwell stationed there. Their request was granted by Conference as a favor, and Messrs. Barber and Reece were appointed his colleagues. Previous to his arrival, many had entertained unfavorable sentiments concerning his ministerial talents; and, indeed, the opinion had perhaps been too prevalent that, if a man enter heartily into what has been termed "the revival," or, in other words, if he encourage prayer-meetings, and exhort plain, simple people to unite in carrying on the work of God—this was a manifest proof of his being a person of ordinary abilities.

If this sentiment were actually correct, it proves that God is pleased at times to "choose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." But the sentiment is extremely erroneous; for it is a fact, which none will be disposed to question, that Mr. Wesley was a man of the most profound erudition, and it is well known that he was the decided friend and advocate of the work of God. No one can peruse his Journals, which have been very properly called a "History of Revivals," without being convinced of the truth of this remark. Mr. Bramwell had not been long in the circuit, however, before the mist of prejudice was completely dispelled; and he was soon regarded as an eminent minister of the gospel.

Considering his disadvantages during the early part of his life, it will be readily granted that he could not have mean ideas of human learning. How many laborious days, perhaps years, must he have spent in obtaining those ministerial abilities which, through Divine grace, rendered him so useful in the Church. He was a good sermonizer, and no one was more orthodox or pure in the doctrines which he taught.

His ardor for the salvation of sinners, and the assistance which he received from the Holy Spirit, frequently exalted him above all formal preachers. Because he was eminently holy and faithful, the Most High condescended to render his preaching effectual to an amazing and unwonted extent. He had good, natural talents; but the entire abandonment of the wish to shine was the most consummate victory he ever achieved over the flesh. It was his glory to render himself a servant to all, so that he might win souls. The weapons he wielded were the mighty arms of faith and prayer; and when he beheld Satan's kingdom falling and crumbling beneath their powerful energy, he scorned all adventitious aids, considering ornament as the destruction of their simplicity and effectiveness.

He was frequently consulted both concerning temporal and spiritual things; and many derived peculiar benefit from his judicious and friendly advice. He well knew how to "condescend to men of low estate," and the poorest members of society could approach him without the least embarrassment. Far from assuming an air of consequence or superiority while in the company of the humblest followers of Christ, he endeavored to convince them that he was their brother.

Abhorring the fashionable practice of pretending not to know a poor man in the streets, he heartily greeted him. Some who were poor and godly, occasionally invited him to take tea with them. He always went if he was at liberty. Several friends and neighbors usually assembled, and great was the enjoyment which they had in each other's company.

To the sick he was peculiarly attentive; and he made it his business to call on every family in the town, who were Methodist, and on as many in the country as he could conveniently visit.

Herd-farm, near Harewood, the residence of Richard Leak, Esq., was one of Mr. Bramwell's favorite places when he was in the circuit. The situation was most delightful. Placed on a gentle eminence, the house was, at a small distance, nearly encircled on three of its sides by a fine wood, that gradually rose to a proud elevation above it. Penetrating into the depths of its most umbrageous retreats, Mr. Bramwell poured forth the feelings of his heart in loud and fervent supplications before God. He was frequently engaged there for hours together, till some branch of the family, loath to disturb his devotions, ventured into his beloved solitude, and invited him to partake of the prepared repast. Always gentle and obliging, he complied with the request; though the heavenly abstraction of his mind at such seasons seemed to say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

Mr. Bramwell's earnestness in preaching, and his powerful and successful pleadings at a Throne of Grace, soon attracted general attention. From his commencement at Leeds, nothing would satisfy him but to see the arm of the Lord revealed in the awakening and conver-

sion of sinners. For this he wept, studied, fasted, prayed, and preached. Like the prophet Isaiah, he often exclaimed, "For Zion's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

It was not long before he saw the fruit of his labors; the Lord poured out His Spirit; numbers were awakened, believers were quickened, and a very general revival took place.

In writing to his wife, from Harewood, under date of April 14, 1802, Mr. Bramwell says, "It has been much on my mind, that you live as Ann Cutler, and I as John Fletcher."

After Mr. Bramwell left Leeds, he was stationed in the Wetherby Circuit, at the Conference of 1803. He was received by the people with the greatest satisfaction. Many were the seals of his ministry there. His attention to the general duties of the ministry continued constant and undeviating. In all things he appeared as a minister of the Lord Jesus, and gave the most indubitable proofs that the Lord was with him.

In the year 1804, Mr. Bramwell was appointed to the Hull Circuit, and he labored with all his might to bring souls to Jesus. His ministry was very acceptable; numbers were converted, and the society in general quickened. In this circuit there were many remarkable answers to his fervent prayer.

In the frost of 1804 and 1805, Mr. Brayshaw, of Hull, had the misfortune to fall, and pitch upon his right elbow. Not finding much inconvenience at the time, he neglected to apply anything to it, until about the middle of February, when a mortification set in. So rapid was

its progress, that his medical attendants had determined to amputate his arm. They probed and laid it open to the bone; but so much was nature exhausted, that it was feared at every subsequent dressing he would have died. An asthmatical cough, to which he had been long subject, then suddenly stopped; a conclusive hiccough came on; and all hopes of his recovery were lost. His family were called in; he took an affectionate farewell of them, and gave them, as he thought, his last blessing.

At this crisis, Messrs. Griffeth and Bramwell called, and they were requested to remember Mr. Brayshaw at the band-meeting; and while engaged in agonizing prayer for his recovery, he began to cough, the hiccough left him, and his cough returned; so that he recovered, to the great surprise of all around him, and it was generally thought to be a miraculous cure in answer to prayer.

Mr. Thomas Ryder, a local preacher of Thorngumbald, says:

"In the year 1805, our daughter Abigail was so very ill of the whooping-cough that at times she appeared to lose her breath, and my wife often thought she was dead. Mr. Bramwell was in the Hull Circuit, and when in that part of Holderness, where we then lived, he slept in our house. At one of these visits we told him how ill our little girl was. He asked several questions about her, and then said, 'Let us pray!' The man of God prayed with peculiar fervor, and apparently in strong faith, that the Lord would bless the child, and speedily restore her. The Almighty heard and answered His servant. Our daughter began to recover from that hour, and never afterwards had a severe attack."

He was deeply interested in the comfort and happiness of those amongst whom he labored; and it appears very remarkable that, when any of his Christian friends were peculiarly tempted or called to pass through heavy trials, their afflictions were often revealed to him. This will be better understood by the following incident:

“After being in the country part of the circuit, Mr. Bramwell was returning home from Cottingham. On arriving at Hull, he dismounted from his horse, and, instead of going to his own house, as usual, he went to Mr. Adams’s. ‘Come,’ said he to Mrs. Adams, ‘tell me the state of your mind. You have been unusually impressed upon my mind all the way from Cottingham.’

“Mrs. Adams was in very deep distress, occasioned by a peculiar temptation under which she was then laboring. When she stated her case to Mr. Bramwell, he said to her: ‘Let us pray! For the Lord is about to bring deliverance.’ He wrestled with God, the snare was broken, and she was completely delivered.”

CHAPTER XI.

WISDOM—LETTERS—ANECDOTES.

IN 1806, Mr. Bramwell was sent to the Sunderland Circuit.

So ardently did he long for the salvation of souls, that, when walking with a friend in the streets, he would suddenly leave him and go to warn, encourage, or exhort persons who were passing, and to many of them he was unknown. Early one morning, when he was returning from a village in which he had been preaching the preceding evening, he met a friend, and said: "O my brother! How much I feel condemned in my mind! The little feathered songsters of the grove have been awake and employed in the praises of God an hour or two before I arose."

While in this circuit, he and one of his colleagues spent the night with a worthy and respectable friend. At the time, the family was brought into a very low state. The owner of the property, which they occupied, desired to get it for some other purpose. During the evening, Mr. Bramwell was made acquainted with these facts, and after family worship he and his colleague retired, and spent nearly the whole night in prayer for these good people. In a short time afterwards, affairs were most unexpectedly overruled for their good, in a manner for which they could not account. But they believed that this change was brought about in direct answer to Mr. Bramwell's prayers

A number of letters which he wrote to different friends are recorded in this chapter, in the original memoir, from which we give a few extracts. He was indeed a man of God, and his devotion to God is breathed forth in his letters.

In writing to Mr. W. Burrows, in 1806, he says:

“I never was so much struck with the Word of God as at present. The truth, the depths, the promises, quite swallow me up. I am lost in wonder and praise. My soul enters into Christ in this blessed Book. His own sayings take faster hold on me than ever. I could read and weep, and love and suffer; yea, what could I not suffer when I thus see Him? Justification is great, to be cleansed is great; but what is justification or the being cleansed, when compared to this being taken into Himself? The world, the noise of self, all is gone; and the mind bears the full stamp of God’s image. Here you talk, and walk, and live, doing all in Him and to Him. Continual prayer, and turning all into Christ in every house, in every company,—all things by Him, from Him, and to Him!”

In January, 1808, he writes to Mrs. Pawson:

“I am waiting for my change. I can say, I long for it. . . . I must say to my dear mother in the gospel, ‘I now live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’

“I have been for some months laboring to attain that point,—for nothing for one moment to divert me from God. The Lord has given me this blessing. I now feel the full effect of that passage, ‘He dwells in God, and God in him.’ I live in God. . . . I grieve, but it is in God. I rejoice, but it is in God. I speak, but I find it is in God. I am tempted

much, but unmoved in God. O, how I long for the Church to know this great salvation!

“My dear Mrs. Pawson, what shall we do to persuade the Church into this union? To be cleansed from sin is great, indeed; but to receive the inward glory in its full influence—this is salvation. The Lord waits to impart everything He has promised, and would, as a kind Father, rather, much rather, that His children had the whole.”

In writing to Mrs. Baiston, in 1808, he says:

“Nothing does my soul more good than to see my fellow-Christians claiming their own, that which is with God laid up against their return. When you receive this cup of salvation, the effect will be, the clamor of self is over; the slavish fear of being nothing is over; the soul keeps its place in God, and is ready for all that can come upon it. It bears; it thinks no evil; it can not dwell or live here.

“O this heaven of God’s presence! this opening into glory! this weeping over a lost world! this being willing to lay down your life for the Church! ‘God is all.’ O, my soul, I feel its fire, its burning, as I write. God grant the flame may spread, the glory shine! May the world receive it! Places to me are less than ever. Devoted souls are my delight. To see my friends dwelling in God, and God in them, affords me one of the greatest earthly pleasures. Go on, my dear sister, go on; the crown is before you. A few more battles, and heaven is won. God grant you may never faint!”

In writing of his experience, to Mr. Sigston, he says:

“I long to live as near as ever any did; and yet I feel I have not all that Ann Cutler found.”

In 1808, Liverpool became the scene of Mr. Bramwell's labors. From the statement in the first chapter of this volume, it will be seen that some of his relatives resided there. He was received by the society there as an eminent minister of Christ, and soon found the blessed fruit of his labors in the gospel. While in this circuit, we see him the same true, devoted servant of God, and while in this place, he writes, to Mr. Sigston, his memorable words against the idea of being sanctified when we are justified; and he says:

"An idea is going forth, that 'when we are justified we are entirely sanctified,' and 'to feel evil nature after justification, is to lose pardon,' etc. You may depend upon it, this is the devil's great gun."

And so it has proven from that day to this.

To Mr. Preston, in 1809, he writes:

"I am just going into my Lord. Here the noise of self, of the world, and of the devil, is over. All is burning, all is rest, yet all is calm within. The eye is fixed, the soul established, the tongue loosed, and all in the Spirit! Here the Lord teaches, the Lord governs, and the Lord continually supplies." Amen!

CHAPTER XII.

SOUL-WINNING SUCCESS—A REMARKABLE INCIDENT.

ONE of Mr. Bramwell's particular friends gives an account of his second appointment to the Sheffield Circuit, from which we take an extract:

"In the year 1810, after an absence of twelve years, by the very earnest request of the people, the Conference sent Mr. Bramwell a second time to Sheffield.

"In the commencement of his work, he openly avowed that he 'was determined to know nothing among us but Christ, and Him crucified.' 'None,' he said, 'would be permitted to inform him privately of dissensions among the brethren, but that he would always have the accuser and the accused face to face, and that he would neither condemn a man, nor form an opinion upon any case, before the individual whom it concerned had answered for himself.'

"He unceasingly pressed upon his hearers the necessity of Christian holiness, and so preached this doctrine as to manifest he was himself habitually grounded and settled in the experience of it. He raised the standard of Christian experience as high as the Scriptures do, and yet placed it within the reach of every justified person. He gave believers no rest till they sought with all the heart to be fully saved from sin, knowing that we are in danger of counting our steps back again, if we do not 'press towards the mark for the prize of our high

calling.' 'The reason,' he said, 'why so many seek to be saved from the remains of the carnal mind, and do not obtain the blessing, is because they have secretly backslidden, and have forfeited the Divine favor. If they were correctly acquainted with their own state, they would first seek to be justified by faith in Christ Jesus.'

"His conversation was in heaven, from whence he looked continually for the Savior. He breathed and lived in Christ, in God."

While Mr. Bramwell was in this circuit, the following occurrence took place concerning Mr. Thomas Riley, who was, at that time, one of England's soldiers, and who relates the incident:

"In the month of July, 1811, I was quartered in Sheffield, at which time our regiment was ordered for Spain, then the seat of a protracted and sanguinary war. My mind was painfully exercised with the thoughts of leaving my dear wife and four helpless children in a strange country, unprotected, and unprovided for. Mr. Bramwell felt a very lively interest in our situation; and his sympathizing spirit seemed to drink into all the agonizing feelings of my tender wife upon the occasion. He supplicated the Throne of Grace day and night in our behalf.

"My wife and I spent the evening previous to our march at a friend's house, in company with Mr. Bramwell, who sat in a very pensive mood, and appeared to be engaged in a spiritual struggle all the time, until shortly after supper he suddenly pulled his hand out of his bosom, laid it on my knee, looked me in the face, and said: 'Brother Riley, mark what I am about to say. You are not to go to Spain. Remember, I tell you, you are

not; for I have been wrestling with God on your behalf, and when my Heavenly Father condescends in mercy to bless me with power to lay hold on Himself, I do not easily let Him go; no, not until I am favored with an answer. Therefore you may depend upon it, that the next time I hear from you, you will be settled in quarters.'

"This came to pass exactly as he said; for the next day I was informed that the regiment was countermanded; and when we reached our quarters at Chichester, in Sussex, I wrote to him, with a grateful heart, informing him that his prediction had received its accomplishment, as our regiment was not to go to Spain."

At the Conference held in Leeds, in 1812, the friends in the Nottingham and Birstal Circuits wished to enjoy the labors of Mr. Bramwell, and as both parties were very urgent, it was determined to take the sense of the Conference on the subject, when a majority decided in favor of Birstal.

The societies, both in the town and in the circuit, were at that time in a very low state. On the first Sunday that Mr. Bramwell preached at Birstal, he met the society, and observed that "slow singing, long prayers, long meetings, and late attendance on the ordinances, were indubitable marks of a low state of grace." He also observed that he would neither speak evil, nor hear it, concerning any one.

He would admit no one into the band-meetings who did not enjoy the experience of justification; and he recommended to every member to seek the blessing of entire sanctification.

This man of God, having taken every necessary step,

and having engaged his colleagues, the leaders, the members, together with himself, in earnest prayer to God for a revival, it was not long ere the Spirit of God was poured out, especially at Birstal and Gomersal, and many were brought out of darkness into light.

Towards the close of his second year he had a severe attack of rheumatic fever. His illness commenced on Saturday. Being unwilling to omit his appointment on Sunday, though he could neither mount his horse nor dismount without assistance, he went and preached at Cleckheaton. Not being able to ride home, he went to Mr. Pearson's at Gomersal, and remained there eight or nine days. His pain was very severe, but he bore it as a man of God, and was never heard to complain. He frequently said: "Glory be to God! This is better than hell fire!"

He constantly prayed with the family three times a day; and when so ill he could not be out of bed, he still continued his delightful exercise of talking with God.

One evening, when very sick, he fell out of his chair upon the floor. There happened to be only one person in the room attending on him, who tried to lift him up, but, not being able to do so, exclaimed, "O Mr. Bramwell, what must I do?" As soon as he was able, he replied: "PRAY! That always brings me out on the right side." Prayer was made, in which he fervently joined, and, having at length been raised from the floor upon the bed, he pleasantly observed, "Continue to pray; we shall never sink while engaged in that exercise."

During this affliction incessant supplications were made in his behalf. Two of the preachers were going to see him one afternoon during his sickness, and, hearing

persons engaged in prayer in a house near the road, they asked a bystander if there was a prayer-meeting at that place, who replied, "Mr. Bramwell, our good preacher, is ill, and they are praying for his recovery."

Here, as elsewhere, the life and conduct of Mr. Bramwell were exemplary, and he used every possible exertion to promote the welfare of Zion, and of the world; and God owned and crowned his labors with success.

While engaged in this circuit, he wrote to a brother in Christ (1813), from which we take the following:

"I am more than ever convinced of the great advantage we receive from entire sanctification. It preserves the soul in rest, in the midst of all the storms of life. It gives such satisfaction in every station, so much approves of the order of God, has such a proper lookout for his glory, a full deliverance from self, and such a strong desire for the good of our neighbor in every way. 'The world is gone, we live above; yea, we 'dwell in God, and God in us.' We can speak when we will, and be silent at our pleasure. Such victory is gained, such salvation is accomplished! We are nothing, and feel it; and we can do nothing without God; hence we give Him all the praise of every good thought and action."

CHAPTER XIII.

A PERPLEXING APPOINTMENT—SICKNESS.

IN the year 1814, Mr. Bramwell was sent to the London West Circuit; and from the ideas which he had previously formed concerning the gayety and dissipation of the metropolis, that appointment was to him a source of considerable and painful perplexity. Indeed, his entrance on a new circuit was generally a time of great conflict; and therefore it is natural to suppose, that when about to engage in a spiritual warfare among the rich and great in London, his mind would be unusually affected. However, he requested his Christian friends to unite with him in earnest prayer that the Lord might accompany him and own and bless his labors.

It was not long before the Lord made bare His arm, and gave His servant to see His good pleasure prosper in his hand.

While engaged in the work of the Lord in this circuit, in which labor he had success, he was again called to suffer bodily affliction. He had a return of his old complaint, rheumatism, which, for a short time, rendered him incapable of labor, but which did not for a moment deprive him of the comforts of full salvation.

In writing to Mr. Stones, January 9, 1815, he speaks in the following language of his bodily affliction:

“Though I have been in the furnace, yet I assure you that I have had such views of the glory of heaven,

and the torments of the damned, that, if I have strength, I shall pour out such blessings and curses as I have never done before. O that my God may be with me!

"I am now recovering, but the disorder has not yet left my hand, etc., so it is with great difficulty that I now am able to write."

We find, by reading the many published letters which he wrote while engaged in London, that the affliction with which he suffered did not cause his mind to wander at all from God.

In a letter addressed to Mr. Thomas Crowther, April 11, 1815, he says:

"The views respecting God and everlasting life, given me in my affliction, were extraordinary. To retain a constant sense of the presence of God, is our glory in this world. It is to live in Him, and always feel it. This great salvation,—salvation from all sin; salvation into all the gospel glory, and to be changed into the same image! I am lost in wonder, love, and praise! O may we drink still deeper into these wells of salvation! You know how,—prayer, constant, private prayer. I have lately been roused from my bed in the night, to pour out my soul to God. I feel I never pray too much: it is my life, it is my all in Him."

A letter addressed to his friend, Mr. Sigston, dated Chelsea, May 25, 1815, reads (in part):

"I pray for you continually, that you may experience all the salvation from sin, living perfect love, do all the will of God in this world, and that your teaching may (as it has done) answer two blessed ends; that is, produce the wisdom of man, and the power of God, among your pupils. Pray that your preaching may be effectual,

have always one end in view,—SOULS, SOULS,—the salvation of your hearers! Amen, Lord Jesus!

“You know I have been about three months in the furnace. The mystery of God! ‘I know not now!’ I can not find it out, but I know He was with me. The glory I experienced was beyond all I can now relate. I was filled with mercy. I could have shouted ‘MERCY’ continually. Yet I never had so clear a view of the torments of the damned. . . . Since my sickness I have had uncommon enlargement in preaching, and never saw greater effects. . . . I remain weak in my ankles and feet, but am able to go through all my preaching and walking.”

From the state of Mrs. Bramwell’s health it was deemed best, by attending physicians, that it would not be proper for them to winter in London; and in consequence thereof, as well as from a fear that the winter might prove injurious to Mr. Bramwell, the Conference of 1815 stationed him in the Newcastle Circuit.

Although Mr. Bramwell had still to endure much personal affliction, yet his desire for the salvation of men seemed to become more ardent. The following extracts from letters, written to his friends, show the state of his mind in this respect, and his patient, yet eager waiting for the appearing of his Lord:

“I am waiting every day for my change; and I see the heavenly throng waiting for me. I long more than ever to be there, ‘where we shall see His face, and never, never sin.’”

“The frequent changes and many deaths of our dear friends, ever call upon me to use the utmost diligence to grow in grace, to be ready, to be fully ready to meet

God. I frequently long for His coming. I wait to see Him as He is, to behold His glory, to see the company, and especially the number I have known, and who are now with Him. What is all the world, or worlds on worlds, to compare with this? What is labor? What is suffering? What are fire and water (supposing we were called to pass through them), if God is with us? To see the Lamb and possess everlasting life, overbalance everything else."

To his daughter he says [1815]:

"MY DEAR ANN,— . . . I hope you will unite in praise to God, when I tell you that I have received what I call *an extraordinary baptism of the Spirit*. I do not know that I shall preach any better, or look in anything more like an angel; but my soul has experienced such a fellowship with God and heavenly things, as I never felt before. O the glory which shall be revealed! I am swallowed up in Him!"

In a letter to Mrs. Pickford, 1816, he writes:

"He justifies, He purifies, He then stays the mind on Himself; but He gathers us nearer, still nearer, till we feel we live in the presence of God every moment. This is our place, and this is heaven on earth.

"Never expect your Heavenly Father to keep His covenant only on the ground of your acts of faith. This faith must be like the pendulum of a clock,—it must keep moving, to put the whole soul in motion. And, as your faith increases, you will more quickly mount up, run faster, labor more, love more, rejoice more, and drink the cup with greater cheerfulness. . . . I never had more pleasant walks, by faith, in the heavenly country. I see the company, and I live amongst them; for we are come to an innumerable company of angels; to the spirits of just men made perfect.' "

CHAPTER XIV.

LAST APPOINTMENT—PREMONITION—SUDDEN TRANSLATION—"A STATION IN HEAVEN."

WE now enter on the last circuit in which this faithful servant of Christ Jesus was permitted to labor. The Conference in 1817 appointed him to Salford. From all accounts of those who were favored with his presence, it appears that he was fully persuaded that his work was nearly finished, and that the time of his departure was at hand. Few Christian ministers have had more intimate communion with God than William Bramwell. His heavenly conversation and zealous exertions in the cause of Christ are thus spoken of by one who knew him, and loved him:

"At this time, when Mr. Bramwell was appointed to this circuit, we had petitioned for him for seventeen years; and at length we obtained our wishes. The expectation which had been formed was not disappointed. In his first address he stated the duties of ministers of the gospel, and his determination to labor after that model. 'I shall call upon you,' he said, 'not to eat, drink, or spend the time in conversation with you upon different subjects, but to ask you concerning the state of your soul.'

"His method of preaching was peculiar to himself. For sometimes he made choice of very singular passages from the prophets; notwithstanding which, before he had finished, they were made very plain to the understanding. The metaphors of the inspired penmen were also applied

in a remarkable manner to every individual, either as a private character, or as a member of a Christian community.

“How powerful was his call: ‘Preachers! leaders! prayer leaders, and people!’ and sometimes his zeal was so great that not an office of any kind escaped his notice. ‘Singers and door-keepers!’ resounded through the chapel. So impressive were his calls to enter into the fullness of every gospel privilege, that every head has often been bowed down, and hundreds pricked to the heart.

“According to his own account, he seldom ascended the pulpit without strong conflicts. Perhaps his soul had been wrestling with God in mighty prayer, that the glory of the Redeemer might appear. But the nature of those conflicts he never mentioned. When, however, he had entered upon his duty, and sometimes even as soon as he entered the pulpit, his soul became unburdened; in the midst of his sermon he would obtain full liberty. Enraptured with the glories of heaven, and filled with holy fervor and zeal, he would lose sight of his presence in the body. At such seasons the Spirit’s influences were shed abroad; and if there was a heart that felt not, surely that heart was hardened by wilful prejudice, or had become a willing captive to a Laodicean spirit.

“The fervor of his spirit often led him into an involuntary poetic strain, little inferior to those celebrated compositions which have given immortal honor to the name of Dr. Young. I did indeed think that he had composed some piece which described the warfare and

triumph of a Christian, and that at these times he was generally quoting himself. This mode of delivery was of frequent occurrence.

“He usually met the society after preaching on a Sunday evening, when that holy fervor which he had felt during preaching was far from being evaporated. He appeared unwilling to leave his post: ‘Suffer me, suffer me,’ he would often repeat. During preaching also he used the same expressions, as well as ‘Bear with me, O bear with me!’ so importunate was he, and yet so feeling! and as often he returned to the charge. In the midst of the closing benediction, he has frequently resumed singing with ‘Praise God from whom all blessings flow,’ etc.; when the chapel, instead of being emptied, has been filled with fresh incense. In short, if Mr. Bramwell had received at his first coming amongst us a clear discovery of the particular time of his departure, he could not have labored with greater earnestness. On the Sabbath before he left us for Conference, one of his texts was from Phil. ii, 8, ‘For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.’

“Whenever he met an old professor enjoying the love of God, and ready to depart, he would say, ‘Well, my friend, it can not be long before you take possession of the kingdom. When you get there, tell them who are already in heaven, I am following hard after you, and shall not be long.’ ‘I go,’ said he, in one of his sermons, ‘many times in a day to look over this estate of mine.’ To a friend who said, ‘This is my birthday,’ Mr. Bramwell replied, ‘Well, if you live as long again wholly devoted to God, you will then become a holy man indeed.’

The attainment of entire sanctification was what he would constantly impress upon the minds of all who entered into conversation with him.

“To live dead to the world, and ever prepared for a dying hour, was his constant subject. This he would enforce by many familiar similies. ‘If,’ said he, ‘the call should be at midnight, can you arise at once willingly and cheerfully obey the summons? -If at noonday, are you ready? Is everything in its place? Can you obey with the same alacrity with which you would run to the door upon hearing a loud rap? Or is there something to be set in order before the call can be attended to?’ He also observed that, if not both willing and ready in every moment of time to attend the summons of death, we were not fit to die.

“The week before Mr. Bramwell went to Conference, he called at a friend’s house in the afternoon; and, during his short stay, he prayed not less than six times, with uncommon earnestness, and in reference to some particular circumstance: whatever that might be, he was enabled between the intervals of prayer to praise God with equal fervor. His knowledge of the human heart was so deep, that it has been emphatically said of him, he was truly a discerner of spirits. With the pious and learned Archbishop of Cambray, he knew ‘there was a simplicity which is a wonderful virtue;’ of this virtue he was in full possession. He was a recollected soul. He was never absent, except when, with uplifted eyes, he looked at his estate; and this he could not avoid, even in the midst of company. He often lamented that Mr. Fletcher’s letter on recollection was not more generally known. Of the reverse of this state he was accustomed

to observe, that it was a dissipation of mind and of soul. He frequently said, 'I feel as if I would like to go to heaven next week.'

"His familiar anecdotes and similies were made uncommon blessings. At a meeting of the society at Pendleton, he noticed many of the hindrances which prevent God from taking full possession of the soul. These he considered as idols. He gave an account of a canary fancier,—a professor of religion, but a mourner in Zion. Mr. Bramwell having seen the birds, and heard a description of their various beauties and excellencies, observed to the man, 'Why, these are your gods!' The man was offended; but, upon serious consideration, he felt the force of the remark, cut off the heads of all the poor canaries, applied to a 'Throne of Grace, and his soul was immediately set at liberty. At the same meeting another bird fancier felt the force of this remark, and instantly disposed of his birds; and although he was then in perfect health, he sickened soon afterwards, and within the space of fourteen days after the meeting, died happy, triumphantly happy in the love of God."

The writer of this memoir (Mr. James Sigston) is indebted to a friend for the following account of Mr. Bramwell's short residence in Leeds:

"Mr. Bramwell's last journey commenced on the twenty-eighth day of July, in the year 1818. On the morning of that day, he took a place in the Manchester coach, and proceeded to the house of his affectionate friend, Mr. Sigston, of Queen-Square, Leeds, his usual place of abode whenever his duty called him to sojourn in that town, or to pass through it. His host and hostess possessed views and feelings congenial to his own, being

warm admirers of his piety, and imitators of that zeal and devotedness for which he was greatly distinguished. In their society he always appeared to be at home; and those happy, edifying interviews which many religious friends enjoyed with him in Mr. Sigston's house, will never be erased from their recollection.

"It was on the evening of the same day, that he arrived at his favorite abode. He came there for the purpose of attending on his duties in Conference, which was held that year at Leeds. The financial embarrassments under which the body had been laboring for some years, were lamented by him, because he thought they might in a great measure have been avoided; and they were a subject of grief to him, on account of their being real hindrances to the planting of the gospel in other places. Economy in expenditure, and less of worldly show and costly ornament in our places of worship, were at once the preventives and the cures which he prescribed for this malady.

"But his great concern was not about outward things: he thought much and deeply about the inward declension which he feared was too perceptible in the race of Methodists. He longed to see the restoration of all that simplicity, that genuine attachment to the Redeemer, and that unaffected charity for all men, which were the characteristics of early professors. These circumstances, connected with the temporal and spiritual prosperity of the Church to which he belonged, compelled him to a close attendance during the sittings of the Conference, that he might hear everything which was suggested for the mitigation of existing evils, and that he might contribute his portion of advice, which he always gave with modesty and firmness.

“In the intervals between each sitting, he enjoyed himself at his friend’s house in conversation that was at once exhilarating and profitable. At such moments he shone as the enlightened minister and the pleasing companion. His presence communicated both delight and edification; and it is the declaration of his host, that if Mr. Bramwell had previously received a sure intimation that his earthly existence would terminate so soon and suddenly as it did, he could not have conducted himself with more of that dignified propriety, and innocent cheerfulness, which become a minister of grace and an heir of heaven. Indeed, this had always been his character, when in former times he had passed many happy days at Mr. Sigston’s house: but it was the more remarkable at this period, for ‘his conversation was eminently in heaven, from whence he was looking for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.’ He was ‘filled with the Spirit;’ and exhibited to the view of all around him a heavenly specimen of a finished character.

“One afternoon during the Conference, he took tea with an old friend, in company with several other preachers. In the course of conversation, it was observed how difficult it was to station those preachers who had large families. Mr. Bramwell said with much solemnity, ‘I think some of us ought to pray that God would be pleased soon to grant us a station in heaven!’

“A few days before he died, clasping his hands together, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, ‘O the blessed, blessed state of that man of God, Mr. Blagburn, when he was about to depart! I saw him in London a short time prior to his death, when he exclaimed with great joy, “Glory, glory to God, who has made me fully ready for my change!”’

"A friend calling upon him one day, inquired where his station for the following year was fixed. Mr. Bramwell replied, 'My brethren have appointed me to return to Salford. But I tell them they will never have another opportunity to give me an earthly station; for it is my intention to be in heaven before next Conference. I am hastening to that better country as rapidly as I am able.'

"On another occasion, an intimate friend meeting him in the yard of the chapel, walked with him, and complimented him on his being chosen chairman of the Manchester District; adding with an air of pleasantry, 'that he hoped his elevation would not turn his head.' Mr. Bramwell smiled, and, without seeming to have heard a syllable of what had been uttered, fixed his eyes upon his friend, and said in a very emphatic tone, 'O brother, live to God!' Immediately afterwards, his attention was called off by some other friends. This one object he had perpetually in sight,—to exhort every one with whom he conversed, to prepare for the complete enjoyment of the inheritance of the saints of light. He could assure all his friends from his own experience, that nothing was so delightful as to live under a constant sense of God's presence, and to do all things with a regard to His glory.

"Being only a few miles distant from Westgate Hill, the residence of his daughter, on Saturday, the eighth of August, he went to see her and the family, and preached in the village on Sunday afternoon, to a crowded congregation. His text was 1 John iv, 16-18. His sermon was very experimental, and he urged all his hearers to press into this life of God,—the dwelling in love. He spoke in a powerful manner on the 'boldness' with which a believer is inspired through Christ, 'in the day of judg-

ment;’ and in the course of his second prayer, he uttered these remarkable expressions, ‘Lord, didst Thou not this day speak to my heart, and say, *Thou shalt soon be with Me to behold My glory?*’

“On Monday evening, August 10th, he went to Holbeck, and took tea at a friend’s. The same evening, at seven o’clock, he preached to an attentive and overflowing congregation, from Isaiah xliii, 1-3. This was the last text which Mr. Bramwell was permitted to choose, and he spoke from it as a dying man to dying men.

“On Wednesday in the same week, after attending the last sitting of the Conference a short time, he left his brethren about seven o’clock in the evening, and repaired to the house of his friend. Mr. Sigston saw him come across the yard, and says that he advanced with a firm and agile step, like a young man in the bloom of health and buoyancy of spirits.

“That evening he expected the arrival of his son John by coach, from Durham. When he had finished all his intended preparations, two young men were dispatched into the town to await the arrival of the north coaches. On their return, they informed Mr. Bramwell, that his son had not arrived, but that they had met with a gentleman at the coach who had seen his son the Saturday preceding, and he had not intimated to him any intention of coming to Leeds. At this Mr. Bramwell seemed somewhat disappointed, till Mr. Sigston reminded him that he had heard him say his son would be in Leeds on Thursday evening, and that night was only Wednesday. He appeared much surprised at the mistake which he had made, and said, ‘Dear, dear! of what have I been thinking?’

“During the remainder of the evening he was quite cheerful, and entered readily into conversation on various topics. Immediately after supper, raising one hand, and looking upwards, he said with a pleasing smile on his countenance, ‘It strikes me that one of us will be gone in three or four months.’ On which Mrs. Sigston observed, ‘If it should be Mr. Bramwell, we would say, Who could have thought it, as he looked so well at Conference?’ He then said, ‘Several of my friends have died of apoplexy, and I expect to go in that way.’

“Knowing that he intended to rise about half-past two o'clock next morning, to go by the first coach to Manchester, Mr. Sigston endeavored to prevail upon him to retire; but he said he could not till he had seen Mr. Nelson, who had promised to bring him an account of the termination of business in the Conference, about which he seemed to be much interested. At a late hour Mr. Nelson arrived and partook of a little supper, after which he told Mr. Bramwell all the final proceedings of Conference, and soon afterwards withdrew; and when Mr. Bramwell had conversed a few minutes with his friend, he took the bed candlestick, bade farewell most affectionately to Mr. Sigston, and commended him to God with peculiar fervor.

“After he had entered the chamber, Mr. Johnson, one of the teachers who slept in the opposite room, heard him most fervently praying, and, amongst other petitions, he recollects the following sentence, which was repeated several times, ‘O Lord, prepare me for Thy kingdom and take me to Thyself!’ At half-past two o'clock precisely, he came downstairs, without having been called, and took his lunch, with as good appetite as usual. During the

time of this early repast, he very often lifted up his hands and his eyes, and with great earnestness said, 'Praise the Lord! Glory be to God!' etc. He then said to the servant, 'We will pray a little.' And he prayed very fervently for himself, for her, and for the whole family, beseeching God that she, as well as himself, might be fully ripened and made ready for heaven. After this she went to open the yard door, and he immediately followed her, shook hands with her, and said, 'The Lord bless you, Alice!' He departed—this was about three o'clock—and, before she had time to undress, she heard some one knocking at the yard door. She opened a window, and a man said to her, 'Has a gentleman left your house this morning?' She replied, 'Yes.' The man then said, 'I believe he is dying in the lane.' She alarmed the whole family, several members of which ran down into the lane," and there lay Mr. Bramwell. "One of the patrol ran for a surgeon; the other, assisted by Mr. Sigston and his young men, conveyed him back to the house. A surgeon arrived in a few minutes, but, alas! the vital spark was quite extinct.

"Many of his brethren, the preachers, had not left Leeds, and they testified in every possible manner, their deep regret for the loss of such a faithful and affectionate fellow-laborer.

"On Sunday, the sixteenth of August, multitudes from all parts of the country repaired to Westgate Hill, to witness the funeral ceremony of their beloved friend and pastor.

"On the fourteenth of September, a funeral sermon was preached by Mr. William Dawson, in the area in front of Mr. Sigston's school, and near the place where

Mr. Bramwell died. Nearly ten thousand persons were assembled that afternoon, and listened with almost breathless attention to the discourse.

“A plain tablet, bearing the following neat and unassuming inscription, was erected to his memory in the burial-ground at Westgate Hill:

“Here lieth what was Earthly
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WILLIAM BRAMWELL,
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