

Mission Work in Manchester

by Thomas Bradbury

Thomas Bradbury's sermon emphasizes the transformative power of the gospel through personal encounters with the afflicted in Manchester.

Scripture: Psalm 139:23, Isaiah 53:5, John 14:6, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Ephesians 1:7, Ephesians 2:8, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Mission Work", "Gods Grace"

Description

Thomas Bradbury shares heartwarming accounts of his ministry work in Haydock, including touching stories of individuals like Peggy Greenall, Jemmy Atherton, and the Turton family. Through his faithful preaching and teaching, many souls found comfort, peace, and salvation in Christ, experiencing the transformative power of God's grace and mercy in their lives.

Transcript

PORTION FROM THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF THOMAS BRADBURY

When my father commenced his work as a missionary, as mentioned on a previous page, a part of his duty was to keep a Journal, in which he registered a full account of his visits amongst the poor. This he kept up for several years, and many an interesting account was entered therein, as I can bear witness, for it was my delight as a child to read its pages.

Some of the incidents recorded in this Journal have been published by my father in his book entitled; "Strangers and Pilgrims," which has been read with both pleasure and profit by many of the Lord's family.

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

As this book is now out of print, I need offer no excuse for giving a few extracts from it, as an illustration of my father's work at this period of his life, showing that the gospel he proclaimed was undoubtedly the Lord's message by the Lord's messenger. (Hag. i. 13)

The following incident occurred during his mission work in St. Philip's Parish. He says: "Towards the close of the year 1856, when winter's icy mantle was thrown over the face of nature, and stern necessity made many a manly spirit bend, I was directed to a humble dwelling where, on a bed of affliction, lay an aged

pilgrim. He was bound in poverty's strong chain, and few were the comforts of this world which he enjoyed. Having introduced myself, I said, 'So you are very ill.'

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

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

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

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

"'Thank you.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"'Do you know his name?'

"'I cannot say; I never heard it. He was a queer man. They say he was one of Gadsby's antinomians.'

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

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

It was during the same winter that he came across an old woman named Jenny Murphy, of whom he writes:

"Old Jenny resided in a poverty-stricken nook of the populous city of Manchester. Bending to the earth beneath the weight of age and affliction, and surrounded by unhappy associations, she manifested a composure and peace of mind which was maintained by direct communication with His sacred Majesty in the court of heaven. Her husband, son and daughter were in the world, and rebelled there in the most profligate and dissipated manner. This was a sore grief to one whom grace had taught to tread the beaten path of tribulation which leads to the pilgrim's home above. It was in the winter of 1856 I first met Old Jenny. Through a narrow passage I wended my way, and on arriving at her door I knocked, when a voice from the interior cried, 'Open the door, and come in!'

"Obedient to the summons, I entered. Near to the fire, and bent nearly double, sat the poor old creature.

"'Well, and what is your business?' she enquired.

"'I am seeking for a sinner,' I replied, 'whose heart longs after Jesus, or one who may be seeking to know Him.'

"'Sit you down, and draw up to the fire,' she cried. 'Why, I thought there were none of your sort about this part.'

God knows best what His people want, when they should have their wants supplied, and the means for the supply of them. Jesus, who is the "Head over all things to His Church," will send His messengers at the right time and to the right place.'

"'Ay, we believe that sometimes, when we are in health and strength, and we can get out to church to praise and worship Him, and hear His blessed gospel preached; but when sickness and affliction come, and we cannot get out to hear God's ministers, and nothing but sin and ungodliness is dinned into our ears from those around us, it is different then. God takes some of our ministers away - He knows best why, and others come not near us, and the old proverb seems to be true, "When poverty comes in at the door, love flies out at the window." Then, like Jeremiah, we are ready to cry, "My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord."

'Where did you learn to love such truths as these?'

God taught me them at St. Jude's Church, in Canal Street,' she answered. 'I was living in Canning Street then. The Scripture Reader called, and invited me to the Sunday night service at the Church. I went, and oh, mercy of mercies! God met me - me, a poor, miserable sinner. That night proved to be "the time of love" to me. I went there ignorant of God's great love, careless about my never-dying soul, a proud, guilty rebel, and a despiser of His goodness; and yet, for all that, He singled me out. His own sent servant, the Rev. Mr. Walker,* was the minister who preached, and he took his text from Judges xvii. and the last verse: "Then Micah said, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to be my priest."

*The Rev. Dr. Walker, late Rector of Oheltenham, who was then Incumbent of St. Jude's, Manchester, succeeding the Rev. P. J. O'Leary.

"'But how could such a text as that be the means of awakening you?' I asked.

"Eh, bless you! that is God's Word as well as the rest. As the minister explained it, I could see that I was a Micah. I had not a Levite to be my priest, but I had lots of things to look at instead of the one Mediator, the one Sacrifice once offered on Calvary's tree. I could do very well without Jesus then. I was ignorant of God's righteousness, and I wanted to establish my own righteousness, and I was too proud to submit to the righteousness of God.'

"Were you able to submit to God's plan of saving sinners that night?'

"Oh dear, no!' she answered. 'I could see that I was a guilty, undone, miserable sinner. My comeliness, like Daniel's, was corruption, and my righteousness was as filthy rags. I was a foolish old woman; I thought I was somebody, but I found I was worse than nothing. There was no place but hell fit for such a sinner as me. I got my Bible and looked for something that would give me a little comfort, but I could find none. I kept in that way for some time, and I was laughed at, which hurt me very much.'

"But what gave you peace and rest at last?' I enquired.

"Well - ay, it was well! One Sunday night I was at church, and the minister, Mr. Walker - bless him! - made use of those words in his sermon, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh dear! when I heard those words, my poor soul was drawn in such a way as I cannot describe, and it did run. It could do nothing else but run to Jesus. I felt that He had took all my sins, and that He had given me His righteousness. I found that true religion was something that was brought home to the heart, Jesus' love warming it. . You cannot tell how glad I am to see you. I thought I was not going to see another of the family till the Lord was pleased to take me, and that cannot be long.'

"Poor dear old soul, she little knew how her heartfelt confession warmed and cheered my soul. Not another was to be found in the same street who could talk after that fashion, and how could they? The two or three who made any profession at all are well described in the language of the Lord by Isaiah: 'This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do they honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men.' These people were too nice and respectable to take notice of a child of God, a King's daughter in a hovel.

"Poor old Jenny! she never went half-a-dozen yards from her own door afterwards. Her sufferings increased, and for a period of several months she was not able to move without intense pain In all her sufferings - and she never complained of one too many - she was wonderfully sustained. She was comforted oftentimes with the presence of a blessed Sympathizer. She rejoiced in the knowledge of Him whom Isaiah describes in these sweet words: 'In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bare them and carried them all the days of old.' She felt honoured in being truly a suffering member of the suffering body of Christ. My visits to her were continued up to a few days of her death, and were always most precious and profitable She was truly one of God s hidden ones, hidden from the world, but not from Him whose foundation - His covenant settlements in Christ Jesus - standeth sure, having this seal, 'The Lord knoweth them that are His.'"

CHAPTER III.

"The gospel is God's message of love and grace to His unworthy ones. It is a distinct and definite declaration of sovereign goodness to distinct and definite persons, who were foreordained to this glorious privilege. Those who are honoured by God to be entrusted with so rich a treasure, have simply to declare,

proclaim, or preach it, but have no offers to make, and possess no power to apply it."

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

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

It was soon manifest that God had a special work for him to do in this place. His time was spent chiefly in visiting the poor in their cottages, preaching in the open air, and also in farm kitchens and cottages.

As the months went by, he saw that God was marvellously blessing his labours in making him the instrument in bringing dead sinners to realize their union with a living Christ. Looking back to this time in after years, he says: "Haydock! the very mention of the name will thrill through many a heart. Within its bounds JEHOVAH'S mercies and judgments have been solemnly displayed. Here the gospel of the grace of God has been sounded forth for many a long year, and weary pilgrims on the way to Emmanuel's glory land have been refreshed and comforted. At certain times, appointed by the Father, faithful ministers of Christ visited the scattered flock and dealt forth from a Spirit-wrought experience God's precious truth, which was blessed to the quickening, comforting, and establishing of many living souls.

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

It was his custom to walk many miles in his visits to the poor, calling at a cottage here and there on his way sometimes, as he passed a coal mine, stopping and talking to the men on the pit brow, or halting a few minutes to have a chat with a man breaking stones at the wayside; always with the same object - that of leading their minds to eternal realities, and showing them that the way of salvation was through the work of Christ alone.

From the commencement of his labours at Haydock, and throughout the time of his stay there, he usually visited Edge Green (a little hamlet about four miles away) on the Monday in each week, and spent the greater part of the day visiting the people in their cottages, reading and expounding to them the gospel of the ever-blessed God. In one of these cottages lived old Alice Banks, an account of whom is here given in his own words:

"The first time I met this old pilgrim was in the spring of 1859. She lived in an old thatched cottage in Edge Green Lane, into which I was not allowed to enter. On Good Friday, 1861, two religious visitors stopped at the door and enquired did Mr. Bradbury call to see the inmates, when the daughter replied, 'No, my father will not allow him to call here;' so it was. Poor Banks! as hardened a wretch against God' truth and people

as ever existed, but devotedly attached to his parish church and clergy, forbade any but these to cross the threshold of his house on religious matters.

"In the spring of 1862 he was seized with a serious illness, which terminated his mortal life. Prayers and entreaties from the sorrowing soul of his wife besieged the mercy seat on his behalf. She ventured at length to ask him might she send for Mr. Bradbury, to her astonishment and joy he consented.

"With a trembling heart I hastened to the bedside of this aged sinner, while the dear old woman, unknown to myself, crouched outside the chamber door, eagerly listening for some word to fall from his lips which she might accept as an evidence of the good Spirit's regenerating grace. I found him very weak and fearfully ignorant. What could I do? The Lord knew best. He inclined my heart to say but little. Suitable portions of God's Word were read, and a few words of explanation given at each visit. The total depravity of the sinner and salvation by grace, wholly of God's will, by the doing and dying of our Lord Jesus Christ, was stated to him. Will the enmity of his wretched nature manifest itself? He lay in silence. Commending him to God and to the Word of His grace, I continued my visits to him, but never heard a word of spiritual concern from his lips.

"On Monday, June 23rd, I found him very low. The Lord directed me to read the xxvth Psalm. I spoke to him of David's great sin, and of God's greater mercy in revealing to him His secret; His way of punishing sin, and accepting the sinner in the son of His love. The old man was moved; I enquired, Do you know of anything in which you can trust for the salvation of your never-dying soul? 'I have been a great sinner,' he replied, 'I am still a great sinner; I can see nothing but sin in me. This makes me afraid to die when I think at it. I would trust in God, in Jesus Christ.'

"He said he wished he could repent and pray as he ought; and when asked if he would be better prepared for heaven then, he said, 'No; I can see no fitness for heaven but in Jesus Christ. He must do all for me.' I did not prolong the conversation, but read a few verses from the end of Rom. vii., prayed with him, and left.

"On the Thursday following I called again; the old man was gone. If the words, 'I can see no fitness but in Christ; He must do all,' were the utterance of an anxious, longing soul, there can be no doubt as to his acceptance in the courts of heaven. 'The day will declare it.' Thankfulness filled the heart of dear old Alice in witnessing the goodness of God leading her husband to listen to the message of sovereign love and mercy to hell-deserving sinners. She delighted to attend the meetings where 'the Word of the truth of the gospel' was proclaimed. Many precious seasons I enjoyed in her company. She loved to dwell upon the Father's electing love, the redemption work of God the Son, and the blessed Spirit working out that glorious redemption in her everyday experience. She well understood the true nature of growth in grace as the exclusive work of God the ever-blessed Spirit. Upon one occasion she was confronted by a pious Arminian upon the subject. She lamented her want of faith in, and love to, the God of all her mercies. Her visitor said, 'Ah, but you ought to grow in grace.'

"'I hope I do,' replied Alice; 'but my growing is very much like the cow's tail, the longer it grows the nearer it comes to the ground.'

"'You do not mean to say there is no growing meetness for heaven, do you?'

"'But I do; my meetness is in Jesus;' she quickly replied; 'the more I know of this, the worse I grow in my own eyes; but Jesus grows more precious. If I do not feel myself a guilty wretch today, I shall not prize His

precious blood much. If I am never hungry, the bread of life will be of no use to me.'

"Our weekly meetings, held in Ambrose's farm kitchen, situate not far from old Alice's cottage, were greatly prized by her. At them she received many a lift by the way, and enjoyed much of her Lord's confirming grace. One day as I sat conversing with her in her house, she burst forth in the following confession of Spirit-wrought assurance: 'Well! the Lord did bless us the other night. My heart was in heaven. Eh, mon! I forgot this owd carcass altogether; sin was gone; Jesus was precious; there mightn't have been a devil. Well, when Jesus is All in all to our hearts, the devil is put to flight.'

"During the month of September, 1862, the faithful and uncompromising William Parks, Rector of Openshaw, Manchester - who was much beloved by the poor of the flock in these parts - visited the neighbourhood, and preached most blessedly in the farm kitchen from Mal. iii. 16,17. He preached through his tears - tears of God's own giving.

"Some time after this, as we were conversing on the faithfulness and clearness of Mr. Parks' teaching, she said: 'I say! I thought there were no such rectors i' th' Church now-a-days. All that I come across build up and pull down. It's in and out, on and off, with them; but this man testifies of a perfect salvation for perfect sinners. I am one of 'em. Well, isn't it a mercy that we can think upon His name? Yea, I can get there when there's nowhere else for me to creep to.'

"In the autumn of 1863 I stepped into her cottage in company with a friend. We were led to compare notes on the subject of temptation and the assaults experienced by the children of God at the hands of the devil. My friend said to her, 'I say, old lady, you must be very careful, for the devil walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.' 'Ày; ay, that's true,' replied Alice, 'but what about those whom he mayn't devour?' My friend laughed heartily, being delighted at finding himself in company with one who understood so well the everlasting security of the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock.

"The last time I saw her was in the month of September, 1868. She lay in bed; a smile stole over her face as I entered her chamber. She exclaimed, 'Eh, dear! why that's th' owd face again; I thowt I should never see it again before we meet in glory.'

"Then you do hope to get there at last?'

"Well, I could hardly tell you sometimes. If God has nothing better than this owd carcass to look at, I shall never get there. Don't you see it's accepted in the Beloved I am - not in myself? Not on me, not on me, it's on Jesus God looks, and He sees me there. What a mercy!'

"Why you must feel like a king's daughter in this old hovel.'

"Owd hovel! why, mon, it's a palace to me; you mustn't talk o' that way about th' owd house. God supplies all my wants in it, and what more can anybody have?'

"I read 2 Cor. iv. 15 - v. 9, and commented upon a few words of it, when my knees bent, and my heart was poured out before the throne on her behalf. It was a precious, hallowed moment; the sweets of the far-off land were enjoyed; Jesus was very nigh. When I arose from my knees the big tears stood in her eyes; she took my hand in hers, and said with true heart feeling: 'Good-bye. God Almighty bless thee, and make thee a blessing to His poor people wherever thou goest. We may never meet down here again; but we shall meet, I believe, where no vile body shall plague us, no sin will torment us, and no devil will tease us - we shall see Jesus; that's what we want. Good-bye; and God Almighty bless thee.'

"We parted; I never saw her again. She gradually grew weaker and weaker, until the Lord graciously put a period, to all her cares and conflicts. Angels, ay, and the angels' Lord, were there to convey her ransomed spirit to the joys of Emmanuel's glory land. Her last words were: 'I want to go home from all this sin and corruption. I do not fear, though I am the greatest sinner that ever breathed. This is my hope - my life is hid with Christ in God, and nowt can touch it there.' Early the next morning, December 19th, 1868. her weary spirit rested in a loving Saviour's bosom."

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

It was during one of his visits to Edge Green early in the year 1859 that he first became acquainted with Sarah Hatton, but I will give the account in his own words:

"I generally found time during my weekly visit to step into the cleanest cottage in the vicinity. Here lived old Sarah Hatton. I always felt interested in her company; there was something so guileless and simple about her which won my affection and esteem. She was never ashamed to own and acknowledge her ignorance. Invariably she paid marked respect to the reading of God's Word, but remained totally destitute of the knowledge of that saving grace which abounds by Jesus Christ, the glorious Keeper of all spiritual blessings, gifts, and privileges for His afflicted, poor and needy people. Yet, though she knew Him not, she was well known to her covenant God and Father, who, in pure electing love before all worlds, gave her a place and a name in His house better than of sons and of daughters. During the long period of eight years she lived and knew not Jesus but in name. To hear of her total depravity and utter helplessness was indeed news to her; but to be stripped of every rag of her own fancied righteousness was painful in the extreme. How could it be otherwise? Her character was highly moral, and though poor, she was greatly respected by all who knew her. She was not what the world or deluded Pharisees would call a sinner; and now to be told that her righteousnesses were as filthy rags perfectly overwhelmed her. Many times, when I left the house, she expressed a hope that I might never call to see her again. But God's all-wise predetermination could not be frustrated. This jewel in the rough must be polished, however painful the process.

"The people of JEHOVAH'S choice

Are registered on high,

And they shall hear His sovereign voice,

And by His grace draw nigh.

Far off, depraved, and prone to stray,

But they shall surely come;

For covenant love marks out the way,

And brings the outcasts home."

"The time due for JEHOVAH the Spirit to reveal a precious Christ in her at length arrived. I remember visiting her in the afternoon of Thursday, July 28th, 1859; more than ordinary interest was manifested by her; half smilingly but with an expression of bewilderment in her countenance, she received me. I had scarcely entered the house when she said, 'You have come to see us once more. You will make a prayer for me?' These words she repeated three or four times. Having taken a seat, I drew my Bible from my pocket, when she made as though she would have knelt down. I asked her to sit still. 'Are you not going to pray for me?' she asked, apparently greatly surprised.

"No,' I answered, 'we will see first what God may say to us in His Word, and then perhaps we shall be in a better state of mind to pray to Him.' I opened my Bible, when my mind was directed to the xxxiird Psalm, which I read for her. When I had finished reading, I said, 'David was one of those who could say, "We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture." What a mercy it must be to know that we are His sheep, and He our Shepherd!'

"Eh, mester! I wish I was fit for that.'

"Fit! What do you mean by being fit?' I asked.

"Why,' she answered with some little hesitation, 'I am not good enough yet.'

"Good enough you never will be; bad enough you may be.'

"Mester, you frighten me.'

"If God's truth frightens you,' I replied, I can assure you I am not sorry.'

"If I am not to make myself better, how is it then?' she inquired, trembling in every limb.

"I answered, 'Let us see what God's Word says. David expresses his experience in these things thus - "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Thy servant." Isaiah says, "All we like sheep have gone astray." Peter says, "Ye were as sheep going astray." Now when a sheep goes astray, can it find its way back?'

"No, that it cannot; for there's nothing so silly as a sheep,' she answered.

"Well, then, do you not see that each of Christ's sheep have this mark upon them - they have gone astray! The Lord Himself says, "My people have been lost sheep!" How often have we confessed with our lips, "We have erred, and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Thy holy laws We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us." Now, then, do you believe this is all true concerning you?'

"Mester, you make me tremble!'

"Trembling at God's Word is a blessed evidence of being one of Christ's sheep.'

"Eh, mester, I am a great sinner!'

"Jesus Christ came into the world to save such. He says, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance!'"

"The poor old woman was silent Her soul was troubled within her, tears burst from her eyes, and ran copiously down her furrowed cheeks. I continued: 'I am glad to hear you own that you are a great sinner. To feel the burden of sin and hate it can only be produced by the Holy Spirit of God It is His to convince of sin. By nature we an do nothing but sin.'

"If that's it, what must I do then?"

"Nothing,' was my reply.

"With earnest anxiety pictured in her face, she exclaimed, 'Then my poor soul must be loss for ever. Mustn't I pray?'

"If you are truly anxious after your soul's welfare, you cannot help praying; can you?"

"No! I do pray. But you know I am very ignorant.'

"Well, my dear old friend, do not think me merely inquisitive when I ask you, what kind of prayers do you offer to God?"

"For a moment or so she hesitated, and then exclaimed, 'Why, "Our Father," th' "I Belief," and the "Ten Commandments."' "

"I could scarcely suppress a smile, but remembering that I might be dealing with one, of the lambs of Christ's flock, I observed, 'Why, you read your own death warrant, and call that praying!'

"My own death warrant!' she exclaimed; 'I do not understand you. How do you make that out?'

"The Ten Commandments form God's holy law which is binding upon you and me. It says: "Obey Me perfectly; love Me above everything, or you are lost if you fail in the least.' "

"Eh dear! but that's hard!"

"Ay, you may be sure of that. It is hard, indeed, when we find that we have broken and disobeyed it in every part.'

"Then we're all lost?"

If you and I know that we are among the favoured number; "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which is lost." Jesus says, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He invites all such to confide or trust in Him.'

"Then I've been making a mistake all the days of my life! I always thought I should make myself better by praying and doing good things, and then the Lord would save me!"

"Ay, ay, and you are not alone there. But God's ways are not as our ways; we do good to those who are kindly disposed toward us, but God does good to those who have done nothing but sin against Him. Oh! how sweet is the Shepherd's voice to such, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And then He says, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

"Eh dear, mester! how different it all seems now! I feel I could trust such a good Shepherd for everything. I didn't see that I was altogether lost before. I feel He has found me, a poor lost sheep. You will pray with me now, won't you?"

"Poor dear old creature, how her tears of joy and gratitude fell on her lap as she ran over these last words, forcibly reminding me of the word of the Lord by Jeremiah, 'They shall come with weeping and with supplications will I lead them.'

"At her request we knelt before our Father's throne to ask His blessing on the reading of His Word and the conversation we had held together. I felt my soul drawn out to God for her. Her subsequent history (short as it was) proved that our prayers were registered in heaven. I left, promising to call and see her whenever I visited the Green.

"Many were the precious seasons I had the privilege to enjoy in her company; Jesus' person, love, blood, and righteousness became more endeared to me through the artless confidence manifested by this dear old saint. I never met with one of a more teachable disposition. She continued to the last as a little child desiring the sincere milk of the Word. The day the summons descended from heaven for her departure 'from these lower scenes of night,' she called her daughter Hannah to her bedside, and faintly whispered, 'Precious Jesus! blessed Jesus! Then, in a louder tone, she cried, "O death! where is thy sting? O grave I where is thy victory?"' And when she had said this, she fell asleep."

CHAPTER IV.

"The love of the Father is great as it shines forth in our election. The love of the Son is wonderful as it is revealed in sin-bearing and enduring the judgment due to the sins of God's elect. But the love of the Spirit is marvellous, when we think of His dwelling in such vile sinners as we know ourselves to be."

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

It is to be hoped that the accounts of the dear old pilgrims at Haydock will not weary the reader, but a record of my father's work in and around Haydock would not be complete without them. The Lord signally blessed him and honoured him above many in making him a faithful minister of the Word, in blessing the reading and expounding of the holy Scriptures in his daily house to house visitations, cottage meetings, and services in the farm kitchen belonging to the Ambroses, at Edge Green.

The first summer of his work here was full of incident, and another interesting account is here given:

"On Sunday, July 24th, I was directed to a cluster of houses called North Boston, in the township of Haydock. Groups of men idled away their time during the whole of those precious days which God had

given to His Church for hallowed intercourse and communion with Himself. I was moved to visit that part and drop a word of warning, speaking as opportunity served to those careless ones - those home heathen, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' During the forenoon, while I was thus occupied, two women called at my house and left a request with my wife that I would go and see a woman who was given up to despair.

"In the afternoon, according to an appointment I had made in the morning, an open-air meeting was held in the lane, when I was enabled to deliver my Master's message. After the meeting was over, I set off to see this strange woman. When I arrived at the house, I found the women had not exaggerated her case. The poor creature was upstairs moaning piteously; hearing me in the house, she descended. As she came near, her low, plaintive wail of 'I am lost!' produced a very solemn impression upon my mind. When she appeared, what a sight met my gaze! A perfect picture of misery and wretchedness, she cried out, 'Oh, I am so glad you have come!'

"I took my seat beside her and said, 'Well, my dear woman, why have you sent for me?'

"She wrung her hands in bitter anguish and exclaimed, with a pungency which made my very flesh creep, 'Oh dear! oh dear! I am a lost woman! I am damned! The devil has me now!'

"Seeing the poor woman in such a condition I felt bewildered; I was a fool indeed. From a sense of my perfect incompetency to deal with this poor creature's case, and knowing that

"None but Jesus,

Can do helpless sinners good,"

I cried inwardly, 'Lord, who is sufficient for these things? Speak to the heart of this poor sinner. Enable me to show this transgressor Thy way, that she may be converted unto Thee.' In the strength of that sufficiency which is of God, I stammered out, 'Well, my dear woman, I am very glad to hear it.'

"Poor soul, she was quite shocked, and completely overcome with astonishment. At length she said, 'Well, that's a settler. The parson was here this week; he told me to pray. I told him I couldn't, and he said I was a very wicked woman. I screamed out, and told him I knew that a great deal better than he could tell me. He could make nothing of me and he left. Then some Methodys came, and they gave me more to do than I was able and, I think, much more than they could do properly. They left me a great deal worse in my mind than they found me. But this bangs all. You are very glad to see me in this state, are you?'

"I am very glad whenever I hear a poor sinner, like myself, coming to a just sense of her true character before God,' I answered.

"What do you mean?' she anxiously enquired.

"I mean that you and I, and every other sinner by nature, are lost, ruined, and under the curse. The devil leads us all captive at his will, and until God the Holy Ghost opens our eyes and convinces us of our sinful state we are the children of wrath; we are not only led captive, but we are the devil's willing captives.'

"Well, well!' she exclaimed, 'that is true, for I have been his willing captive long enough.'

"Then you are not his captive willingly now?'

"No, I am not,' she replied; 'but there is no mercy for me.'

"Who told you that?"

"With some little hesitancy she answered, 'Why, my conscience - my heart.'

"But God tells us, 'That every imagination of the thoughts of the heart; are only evil continually.'"

"Well, well,- she cried, 'I cannot get it out of my head that I am lost. There's no mercy for me.'

"For you to say you are lost is perfectly right. You can find something about that in God's Word, but you cannot find there is no mercy for you. On the contrary we read, 'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.'" Would you allow me to ask, 'Is there anything particular which has caused you all this trouble?'

It's because I feel I am a sinner - a great sinner, a lost sinner!' she replied.

"But is it some particular sin you have committed?' I inquired. Here her countenance indicated deep mental anxiety.

"She replied, 'Eh, mester! it's because I have sinned against God and nobody else, and He knows all about it.'

"David, the man after God's own heart, was like you, for he says, 'If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight.'" He felt as you do, that left to himself he could not stand before God.'

"At this part of our conversation I endeavoured to point out to her the nature and design of the obedience and sacrifice of Christ. From the Psalms I set before her Jesus' righteousness as David's only hope and confidence. She listened with breathless suspense and anxiety, and at length said: 'Well, that's something better; but oh! I wish I was alright!'

"Jesus says, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'"

"Blessed! comforted! what with?' she asked.

"With the blessed assurance of His own Word, which says, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" Blessed and comforted with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.'

"And can a poor sinner like me enjoy such blessings as these?' was her prompt enquiry.

"Yes,' I answered; 'none but sinners do enjoy them.

"Raise thy downcast eyes and see

Numbers do His throne surround;

These were sinners once like thee,

But have full salvation found."

Salvation, because Jesus, His own self, bare their sins in His own body on the tree, that they being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes they were healed.'

"But how is it that His stripes can heal us?"

"How is it that the husband can, and does, pay the wife's debt?" I asked her in reply.

"And is it in that way He does it?"

"It is, my poor woman. As the Husband, Friend, and Surety of His Church, which is composed of a countless multitude of sinners, Jesus stood in their room and stead; He paid all their debts - that is to say, He endured all the wrath and suffering which they deserved; He obeyed all the commands and precepts of the law for them, thus arching over the great gulf sin had made between them and an all holy God. It is here the believing sinner meets with God on friendly terms."

"After a little further conversation I left, commending her to God and to the Word of His grace."

"The Thursday following I called to see her again. She gave me a hearty welcome, and appeared more composed than she was when I left her on Sunday. After reading and conversing with her a short time, she said: 'I cannot think that God will forgive me, I am too great a sinner.'"

"Why do you think so?" I asked.

Well, mester, to tell you the truth, one day, when something happened i' th' house that I didn't like, I cursed God for letting it be so; and I feel sure He will never have mercy on such a guilty wretch."

"Hold, hold a little!" said I, 'you are sadly mistaken, I think. Don't you remember the Apostle Paul? He says, "Jesus Christ our Lord putting me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy.'"

"Ay, for sure he says he was as bad as I am in that respect; but there never was as great a sinner lived in this world as me!"

"Well, well," said I, smiling, 'Paul and you might be brother and sister. See what he says in stating the blessed truths of pardoning mercy: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." Now, then, what poor sinners, with Paul's case before them, can question the love and power of Jesus to save?'

"No, my word," she replied, 'there is no mistake about it, I see; there is no occasion for me to doubt any longer. He says He is able and willing to save me; and oh! how I feel myself drawn to such a Saviour!'

"May you ever feel drawn to Him. He is a complete and perfect Saviour; He loves sinners, saves them, keeps them, and does them eternal good."

"Eh dear!" she ejaculated, 'I wish I could do nothing but love and serve Him; for it has comforted me to hear of what He has done for poor sinners like me.'

"And hearing of what He has done for poor sinners, you feel you can trust the well-being of your never-dying soul in His hands, and to none other?" I asked.

"Ay, He is able to save," was her reply; 'that's His work; and as you have shown from His own Word, He finished His work, and God is satisfied with Him; and why shouldn't I? God knows I'm satisfied.'

"We now knelt at the throne of grace to ask the blessing of our covenant God on this, which was evidently His own good work begun; and truly our fellowship was with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, by the grace and operation of God the ever-blessed Spirit."

In my father's visits among the poor, he came across a dear old man named John Turton. Entering a thatched cottage in Old Boston, Haydock, one Sunday forenoon to see a poor afflicted man, he found old John sitting by the bedside reading to him from God's Word. "After this," my father says, "I oftentimes came across this dear old man as he was busily engaged in his daily occupation about the fields. A few words of precious truth always passed between us. One remarkable feature I noticed in him was, he would invariably converse in the exact language of God's own Book. Little did I imagine on these occasions that such an interesting and affectionate bond of union would be formed by the special grace and discriminating mercy of Israel's covenant God, as that which now exists between the members of old John's family and myself in a precious Christ."

Old John's wife, dear old Ellen, was a sweet, gracious woman, and referring to their union my father says, "A happier or more suitable match heaven never made." They had five children - three sons and two daughters - to whom it was their father's delight, after his day's hard toil was over, to read the records of redeeming mercy from the Book of books.

Continuing the narrative, my father says: "The lads were sent to work in the coal mines of the place, where they fell into bad company. Wild, rude, and reckless they were to the grief of poor old John and Ellen. In this state they continued for some time, but-

"Glory to God, they ne'er could rove

Beyond the limits of His love;

Fenced with JEHOVAH'S shalls and wills,

Firm as the everlasting hills."

"John, the eldest son, was the first I noticed to shew signs of spiritual and eternal life. He came now and then to the cottage meetings in the lane, at first sitting outside the back door to listen. At length, the sheer force of God's truth drew him inside, where he manifested a deep interest in the truths he heard. The pleasures of sin had firm hold upon him, and for a time he was lost sight of. But how precious is the truth, 'He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' He who has said, 'I will work, and who shall let it?' stirred up John once more in his nest. Heartily concerned about his never-dying soul, he found no peace, no rest, no quiet for his wounded conscience. The flesh was weak, but JEHOVAH-JESUS was greater than them all. A precious sight of Calvary's bleeding Lamb removed all burdens; where iniquities preveiled, peace, through the blood of the cross, was richly enjoyed. On the resurrection side of the cross he saw the fading of all earth's joys and beauties, and though temptation's furnace off was hot and his poor flesh was weak, yet a precious Jesus nigh at hand with His almighty grace both strengthened and supported him. Poor John! nay, rich, happy John, oft have I envied thee thy sweet simplicity.

"How the call and regeneration of this poor wanderer must have gladdened the hearts of old John and Ellen! but greater blessings were yet in store for them Mary Ann, the eldest daughter, was always of a quiet disposition; but James, the second son, was a grief to the family. Were I asked to describe them in

two words, I should say, Piety and Profligacy. Evil associations had weaned James' mind from the joys and pleasure of the old hearthstone. Many were the riotous scenes he took part in, and oftentimes the midnight revel resounded with his noisy glee. Poor old Ellen! often from thy aching and almost broken heart have sighs most sorrowful ascended to thy Father in heaven on behalf of thy wayward son. He heard thy groaning; He remembered His covenant; He looked upon the children; He had respect unto them; He whose delights were with the elect sons of men before the daystar knew its place, forgets them not when sunk in sin and shame.

"The time for the manifestation of the promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus to Mary Ann and James had arrived. Through conversation and association with a neighbour, who loved the truths of JEH0VAH's sovereign and distinguishing grace and who seized every opportunity to sit under the sound of God's gospel, they were led to our Sunday evening meeting, held in the cottage of dear old Jemmy Atherton, near the Old Fold. The night they first appeared will ever be remembered by them. The portion of His Word which the Lord the Spirit laid upon the preacher's heart to speak from was Solomon's Song iii. 1 - 4. The voice of the heavenly Bridegroom was heard by those two anxious ones, who were evidently inquiring their way to Zion with their faces thitherward. The piety of the one, and the profligacy of the other, met with its deathblow. Many are the precious epistles I have received from them, which are written in 'the language of Canaan.'

"The following are extracts from two of them. Mary Ann writes:

"My dearest Friend in the faith and fear of a precious and compassionate Jesus, - Your very kind and edifying epistle came in due time. Blessed be the name of our covenant God, who gave me to feel a saving interest in the truth you state so fully. It is a refreshing feast to my hungering and thirsting soul.

"What joy springs up in my poor heart when I look back and trace the free and unmerited favour of a covenant God, in bringing me out of that wretched place, and leading me to Jesus, "the true and living Way." How sweet the consciousness that He put away my sin by the sacrifice of Himself! Yes, often has both joy and peace abounded when I heard you speak of His dying love for His Church, a people chosen in Him; of His pardoning blood and justifying righteousness, and of His rising power over death, hell, and sin. Thus being enabled to see that help had been laid upon One that is mighty, legality received a fatal blow, and I was given to enjoy a sweet liberty, believing that Christ had made me free.'

"The following is from James:

"I hope you will receive these few lines with affection, for I feel my heart glow toward you with love and gratitude. I cannot but think of the time when your feet brought salvation to me, a poor unworthy creature, when you published peace, and it flowed into my soul like a river. Ah, I found "Him whom my soul loveth." (Song iii. 1 - 4)

"I can never forget the time when you took me, as it were, by the hand, and led me to see that dear Lamb whose precious blood has washed all His people's sins away, and in His righteousness I can only trust.'

"Are not these precious indications of dear old John's desires being fulfilled?

"One son, the youngest, was still a pain and grief to the dear old folk. William, still heedless to all entreaties on his mother's part, clung to his ungodly associates. Many times did old Ellen beg of me to speak to him and try to persuade him from his evil ways. I remember one day she followed me out of the

old cottage and said, with anxiety pictured upon her face, 'Mr. Bradbury, do speak a word to our Will; he is living in such a state. You know a word might be blessed to him.'

"I hesitated, and at length said, 'No, I will not speak a word to him.'

"With surprise she exclaimed, 'What! Then must my lad be lost?'

"No, no! Your lad will not be lost. I believe God has designs of mercy toward him. Do not be too hard upon poor Will. I shall continue to call, and as we read God's Word and converse upon the precious truths we know, no doubt he will be drawn into conversation, and "Who can tell?" May the Lord send home His precious truth to poor Will's heart.'

"Amen!' was the hearty response from the depths of the dear old woman's anxious spirit.

"Often were our prayers heard at the Throne of Grace for the stray one. In the evenings, round the bright fire in the old nook, we sat and read the blessed Book, and truly we may say, 'Did not our heart burn within us' while a precious Jesus blessed us with His presence and opened to us the Scriptures? One grand truth was always kept prominently before us - the exalted position of sinners who, by the distinguishing grace of JEHOVAH, are brought into living experimental union with Jesus, and the spiritual blessings they enjoy in, by, and through Him. As these Christ-exalting and sinner-humbling truths were meditated upon, our hearts oftentimes burned with the fire of Divine love, while our faces glistened with tears of God's own giving, indicating the state of the soul within. This contrasted greatly with Will's anxious and careworn face. The Word of God, by His blessed Spirit, was doing its work. The heart was touched, and out of its fullness Will began to speak. At the feet of Jesus he was found, a poor suppliant suing for mercy. Mercy, free, full, and bounteous, was granted to him. One day in the first week of September, 1866, dear old Ellen's ears and heart were delighted with this confession from him, 'Eh, mother, if anybody had told me that I should have such a blessed interest in the truths of my Bible, I shouldn't have believed them.'"

Knowing the interest many of my father's friends have taken in the Turton family, I asked Mr. James Turton to send me a little account of his first meeting with him. He has sent me the following letter, which I am sure will need no apology for reproducing here:

"123 Black Brook, Haydock,

"9th February, 19 - 10.

"Dear Sister, - I cannot tell you the pleasure it gives me to write anything respecting your dear father and mine; the sweet remembrance of him grows upon me as years roll on. Oh, how pleasant he was in his life, and in death we are not divided. I shall go to him some day, and join the everlasting song - 'Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His Own blood.'

"You want to know our first knowledge of him. My dear old father met him first time in 1859 by the bedside of an old, bed-ridden man, that had lain there forty years. It was my father's custom on a Sabbath morn, after the church service was over, to call and see this man and read to him from the Holy Book, and help him a little when he could with 'a cup of cold water,' knowing that Christ has said, 'Inasmuch.' Now this was the time God had ordained that these two sons of His should meet. Now, mark the spot - by the bedside of this poor, afflicted man! and it brought about a union that will never be dissolved. From this time your dear father sought out my dear old father's abode, and he used to call and visit our home week by week; and he began to preach one night a week in a cottage near to us, and as time went on I was persuaded to go

and hear him. I went very reluctantly, thinking he was one of the old ranting stamp, and he took the text, 'I am the Good Shepherd.'

"Now some of the things he said in this sermon filled me with all the spleen of hell. I thought if those things were true. I would shoot down every man that taught such devilish things, and I would not hear him again for some time; but oh, the appointed time rolled on when I heard him on the very brink of despair, with hell in my conscience, the devil roaring, and my deep, dark crimson sins hanging all around me. I had longed to die to know the worst; yea, I had prayed for death, but that could not be the prayer of faith. I felt sure I had committed the unpardonable sin, for I had drunk myself drunk repeatedly, and I hated God's dear servant, and despised the holy things, and blasphemed that precious Name your dear father so extolled. Oh, dear sister, I had not the smallest hope of mercy! Oh, no! I was not looking for mercy; I could not hope for mercy in my wretched state. I had nearly broken my dear parents' hearts; I had sinned beyond recovery - the devil said so, my conscience said so, and the Word of God most assuredly said so (with double force), for every word I read was sharper than a sword cutting me asunder - yea, it was killing me. But oh, that memorable night when I heard him preach from those words in Sol. Song iii. and the first verse of it, my soul was set at liberty. I was really in my feelings hanging over hell, but heaven descended upon me. Oh, if I could, I felt I would give my soul to recompense the injury I had done in my wicked heart to that dear man; but oh, marvel of marvels! never was love like ours. Even after forty years, when I knew he was dying, I felt I would willingly die in his stead.

"After these things, now the old house of my father and mother became a real Bethel; the nightly visits of dear Mr. Bradbury were so blessed of God, that we gathered round him in the house while he expounded the Holy Scriptures, and oh, who could do it like him? Ah, the tears of holy joy, the unction from heaven dropped down like manna, and we sat at his feet whilst we ate it. If I know anything about 'Heaven begun below,' that was the time (and I have had some sweet repetitions of it with a dear old friend and brother now living, but the Lord in His providence has taken him to the great city, London).

"But to return. This sweet and heavenly favour lasted till he left Haydock, 1866, and oh, what a loss we felt! When he used to leave us at night (often late), we used to go with him on the way; then we would stop, then go on again, till at last we had to part. Oh, but then I cannot half tell you! When I have done my best you will not know half the blessedness that we enjoyed at that time.

"I will just tell you one incident. On a nice afternoon we were together, and had read and talked a while, and he said, 'I will sing a nice hymn.' He began with, 'Just as I am, without one plea,' but oh, he broke down and we were all in melting tears. I will never forget it; it was a time of love, a house of mercy. It came like a flowing stream, and Christ was exalted, and all the glorious Triune Persons were glorified. And my dear old parents used to say, 'O what a man of God he is!' and I saw the love-tears run down their furrowed cheeks as they talked of the goodness of God in sending him to that poor old cottage. But, dear sister, if I wrote all day I should have something more to say, for a folio would not hold all that he said and did in that old cottage. I now feel glad he is gone to his eternal home; if he had lived to see us in our old age and low estate it would have troubled him.

"But we are

"Safe in our Redeemer's hands,

Who bears our name upon His heart."

We have the sweet and blessed promise, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' God bless you, your husband, your children - may they have their grand father's God for their God, and His blessed Word for their guide through life; then I trust it will be well with them in death and to all eternity.

"We send you our best united love. May you enjoy the sweet peace which passeth all understanding. This is our prayer for you.

JAMES TURTON."

CHAPTER V.

"Sovereign grace provides everlasting arms to keep the loved ones from falling into hell, and a fence around them to keep them from wandering finally from Him they love. Sovereign grace, full, free, bounteous, will be the theme of rejoicing which will ascend from elect and redeemed souls throughout all eternity."

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

The following is an account of a dear old man, at whose house my father held a service every Sunday evening for about seven years:

"During the summer and autumn of 1859 a course of outdoor addresses were delivered near the Old Fold, Haydock. At one of these meetings, in the month of June, the subject of the address was, 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin?' etc. This raised the ire of a lot of free-willers who attended, and the lies and misrepresentations which sprang from them were legion. Others in whose hearts the love of God was shed abroad by the Holy Ghost were led into the way of truth, to hold the faith in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Among them was dear old Jimmy Atherton. The law of God, brought borne to his conscience by the gracious operation of the blessed Spirit, killed him to all hope of obtaining favour with God but through the merits of the risen and accepted Surety.

"When winter set in, one of the neighbours invited us into his house to hold our weekly meetings. Here we stayed until the beginning of the summer of 1860, when unmistakeable signs manifested themselves that a free- grace Gospel did not make matters very comfortable there. I mentioned this to my friend when, with a little hesitation, he said, 'Well, I have seen for some time the creature is laid too low for them. You put down all creature doings for salvation, and it is more than they can stand. For the Lord to save them altogether is too much for carnal nature, but it will do for me.'

"How will it be if we hold the meetings in your house?' I asked.

"You are quite welcome,' he replied, 'and I know we shall be more comfortable.'

"From this time until the close of 1866 we held our meetings under his roof. Many were the happy seasons we enjoyed. Once or more poor Jemmy received injuries in the pit while he was following his daily employment. These blows on his constitution appeared in my eye to hasten the time of his dissolution, but his hope remained steadfast, anchored to the Rock of Ages within the veil.

"The last time I saw him was in April, 1868, when it was my lot to proclaim 'the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory' in his house. The old favoured spot was filled with eager listeners, and Jemmy clearly showed that he was still sheltering within the cleft of the Rock and feeding on 'the old corn of the land.'

"From communications which I received from his son-in-law, James Turton, who was one with him in a precious Christ, we find his end was peace."

It was at one of the meetings at Jemmy Atherton's that my father first met a strange old, woman named Peggy Greenall. She worked with the men at loading coal carts, and amongst the boats on the canal. Speaking of his first meeting with her, he says: "One evening I noticed a strange woman among the little cluster who were gathered together to hear something more of Him whom their souls loved. She paid marked attention, and was often in tears. After the service was over, and the people had departed to their homes, I said to dear old Jemmy, 'Who was that old woman sitting next to the door at the meeting tonight?'

"Why, don't you know? It's owd Peggy Greenall. She's a queer sort of an owd body. I was walking by th' canal t'other neet, and we had a bit of talk about better things. I'm sure th' owd lass knows something o' th' plague of her own heart.'

"Why do you think so?'

"Well, she complained about her sinfulness, and said her only hope was that salvation was all of grace; and if it isn't, it'll be all up wi'her. God has some queer ones in His family, an' I believe she's one of His.'

"I am glad to hear you say so. I must call and see her one of these days.'

"In fulfilment of my promise, I called to see her. She was at home, and upon seeing me, said, 'Come in; we owt to spare a bit of time when the Lord sends us owt that's good.'

"But His Word says, 'There is none good but One, that is God.'"

"Well, you needn't be so sharp; if there is none good, the Lord sends His good news, an' th' good things of His kingdom, in earthen vessels - owd mugs - and those cracked sometimes.' This was said with a seriousness and gravity which commended the old woman and her saying to my heart.

"On another occasion, as we sat chatting on the truths of God's Word, the imputed righteousness of Christ became the subject of conversation; she was patching an old threadbare coat at which she looked intently for a moment or two, then referring to the robe of Christ's righteousness, she exclaimed, 'I say, there's no takkin' th' nap off that coat.'

"I laughed, and yet my heart was in no laughing mood. The truth, which above all others had been made exceedingly precious to my soul, was brought out with a realty, clearness, and fullness I did not anticipate. 'That coat!' The robe

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net