

WILLIAM BROCK D.D.

FIRST PASTOR
OF BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL.

BY
GEORGE WILSON M'CREE.



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Minister of Borough Road Chapel, Southwark.

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This Sketch of the Public Life

OF

THE REV. WILLIAM BROCK, D.D.

FIRST PASTOR OF BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL,

Is Dedicated

TO ALL WHO LOVED HIM.

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WILLIAM BROCK, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN.

IMAGINE a tall, broad-shouldered, massive man, with a large square head, an abundance of flaxen hair, a rather rugged face, capable, however, of becoming radiant with love and hope; eyes somewhat dull in light, but very observant, wide mouth and full lips, strong jaw, sonorous voice, small hands for so ponderous a frame, hearty manner, heavy and often uncertain footstep; of bluff address and a farmer-look about him, redolent of life, full of humour, sympathetic, helpful, tender, noble, good; prone, at times, to take offence, but forgiving and magnanimous; devout, heroic, impulsive, true to his country, his friends, and his God; and you have a mental image of William Brock.

He was born in Honiton, Devonshire, on February 14, 1807. He came of a healthy stock, and had a sound, enduring physique. His grandfather was pastor of the church at Prescot, and he often playfully said that any excellency he might have had been inherited from him. His mother was baptized in a small chapel in Honiton, her young son, William, being present at the time. No doubt the affecting spectacle of his mother's public baptism had much to do with his profound belief in, and unflinching defence of, the baptism of believers only in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

As a boy he was companionable, boisterous, fond of fun, energetic, but not evidently endowed with the budding intellectual powers which augured future eminence in life. He once had a singular meeting with one

of his early playfellows. Having engaged to preach in one of the London theatres, he went, on a week day, to have a look at the stage, and introduced himself—without giving his card—to the stage manager. After some brief conversation, he said to Dr. Brock, "I think, sir, you are a Devonshire man." "Why do you think so?" "You just now used an expression that only a Devonshire man would use." "And, for the same reason, I think that you also come from Devonshire," replied Dr. Brock. "Where do you come from?" "From such a town." They looked at each other. "Why, you are Jack Smith!" "Why, you are Bill Brock!" It was indeed so. They had been boys together; they had played the same games, they had sat in school at the same desk. Now, the one was the stage manager at a theatre, the other was the popular minister of Bloomsbury Chapel!

A friend who had much intimate intercourse with him relates a touching anecdote of his good mother and early life. "He was left very early without a father, and his widowed mother was not largely provided with the gifts of this world. In the year 1821 or 1823 he was sent by his mother to purchase a loaf. He came and told her that bread was thirteence a loaf. His mother said, 'Ah, then, William, that means one loaf less a week.'" No doubt the recollection of youthful indigence did much to teach him to remember the poor.

Some highly-interesting incidents in his early religious life have been revealed since his decease. When he left Devonshire for London "he had not gone far from his home before he stopped, and sat down under a hedge, in a lane, and opening his Bible at the 13th chapter of Nehemiah, his eye fell upon the 31st verse. It reads thus: 'Remember me, O my God, for good.' Kneeling down upon his knees under that hedge, with his hand upon the passage, he put up a fervent prayer that God would befriend him by remembering him for good in his metropolitan life. How strikingly was that prayer answered! Dr. Brock himself used to say, 'Who can tell how much of the success of my after-life may be traced back to that prayer?'" This habit of prayer grew with

his strength, and was carefully cultivated by him. Mr. B. P. Pask, author of "The Introductory Class Text Book," and long a member of Bloomsbury Chapel, relates that "on one occasion Dr. Brock was speaking of his apprentice days—as a watchmaker, and his hours were then from six in the morning till eight at night—and he recounted how one day his master gave him a task to do, and then left him to go some distance. The lad tried his best, but found his task too much for him. In his distress, he went up in one corner of the shop and prayed earnestly for help, 'and I did it,' was his triumphant close."

Mr. Pask, in his recollections of his pastor, also relates an incident connected with his arrival in London. "It was a guiding principle of his life, as he has himself asserted, to do with all his might the duty that came next to hand, not looking for any 'great thing' to do. After his apprenticeship had expired he came, like many others, to London to seek employment here. He made no secret of his entry upon life, and many may have heard him tell to young men how, when he got down from the coach at Regent's Circus, Oxford Street, and reached his lodgings in Charles Street, near Middlesex Hospital, he counted his money and found he had twenty shillings left after paying his fare. He advertised, and obtained a situation as journeyman watchmaker at 30s. per week. Thus he started life, without a thought of ever becoming a preacher having entered his mind. He was a lover of God; he joined a Christian church, engaged in Sunday-school work, and after a time some friends persuaded him to conduct what he called a 'cottage service.' He entered upon such labour with fear; but his friends were more encouraged than he was, and they urged him to persevere. When the young man obtained the conviction that his *duty* lay in the path of the ministry his whole soul was given to it. He sought it not, but took it up as a charge solemnly laid upon him."

Several and varying accounts have been published of Dr. Brock's entry into the ministry; but the church.

books of the Baptist Chapel, Southwood Lane, Highgate, undoubtedly contain interesting authentic records of this part of his life-story. The Rev. J. Barnard, minister of the chapel, states—"There appears first the minute recording the profession of his faith in baptism, in April, 1829. His admission into the fellowship of the church, after an absence from London for some time, during which he had been engaged in preaching the Gospel in the villages of Hertford, is next recorded in January, 1830. The following minute appears in February, 1830:—'Brother Brock having several times exercised his gift amongst us, and being also admitted a candidate for the Stepney Academy, it was unanimously agreed to sanction his thus proceeding.' Then in May, 1833, mention is made of the transfer of his membership from the church at Highgate to the church in the parish of St. Mary's, Norwich, of which church he had become the pastor a short time before."

The preparatory studies for the ministry were undertaken at Derby, in the school for the prophets held in the house of the Rev. T. Hawkins, and subsequently at Stepney College, when Dr. Murch was president. In the year 1833, as we have seen, he went from Stepney College to St. Mary's Chapel, Norwich.

A public journalist, who knew him well in that ancient city, and who fought many a brave battle by his side when the dust and din of moral warfare were dense and loud, thus describes him:—

"William Brock was a plain, honest, unadorned Englishman, gifted with common-sense, serviceable abilities, a bold utterance, and a massive frame. He was naturally a man of the people—as sympathetic as he was sagacious. He sprang from them, sympathised with them, laboured for them all his life, and loved them to the end. He was a good man in the most deep practical and thorough meaning of the term. He hated cant, and delighted in plain speaking. He was orthodox in the superlative degree, but not intolerant. He was a Baptist, and yet a true Catholic. He was a Nonconformist

of the thorough-going anti-State Church type, and yet a real Protestant with a genial heart and welcome for every true man, whether in the Church or outside of it. He was a man of great industry, who made the most of the mental 'acres' he had to till, and raised therefrom a plentiful crop of goodly fruit, for the present, the future, and eternity. He lived to good purpose, and though his life cannot be called a very long one, it was filled with working days, and he worked till he finally fell asleep. Wherever he went he found a warm reception. His frank style made for him a large circle of attached friends. His masculine energy and warm-heartedness in the pulpit commended 'the everlasting Gospel' to many a manly spirit, tired of dry doctrine, weak sentimentalism, and exaggerated ritual."

In Norwich he soon took a high position as a preacher, and everything prospered with him. His chapel overflowed, the members of the church were multiplied, his public influence increased, and he gathered around him a pleasant circle of worthy and affectionate friends. In 1835 he married, and entered upon a truly happy conjugal life. As he grew in culture, experience, strength, and Christian wisdom he took a high place in the city, until at last he had no equal, but stood pre-eminent in Norwich and Norfolk as a man whom all might honour.

Of his career in Norwich Dr. Brock had many reminiscences, and not the least attractive of them was the story of the farmer's Bible, and which he related shortly before his death, and thus reported in the *Christian World*:—

"In 1842 the Baptist Missionary Society was celebrating its jubilee, and all its friends were doing what they could to further its interests. There was then living in Norfolk a farmer named Smith, who was the deacon of a small Baptist Church. A man of constructive ability, he had invented a plough; and, through his landlord, the Earl of Albemarle, he procured an introduction to Prince Albert for the purpose of submitting a model of the plough to His Royal Highness. Most kindly was he received at Windsor Castle, where

the Prince entertained him for several days; and, after inspecting the model, His Royal Highness permitted Mr. Smith to call the plough the 'Albert.' As he was about to leave, the farmer said, 'I am a little bit of a poet, and when your Royal Highness came here courting the Queen I wrote a little poem, and here is a copy of it.' The Prince received it kindly. 'And when your Royal Highness was married,' continued the deacon, 'I wrote another poem, and here's a copy of that; and when the Prince of Wales was born I wrote another, and here's a copy of that.' The Prince took them all, bade Mr. Smith good morning, and back to Norfolk went the deacon as happy as a prince. Within two or three weeks from that time the Telegraph coach, running through the town of Attleborough, stopped before the residence of Mr. Smith, and left a parcel for him. When this was opened it was found to contain a handsomely bound Family Bible, and with it a note from Prince Albert, asking him to accept it as a token of respect. Great was the joy of the deacon and his wife. 'Now,' said Mr. Smith, 'if I could only get the Queen's signature and the Prince's to this book, I would show it for a shilling apiece, and send the proceeds to the Baptist Missionary Society.' Again he betook himself to Windsor, and succeeded in obtaining the coveted autographs, Prince Albert, to whom the good farmer's purpose had been stated, assuring him that both Her Majesty and himself had had great pleasure in complying with his request. Dr. Brock, who was then settled at Norwich, had the pleasure of forwarding to the Mission House £28 in shillings obtained by the exhibition of the book."

But Norwich was not to be his permanent sphere of ministerial work. He must go to Rome also. He was summoned to a vaster field of holy toil, and in 1848 he left Norwich for the metropolis. Thousands lamented his departure, and every minister in Norfolk felt that he had lost a brother indeed; and the following words appeared in a leading article in the *Norfolk News* :—

"We cannot suffer such an event to transpire without

expressing our deep regret at the loss which the city will sustain by his removal, and paying our tribute of praise to those noble qualities of mind and heart which have won for him and maintained the vast influence he has exerted, not only in his own church, but in the city and neighbourhood. He was on every occasion ready to advocate the rights of enslaved and oppressed humanity, and fervent in the cause of that moral, social, and political reformation which has been so marked a feature of the present day. In the midst of these public engagements he was ardent in the pursuit of knowledge and diligent in attention to his pastoral duties. The church over which he presided numbered about 150 members when he came, and upwards of 400 when he left. The congregation, having increased in an equal ratio, numbers at the present time about 1000 persons."

Such a tribute of praise was well deserved, and came with grace from the pen of its admirable writer.

How the Nonconformist Churches of London welcomed him! It was known that he was valiant for the truth of Christ; that he excelled as a public speaker, lecturer, and preacher; that he was a political reformer, an opponent of State Churches, an advocate of peace, a friend of the slave, a true Briton and Christian; and it was believed that he would be a helper in every blessed work of charity. All those expectations he fulfilled, and even went beyond them; and Bloomsbury Chapel became a centre of light, its people a fountain of life, and its pastor one of the most highly honoured men in the capital of England.

As the various epochs of his life will receive detailed notice, it is not necessary to enter here into minute particulars of his manifold labours. They extended to every part of London, and embraced an immense variety of work, which laid the entire community under great obligations. He was, for instance, probably the first minister who preached in a London theatre; and a friend has thus described the scene in the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, which will hold three thousand per-

sons: "The crowds around the theatre doors were so great that he had very considerable difficulty in getting into the building at all; and when he did get into the adjoining room, where he had to wait before the service began, he met two of his attached friends, Baptist Noel and Thomas Binney. They could all distinctly hear the hooting and yelling, with loud clapping of hands, of the crowd gathered within. These eminent servants of Christ betook themselves to prayer, and when the preacher appeared on the stage, contrary to expectation, all were hushed into silence, and the whole service was most impressive and blessed."

In the year 1866 he visited America, and on his return delivered lectures on his travels. Prior to his visit to the United States, namely, in 1859, he had received the diploma of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard, but he did not assume it until several years afterwards, and only then at the request of the church.

As the founder of the Bloomsbury Chapel Domestic Mission to St. Giles', he rendered invaluable service to the poor, and he took a profound interest in its success. He opened both the halls in King Street and Moor Street; he aided in every way the Branch Mission in Rose Street, and by innumerable acts of kindness gained himself a good name in many an odd corner of the parish. Mr. B. P. Pask has contributed a very characteristic story of him, as he once appeared in St. Giles': "At a meeting of some poor people one evening, he caused a little merriment by telling them that he had that afternoon spent three hours in company with an old man who had been dead about 2,000 years. He had been studying Plato. What a transition! From the study of the philosophy of Plato to comforting and encouraging and directing a number of poor men and women in the midst of our modern St. Giles'! However, he was at home at both."

It was very pleasant to hear Dr. Brock relate anecdotes of himself and of his early ministry. Far down in St. Giles', in a back street, and completely obscured by dingy houses, stood Little Wild Street Chapel,

the pastorate of which was once vacant. Two young students, therefore, preached as candidates—Charles Woollacott and William Brock. The former received the call, and is still waiting on earth for the opening of the Gate Beautiful. At Mr. Woollacott's valedictory meeting, presided over by his son-in-law, Sir R. Lush, Dr. Brock was present, and playfully said, "'Open confession is good for the soul.' Well, I own that I *was* somewhat disappointed when Little Wild Street preferred Brother Woollacott to Brother Brock, but in the gracious ordering of the All-Wise One my *then* disappointment proved to be the very best that could have happened for my *future*. My rejection at Little Wild Street paved my way to Norwich, Norwich brought me into fellowship with Sir Morton Peto, and that 'settled me' at Bloomsbury. So what seemed 'a bad beginning' brought me to a really 'good end.'

"'There is a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.'"

The large humanity of the Bloomsbury pastor was very palpable in his relation to boys and girls. He loved to talk with them, to tell them stories, to excite them with clever questions, and to pour new knowledge into their opening minds. A minister's son said to me, "Dr. Brock had a good deal to do with sending me to school, and he came one summer and spent a few days with us. It was his practice to get hold of our letters in the morning, and come into the playground with them; and fine fun we had with him. We thought him very jolly, and every one of us took to him." One of his smaller works, entitled, "Fraternal Appeals to Young Men," was issued, I think, by the Religious Tract Society, and had a fair circulation; and connected with it is a charming note, from a gentleman resident near London, who says, "It came into my hands in 1842, and the circumstances are worth noting as illustrative of the kindly interest he always took in young people. Mr. Brock in that year visited Scotland as one of the Baptist Mission deputation, and stayed for a few days in my father's house. I was then a boy of fifteen, and have still a pleasant reminiscence of the

visit. He was so genial and hearty, and took such an interest in all that was going on, that he quite captivated my boyish fancy, and left a very wholesome impression of what a Christian minister should be. A week or two after he left, to my great delight the postman brought a packet containing the little book with 'the author's kind love and earnest request that this little book may be carefully read.' The book is still in my possession, and is highly prized." Mr. Joseph Soul relates an anecdote which shows how tenderly he remembered his mother, and what a deep interest he took in young folks: "In the year 1844, he came to London expressly to preach one of the annual sermons for the Orphan Working School, then in the City Road. It was the first time any minister other than a Presbyterian preached in the Regent Square Church. He took the morning service and Dr. Hamilton in the evening. The collection and donations on that day amounted to £105. Before he did so he visited the schools for the first time. It was a poor affair then in the City Road; but with his son William, then a little boy, he went. His address was a history of himself, from the time he was left an orphan boy, and his references to the struggles of his mother as a widow. He charged his son never to neglect the poor orphan. His prayer with which he concluded, and his address, had such an effect upon the children that they were all in tears. From that day he was ever a staunch friend of that institution, and often afterwards preached on its behalf at Bloomsbury Chapel."

Nonconformity had no timid, time-serving adherent in the subject of this sketch. He was a thorough Nonconformist, but none who knew him could justly designate him "a narrow Dissenter." He could esteem Bishop Stanley and love Bishop Villiers, revere Edward Bickersteth and admire the splendid eloquence of Hugh Stowell, study with delight the works of Dean Alford and ponder the disquisitions of Canon Lightfoot; but he remained, nevertheless, one who gloried in the Pilgrim Fathers, and held in reverence the names of Cromwell, Milton, Bunyan, Baxter, and George Fox. Not for

prince, peer, or prelate, would he hide his principles as a Nonconformist, and he gave hearty aid to the formation of the Anti-State Church Association, and many a bold speech did he deliver in favour of religious equality and freedom. A Norwich journalist writing of this feature in his character, praises his consistency in the most glowing terms. "Here he identified himself with all that was Liberal and thoroughgoing in politics, as well as with all devoted efforts for the spread of the Gospel. He took a deep interest in the Anti-Slavery cause, and stood side by side with the illustrious Knibb on many a platform. Being a parishioner of St. George's Colegate, he was prominent in the great Church-rate cause which brought to issue the claim of the archdeacons to impose by means of a monition a Church-rate upon a refractory majority. No event tended more decisively to compel the abolition of Church-rates than the effective resistance to the ecclesiastical law exhibited by the redoubtable parishioners of St. George's, headed by the venerable John Frances and the unflinching William Brock. On the education question, particularly in opposition to Sir James Graham's obnoxious Bill, Mr. Brock took his place in the very front of the battle." And that was his habit—the front of the battle was his right place.

Believing that a thorough knowledge of popular movements and the literature of the passing age was of paramount value to the public teacher, he did not fail to make himself well-acquainted with them. The Rev. John Clifford, M.A., writing of his ministry, remarks very pertinently: "Again and again we have heard him speak of his indebtedness to the *Times*, and with what thoroughness he studied it. 'The Bible and the *Times* newspaper are the best materials for the preacher,' was the way in which he unwittingly represented his quick susceptibility to the life around him, and his strong faith in the living creed that the God of the Bible is the God of every day." Most carefully did he study the signs of the day as it came and went. Books, magazines, quarterly reviews, and newspapers were read for the enrichment of his sermons. A Christian friend who had access to his study appropriately says truly that "he was a wonder-

ful reader. A very large library was to be found in his own house, comprising books on almost every subject, and not at all confined to theology and Bible criticism. Besides those of his own possession, he availed himself of Mudie's Library, through which nearly every book published of any note found its way to his table. He was 'up' in all the literature of the day, whether of poetry, science, or fiction; and constantly was he putting his congregation on their guard against the subtle poison he discovered in many of the popular periodicals or more pretentious books. This reading enabled him to notice many important matters with great promptitude. He preached, for instance, on the efficacy of prayer, in answer to the celebrated challenge of the *Contemporary*, before, perhaps, one of his audience had read it."

It was well for Nonconformity that it had so able, large-hearted, and fearless an advocate as the pastor of Bloomsbury. The friend of Bishop Stanley and Bishop Villiers, he, nevertheless, always maintained his position as a Baptist minister. He allowed no man to slight his denomination in his presence, and at great gatherings of Churchmen and Dissenters he did not hesitate, if necessary, to vindicate the honour of his faith and practice. A genial and skilful pen has written, "When the Bunyan statue was unveiled at Bedford he stood forth as the representative of the denomination to which the glorious dreamer belonged, and most worthily did he fulfil the function then devolved upon him, extorting the admiration of Churchmen as well as of Dissenters by the manly testimony which he delivered on behalf of civil and religious liberty. It seemed to give him great pleasure to meet on such an occasion with the son of his old friend Bishop Stanley of Norwich; and if we might trust the look of the Dean of Westminster while the old Bishop of Bloomsbury was speaking, the pleasure seemed to be a mutual one. Dr. Brock's address had not the accurately measured eloquence of the Dean's, nor the elaborate literary art which distinguished the essay of Dr. Allon; but it was out of sight

the most heart-moving word heard that day, and the word most akin in its sturdy, straightforward, stern honesty to the spirit of the hero to whom honour was being done."

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon writing of his work, says:—"It was in Dr. Brock's parlour that a few brethren met to form the London Baptist Association, which has been of more service to the ministers united in it than can be estimated. Dr. Brock himself was all the better for taking so prominent a part in the movement, and he benefited us all thereby. Together with Dr. Landels, W. G. Lewis, Francis Tucker, and others, William Brock was a tower of strength to the association. He was generally quite at home among us, and when in such a condition, it was fine to hear him pile up his massive sentences, interspersed with playful allusions, and consecrated by a devout spirit. His letter to us when he was on one occasion stretched upon a sick bed was of such a kind that the whole association felt its power, and the meetings rose to a tone of fervency seldom equalled. He enjoyed the loving respect of all the London pastors, and consequently his word was with power."

But his highest praise was embodied in the fact that he was indeed *A Christian Man*. He worshipped God. He believed in Christ as a Divine Lord and Saviour. The Spirit of the Lord of Hosts dwelt within him. He was anointed to preach the Gospel of Peace, and he contended earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints. He loved the brethren. He trained his family to serve God and His Church. The poor found him a helper and the widow a comforter. The beauty of goodness shone round about him in his old age, and he was gathered into the heavenly home like a shock of corn fully ripe.

"Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon light is quenched in smoke,
The trumpet's silver sound is still,
The warder silent on the hill."

CHAPTER II.

THE PREACHER.

THERE were few abler preachers than the pastor of Bloomsbury. He was happiest and greatest when preaching, and never so eloquent, persuasive, powerful, and edifying as when in his own pulpit, or, as he phrased it, "at home." He had no model. He had read the sermons of John Bunyan, the famous tinker; of John Owen, whose transcendent genius he often extolled; of Bishop Butler, the profound divine; of John Wesley, whose four volumes of sermons he regarded as a treasury of strong and simple English; of Robert Hall, the splendid orator, whose fine statue now adorns the town of Leicester; of Richard Watson, for whose learning and piety he entertained a high admiration; and of Frederick Robertson, of Brighton; but he imitated none of them. He had his own mode of preparation, construction, style, and delivery, and was "a strong tower" in himself. He was a master, not a scholar. He was a leader, not a follower. He could stand alone—a column of massive and stately proportions on which men might gaze with pleasure. For nearly twenty years I heard him preach every Sunday morning, and I never knew him deliver a crude, feeble, desultory, incomplete discourse. He gave his people the ripe fruits of a mature, earnest, devout, loving mind, and longed and laboured for their spiritual perfection. Most truly might he have said in apostolic words:—
 "For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile; but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: *So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.*"

The central point of Dr. Brock's ministerial work was in Bloomsbury Chapel, Bloomsbury Street, Bedford Square. An incident connected with its site deserves record. Sir Samuel Morton Peto, Bart., having resolved to build a beautiful chapel, and thus inaugurate a new and brighter era for the Baptist denomination in the metropolis, sought for a site from its ducal owner, but he could not grant one for a Nonconformist conventicle. Close to Bedford Chapel was a desolate spot on the very verge of St. Giles', which was the property of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, of which the excellent and accomplished Earl of Carlisle was then Chief Commissioner. When Sir Morton Peto asked him for a lease of the site the noble earl gave a dubious look, and said, "If it had been a building with a *spire*;" whereupon Sir Morton quickly exclaimed, "My lord, we shall have two spires." The site was ultimately granted, the chapel built, the spires reared, and they lift their heads on high to this day.

The opening of the chapel is thus described by a graphic pen:—

"On a bright December morning, in the year 1848, there was an unusual stir in what was then a new London street, recently driven through the 'Rookery' of St. Giles'. Bloomsbury Chapel was that day to be opened. The event had been awaited with peculiar interest. Baptist principles and practices, worthily represented in some parts of the metropolis, had at present little root in its central and more populous districts. They were not always associated with the broader evangelical sympathies or the bolder Christian activities. It was known that Mr. Peto, the author of the new enterprise, had in view the union of the one

with the other on a scale not hitherto attempted. The undertaking was felt to be a kind of era in the history of the denomination. It was accepted by many outside the Baptist body as an olive branch of hope and peace. It awakened curiosity in circles usually indifferent to the existence of Nonconformist chapels. These expectations, it may safely be said, have been amply fulfilled. 'Bloomsbury' is now a household word in a multitude of English homes; colonists in America and far Australia look back to it as to the Zion of their spiritual birth, and it has its trophies in the better world."

As helpers and friends were scarce, there being neither church nor congregation, I acted as one of the door-keepers and pew-openers. Great was the crowd of people. Every seat was full. The aisles overflowed. The pastor was anxious, but radiant and grateful as he saw his new chapel filled with devout worshippers. The Rev. John Harris, D.D., preached in the morning, and the Rev. Benjamin Godwin, D.D., in the evening. On the following Friday morning, at eleven o'clock, the pastor began his own labours in a quiet, solemn, refreshing service, by preaching from the words, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness; even of Thine only." And thus did he begin his great work in humble and confident reliance on the Lord of Hosts, his God and Saviour.

In one of Dr. Brock's farewell sermons from the same text, he related what he had thought and felt about the momentous enterprise which was before him that memorable morning:—

"Shall I go or not? was my anxious interrogation, when I was asked to come and occupy the pulpit, and undertake the evangelic service of this House of the Lord. The place was but just then completed. The entire enterprise was new. I was aware, consequently, that everything would have to be originated; and then to be sustained. I was aware, also, that the expectation was afloat that a kind of service would be found here which should adapt itself, congenially, and yet legitimately, to the peculiarities of the age. What the older

metropolitan places, with their ministers, had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that this new metropolitan place, with its minister, was to be in the middle of the nineteenth century. No secret did my friend, the founder of the place, make of his desire, that it should become religiously attractive both to Londoners themselves and to visitors from the provinces and from foreign lands. The service of the generation was the object; the effective service of the current generation, according to the will of God. What that involved I could perceive in a moment, in part, at least, and to some extent; and, as I considered, I perceived it yet more and more. Not wholly unacquainted was I with the peculiarities of the age, relatively to sacred things. I had been wont to read the general religious literature of the various theological schools, and to observe the successive religious movements of the various ecclesiastical and ritualistic sects. Somewhat familiar was I, moreover, with the free handling of such matters by our periodic press. It had been my privilege to mingle much in the society of men who had understanding of the times. The experience of sixteen years' ministry at Norwich was immediately at my command. Thence my anxiety, when confronted with the request to undertake the effective service of the generation, through the influence of this place; a place whose erection had been marked with singular interest and earnest prayer. 'If it succeed,' as I heard it said, though without any personal reference to myself, 'if it succeed, it will be a great success.' Yes, but will it succeed in my hands? was the question for myself. Knowing what I knew of the pre-requisites for success; knowing, also, what I knew of the obstacles to success; and knowing, further, what I knew of myself in respect to attempting that success: will it succeed in my hands?—was a question at which I stood in awe. True, I had the assurance of earnest and thorough co-operation from several quarters and of many kinds. I had, too, the help of one of the choicest helpmeets that God ever gave to man; and then, I had the promise of God's own help. Nevertheless, I hesitated; and of my hesitation I could offer you the evidence in records

written at the time. I arrogate nothing, as I falsify nothing, when I use the words of the apostle, and say—'I came hither in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.' And, my brethren, I was right. Had I known then all that I know now, my hesitation would have been greater, and my solicitude more intense. Strong as was the tendency to discuss all religious matters at the commencement of my ministry, the tendency has been becoming stronger ever since. Prevalent as was the effort to get rid of all theological restraint then, the effort has been becoming more prevalent ever since. Fashionable as was the habit then of ignoring, as far as possible, the offence of the cross, the habit has been becoming more fashionable ever since. Severe as was the demand then for exactness in statement, for soundness in reasoning, and for suitableness in enforcement and appeal, the demand has been becoming severer ever since. Not premature, not by any means premature, I know, was the solicitude of my soul. It has been arduous, weighty, solemn work—this continuous work of Bloomsbury Chapel; work which has often drawn from me the tremulous inquiry, 'Who is sufficient for these things?'"

The pastor of Bloomsbury Chapel was a man who knew the times in which he lived, and he marked the signs thereof. Hence, he often preached sermons bearing directly on passing events, phases of faith, and developments of doctrine. He preached two remarkable sermons, entitled "Ritualism repugnant in its appearance and mischievous in its design." He employed great plainness of speech, and failed not to rebuke the men who, although clergymen of a Protestant Establishment, yet, openly wore the vestments and taught the false doctrines of Rome. Thus did he speak of

RITUALISTIC PAGEANTRY.

"To every reader of the Acts and of the Epistles present I appeal, and I ask whether we have anything said, or anything done, which shows that the Christian Church was to have a renewal of temple pageantry or of

priestly pomp. Nay, I go further and ask such readers whether we have not things said and things done which show that all such pageantry is uncongenial with Christianity, and that all such pomp is at variance with the simplicity that is in Christ. What learn we from an expostulation such as this:—'How turn you again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.' What learn we from an expostulation like this:—'Are ye so foolish, having begun in the spirit are ye now made perfect in the flesh?' Heart and soul did the apostles thus give themselves to detach every Christian man from Jewish ceremonies and Gentile rites, never substituting any others in their place. 'But they celebrate baptism,' you say. Yes, if the word 'celebration' is the word to be used, which I do not believe it is. But say so—that they celebrated baptism: this was the manner how:—'And as they went on their way they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.' Not much like the grandly symbolical, that, brethren!—not much like the grandly symbolical, the impressively histrionic, the evangelically dramatic. Just as they were, these two godly men went and did what they felt in common,—simplicity and godly sincerity being a characteristic of them both. 'But the apostles celebrated the Lord's Supper,' you say. Yes, if the word 'celebration' is the word to use. And this is the manner how. They came together with the people, that is to say, the church, and being assembled, they gave thanks, and they brake the bread, and ate it; then they gave thanks, and poured

out the cup and drank it, thus showing forth the Lord's death until He came. But was there any consecration of the elements? We have not a single word about such consecration. Was there any recital of the sacramental formulary? We have not a word about any such formulary. Was there any performance of mysterious solemnities? We have not a word about mysterious solemnities. Everything was done decently and in order: but, the apostolic record being my proof, nothing was done sacerdotally; nothing was done ornately; nothing was done operatically; nothing was done sensationally. There sat, or rather reclined, the communicants, and there reclined the brother who brake the bread, and poured out the wine, and, perhaps, offered up thanks. There they reclined together in the ordinary posture, in their usual dress, no insignia distinguishing one or more of them above the others, the very chiefest of all the apostles abiding faithful to his avowal, 'Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.'

I have known Dr. Brock speak with approval of Dr. Stroud's book on the "Physical Cause of the Death of Christ." We can trace the influence of the book in many of his sermons on the "Sufferings of Christ," and it will be detected in his discourse on

THE MAN OF SORROWS.

"Now as to the physical anguish of that crucifixion I do not say a word—I could not say anything I believe that might be quite trustworthy for its accuracy, but I remind you how all the functions and organisations of the body must have been interrupted, and how the lingering death that had commenced was about the most shocking that could be endured. I leave that to you, only reminding you that I believe the word 'excruciating' had its origin in our Lord's crucifixion. Hence you hear of 'excruciating agony,' and our Lord's sufferings are pourtrayed very significantly by that very expression. However, taking it, that the

sufferings of His body were excruciating, still infinitely more so were the sufferings of His soul—and they were the soul of His sufferings. To hang there as the act of crucifixion had placed Him was dreadful, but to hang there alone and destitute was the most fearful and terrible of all. No wonder that this old earth of ours shook to its very centre! No wonder that the heavens wrapped themselves up in gloom! And if you could read out aloud the registers of Pandemonium for that day you would read out awful exultations at what had happened on Calvary. And if you could read out aloud the registers of Paradise you would read out some utterances of the darkest and deepest dismay that intelligent minds have ever known at what was happening on Calvary. The moral universe shook as it reverberated with the cry: 'My God! my God! Why hast Thou forsaken me!' By the Divine appointment and Divine interposition He suffered until there was nothing more to suffer. He exhausted that cup that had been given Him to drink, and as He exhausted it He died."

The pastor of Bloomsbury had little faith in the Evangelical Alliance. He thought it a *fiasco*, and smiled at its weak pretentiousness. He was an Evangelical Alliance in himself, and loved heartily all who loved Christ. Most earnestly did he plead for

UNITED CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANS.

"Believers, in their manifested unity, are God's witnesses that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah. Believers, in the exercise of the one heart and the one soul, are God's witnesses that in the person of Jesus of Nazareth the sublime foretellings of prophecy have been fulfilled, and the profounder prefigurations of the law have been fulfilled as well. Believers, living and moving and having their being in brotherly kindness and charity, are God's witnesses that, in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God were accomplished touching the reconciliation of the world unto Himself. Believers,

watching, praying, working, until the Church on earth resembles that above,

“Where joy, like heavenly dew, distils,
And all the air is love,”—

such believers are God's great witnesses for 'putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men.' These united evangelical sympathies must be accounted for,—and these united evangelical co-operations, and these united evangelical contributions, and these united evangelical devotions, and these united evangelical expectations. I know, full well, alas! that they are faulty in a thousand ways, and that at their best estate they have need of the forbearance both of God and of man. I know all that; but there they are, and you cannot ignore them and you cannot deny them. There are the united sympathies, co-operations, devotions, contributions, and expectations. Now, how did they come there? There is but one answer, and it is this,—'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life;' for 'God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.' A united church is God's rebuke to the scornfulness which the world may be evincing,—God's testimony against the unbelief which the world may be affirming. A united church is God's encouragement to the inquiry which the world may be proposing. A united church is God's directory to the shelter which the world may be wanting. And a united church is God's pledge and guarantee for blessedness unto the world throughout all the ages, world without end."

For several years a sermon on "The Common Salvation" was a favourite with Dr. Brock, who told me he thought it one of the most useful he ever delivered. On September 14, 1851, he preached it in Exeter Hall, and thus reasoned as to

THE UNIVERSAL ADOPTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

"I have spoken of various forms of religious service

and various modes of religious action: now of many of them it may be said that they arose out of the necessities of some given district, and that they relate entirely and exclusively to the peculiarities of that district. If you were to take them from the district where they originated, you would find that many of their practices would be utterly impossible. The religion of the Hindoo, for example, is evidently a religion for Hindostan alone. The religion of the Egyptian is evidently a religion for Egypt, and the religion of Mahomet is evidently adapted for only certain regions of the earth. How, I ask, could the great feast of Mahomedanism, which absolutely requires in its adherents total abstinence from sunrise to sunset, be attended to in those northern regions, where for many months the sun never rises, and then again for months never sets? You could not, therefore, take Mahomedanism where the Moravian took the Gospel; it would not do, for you could not carry out its services nor insist upon its claims. And as with Mahomedanism, so with other systems of religion. Suppose you had taken a priest of the old Druids to the great Prairies of South America, there to establish his religion, he would have been utterly at sea; he must have had the dark ambush and labyrinth of an entangled forest, the oak and the mistletoe, to execute the mystic rites of that religion. The high priest of the Parthenon, too, had he been removed from the region of poetry and of song, and taken away from the neighbourhood of Parnassus or Olympus, he could not have carried on that system which he professed to believe, and was devoted to establish. And so if some disciple of Buddha, Vishnu, or Bramah, were now to come to our country to convert us to his faith, he would be baffled instantly and irrecoverably, by the national, natural, conventional, and domestic differences between Great Britain and Hindostan. So that whatever you may say about these various religions, you cannot say that they were made for man, for I can tell you of regions of the earth where mankind are found, where they cannot be instituted, and where they cannot be carried on. But you cannot tell me of any region of earth where Chris-

tianity cannot be instituted ; the man does not live to whom it may not be preached, upon whom it may not be inculcated, and by whom it may not be forthwith enjoyed,—simple in its nature, and spiritual in its requirements, and so far as its ritual is concerned—for you can scarcely call it a ritual at all—Divine in all its resources. The nation cannot be found under heaven to which it may not be sent. The government does not exist under which it will not survive. Peculiarities, geographical, local, or national, cannot be found whereby it would be set at nought. I love to think of that, and I want you, too, to be filled with a holy satisfaction as you think of it likewise. There is not an empire or a nation upon earth, however tyrannical, but the Gospel will go there—it would go there now, so far as itself is concerned. But there are other nations who are idolaters ; could the Gospel go there ? Yes, and so far as itself is concerned, it could go there now, and whilst it would assuredly correct the tyranny and abolish the idolatry, it would go on in the meantime saving men's souls, doing its own proper work, working from the particular to the general, securing in the first place man's deliverance from perdition, and then ultimately raising him from present evil and present woe. In the meanwhile, Christianity will do all its proper work. It requires no aid from the civil power ; it assumes no position or rank among the authorities of the world ; it proclaims, wherever it goes, that it is not of this world ; and this is the very reason why it can go forth and occupy the world, in obedience to the commission of its Divine Lord, inasmuch as its weapons are not carnal, and therefore it is that they are mighty through God. You and I may go anywhere ; we want not to wait and ask for anything individually ; we may always depend on the blessing of Him who is head over all things to His Church. You and I may go and teach the rough-clad Huron amongst his ice-bound lakes, or you can go to the reclining, effeminate Asiatic, amid the fountains and odorific groves of his country, or you may go and travel with the pigmy Laplander, along the consolidated surface of his snow ; or you may go to the sunny islands

of the southern seas, passing from one to the other, doing precisely what Paul did at Philippi—'warning every man, teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.'

No man had more faith in his message than Dr. Brock. He spoke because he believed. Boldly did he preach what he designated "the old Gospel." In one of his sermons he thus reasoned on

CIVILISATION AND CHRISTIANITY.

"I ask, where would your civilisation have been if it had not been for your Christianity ? And the more it goes on, the better will it be for our Book ; the more honourable your commerce, the more exactly will it embody its principles ; the more perfect your literature, the more distinctly it will echo its spirit and its teachings about all things relating to man and all things relating to God ; the more accurate your philosophy, the more precise will be its utterance of that which beforehand is written here ; and the more worldwide and comprehensive your philanthropy, I need hardly say the more perfectly will it be the embodiment of the love, the compassion, and the piety, which are written on every page, and which are devolved upon every saint. Tell us that civilisation will be the destroyer of Christianity ! Why, my brethren, abstract from your modern civilisation that which Christianity has imparted to it, and you have just that which very presently, by common consent, would be buried and out of sight. Why, it is the very child which your Christianity has brought forth ; it is the very creation of which Christianity in her pure exuberance is instrumentally the creator. You might just as well think of this great superstructure in which we are assembled existing without a foundation, as to think of modern civilisation existing without Christianity. There is, at the foundation of all I have mentioned, the old Gospel, which scatters blessings, as we have been told, on its way to immortality ; which has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of

that which is to come; which does us good for this life, as well as for that which is beyond the grave. And, if I have fearful and timid-hearted Christian brethren here, men who sometimes think we are to have the worst of it as the world goes on, I remind them of what they themselves believe, and of what is written here—that, let what may happen, instead of this old Gospel coming into degradation, and disrepute, and disgrace, onward will be its course, and upward and homeward will be its way. It came from God, and to God it by-and-by goes back; and the word of the truth of the Gospel, that which pertains to your deliverance and condemnation, to your introduction into the liberty of the sons of God, that which can make every man, and woman, and child in this great assembly a new creature in Christ Jesus, that let all of us lay to his heart, and be thankful that it liveth and abideth for ever. Trust it, it never will yield; build upon it, it will sustain all the superstructure; rejoice in it, not as the word of man, but as it is in deed and in truth, the word of the everlasting God.”

There were occasions when Dr. Brock's sermons presented a fine combination of argument, exhortation, persuasion, doctrine, and holy joy in Christ. Here is a specimen of this in what he said on

A FULL DELIVERANCE AND ACQUITTAL.

“No matter what you may say to me about sins which are as red as scarlet; no matter what you may say to me about a heart as hard as the granite on the parapet of London Bridge; no matter what you may say to me about habits which are as domineering as the devil; no matter what you say to me about apprehensions which you have as you look forward to the future: nothing comes of any of those difficulties or objections whatever. If you become the simple penitent believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, granted all that you tell me about sins innumerable, I tell you about blood that cleanseth from all sin; granted all you tell me about ten thousand obstacles to your ever getting back to

God, I tell you of a guarantee on the part of your great High Priest and Intercessor, that come back to God you must—a guarantee granted and sustained by the power that belongeth unto God, and by the everlasting covenant that is ‘ordered in all things and sure.’ Men, brethren, and fathers, young men and maidens, old men and children, take it that your great adversary is now doing all that in him lies to prevent your participation of the great salvation that has been described to you. Vile deceiver that he is, he tried to plunder you just now, because you were too good to need salvation, and now he frightens you by telling you that you are too bad to hope for it. Tell him, as your Lord did, ‘Get thee behind Me, Satan,’ and remember that it is not with him you have to do, but with Satan’s Sovereign and Almighty Lord; and the Sovereign and Almighty Lord said this of the humblest believer anywhere, in this place or anywhere else, ‘I give unto him eternal life, and he shall never perish, neither shall any’—not ‘any man’—neither shall *any*—‘pluck them out of My hand.’ And then He saith again, ‘If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall My servant be.’ To your feet, ye desponding ones! Yes, to your feet instanter! And with brightness in your eye, and buoyancy in your spirit, and courage in your heart, and gladness upon your tongue, take up the great apostolic exhortation, ‘Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?’—and all penitent believers are God’s elect, mind—‘Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is it that condemns?’ Now, mark the ascent up to the height of this great argument:—‘Who is He that condemns? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again; who is *even* at the right hand of God, who *also* maketh intercession for us.’ There, you are free of the universe with that upon your lips; and every penitent believer in the Lord Jesus Christ may take it upon his lips; there is no accuser that he need to dread, there is no adversary from whom he need to flinch. If he ascends up into heaven, he is not there; if he makes his bed in hell, he is not there; if he takes the wings of

the morning and dwells in the uttermost parts of the sea, he is not there—not the accuser, I mean, of whom the believer has any need to be afraid. No, and I look forward to another scene, and see that. Oh, my brethren, when the books shall be opened, and all things written there shall be declared, and presuming you to have come to Christ to-night in response to these great calls, and presuming you to be there, the penitent and the saved one, there will be interrogations still, 'Who is He that condemns?' No man will pass into heaven by sufferance; no man shall be found there whose sins have not been forgiven, whose nature has not been sanctified, whose whole person has not been justified and accepted; hence, amidst the dread scene of that tribunal, that will be the interrogation on behalf of every believer, 'Who is he that condemns?' Silence having supervened, and space having been given for an answer to that question, methinks I see the Judge, the Saviour as well as the Judge, looking down and saying, 'Where are those thine accusers? Do none of them condemn thee?' and then pointing to mansions of everlasting blessedness, and saying, 'Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.' Therefore we declare unto you first of all now that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day, that you might 'never perish, but that you might have everlasting life.'"

It was often delightful and edifying to hear the preacher descant on

THE BELIEVER'S RELATION TO GOD.

"He, to whom all entangled things are plain, is mine. He who sees all unknown things, is mine. He who controls all unmanageable things, is mine. He who works all things according to the counsel of His will, is mine. He who turns curses into blessings, is mine. He who maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, is mine. He who will take the worst phenomena or facts upon which the eye has ever looked, or with which the

human eye has ever been troubled, and will make them all right, and plain, and good, and true, is mine. Mine, to minister to me counsel!—mine, to speak unto me words in season!—mine, to warn me off from the place of danger!—mine to guide me with His eye until He has landed me in the place 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' And as the man takes up the flower of his garden and sees wisdom there, as he contemplates the heavens above and sees wisdom there; be the sphere of his thought whatever it may be, the deeper his conviction of God's wisdom, the deeper his persuasion that it is well with himself. But, say some of you, 'would that that God were mine.' That God is willing to be yours. I am not coming here to-night with any special message to the saints; I am not come here to gratify any fastidious spiritual taste; I am come here for the salvation of unsaved and imperilled souls, yours amongst the rest; and I say again, that this only wise God says to you, 'Let Me be your guide; let Me be your portion.' And instead, as it might have been, of our having to beseech the throne of heavenly mercy with importunate and heart-rending entreaties, the ear being heavy and the arm being shortened—instead of that, God cometh forth from His secret place; God is here, and He waits for your inquiry, for your request, for your application. You may make it within the multitude of your thoughts within you, and He will be your God likewise. Yours will be the privilege, as I feel in my own heart it is my privilege, to be able, amid all that is conflicting, and amid all that is convulsive, and amid all that sometimes makes the human heart to quake for fear, to say, 'Well, He who governeth all things, and doeth whatsoever seemeth Him good, in the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, permits me to take His hand; and He tells me when I have got hold of it, that none shall ever pluck me away from His hand. "This God is our God for ever and ever," with the mightiness which is omnipotent, and with the wisdom which nothing can baffle, which nothing can contravene.'"

But I must pause in my reminiscences of Dr. Brock as a preacher, giving, however, an example of his

WISE BEHAVIOUR IN THE PULPIT.

It was my high privilege to hear him in Norwich on Sunday evenings in St. Mary's Chapel. One evening there rolled and flashed through the sultry sky a most awful storm of thunder, lightning, wind, and rain. The preacher entered the pulpit and sat still. The people were sore afraid. To sing the usual opening hymn was obviously inappropriate. Who could sing with trembling lips? Calmly did the preacher arise, his tall, broad figure, his massive head with its crown of flaxen hair poised firmly on his shoulders, and his whole *pose* manifesting reverence and solemn awe. Without preface, he opened his Bible, and read the whole of the 29th Psalm.

"Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the Lord is upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness; the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh. The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever. *The Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.*"

"The Lord," repeated the preacher, "will bless His people with peace;" and then saying, "Let us pray," he poured forth one of those wonderful prayers for which, at all times, he was so distinguished, and which few men could equal. The storm ceased. There was a great calm. Silence prevailed in the heavens, peace descended like a dove on the people, and we could sing:—

"This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our God;
He will send down His heavenly powers,
To carry us above."

None who was there will ever forget the reading of the psalm, the prayer of the minister, and the holy rest which was given to us of God.

Some of the characteristics of Dr. Brock's pulpit oratory have been admirably described by Mr. Robert Cowton, author of "Memories of the British Museum." In a critique with which he has favoured us, he says:—"My acquaintance with our brother dates as far back as 1845, when I was visiting a friend at Norwich, and naturally enough went on the Sunday to hear the best Nonconformist preacher at that place. I had before this read a sermon of Mr. Brock's on 'The Baptism of the Heir Apparent,' on which national occasion our friend seized the opportunity of recording his own ideas of Christian Baptism in opposition to the sacramental and sacerdotal practice of the Church of England. It was, however, my good fortune to meet with a little tract of Mr. Brock's, printed by Mr. Josiah Fletcher, of Norwich, entitled, 'The Behaviour becoming the House of God.' The subject and the writer were in perfect unison, and wherever our dear brother afterwards laboured, the services over which he presided were remarkable for the becoming reverence and sacredness of their character. I was, as a young man, struck with the fact, on entering St. Mary's—with the reverential silence and the devout demeanour of the people. I should be glad to see that little tract reproduced at the present time, as some of our larger churches are not, as a rule, distinguished for devout behaviour in the public worship of Almighty God. Before Mr. Brock's removal from Norwich I had occasional opportunities of hearing some of his sermons, and also of attending his lectures before the Young Men's Christian Association.

"Shortly after his undertaking the ministry at Bloomsbury Chapel, I became a member of the church over which he presided. My regular attendance upon his ministry only confirmed my first impressions of the

man. The services of the sanctuary were always looked forward to by my family and myself as a thing to be desired. Mr. Brock did much to improve the psalmody of our churches, and he was one of the foremost of our Nonconformist ministers to introduce chanting the Psalms. His selection of the hymns for public worship was always judiciously adapted to the congregation and the occasion. His reading of the Scriptures was very impressive, and he rarely or ever indulged in commenting or paraphrasing the sacred narrative. It could be seen at once that the portion selected for public reading had been thoughtfully and prayerfully perused in the study. The public reading of the word of God is so important a part of Divine worship that our younger brethren who are preparing for the work of the ministry would do well to take heed to the fact, that no amount of pains is too great to be expended upon this necessary part of the service. Every one who has taken part in the devotional exercises, led by our late dear brother, must have been impressed with the devout fervour and profound reverence, combined with child-like simplicity of utterance, that marked his prayers. Often did the broken utterances and faltering voice evince the deep feeling of the man who was standing between God our Father and the assembled congregation. It has also been my privilege to meet our friend at the bed-side of the sick and sorrowful, where the tenderness of the strong man gave help and hope to 'him that was ready to perish,' as well as to the weeping ones who surrounded the dying couch. In nothing did our brother more excel most of his brethren than when he was called to counsel or to comfort the sick and the dying.

"As a preacher, Mr. Brock took a leading place, not only in the churches of our own denomination, but also among his Nonconformist brethren. His goodly presence and naturalness of manner, with a thorough knowledge and mastery of the subject in hand, was a marked feature in the sermons of our friend. I have often witnessed a very large audience wrapped in attentive receptivity while the preacher has been speaking of things that he had handled, and tasted of the Word of Life.

Mr. Brock's sermons had all the appearance of having been carefully prepared, and I should imagine that very little was left to the inspiration of the moment. No one ever left the house of God after hearing our friend preach without a deep consciousness that the preacher thoroughly believed in the doctrines he had propounded, and also that he did his best to illustrate in his own person and character the virtues he had enforced as the result of a cordial reception of 'the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.'

"It has been my great pleasure on several occasions to assist our late friend here (British Museum) to books when he has needed a reference to our national library, and I may be allowed, in concluding these few desultory observations, to say that I always found him cheerful and hearty whenever we met. I valued him as a pastor, and loved him as a friend. I know how interested he always was in everything connected with your good work as an evangelist and brother to the poorest of the poor in St. Giles', and what an interest he took in your translation to your new sphere of labour."

A very thoughtful hearer of Dr. Brock's, in reviewing his ministry, writes to me thus in reference to

RELIGIOUS STIMULANTS.

"The very large use of what may be properly and respectfully termed *religious stimulants*, to which evangelical pastors and churches have addicted themselves of late years, has always seemed to me a confession of the weakness and failure, so far, of their own ordinary methods. Whether this be so or not, it will be admitted that palpable instances of failure have been lamentably numerous. It therefore becomes seriously important to ascertain, if possible, wherein has consisted the secret in any case of marked success, especially if that success has been of a continuous and progressive character, and obtained without resort to 'stimulants' of any kind. I remember Mr. Brock preaching a sermon bearing on this very subject. The text was, 'Therefore, be ye steadfast, immovable, *always abounding* in the work of

the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.' The drift of the sermon, if I remember rightly, was to the effect that healthy Christian action and effort are not *spasmodic*, nor occasional, but continuous and persistent.

HIS EARLY MINISTRY.

"Whatever it may have been, Mr. Brock's early ministry in London was characterised by a *something* which stamped it as a great advance on what was current in the Baptist churches of those days. There were certainly preachers equally thoughtful and more profound, whose names were household words in the denomination and beyond it; but their following was comparatively small, and their influence circumscribed. Mr. Brock was, if the expression may be allowed, the first Baptist minister, at any rate in London, to *popularise* evangelical doctrine among men of thought and culture, especially young men.

BROAD HUMANITY.

"There were, of course, many qualities in the preacher which contributed to this result, and one or another of these would present itself with especial prominence to differently constituted minds. I would give it as my opinion that the main secret of power was to be found in the *broad humanity* which pervaded Mr. Brock through and through. Accordingly, he taught 'not as the scribes.' I remember his preaching a sermon on the Essential Characteristic of the Ancient Priest, as given in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that he should be 'able to bear with the ignorant, and with them that are out of the way,' and this he always made it his own habit to do very patiently and considerately. For honest doubts he had great regard; but he imperatively insisted on candour on the part of all who concerned themselves with revealed truth. I remember his saying, in one of those Sunday evening sermons so memorable for the earnestness and yet variety of appeal to those who were 'out of the way,' 'Do not, I beseech you, trifle on the turning point between salvation and perdition.'

UNWORTHY ARTS.

"He disdained all attempts to gain ascendancy over the conscience of his hearers by *unworthy arts*, or by working on their animal feelings. Like the apostle, he '*reasoned* with them out of the Scriptures.' 'I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say,' was a favourite quotation of his with which to drive home some forcibly argumentative appeal.

FREE PRAYER.

"If there be any one function which more than other demands that a minister should possess the faculty of placing himself in the position of his hearers, and entering into their varied experiences, it is that of free prayer. Were this faculty more generally possessed or cultivated, congregations would be spared the long string of orthodox conventionalisms which so frequently send them empty away. Never did Mr. Brock punish his people in that cruel fashion; never was there a heart anxious to pour out its fulness of joy or grief before God which did not find itself enabled to do so through the medium of the earnest and sympathetic outpourings of Mr. Brock's own large heart.

"This reminds me of an incident he once related to me, which illustrated one of the noblest traits of his character—viz., his readiness to divest himself of any unjust prejudice he might have unwittingly imbibed. He had undertaken to preach at the opening (or reopening) of a certain chapel. 'Though,' said he, 'had I known who was to conduct the introductory service, I should certainly have declined,' the reason being that the minister to whom he referred was one whose 'unsoundness' had been loudly asserted. 'But,' he added, 'I never heard a prayer which carried me nearer to God than the prayer offered on that occasion by that man.' That man was the late Rev. T. T. Lynch."

DILIGENCE IN HIS OWN PULPIT.

It was characteristic of Dr. Brock that he dwelt among his own people, and greatly delighted to preach

in his own pulpit. John Angell James thought there was no place like Carr's-lane Chapel; Dr. Brock said there was no chapel like Bloomsbury; to him it was *a home*. Its pulpit was like an inner temple. There he met with God; there he preached Christ; there he heard the jubilant songs of a beloved people; and there he saw his ministry crowned by the Spirit of God. Hence, he rarely left his own chapel. At a meeting in Hanover Square Rooms in December, 1869, I heard him say that he had delivered in his own pulpit 1,716 Sunday sermons, 826 Thursday morning sermons, and given 850 prayer-meeting addresses. He added, "We began the church with sixty-two members, and there have passed through the church 1,925 persons, to more than one-half of whom, I hope, I have been God's minister for good." Such a statement showed that he was, indeed, an ABLE MINISTER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST.

CHAPTER III.

THE MIDSUMMER MORNING SERVICE.

A BRIGHT, calm, beautiful Sunday morning in Midsummer; the great thoroughfares of the West End silent and still; the lark singing sweetly far away above Regent's Park; Russell Square, Mecklenburgh Square, and Bedford Square adorned with flowers and foliage of exquisite beauty; here and there the music of church bells; white and gold and crimson in the deep blue sky; London spreading in its vastness and majesty miles around—such was the scene on the 24th of June, 1849, when the Rev. Dr. Brock was to preach his first Midsummer Sermon to the young men of London.

His account of this and the subsequent services is full of interest:—

"I began my ministry at Bloomsbury Chapel in December, 1848. From the first, many young men were found in the congregation, and it was my pleasure to have intercourse with them of different kinds. Hence arose a practice of preaching to young men a good deal; not only in a special sermon now and then, but in the tone and cast of my ministry at large. It came upon me to watch anxiously for their souls. As I was musing one day, the thought occurred to me of some special service at an unusual time. The matter was talked over amongst my friends; and, as the time approached, it was resolved that we would hold a Midsummer Sunday Morning Service for 'Young Men,' from seven to eight o'clock.

"Accordingly, on Sunday morning, the 24th of June, 1849, we held our service; a goodly number having assembled of the class that I desired to address. The next year the service was repeated; and it came to be

thought that, possibly, it would be an annual thing. The year after it was repeated again, amidst obvious indications that it was valued and desired.

"In 1853, Bloomsbury Chapel undergoing repairs, I had to go, with my general congregation, to worship and teach elsewhere. As a consequence, our Midsummer Service was omitted, and somehow it was not resumed until 1856. On resuming it then, I announced that it would thenceforward be a service for 'Young Men and Maidens,' and, under that designation, it has been continued until this year, 1872.

"In 1866, when I was in the United States, my friend, the Rev. Newman Hall, occupied my place, with great kindness and to right good purpose. He read a letter to my young friends, which I had written and sent to him from the Falls of Niagara.

"Thus, through the good hand of God upon me, I have been the preacher of Twenty of these Midsummer Morning Sermons. Sermons, however, they can hardly be called; at least, I would call them by a more fitting name, if I knew how. Familiar, earnest, pleasant talk about the good and the right has been my aim; just such talk as young men and maidens might listen to in a walk with an elder brother, or when sitting by their father's fireside. And my talk at one time has had no connection with my talk at other times. Hence, there is no particular order or consecutiveness in the Sermons, whilst there is a good deal of sameness, both in topics and in modes. To inculcate some 'present truth,' there and then, has been my simple aim.

"No thought have I ever had of the publication of these Twenty Sermons; and now I comply with the request for their publication with considerable reluctance. The preponderating reason for my compliance is this—that the volume may constitute a not unsuitable memorial of my Bloomsbury ministry, which is to terminate this year.

"To my friend Mr. Shipton, the Secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, I have been much indebted, for his cordial co-operation year by year; and to my friend Mr. M'Cree, the Missionary of the Church, I am

also much indebted, for the great promptitude and efficiency with which he has conducted services in the street, for the benefit of the large numbers who have been unable to get within the chapel doors. The Officers of the Church, and many other friends, have rendered me valuable co-operation, and thus our Midsummer Morning Services have been, not a work of faith only, but also a labour of love."

Any one abroad in London within a mile of Bloomsbury Chapel, at six o'clock on a Midsummer Sunday morning, saw, to his amazement, streams of well-dressed, cheerful, radiant young maidens, and equally well-dressed, respectable young men, many of them with Bibles and hymn-books in their hands, hastening towards Bloomsbury Street. Through the noble squares, up Holborn, along Oxford Street, down Gower Street, across the Seven Dials, up Bow Street, they came in crowds—all eager, happy, and swift of foot to hear Mr. Brock's Midsummer Sermon. Any one who asked them, as many did, where they were all going, received that answer, and not a few midnight revellers were filled with amazement when it was given. "Going to hear a sermon at seven o'clock on a Sunday morning!" This was a mystery, indeed, to those who did not know—

"Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less."

Inside the chapel the spectacle was most imposing. Every seat occupied—galleries, aisles, vestries, lobbies crowded to excess with young men and maidens, with a few older persons, who said they were young for that particular occasion. As years went on the service became historical. Some hearers came scores and hundreds of miles to attend it. Travellers from Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Canada, the United States, Australia, and the isles of the sea were there. Once Dr. Brock was not there; the Atlantic rolled between him and his young friends. But the Rev. Newman Hall, who preached on the occasion, read this striking letter from the absent pastor:—

"Niagara Falls, June 3rd, 1866.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—One word to yourself of loving and prayerful sympathy, as the preacher of our Midsummer Morning Sermon at Bloomsbury Chapel. May an unction from the Holy One come down and rest upon you—such a measure of that unction that you shall be able to pray in the Holy Ghost, and to preach in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power!

"One word also, through yourself, to the young men and maidens of London who will constitute your congregation. My dear friends, I know how well pleased you are to see Mr. Hall in my place to-day. That you will listen to him with profound respect, I am well assured. So far, so good. But I want more than that. Comply, now, as he beseeches you to come to Jesus. Associate our service of this year with your surrender to your Saviour. Present upon the altar of the Lord a capacious and copious basket of summer fruit—becoming each of you, in body, and soul, and spirit, a living sacrifice unto God. To-day—whilst it is called to-day—believe and live.

"I could tell you about Niagara, for I am writing immediately over its impetuous rapids, and within five hundred yards of its stupendous falls; but I will write no more, beyond one word of anxious warning to those of you who are making light of sin, and neglecting the great salvation. Take care! or you will be caught in the rapids, and—over the falls! What then?

"My dear friend, the Lord God Almighty help you to prevent that.

"I am yours very, very truly,

"WILLIAM BROCK."

The thoughtful reader may easily conceive the profound impression produced on "foreigners and strangers," old friends and young hearts, by that loving and earnest letter. It was an epistle from Paul, the aged, to his young disciples at Rome or Corinth.

My duty lay outside. As soon as the chapel overflowed, assisted by kind friends, I began an open-air

service, near the iron gate adjoining the south side of the chapel, and there I preached the Gospel to even a stranger and more motley crowd than assembled to hear the pastor. Night cabmen, porters, rude-looking women, muddled fast men, thieves, homeless wanderers of both sexes, bakers fresh from toil, shoeblacks, and ruffians from St. Giles', and ladies, gentlemen, clerks, merchants, Sunday-school teachers, and Christian workers, were also standing round the chair on which I stood to hear any message which might have been given to me of God.

At five minutes to eight my service closed: at eight Dr. Brock pronounced the benediction from the pulpit, and next moment the doors of the chapel were thrown open, and Bloomsbury Street was thronged through all its ample breadth with two thousand people full of holy joy and love. What smiles there were as dear friends met! What shaking of hands on every side! And many lingered to see "the old man come out," and to say, as he passed along towards Gower Street, "God bless him."

He once said to me, "Every service has been attended by conversions." This was his exceeding great reward.

When the final Midsummer morning, June 23rd, 1872, dawned, the anxiety to hear the valedictory words of "the good old Doctor" was intense and widely spread. It was a memorable service. Some were there who had heard the whole series of discourses; some were there for the first time; some were there from distant towns and foreign lands. The end was come! The immense crowd was "a solemn assembly." The "dew of youth" and the "hoary head" were both present, and all seemed filled with hallowed emotion. The text was announced:—

"One Mnason, of Cyprus, AN OLD DISCIPLE."

The text was felt to be appropriate; and so was the sermon. But who that was there will ever forget the touching, thrilling, beseeching peroration?—

"Now, you friends of mine—to whom, perchance, old

age seems uncommonly distant; almost, indeed, inconceivably remote—be you wise enough to carry on and to carry through your discipleship unto your older age. Mnason, being dead, yet speaketh; and he speaketh unto you vastly to encouragement to-day. He admits that to do what you may have to do, if you are disciples, is arduous and self-denying; but, from the fullness of his joy, he assures you that he has found the doing of it to be right. He admits that to bear what you may have to bear, if you are disciples, is discomfiting to flesh and blood; but, with the golden harp within his hands, and the crown of life around his brow, he assures you that he knows the bearing of it to be good. Why, for these eighteen hundred years, our old disciple has known absolutely nothing, either of sighing, or of suffering, or of pain; for eighteen hundred years he has never heard an evil word, has never witnessed an ungodly act, has never felt a wrong emotion; for eighteen hundred years, he has had nothing but conformity to God, and delight in God. His discipleship did not terminate upon itself. It tended towards the perfect; and it prepared for the perfect; and it culminated in the perfect; and now it expatiates amidst the perfect; and from out of that perfectness, amidst which he is expatiating as I speak, his earnest word to yourselves is this:—‘Be Christ’s disciples, as I was, amidst the freshness of your youth; be you His disciples through the heat and the burden of the day; and then, be you His disciples even when the almond-tree may flourish, and the grasshopper may be a burden, and there will not be much else that you will care to hold by at all. Be faithful unto death; and then come and receive a crown of life.’

“Well, that is my message to you this morning; and, somewhat of an old disciple myself now, I pray you to take the message that Mnason’s instance will suggest. It will be the last Midsummer Morning message that I shall ever give to the young men and maidens of London. This is the twentieth time that I have addressed them. God knows how much I wish I had done it more simply and sincerely and earnestly and devoutly. But all that

must go now—whatever it has been or whatever it has not been. That is a solemn thought with me, and it may be of some solemnity with you. Whatever the services have been, or whatever they have not been, they are gone for ever. My hope is in God’s mercy for forgiving what is wrong, and for sanctioning what, peradventure, may have been right.

“And now my heart’s desire, my prayer to God is, in conclusion, that these Midsummer Morning’s Services may not prove, either to the earlier or to the later auditorics, the ‘savour of death unto death,’ but rather ‘the savour of life unto life.’ They have been the pleasantest of all the services of my long ministry of forty years. They have been the pleasantest of all the services. Now I feel as if I could wrestle with the angel bodily, and say, ‘I cannot let thee go until these have surrendered their hearts to Christ—until they have passed from death unto life’—(I mean *you*)—‘until they have become wise unto salvation by faith which is in Jesus Christ.’

“*We shall never meet here like this again.* Shall we meet in heaven? Now, your hands, all of you, and with your hands, your word. Shall we meet in heaven? God helping us, we *will*. Then we *shall*, for God will help anybody who asks to be helped from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the children of God. ‘One Mnason,’ a disciple, ‘an old disciple.’”

When the venerable preacher said, “Now, your hands, all of you; and with your hands, your word,” he eagerly and affectionately stretched out his own hand. It was an inspiration. Tears flowed on every side. Men and women seemed to bend forward like a field of corn before the wind to seize it, and pledge themselves to follow Mnason, the preacher, and the Great King to the Celestial City. “Ah,” said one to me, “I feel that I must delay no longer; but take his hand and come to God.”

A very fitting arrangement subsisted for several years between the pastor of Bloomsbury and his son, the pastor of Heath Street Chapel, Hampstead. The father

preached in the morning, the son in the forenoon. It was pleasant to see the father resting from his toil, and listening to "Willie," as he fondly called him, and woe betide the man who did not appreciate the sermon of his "boy!" Of that there was not much fear, for the pastor of Heath Street Church was a "son beloved" by us all; and one of the most perfectly-finished and admirable sermons I ever heard was delivered by him the last time he thus preached for his revered father.

The volume of "Midsummer Morning Sermons" contains many passages worthy of record. Thus did the preacher speak of

ATHEISM.

"You do believe that the world had a Creator, and you believe that Creator to be God. May I assume this? Do you actually think that there is a Being who has, of His own will, and from His own design, and by His own power, made you and me, and all persons and all things that exist? If the fool, who hath said in his heart, there is no God, should accost you with his atheism, would you deem it your business to rebuke his folly, and to the utmost of your power to show him that he is wrong? Never had you a finer opportunity for refuting the absurdities of atheism than is provided for you by the Great Exhibition. Take with you there the man who insists upon it that the world, and all that is therein, either did constitute and produce itself, or that it was casually constituted and fortuitously produced. And, walking amidst the wonders of the Exhibition, ask him if the iron and the glass of which the building is composed did produce themselves? Ask him if its beautiful configuration did organise itself? Ask him if its security and capaciousness did create themselves? Ask him if its multifarious contents did bring themselves together from Russia and from India, from Egypt and Zanzibar, from China and Peru? Ask him if the veiled vestal among the statuary came forth in her beauty from the quarry, without the intervention of human skill? Ask him if the great organs just chanced

to combine out of matter in fluctuation their marvellous capacity for glorious sounds? Ask him if the diverse machinery, which holds in astonishment the peasant and the peer alike, merely happened to be constructed after the right manner for its specific purposes, and merely happened to be impelled by the necessary power? Ask him if the crystal fountain did make itself out of nothing, at the very crisis when especially it was required, and if it did connect itself accidentally with the channels through which its waters are supplied?

"Go on asking him such questions, until even in gathering anger, he may ask you in return if you think him to be a fool—when, taking him on his own principles, you will instantaneously rejoin, 'Must not the man be a fool emphatical who holds that the seasons were arranged by merest accident; that the human body was framed fortuitously; that instinct and intellect were quite casually originated; that the manifold relationships of life occurred by a lucky chance?' And press your rejoinder urgently, under the full conviction that, if your opponent be an honest man, he will not leave the Exhibition without yielding to the argument, without adopting the very language of Paul, 'For as every house is builded by some man, so he that built all things is God.'

"Richly is that palace fraught with suggestions both for argument and illustration, touching the existence and the operations of the Lord our Maker. Atheism has got no footing there; it can point to nothing that does not frown upon it; amidst all the varieties of that stupendous microcosm it can claim no kindred that would be recognised. 'The raw materials and the products, and the machinery, and the mechanical inventions, and the manufactures and the sculpture, and the models,' do solemnly disown it. In a court constituted of representatives from every quarter, and from every department of the globe, atheism is refuted and condemned. From those long drawn aisles there comes a unanimous deliverance, and round about that glorious transept the deliverance is sonorously re-echoed, 'It is indeed the fool who saith, There is no God.'"

The preacher had no sympathy with Christian people who were not members of a church. He said to them, "COME IN." Hence, he thus fervently appealed to young converts in reference to

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

"Any person may belong to a congregation. No person belongs to a Church, but such as profess to have given themselves to God. And then, having become one of a certain body, worship with it, work with it, regard it with special sympathy and affection as your own Church. It will have its services for public and for social worship; make a point of attending them. It will meet for the commemoration of the death of Christ at His table; never fail to join in that commemoration. It will need your aid in its various efforts to promulgate the Gospel in your neighbourhood, and far abroad; be ever ready to give your aid, your co-operation in the schools of the Church, in its visitations, in its contributions. It will want your sympathies in administration of discipline, your presence in its gatherings for business, your firm and fast attachment through its manifold vicissitudes of sorrow and of joy. Give the Church which you may select all this. Let your union with itself be a thing of reality, and life, and power. Be, to all intents and purposes, a member of that body. Make that minister emphatically your own minister, and that people your own people, and that place your own home."

Many will remember the sermon on

SELF-INFLICTED SORROW.

"He went away sorrowful." Wisely, solemnly, tenderly did the preacher depict the young man, and then in imploring, impressive words he said:—

"Then—*why did he go away?* If Christ was loving, and not unkindly; patient, and not inconsiderate; profoundly beneficent and wise, and not unreasonable—why ever did the man go away? Alas! he loved his possessions more than he loved his soul! He would

not subordinate the things that were seen to the things that were unseen. He would not forego the present for the future. He would not cease to be what he was that he might become something better. Whatever his solicitude about eternal life, that solicitude was secondary, not supreme. When putting the earthly over against the heavenly, and looking at them both that he might choose the best, he deliberately preferred the earthly. He brought himself to believe that Christ did not understand his case, and that, therefore, to the direction which Christ had given he need pay no heed. He would have had the life eternal, if he could have had it on his own terms; but Christ's terms being peremptory, he determined, if it must be so, to let it go!

"And what a thing it was to let go! What a thing it was to determine to let go! Treasure in heaven! Imperishable treasure! Inexhaustible treasure! Ever augmenting and ever satisfying treasure! It might all go? Yes—for ever and for ever it might go, rather than he would do what Christ enjoined.

"You are struck with the infatuation of the man! You may well be struck; but *mind that you are not infatuated too!*

* * * * *

"You are not prepared to do what Jesus Christ requires. The demand to love father and mother, brother and sister, husband and wife, less than you love Him, is a demand that you cannot agree to. The requirement to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, is a requirement that you cannot accept. The injunction to deny yourself, to take up your cross, and to follow Christ, whether you like or dislike what may come, is an injunction that you cannot undertake to obey. If you could become entitled to eternal life, and assured of eternal life upon terms more consistent with your position and more congenial with your tastes, you would address yourselves to the fulfilment of the terms; but if neither your position nor your tastes are to be consulted—if in that which Christ insists upon you must needs acquiesce, then eternal life must go!

"*Now, now*—can you come to that conclusion? Dare

you come to that conclusion? Will you write it out, in so many words, on paper, and then put your name to it; saying, calmly and thoughtfully, as you do so, 'This I deliver as my act and deed'? Consider what I say; and the Lord give you understanding in all things."

Words like these used to hush the vast assembly into breathless silence, and many were "born again" then and there.

On June the 15th, 1862, Dr. Brock preached from Amos viii. 1, "A basket of summer fruit." He introduced the sermon with this anecdote of

CHARLES VINCE, OF BIRMINGHAM.

"In my holiday of last year, I enjoyed the companionship of my beloved friend—the Rev. Charles Vince, of Birmingham. Together did we participate the pleasure which is so bountifully administered by the scenery of North Wales. For the manifold purposes of intelligent relaxation, we often said and sung—'It is good for us to be here.' Our talk was frequently of our congregations, of the people to whom we preached, of the young men and maidens among the rest. We discoursed and we prayed in respect to our services for young men and maidens—thinking out the means and methods to be adopted in order that they might be saved.

"One day the words which I have just read were mentioned by my friend, as suggestive of attractive and important truth—of just such truth, he thought, as peradventure the Holy Ghost would bless. I came into his opinion; and there, about Snowdon, and Capel Curig, and Llanberris, I ruminated on the words as probably providing me with a Midsummer Morning's text. I hoped, as I many times have hoped since, that, under God, our consideration of these words would contribute to your good. I seem to hope so more than ever now."

It is not every pulpit orator who would have told so frankly where and how he found so exquisite and suggestive a text; but William Brock was an honest man,

and would not filch from any brother minister's claim to honour and praise. In expounding

THE LESSONS OF SUMMER FRUIT,

the wise preacher said:—

"YOUR BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT TEACHES THAT GOD, IN HIS BENIGNITY, IS WITH YOU.

"Thus sings one of the poets of our time:—

" 'God might have made the earth bring forth
Enough for great and small;
The oak tree and the cedar tree,
Without a flower at all.'"

Creating at His own pleasure—none dictating to Him, and none controlling Him—His creation indicates Himself. If there be kindness there, we may be assured that He is kind. If there be goodness there, we may be assured that He is good. If there be generosity there, we may be assured that He is generous. But there is all manner of goodness, and kindness, and generosity there—your basket of summer fruit, to wit.

"The conclusion is inevitable—God loveth you; God consulteth your enjoyment; God wisheth you to be happy; God provideth for your gladness; God willeth, not your moroseness, but your cheerfulness; not your wretchedness, but your blessedness; not your perturbation or your gloom, but your satisfaction and your delight."

The great and good pastor of Bloomsbury did, however, on occasions, in the calm judgment of some, make a mistake. He delivered a sermon on "A Time to Laugh," now entitled "Merry and Wise," which greatly disappointed many, who believed that he then missed an auspicious opportunity of promoting the highest welfare of the multitude gathered around him. A severe critique of his sermon appeared in a weekly periodical, which, to my knowledge, deeply wounded the heart of the preacher, and left behind it pangs for very many days. I do not feel bound to defend the sermon, but I cannot too strongly censure the review. It was harsh and hasty, and inflicted pain which was hard to bear.

Whether Christian critics are justified in vehemently showering blows, which make men as noble and evangelical as themselves bleed at every pore, is probably doubtful, and it would have been well if honourable reparation had been made. After all, there was not any unpardonable sin committed by what the good-humoured divine said about

THE LAWFULNESS OF LAUGHTER.

"There is a time for enjoying the outbursts of pleasantry and wit. There is a time for smiling at the facetious and the grotesque. There is a time for being complacently gratified and amused. There is a time for looking on with admiration upon spectacles of pageantry and pomp. There is a time for yielding oneself up, body, soul, and spirit, to the inspirations of the picturesque and to the entrancements of the sublime. That is to say, there is a time to laugh; and that man's godliness is a consistent, and an honourable, and an enviable godliness, who carefully observes the time, and then laughs out, like an honest man. The Christian is free of God's entire universe. The disciple of Jesus Christ may appropriate all the enjoyable things throughout creation. The son and daughter of the Lord Almighty may deem nature, and science, and art contributive to their delectation; they may render the amenities of society subservient to their pleasure; they may take all things whatsoever—*except the sinful things*—and, as seeing Him who is invisible, make them minister to their joy. All are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's!

"Laugh by all means—every young man and maiden here, every mother's son and daughter of you all. Laugh by all means, so far as pure and undefiled religion is concerned. Laugh heartily; laugh genially; laugh to your heart's content. The time and the occasion originating and warranting it, laugh, whoever may be lugubrious; and laugh without any idea that you are wrong. That—all that—the text affirms. There is a time to laugh."

The critic seemed to think there was *not*, and therefore did his best to make the genial, large-hearted

preacher personally illustrate the other text, "*A time to weep.*" Well, his pain is over now, and he rests where the voice of reproach is heard no more.

How solemn and importunate the pastor of Bloomsbury could be was made very evident in his powerful sermon on "*Delays are Dangerous.*" Listen to his final appeal as he speaks of

THE LIFE-TRAIN.

"Why, this is the crisis; and that which you must do to be saved you are to do with your might: that is, promptly, primarily, supremely, at once, now! In the grave you cannot confess and forsake your sins; you can confess and forsake them here. In the grave you cannot flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the Gospel; you can flee for refuge to it here. In the grave you cannot lay hold upon eternal life; you can lay hold upon it here. In the grave you cannot plead that where sins aboundeth grace does much more abound; you can plead that glorious plea here; and if you do plead it, superabounding grace will be vouchsafed to you at once. In the grave you cannot do the work of believing in Him whom God hath sent; you can do that work here.

"Then go and do it, because one of the graves to be dug next week may be your grave, and therein you may be buried out of sight. To-day you have the opportunity; to-morrow it may be gone for ever; and then, whatever eternity may be to you besides, it will not be the fulness of joy and the pleasures for evermore; it will not be the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; it will not be the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. On the contrary, eternity will be everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His power.

"Your solicitude, I pray you, lest you get to your grave unsaved. You are travelling thither as surely as those railway passengers are travelling by our Sunday morning trains to Brighton and elsewhere. You are not conscious of the motion of your train; you are not aware of the rapidity of your train; you had no idea that you were in a train at all.

"But, as you see it now, you really are. The station from which you started was your cradle, and on and on have you been going towards the terminus, your grave. You cannot divert the train. You cannot stop the train. You cannot leave the train. To the terminus you must inevitably go, although forewarned that at the terminus you will be confronted with the utter desolation of the second death; and, maybe, you are nearly come there—the shrill signal tells you that you are well-nigh within the station! Thank God, Christ is at your side, to render you His help at the last moment. Lay hold on it, as for your life; and then, for the impending issue of an eternity in perdition, there will be granted you the right gracious issue of an eternity in the paradise of God."

Through those unique sermons there did come "the right gracious issue of an eternity in the paradise of God" to many a young man and maiden. Rich and plenteous grace was bestowed upon preacher and people year after year, and no doubt the joyful gaze of the good pastor has, by this time, rested on pure and shining ones in the heavenly land who are there through "the words of eternal life" which he spoke to them on some bright Midsummer Sunday Morning. What a morning he has seen since he passed the dark river, and trod the golden pavement of the Jerusalem that is above!

CHAPTER IV.

FATHERHOOD AND FRIENDSHIP.

THE family circle at No. 24, Gower Street, Bedford Square, where the first pastor of Bloomsbury Chapel resided, was a very happy one. It comprised Dr. Brock, Mrs. Brock, and two sons and two daughters. Mrs. Brock was a lady of charming excellence. No pastor could have had a more suitable wife. He spoke of her as "the most precious gift God ever gave to man;" and Dr. Landels, a few days after her burial, remarked at the valedictory services, held in Bloomsbury Chapel, that "many ministers have had reason to bless God for what they have found in their wives; and Mrs. Brock, according to the testimony of all who knew her, was one of the best wives that ever minister was blessed with." As I had the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Brock several times a week, I may add my testimony to that borne by Dr. Landels, and record my high admiration of her sweet and charming character, her serene temper, high intelligence, womanly dignity, and modest piety. A more perfect wife for her husband could not have been found in the realm of womanhood.

It was the unspeakable joy of Dr. Brock to baptize all his children. He baptized his eldest son, and saw him daily going to his business in the City, and there living a Christian life; and then it was his joy to hear him say, "I think I am called of God to preach the Gospel." I gave up my afternoon service at Bloomsbury Chapel that his son might preach a probationary sermon; and he came down to the Mission Hall in Moor Street, St. Giles', and there preached another sermon, because Dr. Brock, with that sagacity which characterised him, wished to know whether his son could preach the Gospel to both rich and to poor; for he

thought that a preacher should be able to address all ranks and conditions of men. It was his happiness also to baptize his younger son, and his two daughters, one of whom he laid in the grave, and the other now mourns his death as he slumbers in the same tomb with her sister and her mother. The father, the mother, the sons, and the daughters, were thus all members of the same church, loving the same Saviour, and walking towards the same heaven.

His eldest son having studied at the University of London, and afterwards at Edinburgh, became the minister of Heath Street Chapel, Hampstead. His father delivered the inaugural discourse—a very elaborate composition—from Psalm xc. 16, 17, "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their CHILDREN. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it." In the ministry of his son Dr. Brock continually rejoiced, and in him and *his* son an honoured name will be perpetuated for generations to come.

As a man of "a friendly spirit"—generous, faithful, sympathetic, playful, sincere, and godly—few excelled the pastor of Bloomsbury. He said, "Two are better than one." He loved the company of good men. He delighted in wise, instructive, elevating conversation. "Wealth maketh many friends," but no poor man could say that Dr. Brock "despised" him. He would talk as kindly to a pious poor man as he would to a prelate or a merchant, and a poor woman, if in sore distress, was sure to find him a friend and helper.

The sons and daughters of his friends were always certain of a welcome to his chapel, vestry, or house. "I knew your mother, my dear," he would say, to some timid girl, and put her at ease at once. "I baptized your father," he would say to a young man; "come home with me to supper, and let us talk of old times." In this way he won many to Christ and His Church.

How many of his friends have gone! There was Dr. Stanley, the Bishop of Norwich, and father of Dean

Stanley. A trustworthy authority, speaking of him, says: "He was on terms of intimacy with the late bishop, the father of the present Dean of Westminster. One day, the Bishop passed by on horseback, when Dr. (then Mr.) Brock was making some alterations in his chapel at St. Mary's, and when he happened to be standing at the door. 'Good morning, Mr. Brock,' said the Bishop, 'I see that you are making some improvements in your chapel.' 'Yes, my lord. Will you look in, and I wish you would come and give us a sermon at the opening.' 'Ah, Mr. Brock, I should like to do so, but you know I cannot ask you to preach in the Cathedral in return.' 'Well, my lord, perhaps you may be able to ask me some day!' And he might have done so, if the Bishop and the Baptist minister could both have been spared for half-a-century longer!" There was Joseph John Gurney, the learned and pious Quaker banker, of Earham Hall; William Forster, the father of Mr. W. Forster, the member for Bradford; the sainted John Alexander, of Princes Street Chapel, Norwich, whom of all men, I think, he loved most deeply; and Jeremiah Colman, and others. The Rev. Dr. Stoughton, speaking of that time, said: "There was a rare triumvirate of ministerial friends at Norwich in those days—John Alexander, William Brock, and Andrew Reed. He remembered the time well, when he (Dr. Stoughton) had the happiness of meeting them in their social hours, and very pleasant and profitable they were. It used to be said that you could hardly find in the three kingdoms three men more attached to each other."

The number of Dr. Brock's friends in London and the provinces could not be told; they were exceeding many, and all of them were proud of his fame, and gave him a prophet's welcome to their homes.

When at Bloomsbury Chapel he had a circle of friends and occasional hearers whom he greatly valued. There was Dr. Thomas Price, under whose ministry in Devonshire Square Chapel he became a Christian disciple, and who was the editor of the *Eclectic Review* in its palmy

days. There was George Lance, the celebrated fruit painter, whose fine, intellectual face, long black hair, and velvet coat made him so conspicuous. There were Mr. Harris, member for Leicester; Mr. Candlish, member for Sunderland; Mr. Winterbotham, member for Stroud and Under Secretary of State, whose mortal remains are now entombed under an Italian sky; Havelock, the hero, worshipped there, and so did David Livingstone, when he had returned from his first African journey.

Some of his best friends came to Bloomsbury Chapel in a peculiar manner. Thus, I once heard him tell an amusing story about a scientific man and popular author, who left a very celebrated minister for a seat in Bloomsbury Chapel. He brought a letter of introduction from Dr. H—— to Dr. Brock. "Before you open it, sir," said the author, "allow me to state that I am a man of science, and that I have much to do with beetles, butterflies, and spiders. Well, I get tired of them in six days and on the seventh, the Sabbath, I don't want to hear anything about them. But our good, genial minister is also a man of science, and he will talk about scientific topics in the pulpit to illustrate the Word. Well, last night, the Sabbath, you know, he gave us a sermon *full of spiders!* I could not stand it any longer, so I went into the vestry, and said, 'Doctor, that sermon on spiders has finished me; give me a letter to Doctor Brock.'" So, said the pastor, laughing, "he came to us because he knew *I didn't preach about spiders.*"

As a writer of pastoral letters, the minister of Bloomsbury did great good, and proved himself a true friend and counsellor. He wrote hundreds of letters with thoughtful care, and failed not to rebuke, exhort, and comfort as might seem most expedient. It would be easy to fill this volume with examples of such epistles; but a few only need be given.

To a gentleman who had lost his mother and a highly accomplished and loving wife he wrote as follows on May 10, 1871:—

"Had you been living nearer I should certainly have

called to show you my sympathy under your heavy loss. Many times have I thought of you, and hoped that you were enabled to hold fast your confidence in the faithfulness and loving-kindness of the Lord. Very short indeed has been the time in which you and your dear wife were the bearers of the common burdens and the helpers of the common joys. I fear from what I hear that she had been a good deal of an invalid for some time prior to her decease: knowing indeed that this was not to be her rest. Well, she had become heir of a veritable and substantial rest in Christ, her Saviour unto life eternal. Thanks be unto God that she belonged to Christ; so that neither her sickness nor her death was unalleviated or uncheered. You know, my dear friend, where she is, and how she is employed. Being dead, she yet speaketh, bidding you to be of good comfort on her account. The victory has been hers; the abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Heaven is very rich in your beloved ones who have entered their mansions in the Father's house; and *there* is your mansion amongst theirs to be entered upon in the appointed time. May you be helped to follow those who through faith and patience are inheriting the promises! May your bereavement, which assuredly is not joyous but grievous, work for you the peaceable fruits of righteousness!

"Mrs. Brock sends her kind love. Very pleasant are our recollections of your occasional visits to our house; and sincere would be our pleasure to see you if you can make it convenient to come at any time."

When he was very busy, just starting, perhaps, for a service, a committee meeting at the Mission House, or a long journey, he would sometimes have only time to write a short note to some friend in deep sorrow. To one who lost a distinguished son by a sudden and distressing accident, he despatched one of those brief, sympathetic letters:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Depend on the true, full, evangelical sympathy of your own brother in Christ.

"WILLIAM BROCK.

"Love to your wife and to each of your sorrowing survivors.

"God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

To the same gentleman, whose grief was very great, Dr. Brock wrote a singularly thoughtful, tender, consolatory letter, in which he said :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I dare say that you have been often struck with our Lord's declaration to His disciples, that a certain calamity had happened that the works of God should be made manifest thereby ; their interpretation of the calamity was wholly wrong.

"The sufferer had not been in any special sense a sinner, so that God must needs punish him ; neither had his parents been some notorious sinners upon whom retribution must judicially be inflicted.

"Wholly and altogether the reasons of the calamity were independent of father and son alike.

"Outside the household and the individual must an inquirer have gone to find on what account it was that the blindness had supervened. Whether he could or could not find it was left undecided ; but it was very peremptorily decided that he must let the family alone, and prosecute his search elsewhere. In permitting the calamity our Heavenly Father had consulted His own glory, and whether the progress and results should become known or remain unknown, the glory *would* assuredly ensue. Query—Do not domestic calamities come upon ourselves, having both immediate and ulterior reference to the glory of God ?

"Is it not the fact that we are made the occasion of manifesting some work of God ? Objections arise, no doubt. Why break up our homesteads, and rend our hearts to manifest anything pertaining to God ? *Yes !* but we may be rash with such a question. After all, we are subordinate to God ; and for His glory were we formed. We are not our own.

"If, indeed, there were injustice or unkindness in what is done, it *would* be a different thing ; but you and I can trust God surely enough in these directions—'Good

when He gives, supremely good ; not less when He denies.' Peradventure, then, your heavy affliction was permitted in order that objects wholly independent of yourselves might be wrought out. *Still* and *still* commending you one by one to Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will," &c.

A pastor who could indite such letters as that just given was indeed "beyond price," and often did the recipients of such pastoral epistles say, "His letters indeed are weighty." When a second great trouble befell the same friend and his family, the venerable pastor once more took up his pen and wrote these

WORDS OF CONSOLATION.

"MY DEAR OLD FRIEND.—I *was* afflicted by the information which reached me on Sunday as to your fresh bereavement. The full measure of the six and even 'seven troubles' is allotted you ; yet a little more and you might say, 'I am the man that hath seen affliction.' When you thought to know this and that about your former trial, it was too painful for you ; far, far more painful is it now that you think to know all about this recent and repeated trial. Two sons taken ! Weep away and welcome, my dear friend. There is nature in the tears, no doubt ; but there is grace as well as nature. Better still ; the grace pervades and purifies and sanctifies the nature. Your consolation in Christ is in you, and through you, and of you ; your whole spirit and soul and body are in fellowship, kinship, membership with the loving Weeper at Bethany. Not without yourself so much as from within yourself, from Christ living in you, cometh the sacredness and saintliness of your present grief ; your sorrow is not the sorrow of those who have no hope. You know whom you have believed ; you are confident of this very thing, that God has been neither capricious, nor disregarding, nor impatient in relation to this heavy and heart-rending blow. 'Is it well ?' 'It is well !' Every precious word of pardoning and justifying mercy has been fulfilled, every pledge of fraternal and effective sympathy will be redeemed.

"I commend your beloved wife and daughters, and well-remembered Michael, to the continuous and un-failing care of the great Holder of the keys.

"Blessed be His name, for the reassurance of one's confidence, at the remembrance of His occupation at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

"I ascend to My Father and to your Father; to My God and to your God."

"I am yours in truest Christian love,

"WILLIAM BROCK."

What golden words were these! Dr. Brock's letters of friendship were indeed like apples of gold in pictures of silver, and often effected in the hearts of men what his sermons never did. As a friend he was to be greatly desired, and thousands will mourn him now that he is gone, because of his manly Christian love to them and theirs. Of this love Mr. Spurgeon gives an apt example. "We once came into collision with him upon a matter in which we had no object but the good of the denomination. We felt compelled to say several things which must have pained him. We counted the cost of our action, and reckoned among the losses the failure of his friendship; but we were in error, for the good soul, though evidently somewhat hurt, took occasion to say, 'Don't go home with the idea that I love you any the less. For the most part what you have said was quite right, and where you were too hard upon me I am sure you honestly said what you thought, so give me your hand.' The hand was both given and shaken with hearty affection, and never once did Dr. Brock show the slightest sign of lessened love." This praise from Mr. Spurgeon is not undeserved. Dr. Brock knew how to admire faithfulness to convictions, and loved you none the less if you showed yourself a fearless man and outspoken friend. As a friend he was himself beyond price.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADVOCATE OF MISSIONS.

FROM the earliest days of his ministry Dr. Brock was a firm, laborious, self-denying, and fearless advocate of missions to the heathen, and he often rendered invaluable aid to the Baptist Missionary Society. In 1836 he made his first metropolitan speech on its behalf in Finsbury Chapel. In 1839 he spoke at its annual meetings on behalf of the extinction of slavery—a theme which always excited his most impassioned eloquence. When the great jubilee of the Baptist Missionary Society was held at Kettering, in 1842, he was one of its most popular speakers, and there are those in that town who still utter enthusiastic praise of his oratorical efforts. In the years 1845, 1849, 1851, 1855, 1864, and 1871 he spoke on its behalf at the annual meetings, and in 1844 and 1863 he preached one of the annual sermons—the latter sermon was a very powerful plea for a native ministry. Since 1862 Dr. Brock was an honorary member of the committee, and a bust of him may be seen in the Board Room. A writer in the *Missionary Herald* truly bears record that "Dr. Brock's exertions for the Society were not confined to the metropolis. While in Norwich he took an active part in the annual meetings, and usually accompanied the deputations in their visits to the congregations of the county. There is scarcely a congregation in any town or city of importance in England and Scotland which has not listened to his advocacy of the Society's claims, and been stirred by his fervent appeals. Thus for forty years, within a few months, our friend has been amongst the foremost of our leaders in the mission cause, and rendered during the whole of that period services the value of which cannot be overrated. Of those who

were his colleagues in the early years of his active exertions for the mission, few now remain."

Very valuable help was also gladly given by him to the Wesleyan Methodists and other Missionary Societies by delivering annual sermons on their behalf, and by impressive speeches, both in London and the provinces. He delighted in such efforts, and rejoiced in expending immense pains on his discourses and addresses.

One of the most valuable of Dr. Brock's services to the Baptist Missionary Society was given at the meeting of the Baptist Union, at Plymouth, on the 8th of October, 1875. Four missionaries were to be designated for foreign work. To witness the interesting spectacle and hear the address, "the tribes" had gathered from far and near. Every seat in George Street Chapel was crowded. The aisles could hold no more people than had been compressed within them. Pastors, deacons, editors, magistrates, philanthropists, godly women, eager students, bright maidens, and grave secretaries were there waiting to hear "the old Doctor," as they lovingly called him. When he rose—solemn, massive, hale, earnest—evidently resolved to "attempt great things for God," and proceeded to give, what a writer described as perhaps "the finest example of sacred oratory that ever fell from the lips of the old pastor of Bloomsbury," every eye was fixed upon him. As sonorous periods rolled on in stately verbal procession from his lips, all present were entranced. Who that heard his closing words—delivered with holy emotion and thrilling power—and so paternal and apostolic—could possibly forget them?—

"God speed, brothers! With all my heart, and soul, and strength, I bid you God speed, and let all the people say, Amen. Brother Comber, I bid you 'God speed!' Brother Tucker, I bid you 'God speed!' Brother Gammon, I bid you 'God speed!' Brother Carey, I bid you 'God speed!' Name of grateful omen yours to a great meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society; name of most grateful omen; a token to us to-day for good. We thank God, and take

courage as we designate another William Carey. We thank God as we think of the William Carey who was designated of the days of yore, of his apprehensiveness of duty, of his fidelity to principle, of his patient continuance in well-doing, of his simplicity and purity and cheerfulness of life, of his fruitfulness in every good work unto a grand old age, and of his apostolic humbleness of mind throughout it all—humbleness of mind so finely expressed by the inscription he prescribed for his gravestone :—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm, on Thy kind arms I fall;
Be Thou my strength, and righteousness, my Saviour, and my all."

Right worthy consummation that of Carey's memorable history; a very coronet of gold around his illustrious and imperishable name!"

As the eloquent words, surcharged with feeling and forceful with victorious faith, resounded through the chapel, strong men wept, and Amen! Amen!! Amen!!! burst from the excited hearers, and the aged preacher—grander than ever—sat down, having once more shown how intensely he loved the missionary cause, and how ably he could serve it. Fathers will tell their sons of the Plymouth address, and the day of its delivery will form a luminous page of Christian history during many days to come.

CHAPTER VI.

A WORKING PRESIDENT.

FOR many years Dr. Brock took profound and incessant interest in the Bloomsbury Chapel Young Men's Association. As its president he did an immense amount of hard and exhausting work. "Look here," he said, as he placed in my hands the programme for an association connected with a leading metropolitan chapel, "what do you think of it?" "Why," I replied, "Mr. A. B., the pastor, is not down for a single lecture all the session." "No," he responded, "we don't do it so at Bloomsbury." In that he was perfectly right. He was a working president. He was our most popular lecturer, and in his busiest and most harassing seasons of "labour and sorrow" he did not fail us, but prepared most valuable lectures for our edification and delight.

Look on this photograph. The lecture hall, under the chapel, at 8.45 on a winter's evening, filled to the door with appreciative hearers. There are present young men, young women, students, employers, shopkeepers, heads of departments in City houses, two or three deacons, a brewer's drayman, the learned Dr. Davies, of Regent's Park College; Mr. Adam White, of the British Museum; Mr. John Francis, of the Athenæum, and a country pastor; Mr. George Brock is in attendance as secretary; Mrs. Brock is on one of the front seats, looking bright and pleasant, as she always did, with her daughter Ellen beside her, and everybody is eagerly waiting for the president. There he is, with a pilot coat, with its collar up, on—for he is afraid of taking cold—and his big lecture book under his arm. With head slightly bent down, his broad shoulders rather erected, his face grave and earnest, and his step slow and ponderous, he passes to the platform; and after

a brief prayer, he begins in full, rotund, deliberate tones to read, say, one of his "Historical Passages." Narrative, argument, humour, indignation, anecdote, pathos, and a fine peroration, make a lecture worthy of Exeter Hall; and as we go out we all say to each other, "How grand the old man was to-night!" "Old!" exclaims an enthusiastic admirer, "he is younger and better than ever!"

Any kindness shown to Dr. Brock by "the Young Men" greatly gratified him, and hence he was perfectly delighted when one of them (Mr. B. P. Pask) on March 27, 1866, in the prospect of the pastor going to the United States, unexpectedly rose and read the following appropriate lines:—

"There was a custom in the days of old,
When men went forth on some great enterprise,
To recognise the need and seek the help
Of some reputed superhuman power.
Thus may we read, in Homer's wondrous lines,
How Grecian heroes and how Trojan dames
Besought the favour of the Gods they owned,
And hoped to prosper as they gave success.

"So we—no less religiously inclined,
But more enlightened on such sacred themes—
Do most devoutly recognise the need,
And earnestly implore that aid Divine
Which, if withheld, irrevocably seals
Our sad disaster and our direful doom:
Thus we on all occasions; but on some
More publicly and solemnly we seek
His gracious intervention, 'neath whose smile
All plans must prosper and all aims succeed.

"And now, anticipating soon to part
With one more dear than prince or warrior brave—
Our much-loved Pastor, President, and Friend—
We would assemble round th' Eternal Throne,
And with one voice, and with one heart, implore
That He who holds the waters in His hands,
And grasps the winds within His mighty fists,
Will have him ever 'neath His gracious care,
And bid him go, and bid him come, in peace.

"Go, then, dear Pastor, to that distant land—
Where happily the din of war has ceased,
And the soft voice of peace once more is heard—
Go—and our prayers attend thee as thou goest,
And so return; and when again we meet,
We will unite in one loud song of praise
To Him who heareth and who answereth prayer."

"I did not know," said the President, "that we had a poet among us." On his return the poet read a second production at the opening meeting of the Association, on Tuesday evening, October 23, 1866:—

"Meet doth it seem that we, who erewhile bent
In supplication at the Heavenly Throne,
And sought, in common and united prayer,
A special blessing on our President—
Most meet that we should recognise and own
The gracious answers that our God vouchsafed,
And with devout and grateful hearts unite
In praising Him who heard and answered prayer.

"Thee, Lord, we do most thankfully adore,
And bless Thee for our Pastor's safe return;
And with our praise we this petition blend—
Oh, spare him long to be Thy Servant and our Friend!

"To thee, dear Pastor, we would now address
Our warm congratulations. 'Tis our joy,
On reassembling thus, to meet thee here—
A joy that prompts no feigned lips to speak
A hearty welcome to a friend beloved.
Not all alone thy journeyings were performed,
For we in spirit bore thee company,
And marked each daily round on sea and land.
Nor without profit would we fain believe
Thy visit to the West; for from that land
There murmurs yet the sound of Christian Love,
Mingling its voice with loud Niagara's roar,
Tenderly warning of the depths beneath
Sin's treacherous falls, so fatal to the soul.
Dear Pastor, we would thank thee for that voice,
Whose echoes will not die till we are dead.
And now once more we heart with heart would join
To thank our God and gladly welcome thee."

Most grateful were those words to the beloved President. How hard he worked for us, and how valuable was the information which he imparted to us in successive sessions, will appear from a perusal of a selection from the titles of his historical passages and Biblical studies—efforts which extended over many years, and continued popular to the very last:—

HISTORICAL PASSAGES.

"Witch-finding."
"The Inquisition."
"Daniel Defoe."
"The Rise and Fall of Cardinal Wolsey."
"The Solemn League and Covenant."

"The Thirty Years' War."
"Incidents of the Reformation."
"Judge Jeffries."
"George Washington."
"Columbus and the Discovery of America."
"Wilberforce and the Abolition of Slavery."
"Tyndale and the English Bible."
"Knox and the Scottish Reformation."

BIBLICAL STUDIES.

"The Scene in Simon's House."
"The Vision at Patmos."
"The Voice from the Cloud."
"The Trance in Joppa."
"The Parable of the Sower."
"Three Months in Malta."
"This God is our God."
"The Humiliation and Exaltation of Christ."
"Baptism into the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Ghost."
"Especially the Parchments."
"The New Creation in Christ Jesus."

Many of the historical passages cost Dr. Brock great labour. He devoted many hours in the British Museum to collecting the requisite materials for them, and wrote them out in full with great care. He was a workman who needed not to be ashamed, and had his reward in the love of YOUNG MEN.

CHAPTER VII.

LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS WORKS.

THE Pastor of Bloomsbury was not a great scholar, a classical writer, a literary oracle, or a profound divine. To none of these honours did he lay claim. His manly modesty prevented him from doing so; but in all his productions he aimed at usefulness, the vindication of truth, the freedom of Christian action, the welfare of England, the liberation of the oppressed, and the diffusion of peace and righteousness. One thing, however, may be affirmed—namely, that he always did his very best. He never issued slovenly, immature, shallow work. He wrote, revised, corrected, and elaborated until he could do no more, and is not that high praise for a busy man?

The first publication he issued was when he was in Norwich, in 1837, and is entitled, "The Unity of the Spirit Explained." We append the titles of others in their chronological order:—

- 1842. "The Baptism of the Heir Apparent."
- 1845. "Speech on the Endowment of Maynooth."
- 1846. "Funeral Sermon on the Rev. William Knibb."
- "The Behaviour Becoming the House of God."
- 1847. "Speech on the Character of the Religious Liberty Society."
- 1850. "Sacramental Religion."
- 1853. "Sermons on the Sabbath."
- "Selected Canticles."
- "Life of Sir Henry Havelock."
- 1858. "Blind Bartimæus."
- 1859. "The Gospel for the People."
- 1864. "Letter to C. H. Spurgeon on Baptismal Regeneration."
- "The Wrong and Right of Christian Baptism."
- 1868. "The Christian's Duty in the Forthcoming General Election."
- 1872. "Midsummer Morning Sermons."
- 1873. "Funeral Sermon for the Rev. N. Haycroft."

Besides the above, Dr. Brock lectured six times to the Young Men's Christian Association—in 1849, on "The

Common Origin of the Human Race;" in 1850, on "The Apostle Paul;" 1851, "Daniel as a Model for Young Men;" 1853, "Young Men of the Age;" 1856, "Mercantile Morality." We may add that Dr. Brock contributed a "Life of Bunyan" to a reprint of one of Bunyan's works, that he was also a contributor to the "Altar of the Household," and that Twenty Sermons on Various Subjects were published by Mr. F. Davis, 1, Chapter House Court, St. Paul's, E.C.

The "Life of Sir Henry Havelock," of which there have been sold 49,000 copies, and which was prepared for the press in a month, excited some surprise in many quarters. Its author was a member of the Peace Society; he had been the friend of Joseph John Gurney and William Foster, the distinguished Norwich Quakers; he had opposed the Crimean War; he adhered to the policy of Richard Cobden and John Bright; Henry Richard, M.P., the Secretary of the Peace Society, had preached in his pulpit, and yet, men said, he wrote the life of a soldier!

It is difficult to refute the objection, nor am I personally bound to do so. Dr. Brock thought friendship had its claims; he greatly admired Havelock, as the Christian soldier; he wished to show that a pure, devout life was possible in an Indian camp; he was a Baptist and Havelock was a Baptist; the public voice clamoured for a monument of its hero; and hence, in his sermon on Havelock, delivered in Exeter Hall, on Sunday evening, February 14th, 1858 (the preacher's natal day), he exclaimed, concerning him whom England hailed as

THE CHRISTIAN HERO,

"Commemorate the man!" is the universal cry. Perpetuate the record of his excellences; hand down to your children, and be sure to tell them to hand down to their children after them, the mention of his fame. Let the most magnificent site in Europe be graced with the monumental column, and let the noblest abbey in the Empire be adorned with the eulogistic marble. The country will have him honoured; India demands the

celebration of his deeds ; the world must know that we hold him in renown. Be it so. Your generous sympathy with the Government in all that it has done, and, then, your generous personal contributions to that which will presently be proposed, by all means. But I, as a minister of Christ, implore one thing first of all, and that is this :—go and follow him as far as ever he followed Christ. Take the lessons about faithfulness unto death, about Christian catholicity, about adherence to principle, about evangelical zeal in regard to others, about fidelity to conjugal and parental responsibilities, and about a godly life in Christ Jesus ;—take all these lessons and learn them. Whether ye be statesmen, or magistrates, or soldiers, or lawyers, or physicians, or merchants, or yeomen, or artisans, or domestic servants, go, all of you, bring out in the living characters of a God-fearing life, henceforward the indelible eulogy, ‘Sacred to the memory of Havelock!’”

Now, argued the listeners in Exeter Hall, and subsequently many of the readers of *Havelock's Life*, that is scarcely the language we expected from William Brock, the honoured advocate of universal brotherhood and peace. I am bound, as an honest chronicler of the life of a greater man than Havelock, to record these expressions of astonishment and regret. I am also under a moral obligation to state that I could never, in private, induce Dr. Brock to vindicate his book. The most he would say was—“I did it *honestly*, my friend.” My reply was, “That I fully believe, but, nevertheless, Havelock *was a soldier*.” There the matter ended between us.

The “*Life of Havelock*” was the most successful and lucrative of Dr. Brock's works, and it remains as his estimate of one whom he greatly admired, and whose name he was always ready to laud as among the first Englishmen of our time.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FIRST BIBLE-WOMAN.

ON May 5th, 1858, Dr. Brock made a powerful speech, in Exeter Hall, on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to which there pertains facts of some historic interest. Speaking of the baser part of the population in St. Giles', he said :—

“Hundreds of them are so vicious that I believe they could not blush, so ignorant that you would say they were beyond instruction, so sunk in misery and sin that you would almost imagine them to be irreclaimable, so deep down in the abyss that at least half of your philosophers and reasoners would say, ‘Let them alone, they are past recovery.’ But God was pleased to direct that a lady (Mrs. Ranyard) should one morning go into these pent-up courts and alleys, those abodes of squalid wretchedness and vice ; and it occurred to her that Bible visitation would do great good amongst these people, and she suggested it. But where were you to find your visitor ? It must be a woman ; none else will do. You will not have energy enough, patience enough, perseverance enough, if the visitor is not a woman. But what respectable woman would voluntarily penetrate these miserable places, or consent to familiarise herself hand to hand with the unrevealed necessities of those dark abodes ? Well, God, who worketh all things for His Word, raised up the means. It so happened that there was living in that very district—born there, bred there, married there—in that parish of St. Giles', there was a woman who had been brought up amid all the circumstances of St. Giles' degradation, who was familiar with the habits of the people, but whom it had pleased God, through means of a Bible, and by the in-

fluence of the Holy Ghost, to make a new creature in Christ Jesus. And this Bible was lent her by Mr. M'Cree, at whose service she attended. She was attracted by the psalm-singing; she went in, heard words which arrested her attention, and, at the close, asked him if he would lend her a Bible. She read that Bible. Ah! we have more persons than one who can say, 'I owe all my comfort to the Bible, and I will circulate it with all my might.' Well, when the word went out that such a person was wanted for the work of the Bible Society, this woman stood forth, and said, 'Here am I.' This woman, who had been brought up there, who was familiarised from her birth with St. Giles', who knew the character of its population, and had lived amongst them, stood forth and said, 'Here am I; send me.' 'You will go?' 'Yes, please God, I will go.' 'When?' 'Now.' 'On what terms?' 'On no terms—I want no terms.' 'To what extent will you visit?' 'To any extent: for I know every court, every alley, almost every house, and there is no opposition to be expected of which I am afraid.' Well, she began her visitations towards the middle of the summer, and before six months were over she had sold 207 Testaments and 147 Bibles; not to the people who hear our City Missionaries, or who go to our churches or chapels, but to the lowest of the low. Of this number, 192 Testaments and 60 Bibles were paid for on delivery, and others were paid for in part, the balance being paid in small instalments. And, to show you that these people, poor, miserable, and degraded as they are, nevertheless entertain sentiments of honour and honesty, I may mention that the other day, as this woman was pursuing her avocation as Bible distributor amongst those dirty, narrow courts and alleys, she heard a voice calling out after her, 'Stop! stop the woman with the Bibles!' Fearing that it was some one intending to molest her, she hastened on; but the cry was repeated: 'Stop! stop the Bible-woman!' She looked back, and saw a man, to whom a long time before she had sold a Bible, hurrying after her, and he called to her again, 'Stop! I owe you 2d. on

account of that Bible you let me have last summer, and I want to pay you. I went away last summer, hop-picking, into the country, without paying you all up for the Bible. Come back, and I will pay you.' She did go back, and the man took her into the house, went with her from room to room, introduced her to the other people who lived there, and, before she left, she sold five Bibles amongst them. Well, I say the work of this Society is going on in St. Giles' by the agency of this woman, and it is gaining strength every day of her life. Why, even the policemen now recognise her; the groups at the corners of the streets recognise her. I can tell you that many a lone woman, in these abodes of abject poverty and squalid misery, waits anxiously for the visits of that person, for they know that she comes to them as the messenger of comfort and peace and grace. Every morning for several hours she goes forth with her Bibles and her Testaments into their alleys and courts, working and getting subscribers day after day. All the morning she thus pursues her labours as the agent of this Society, receiving 10s. a week from your funds. I could tell you how she is often engaged in the afternoons, when she is not acting as your proper agent, doing work which, though not properly Bible work, would never be done but for the Bible, and never could be done but by a woman with the Bible in her heart, and a woman thoroughly acquainted with the locality, and with the habits, feelings, and sympathies of the people."

The "woman" thus referred to was "Marian" (Mrs. Mary Bower) who was the *first* Bible-woman. It was my privilege, in the providence of God, to give her the Bible—the only Bible she ever had—which was the means of her conversion. She was afterwards baptized by Dr. Brock, and became a member at Bloomsbury Chapel. As efforts were long made, by those who ought to have shown a more generous and catholic spirit, to conceal the fact that "Marian" was a Baptist and a Nonconformist, lest "the Church party should be offended, and refuse to have anything to do with the

work," it seems desirable that the fact of her religious associations should be defined and frankly made known. Nonconformity often gains scant honour for many of its most precious fruits and resplendent deeds. Some people think its proper place is "under a bushel," whereas it has produced men and women of whom "the world was not worthy," and vindicated human rights and liberties when priests and prelates were silent. It is, therefore, due to Nonconformity that none of its laurels should be denied, nor its spiritual achievements forgotten.

CHAPTER IX.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS.

DURING the great Exhibition in Hyde Park, it was proposed to secure a large theatre for the delivery of discourses to the multitudes who were expected to flock to London. A deputation, of whom Dr. Brock was one, waited upon the lessee of a well-known theatre to ascertain the terms on which it could be secured, who met them accompanied by a famous light comedian, who was then performing on its boards. After the deputation had informed the lessee of their desire to rent the theatre for the season, the light comedian flippantly said, "Well, gentlemen, I suppose you want to have this theatre that you may *convert* people." The answer given was, "We hope people will be converted, although, perhaps, it is not in our power to convert them." "Very well," said the actor airily; "if they are converted, will they come to see me play?" "Certainly not," was the answer. "Then," said he, turning to the lessee, "you may let the theatre to these gentlemen if you like, but if you do I will perform no more," and out he dashed. The theatre was not obtained, and Dr. Brock often related this anecdote as indicating the antagonism between theatrical performances and the preaching of the Gospel. He also told me that in a conversation he had with Sheridan Knowles, the dramatic author and actor, that Mr. Knowles had assured him he believed a "reformed theatre" to be impossible.

When Dr. Brock returned from his annual holiday, he often related incidents which he thought would interest the members of the church, and he once told us that he had been down into Devonshire and "*hunted*" up the old woman who nursed him when he was a child. "Ah!" said she to me, "Master William, I have had you

on my knee.' " Dr. Brock, glancing at his then somewhat formidable physical proportions, and then looking at us, smiled and said, "I replied to her, 'You would not like to have me now.'" He also told us that when he was going down a street from the chapel where he had preached, he overheard two old women who had been present at the service talking about himself, and one said to the other, "Ah! that is the preacher I like to hear—*six foot high*."

He had great distaste for personal controversy, and had little sympathy with the late Dr. John Campbell in his personal attacks. I once remarked to him, "Well, you see, Dr. Campbell is in hot water again." "Yes," said he, with great emphasis, "and *dirty water too*."

He was entirely opposed to the baneful practice of smoking. He detested both the cigar and the pipe. When in Norwich he was going to drive to a missionary meeting a few miles from that city, and called at the house of a young minister who was going with him. The youthful pastor came out of his house smoking a cigar, and mounted into his seat beside Dr. Brock. "Now, my brother," said the latter, "I am not going to drive you through Norwich with that cigar in your mouth. If you do not put out the cigar you must leave the vehicle." The cigar was put out and the Doctor drove on in peace. To a young relative he said, "I will give you a silver watch if you promise me never to smoke." The promise was made and the silver watch given. In after years the promise was broken, and the owner of the silver watch appeared in the Doctor's presence with his pipe. This greatly chagrined him, and he told me that he intended to have the watch back again because the promise made had been violated. Whether he ever got the watch or not I do not know.

When he was a young man he went to hear John Angell James, of Birmingham, preach, and he happened to sit near the clock in the gallery. Being delighted with the sermon, he resolved to have rather more of the preacher's eloquence than the preacher himself intended. Dr. Brock therefore quietly opened the clock,

and after stopping it for a few minutes he allowed it to go again. The preacher's eloquence flowed on, and the clock was stopped again, and then allowed to tick awhile. The preacher's eloquence still flowed on with great fervour, power, and beauty, and most eagerly was the clock stopped a third time, until at last the operator thought it desirable not to prolong the sermon, and therefore the clock was allowed to pursue its uninterrupted way. Some years afterwards, Dr. Brock informed Mr. James of what he had done. Mr. James laughed and said, "Well, I thought that clock never would go on at all."

However impetuous, and sometimes obstinate, Dr. Brock was deemed by his friends, yet there was no man more magnanimous and ready to acknowledge any mistake. On one occasion I found him highly incensed against what he conceived to be the wrong-doing of a friend. He told me that Mr. So-and-so had displeased him, and how he (Dr. Brock) had manifested his displeasure to him. After a pause I said, "Well, Doctor, will you allow me to say that I believe you are wrong yourself in that matter?" He was walking to and fro across the room, as his custom was on such occasions, and wheeling round, he said, "What! *I* am wrong!" "Yes, you are wrong." "You don't say so, my friend?" "Well," I said, handing him a document, "examine that for yourself." He took it and read it, and I observed that his countenance changed. "Now, in addition to that document allow me to state some facts which are within my own knowledge as to what Mr. So-and-so has done." Having finished my statement, the Doctor paced two or three times across the room, and then turning round once more exclaimed, "Then, my good friend, I see that I am wrong. I shall have to make a most ample apology to Mr. A. B." "Yes, I think that is your duty, and I think you will act honourably and magnanimously if you do so." "Well," said he, musing, "yes, I must go down and make that all right with him." On the following morning when I went into the study, Dr. Brock accosted me and said, "My good

friend, I went down yesterday and made it all right with Mr. A. B., and we are good friends again."

I remember a very striking instance, of his inability to pursue his daily duties, or his ministerial work, unless he knew that he was on good terms with all around him. Unhappily there had been some difficulty between himself and a greatly beloved family in the church. For two Sundays their pew was vacant, and in the meantime no interchange of courtesies had taken place between them. On the third Sunday the wife of the family appeared in her place. When Dr. Brock's eye fell on her he felt that he could not preach without first sending a word of reconciliation and kindness. Sitting down in the pulpit as the singing went on, he pencilled a brief, kind, Christian note, and beckoning the chapel keeper, sent it to her. "I then felt," he said to me, "that I could rise and preach. After the service," he went on to say, "she came into the vestry and we shook hands, and the whole matter was settled."

I never knew any minister who was more facile at finding passages in the Scripture. If a passage occurred to him in the course of a sermon which had not previously been present to his mind, he could turn aside from the line of thought he was pursuing, and rapidly referring to the pages of his pulpit Bible, he could almost instantly fix on the passage he desired to read. I remember, however, two instances in which his memory failed him in the most singular manner. When the chapel was closed for repairs, the Thursday morning service was conducted in the Lecture Hall, and on one occasion during the singing of the hymn before the sermon, I observed the Doctor in a state of great perturbation, turning over his Bible, evidently looking for a passage of Scripture which as evidently he could not find. Had I been sitting near him, as I did when the service was conducted in the chapel, I might have assisted him by going into the vestry and consulting the Concordance, which I had to do once or twice; but sitting as I did at a distance from him, I could only look on and wonder what was the matter.

When the time came for the announcement of his text, he was still engaged turning over his Bible in a state of discomfiture. Compelled to rise, he did so with reluctance, and then said, "My dear friends, I am sorry that I cannot find my text; I have been seeking for it, but somehow I cannot find it. I can tell you the words, but you will have to find them for yourselves. The words of the text, then, are, 'For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.'" He then delivered a very admirable sermon, and closed the service as usual with the benediction. The moment he had done so the reference occurred to him; he seized his Bible, opened it, and then calling after the people said, "*I have found my text*: it is here; you will find it in the 16th chapter of the 2nd Book of Chronicles, and the 9th verse," and down he sat.

The other instance was perhaps still more peculiar. As I sat with him one Monday morning, he said, "What did you preach from yesterday morning on Seven Dials?"—that being my open-air service. "Well," I said, "I preached from the words, 'Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he flieth also as a shadow, and continueth not.'" "Why," said he quickly, "that is not in the Bible; that is in the Prayer-book; it is not in the Bible at all." "I beg your pardon, Dr. Brock, it is in the Bible." "Oh! but my good friend, I tell you it is not; it is in the Prayer-book. You have made a mistake." "Well," I said, "I found it in the Bible." "No, no; here is my Concordance. Take it, and see if you have any such passage as that in the Bible." "It is not necessary at all for me to take the Concordance; please to hand me your own Bible, and I will show you the passage." He grasped hold of his Bible, pushed it towards me, and said, "Find it there if you can." I immediately turned to the 14th chapter of the Book of Job, and pointed to the first and second verses, which I read, and then placing the Bible before him, I said, "*There* it is, you see."

For a moment he was silent, and then said, "There it is, sure enough." How he came to make such a mistake I cannot explain, for of all the men I ever knew he was one of the readiest in making appropriate quotations and knowing precisely where to find them.

Dr. Brock never felt himself at liberty to identify himself with the temperance movement. He and I, however, made an honourable compact, in reference to my own freedom of speech on the temperance platform. Before I left Norwich to engage in my work in St. Giles', it was agreed between us that I should have entire liberty of speech and action as a total abstinence and an advocate of the temperance movement. Distinctly do I remember him saying to me, "The more people you can persuade to be teetotallers the better." I am under the impression that in later life he signed a petition in favour of the Permissive Bill. He also greatly rejoiced in the labours of his son, the Rev. William Brock, who had become a total abstinence, and whose usefulness his father thought had been extended by that step. He was rather fond now and then of playfully bantering me as to my abstinence. When a number of young men were having supper in the Lecture Hall, in connection with the opening meeting of the Young Men's Association, he looked down the table, and in his most playful manner said, "Mr. M'Cree, shall I have the pleasure of drinking your health?" "Yes," I said, "Dr. Brock, you may drink my health in water!" The Doctor said no more about my "health." I remember also that he went to hear Mr. J. B. Gough, with whose eloquence and earnestness he was highly delighted, and he urged all the young men whom he knew to go and hear that great temperance orator.

Prayerfulness was a daily characteristic of the pastor of Bloomsbury. He delighted in prayer. It was his joy and life. He did not, however, always like the frequency with which some brethren insisted, in season and out of season, on having what they called "a few

words of prayer." I remember him telling me how he had gone to preach for a well-known evangelist, and he said, "My dear friend, what do you think took place? I went down to his house to tea. When I got in he said, 'Well, brother Brock, I am glad to see you; let us have a few words of prayer.' We then had tea, after which he said, 'Now, brother, let us have a few words of prayer.' We then had some pleasant conversation, for you know he is a good man, and I said, 'Is it not time we were going to the chapel?' 'Yes, brother Brock, it is; but let us have a few words of prayer.' I then assumed my coat and hat, and got my umbrella, and my friend put on what he wished, and then came into the room and said, 'Well, brother Brock, we must go.' 'Yes,' I said, 'it is about time.' 'Yes, brother Brock; we will have a few words of prayer before we go.' So, said the Doctor, we had a few more words of prayer. We then left the house, and in due time entered the vestry. When I had put aside my hat, coat, and umbrella, he said, 'Well, dear brother Brock, I am glad to see you going to preach for me; let us have a few words of prayer.' He then said to me, "My good friend, between my going into his house and entering his pulpit, we had a few words of prayer *five times*."

It was delightful to hear the pastor of Bloomsbury offer prayer in the sick chamber. His supplications there were singularly tender, sympathetic, appropriate, earnest, and always brief. He never worried afflicted or invalid persons with long conversations, and still longer prayers. He believed in the *efficacy* of prayer. How often did he quote the words:

"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw;
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love;
Brings every blessing from above."

During the most serious illness I ever had when labouring in St. Giles', Dr. Brock came to see me. Most affectionate was he in everything he said, and most apostolic in the godly words which he spoke to me; but a passage in his prayer greatly impressed me at the time, and became noteworthy, in consequence of

something which happened afterwards. In the course of his prayer for me he said, "O Lord, bless the visits of his medical man to Thy servant. Give him wisdom, O Lord, to understand what to do. If the treatment administered to Thy servant by his medical man be not wise and right, O Lord, guide him that he may know what to do, and that Thy servant, by means of what is done, may be restored to health, and to his work in the Lord."

Shortly after Dr. Brock left me, my medical man came. Having examined my symptoms, he said, "Mr. M'Cree, I must change your medicine." The medicine was accordingly changed, and from that hour I began to get better.

Not in vain was it written: "The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins they shall be forgiven him."

CHAPTER X.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS.

SECOND SERIES.

THERE are ministers who have never cultivated the *art* of shaking hands with people. "My brother," said an aged minister to a friend of mind, at whose ordination he preached, "never shake hands with a poor man. Take off your hat to him, brother, if you like, in the street, but never shake hands with him. Maintain your dignity, brother!" Dr. Brock had great dignity, but he also had great humanity. He would shake hands with anybody and everybody, whether rich or poor, young or old. To use the expression of a young man to me, "Dr. Brock's heart always seemed to be in his hand. What a shake of the hand he would give you!"

One habit of his was greatly liked by the church, and did immense good from year to year. On the first Lord's-day in the month we had the Lord's Supper at three o'clock in the afternoon, and at four o'clock the service closed. For many years it was the practice of Dr. Brock to go to what was designated the "North Side of the Chapel" one month, and the "South Side" the next month, and, standing in a pew adjoining the door, he shook hands with every one who went out. His manner was full of tenderness. Most heartily did he shake hands with the people, and it was instructive to stand near and listen to him dropping a few kind words here and there to the friends as they passed out. You would hear him say to one, "How is your wife? I hope she is better"; to another, "How is the little child? Has he recovered from his sickness?" to another, "When did you last hear from your son in Australia? How is he? Is he doing well? Give him my kind love when you write

to him!" to another, "How are you, my friend? I have not seen you lately. I am glad to see you to-day—always glad to see you!" to another, "I am glad you have been able to come to the Lord's Supper. Do you feel quite recovered from your illness?" and to a father and mother who had lately seen their daughter married, "When did you hear from you daughter? Have they returned from their wedding tour? Give them my kind love and say I shall be glad to see them as soon as they return!" and to another who had lost her husband, "The Lord comfort you; peace be with you." "No one," he used to say, "can tell how much good has been done by my standing there and shaking hands with my people month after month—year in and year out." This was a true testimony. The shake of the hand from Dr. Brock, and the kind word he spoke as the people passed out, did much to keep the church together in that united and happy condition in which it was under his pastorate.

He was very careful of the reputation and position of those with whom he was associated in Christian work, and did not like tale-bearers. In the course of one of my lectures to the working-classes of St. Giles, I spoke to them about giving toys to their children, and advised them to see that the little ones had plenty of them. I did this because I found that toys were not plentiful in Seven Dials, and that it was a rare thing for a working man to buy a plaything for his child. To give point to what I said, I had filled my pockets with balls, tops, little dolls, and other playthings which I thought I could use on the occasion, and taking them out of my pockets one by one I threw them amongst the people, who caught them with great glee and were mightily amused. This was on a Tuesday evening, but a newspaper, in reporting the lecture, said it was on a Sunday evening! This serious mistake having appeared, the paper fell into the hands of a most excellent but rather meddlesome gentleman. Off he posted to Gower-street to show it to the pastor. When he had read it he returned the paper to the visitor, and curtly said, "I think, sir, you may trust Mr. M'Cree. You may be sure, sir, there is some

mistake about that. I am sure my friend would not do that on a Sunday evening, and you need not have come to me about any such matter."

Some interesting incidents took place in connection with the Thursday morning service at Bloomsbury Chapel. A lady of plain appearance attended there for some time, and acquired a great respect for the pastor. She did not, however, reside in London, but in Devonshire. One morning she made her appearance at the service, and afterwards informed the Doctor that she wished to give him £500 for the chapel and its institutions. At this he was both astonished and delighted, for so handsome a donation was then most opportune. She also offered him £100 for his own use, which he declined, but accepted it for the general work, giving me £50 for the work in St. Giles'. The other £50 he devoted, without doubt, to purposes apart from himself. After the interview was over, the Doctor and the lady came into the aisle, and a little to our surprise she said, "I want to go home to-day, and I wish to travel by a third-class train." I was, therefore, sent off to consult a railway time-table, and came back with the desired information. "You are sure," she said, "there is a third class by that train?" I said, "Yes, I am quite sure;" whereupon she went off to Paddington. When she had left the chapel, he turned to me, and said, "Did she say 'third class'?" "Yes, she did." An amused expression flitted over his face as he said, "And *that* is the way she can afford £600."

There were times when he felt extremely depressed after preaching. "Ah, my good friend," he said to me one Monday morning, "I had no feeling yesterday; I seemed to be without feeling of any kind. It is quite true I preached, but the words seemed to come through me like through an iron pipe."

The excellency of his preaching was not attained without many sore struggles. Speaking of his wrestlings and fears, he said, "I came home last night thoroughly depressed. I was so unhappy about my

sermon, and as I thought of my entire failure I retired to bed at once, and thought I could never preach again." It was only by cherishing a solemn conviction that the sufficiency was of God that he was able to pursue his arduous and noble ministry.

We were once together at the wedding breakfast of two of the members of the church at Bloomsbury, when the Doctor said, "I was at a wedding breakfast in Norwich, and a ministerial brother who did not always give a proper place to his H's, remarked to me, 'Brother Brock, when any of our young friends marry I advise them to begin their married life with a family *halter*.' 'Yes, brother,' said I to him, 'you mean a family altar.' 'Yes, brother Brock; yes, I mean as I say, a *family halter*.'" And as the Doctor told the story with one of his good-humoured smiles, he rubbed his face—a characteristic action of his—and then went on with other pleasant talk.

It was one of his personal peculiarities that he could not bear to see any of his MS. bent or creased. If he lent you a sermon to read he always solemnly enjoined you not to bend or soil it. A gentleman once asked the Doctor to lend him the MS. of a sermon which he had preached on the preceding Lord's-day. "Yes," said Dr. Brock, "I will; but mind, you must not roll it up, and take care that you do not lose it." The friend promised all that was required, and went off with the precious discourse, for it was one of the eloquent preacher's finest productions. Alas! when the borrower arrived at home, and looked under his coat, where he believed he had the MS. flat against his breast, *it was gone!* In a most perturbed state of mind did the Doctor tell me of the lost MS. He valued it; he wanted to use it again; he feared it would never be seen again. As was my wont, I cheered him the best way I could, and happily, after the parish of Bloomsbury had been flooded with bills advertising the missing sermon, it was restored to its delighted owner. I do not think he ever lent any more sermons.

For the fallen, guilty, and forlorn he had entire sympathy. He pitied and loved them, and was always

ready to do what he could to restore them to happiness and self-respect. I have known him visit prisons and sit down in the cell, and in the most Christian spirit seek to lead the sinner back to God. It was this characteristic which induced him to attend the first midnight meeting in 1860, at which the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel delivered the address, and Dr. Brock offered the first prayer. He also subsequently attended the midnight meetings in the Mission Hall, Moor Street, and delivered fatherly counsels to those who were present.

The death of the Prince Consort was a source of profound grief to Dr. Brock. On the Sunday morning when England was plunged into grief and lamentation, on account of the decease of that illustrious Prince, I entered the chapel as usual, and was suddenly summoned into the vestry. There I found the pastor, with Sir Morton Peto and the other deacons, in a state of consternation and sorrow. I did not then know that the Prince Consort was dead. Dr. Brock said, "Mr. M'Cree, the Prince is dead. I cannot preach; what shall we do?" I was so overcome by surprise and trouble that I had no answer. "Well," said the Doctor, "I will go into the pulpit, and you can go with me, and we shall see what can be done. We shall have a service, but I feel I cannot preach." After prayer by one of the deacons, he slowly ascended the pulpit, and took his seat. I followed him, and sat down quietly beside him. He then rose and poured forth one of the most affecting prayers I ever heard. All the affections and sympathy of his great soul seemed embodied in that prayer. "Undertake for us," he said, "O Lord, undertake for us, for we are oppressed." He then went on to refer to the national calamity which had happened, and to pray for the widowed Queen and her children in the most affecting words and tones. As he prayed those of the congregation who had not been previously made acquainted with the fact of the Prince Consort's death were made to know it, and the chapel became a place of weeping and lamentation.

For many weeks I do not know of a single service in

Bloomsbury in which Dr. Brock did not lovingly refer to the Queen in his prayers, and in his addresses on Monday evening prayer-meeting he made as frequent reference to her. "You do not know," he said, "the sorrow of the Queen. She has all the sorrow of a woman, and all the sorrow of a queen. Had she been a woman in ordinary life, the wife of a tradesman, a merchant, a physician, or a member of Parliament—had she even been a duchess, she might have sought for and obtained the sympathy of women of her own position in life; but who can speak to the Queen? who can comfort her as they might another widow? She has to sit alone in her sorrow. Her royal state prevents other women from offering to her their full sympathy and consolation. We should remember this in our prayers, that God may comfort her as neither man nor woman in this world can." And not only did he pray for the Queen himself, but he showed others how to pray. A more loyal man to the Queen than Dr. Brock it would have been impossible to find in the realm of Nonconformity, or in England itself. It is truly a great mistake to imagine that loyalty is to be found only on the bench of bishops, and within the borders of the Church of England.

All who heard Dr. Brock speak in public were aware, at once, that he had a very sonorous voice—an organ of speech second only to the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon's for great melody and power. It is not known, however, what great attention he had given, and to the end of his illustrious career did give, to his articulation. He could not bear mumblers. When I first came to Bloomsbury and St. Giles', he often said to me, "Speak up, my good friend; speak out. You have got plenty of voice; speak out." So I learned in time, especially when addressing open-air congregations in Seven Dials, to speak out. How the good Doctor cultivated his own vocal gifts may be inferred from what he once told me. "I came from Cambridge in a first-class carriage because I wanted to be alone. And, my good friend," he said, "I read the whole of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans on the way;" and, shaking his head, and giving

the collar of his coat a twitch, "I read it aloud. Yes, every word of it *aloud*." No wonder he knew how to read and speak!

Few persons, even of those who knew the pastor of Bloomsbury most intimately, were acquainted with the elaborate and laborious preparation which he made for his great public engagements. He read, thought, wrote, and prayed with consummate diligence and pains, in order that he might give to his hearers wisdom and not folly; wheat and not chaff; gold and not tinsel. For three months have I known him toil at the preparation of a lecture for the Young Men's Christian Association at Exeter Hall. That on Mercantile Morality cost him immense labour. So did those on Daniel and Paul. For a week before he delivered them, his anxiety was intense. He wrestled with God in prayer. He touched and re-touched sentences. He read and re-read paragraphs. He went down to the hall with the burden of the Lord upon him, and delivered his lecture, not as a contribution to popular amusement, but as an ambassador from God. It was interesting to observe him next morning. He was like a strong man who had run his race. He looked bright and relieved from an oppressive weight of ministerial responsibility, and he always spoke gratefully of any kindness from the chairman, secretary, committee, or friends who had, as he said, "rallied round him;" and he would say in a kind tone to me, "I was glad to see *you* there;" but most of all did he earnestly thank God for His all-sustaining help.

Singular incidents often took place at his house, No. 24, Gower Street, where, on Monday mornings, he held a regular *levée*. From half-past nine to one o'clock the knocker was seldom quiet, and a stream of visitors of all ranks and conditions kept pouring in and out, the good Doctor having a ready, hearty word for them all. One morning a very shabby-looking man called, and Mrs. Brock, who saw him enter, thought he was one of the "innumerable company" of Christian mendicants for whom her husband always seemed to have a spare half-crown in one of his waistcoat pockets. I never

saw him use a purse ; that he left to his excellent wife. When the visitor left, Mrs. Brock, smiling, said, "Well, what did he want from you?" "Nothing, my dear," replied the Doctor, smiling in his turn ; "nothing ; he came to give *me* something." "What has he given you?" "A hundred pounds, my dear—a hundred pounds!" "What for?" "Our work." "Who is he?" "Oh, I don't know ; he gave it to me, and went away." He was never seen again at Gower Street, for which I was sorry, for Dr. Brock generously gave me a handsome sum to spend in St. Giles', and I often wished the mysterious man would turn up again, for the sake of my poor folk there.

Often did I admire his manly patience with gain-sayers. Sitting with him one morning, a visitor came in, and found great fault with something the Doctor had said in the pulpit at Bloomsbury. Very insolently did he speak to his pastor, who listened gravely, and replied to him with great kindness. I, who knew how quick and sensitive his temper was, marvelled greatly at his child-like gentleness. When the visitor retired, I said, "I wonder you were able to bear that as you did." "Ah! my good friend," he responded softly, "I could not have done it if I had not lifted up my heart in prayer." That was the secret of the venerable Dr. Brock's goodness—he was a devout man, and walked humbly with his God.

He was very generous in the help he often extended to me during my work in St. Giles'. In the course of a severe winter, when I had expended every penny I possessed in assisting the poor, I did not make my usual call at his house on the Friday morning, I being too busy in St. Giles' to do so. Having spent about eight hours in visiting and relieving the destitute, I turned my weary footsteps towards his house. The night was dark and stormy as I crossed Bedford Square, and I felt very sad indeed, because I had left behind me a large number of people in a state of starvation. As I stood waiting to know whether he wanted my services in any way, he came from his study, and looking over the banister, in a very kindly tone, as though he knew of

my fatigued state, he said, "My dear friend, how are you?" I said, "I am in great trouble, Dr. Brock." "What is the matter?" "My poor people," I said, "are starving." For a moment or two he said nothing, and then in his softest tones he answered, "I will give you £10, my dear friend, for them." "Thank you," I said, "it is very kind of you ;" and I left his house, and went back into St. Giles' and made arrangements for expending the money.

It would be easy to amplify my recollections of the first pastor of Bloomsbury Chapel, but I need not do so. They may be all summed up in these words,—A MAN OF GOD.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHRISTIAN REPUBLIC.

NONCONFORMIST Churches are self-governed. Parliament cannot interfere with them, nor can aliens, strangers, legislators, peers, or prelates "exercise lordship" over them. The members, elders, deacons, and pastor rule absolutely in their own affairs. A Nonconformist church is, therefore, a CHRISTIAN REPUBLIC.

As the pastor and president of the Church of Christ assembling in Bloomsbury Chapel, Dr. Brock excelled in the wise and devout conduct of its important business. The church meeting was held once a month, on the Friday before the first Sunday, and here all the affairs of the church were transacted. Its members were deemed competent to deal with everything relating to doctrine, discipline, worship, meetings, collections, funds, missions, officers, and pastorate; in fact, a Nonconformist church is capable of taking cognisance of whatever relates to its own faith, order, and progress.

The programme of the church meeting was generally as follows:—Hymn, prayer, reading of the minutes, business, reports, suggestions (if any), prayer, and the Benediction. On December 9, 1869, Dr. Brock, speaking at the Testimonial Meeting, said: "We have had no less than 237 church meetings, at which I have presided, and most pleasant meetings have they been, the odd seven certainly including all at which anything unpleasant has occurred. We have had different judgments frequently, but we have, to a goodly extent, kept the unity of the spirit in the *bond of peace*."

The most memorable church meeting was that held on January 12, 1872, when the beloved pastor read his

letter of resignation, and which is so important in all its aspects that it is here given in full:—

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,—It has become incumbent on me to inform you of a determination at which I have arrived, in respect of my oversight of you in the Lord. It grieves me to give you the information, and I have no doubt that you will receive it with regret. I have, however, no alternative. You ought to know it, and to know it immediately from myself. The importance attaching to it is mutual, and the need will pertain to us in common of bearing one another's burden, in fulfilment of the law of Christ.

"It is now just forty years ago that I entered on my work as a minister of Jesus Christ. For sixteen years I was in the service of the Church in Norwich, and for three-and-twenty years have I been in your service here.

"By the good hand of God upon me, the service to which I have been called has been manifold and arduous. It was so in my Norwich life. You yourselves being judges, it has been not less so in my London life.

"Most imperfectly, as I know full well, have the duties, both pastoral and ministerial, been performed; but through successive years, and under varying circumstances, they have had to be performed; and to the praise of our gracious Lord do I record it, that after one or another manner they have been performed.

"Other duties besides have been required from me. The minister of Bloomsbury Chapel has been expected to take his share in the evangelical work of the metropolis and of the provinces; and you have always been generously ready that he should do so, as far as such special work might be within his power. It has pleased rather than vexed you, that your pastor should represent you in the wider service of our generation, according to the will of God. He has had your hearty goodwill when he has gone to help the brethren of different denominations in the country, and when, as new occasions have arisen, he has assisted in providing religious worship and instruction in London theatres and halls. By your sympathy and prayers you have been his fellow-

workers unto the kingdom of God, in season and out of season.

"To go on working with you and for you as I have been doing would be the greatest pleasure of my life; particularly as, in several instances, your sons and your daughters are giving promise of their fellowship with you in consecration to the cause of Christ.

"But all human working tendeth inevitably to its end and to go on indefinitely is beyond our power.

"Natural strength abateth. Heart and flesh fail. Infirmities gradually gain the upper hand. Whatever the desire to discharge the recurring obligations, the capacity for discharging them surely and imperceptibly decays.

"Of this liability I have become personally conscious; not to an extent, as I thankfully acknowledge, which habitually enfeebles me; but to an extent that frequently distresses me, and makes me anxious about the future.

"It is in the nature of the infirmities to which I refer to increase somewhat rapidly; and, strive against them as a man may, it will not be long before their disadvantageous influence must be confessed by the kindest of his friends. That he is as willing as he ever was to discharge every duty of his position, they may be able conscientiously to maintain; but, when questions are asked respecting his power for discharging it, it is felt to be the safest thing quietly to hold their peace.

"To such an issue I am sure we are coming at Bloomsbury Chapel. Inability to do what its minister must needs do, is growing upon me, and it is, in my judgment, a question but of two or three years whether I could occupy my post at all, except to the detriment of the great interests which are involved.

"This being my full persuasion, I have come to the determination to relinquish my post; and I hereby notify to you that it will be relinquished in September of the present year. It happens that my residence in this neighbourhood will terminate then, which circumstance, in connection with some matters of grave domestic interest, has led me to fix on Michaelmas as the time for bidding you farewell.

"I am quite prepared to hear some of you remonstrate. Not at all astonished shall I be to hear of proposals to secure assistance for me in the ministry and the pastorate. From my long acquaintance with your affectionate attachment to me, I can believe that some of you will move that my resignation be not accepted.

"Let me, as kindly as I can, foreclose all that. I have not come to my determination without much thoughtfulness and prayer, and, as the result of the thoughtfulness and prayer, I must abide by it. Believe me that I deem it to be beyond recall.

"Important duties will by and by devolve on you in respect to my successor; but the God of all grace will be your refuge and your strength.

"Your procedure in that matter will obviously be facilitated by my retirement; and to a sphere of London labour, which he can occupy as his own entirely, some well-furnished man of God may be moved to come forthwith. We have, mercifully, no bad repute, either in the world or among the Churches. Be my successor who he may, I shall be able to assure him that I leave him no root of bitterness of which he need to be afraid; whilst I shall rejoice to leave him many a healthy and vigorous germ from which it may be his privilege to educe fruit even unto a hundredfold.

"Great changes have, no doubt, come upon the circumstances of our metropolitan congregations generally; but taking them well into the account, a good congregation may be looked for at Bloomsbury Chapel still. There is a population within easy reach of it, from which by a man well adapted to the position, it might be filled as heretofore. At any rate, I have great hope that we may anticipate for the dear old place a future wherein we shall have occasion to rejoice. He who made me the minister by whom you have believed, is able to make some other man a minister by whom your children and neighbours will believe. You are not straitened in God.

"Bear with me in the expression of my desire that for the few months which remain to us of active fellowship in the Church, we shall turn them to the best possible

account. Let me depend upon you that there shall be no unnecessary absence either from the Sunday or the week-day services; no diminution of contributions to our various institutions; no giving up of any work of faith; no ceasing to pray that these last days may prove to be our best. We have yet time enough together to stir up one another's minds by way of remembrance, to stimulate one another's zeal, and to quicken one another's spiritual mindedness. We have time enough, besides, with God's awaiting help, to awaken many who are dead in trespasses and sins; time enough, moreover, to baptize those who ought to be baptized, and to gather unto the Table of the Lord those whom He shall summon there to commemorate His death. We may, indeed, provoke one another unto love and good works after such a manner, that we shall part, as we have so often met, in the fulness of the blessing of Christ. Let us all do the best we can within the time; leaving nothing that is within our power undone, if, peradventure, God may rain down upon us the showers of His blessing, and bring our Church relationships to a close amidst some special manifestations of the exceeding riches of His grace. I shall be looking both for times of refreshing and for times of conversion from the presence of the Lord. Faith have I to believe that He will make His strength perfect in our weakness, on purpose that congratulations may accompany and alleviate our regret.

"You may ask me whither I am going? My answer is, that I do not know. Not more ignorant was Abraham of his destination than I am of mine."

"Should I find, after I have rested a while, that I am equal to some lighter service, and should the opportunity for such service be open to me, I trust that you will hear of your old friend that he is at work again.

"All that, however, I leave entirely; my wish being a very strong one that the period of my ministry and pastorate at Bloomsbury may have a definite and distinct end. It had what to me was a memorable commencement; my heart's desire is that it may have a corresponding close. From the hands of Him who is head over all things to the Church I think I received both the

ministry and the pastorate; and at His feet I hope gratefully and reverently to lay them down.

"Many thanks to you for your much kindness to me and mine. It has assumed different forms, and lasted on from the first day until now. We are all your debtors; myself, my wife, and my four children. Long enumeration of your acts of generosity would be easy, but I forbear, referring only, as instances, to your various kindnesses when three of my children were married; to your sympathy when, one after another, they were all added unto the Church; to your co-operation with us when my eldest son entered upon the ministry of the Gospel; to your liberal arrangements for my most pleasant visit to the United States; and to your considerate and congenial celebration of our Terseptenary, three years ago. A memorable consummation, that!

"Go where we may, we shall carry with us the deepest sense of your faithful love. In your society, and through your influence, the lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places, and we have had a goodly heritage.

"And now, my dear friends, I commend you to God and to the word of His Grace, who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of Peace shall be with you.

"I am,

"Your faithfully affectionate Pastor,

"WILLIAM BROCK."

This letter, so apostolic in its contents and spirit, did honour to the pastor, to the church, and to Non-conformity. We heard it with hearts surcharged with emotion, and felt that we were, in due time, to lose a true friend, a wise counsellor, an earnest teacher of righteousness, and one whose place it would be most difficult to supply. With sorrowful hearts did we depart for our homes, knowing that our Elijah was to be taken from us.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SEPARATION OF PASTOR AND
PEOPLE.

MEMORABLE in the history of Bloomsbury Chapel was the month of September, 1872. The time had come for the pastor to leave the people he had so faithfully served, and by whom he was so profoundly esteemed. To add to his "labour and sorrow," his excellent and tenderly beloved wife, Mary, had died at Buxton on the 20th, aged 66 years, and been buried in Abney Park Cemetery. I shall never forget seeing Dr. Brock leave her grave, walk away a few yards, and then return with faltering step to give one more long, wistful look at her coffin. On Lord's Day, September 29th, he slowly ascended the pulpit to preach his valedictory sermons. Knowing what I did of his physical infirmities and heart-breaking grief;—that his house was desolate, and that he was borne down by a sense of ministerial responsibility, I marvelled at the power and literary finish of his discourses. Before him at the morning service was gathered a crowded audience, comprising ministers, deacons, old friends, many grey-headed men, literary gentlemen from the daily journals, and not a few members of the Church of England. With solemn voice the preacher announced Doddridge's noble hymn—

"With what delight I raise mine eyes,
And view the courts where Jesus dwells;
Jesus who reigns beyond the skies,
And here below His grace reveals."

And we also sang—

"For ever with the Lord!
Amen, so let it be;
Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality."

As the bereaved husband read the eleventh chapter of the Gospel by John, few eyes were without tears as he rehearsed the blessed words of Christ:—"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha said unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." The text was the same as he selected for his first sermon, namely, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only." The sermon was very earnest and pathetic, and contained the following passage on

HIS TEXT-BOOK.

"In a word, whether for doctrine, or for reproof, or for correction, or for instruction, the New Testament has been my text-book and my commentary at the same time. In becoming all things to all men that by any means I might save some, to the good tidings of great joy I have systematically adhered. Steadfastly as I have aimed to take advantage of events as they transpired: to turn to my account the incidents which have come within my knowledge; to lay under contribution the discoveries of science; to use, for my evangelic purposes, whatever I could gather up from the universe, whether of matter or of mind; yet to my evangelic purposes I have persistently and permanently cleaved. 'I will make mention,' has been my language before the Lord a thousand times, 'I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only.'"

Rarely has a more impressive service been held than that of the evening. A mighty crowd came, filled with

holy emotion and veneration for the afflicted and departing pastor, who rose in his pulpit and read the words of his favourite hymn—

“Rock of ages! cleft for me!
Let me hide myself in Thee!”

But as many glanced at Mrs. Brock's vacant seat, and thought of her long illness, her death away from home, and her grave in Abney Park Cemetery, they could not syllable the words—

“While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne—
Rock of ages, shelter me!
Let me hide myself in Thee!”

More gladsome were their hearts when they sang—

“There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.”

The text was taken from 2 Thess. i. 10, “Because our testimony among you was believed.” Very powerful were the appeals in the sermon, and great the religious feeling of the congregation, which culminated into intensity as the preacher closed with these

WARNING WORDS.

“There are instances in which my testimony here has not been believed. Never have some of you given earnest heed to my message about the salvation that is in Christ. You have treated me with respect enough; but my Divine Master you have treated with singular disrespect. *What then?* This—you non-believers in the testimony that I have borne will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power. No talk now, I pray you, about the duration of future punishment; as if that were the great question to be settled before you need care about punishment at all. Never was delusion of the Devil more crafty than his delusion in this direction. Let alone, I pray you, the duration of the punish-

ment just now, at all events, and tremble at the punishment itself. Paul declares it to be destruction from the presence of the Lord—destruction, moreover, from the glory of the Lord's power. Punish any man with that, and he will need no other hell! He will have enough of it, and to spare!

“In Christ's stead, my brethren, do I beseech you to tremble at the prospect of such punishment. In Christ's stead do I beseech you to seek your own deliverance from the punishment. In Christ's stead do I beseech you to believe this, my last testimony among you, that I may not, in that day, be found to have been the savour of death unto death to you, but rather the savour of life unto life. Imperfectly, indeed, have I done it: but I have watched for your souls as one who must give account, that I may do it with joy and not with grief. To save myself and them that hear me has been the object of a ministry which has herewith reached its end.—Amen!”

Amen! repeated many lips and hearts. The public ministry of the first pastor of Bloomsbury Chapel was over, and *the flock had lost their shepherd.*

On Monday evening, the 30th, a truly representative gathering took place in Bloomsbury Chapel. There were present Dr. Brock and the deacons of the church, Messrs. James Benham, Henry Woodall, T. P. Price, John Benham, and Frederick Brough; the Rev. W. Brock, jun., and Revs. J. Stoughton, D.D., J. Angus, D.D., James Culross, D.D., of Highbury; W. Landels, D.D., of Regent's Park; J. C. Harrison, of Camden Town; W. G. Lewis, of Notting Hill; S. H. Booth, of Holloway; W. Howieson, of Walworth; James Spurgeon, of Croydon; J. Clifford, M.A., LL.B., J. Cumming, D.D., of the Scotch Church, and several other pastors. Praise, prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures prepared the way for the presentation of an annuity of £200 per annum to the beloved retiring pastor, and of peculiarly tender and appropriate words from chosen friends.

Dr. Stoughton said that “From the very beginning

of his career Dr. Brock had been a man of large bright promise and hope. He could recall the excitement produced at the beginning of his ministry, and that among men who had not only loving hearts but who were intelligent and hard-headed, and who prophesied that there was a great and glorious work to be done by him. That work, by the grace of God, he has done."

Sir S. Morton Peto, Bart., spoke touchingly of Mrs. Brock:—

"Those who had been associated with Dr. Brock, as he had been for nearly a quarter of a century, knew what he had lost within the last few days. He (Sir Morton) could hardly trust himself to refer to it. In their social meetings as a church, in the room below, in past days, he had often said that a pastor more happily situated at home than their friend he did not know. They were aware how, in the various societies connected with the church—the mother's meeting, Dorcas meeting, and every agency of the kind—her aid had been invaluable; and how, added to this, there had been that quiet influence in the life, which made her a living epistle, known and felt by all who came in contact with her. The loss was all the more striking from the fact that Mrs. Brock had been taken just now; but there was abundant consolation in their knowledge that she had gone to be for ever with the Lord, and would, with all who had turned many to righteousness, shine as the stars for ever and ever."

After Mr. James Benham had presented the annuity in an address which evinced good taste and deep affection for his pastor, the Doctor rose, and with slow, loving, pathetic words, and with a ray of his old humour breaking out at the end, he said:—

"It is a matter of surprise to me that I should be treated as I am to-night. I feel I never have deserved it. I never have done a great thing. I may say that I never tried. Dr. Leifchild used to say that nobody could say that he had 'surpassed himself,' for he always

tried to do his best. So it has been with me. I have just done the things that were to be done as they came to hand from day to day. From the elders and deacons I have had all sorts of co-operation; and it would have been a wonder if I had not done some good with so many helpers. I hope that I don't go into indolence and inactivity. It is not as if I were tired or ashamed of the Gospel. But my infirmities, which have caused me to take this step, are no fiction, but a profound reality. I have had letters asking me why should not I 'die in harness?' To them I have replied, that I preferred not to do so, *because the church would probably die with me.*"

We then sang the Doxology, and Dr. Brock prayed, and we departed from the sanctuary, talking of memories of old days now vanished away.

One more public service remained,—

THE LAST THURSDAY MORNING SERVICE.

This was held on the Thursday following the Presentation and Valedictory Meeting, and it is thus vividly described in the *Memorial Volume*:—

"From the outset of his ministry at Bloomsbury, the week-day morning service, first held on Friday, and afterwards changed to Thursday, has been a favourite one with Dr. Brock. It was an opportunity of worship and instruction to many to whom the hour was convenient, and who felt the very quietness of the service peculiarly profitable. The very first sermon from the pastor himself in the new chapel was preached on the Friday forenoon next after the opening services, from the text, Psalm lxxi. 16, which had also formed the basis of one of the concluding discourses. It seemed, therefore, most suitable that Thursday morning should come to be announced as the time for the last public service of the present series.

"The lower part of the chapel was completely filled at the time of service. Once more the familiar figure stepped to the desk, where he had so often stood; once

more the familiar voice was heard in reading and in prayer; and then followed the morning's meditation, based upon the words of 1 Cor. xi. 26, 'For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.'

"It was a fit subject for a closing ministry. The preacher led his hearers to the historical fact of Christ's death; he unfolded its sacrificial character and its atoning efficacy, and proclaimed its availableness as a basis of reconciliation for all men with their God. The prophetic phrase, 'till He come,' pointed the thoughts onward to the end of all labours, and the victory over all enemies; and so conducted to the closing words of farewell and benediction. The Communion of the Lord's Supper followed; and the larger part of those present participated in the ordinance. Ministers and members of other churches united with their brethren in once more 'eating this bread and drinking this cup.' The common thanksgivings were led by the Rev. G. W. M'Cree and Mr. James Benham; and the service was concluded with the hymn, whose closing lines fell with more than usual pathos on the heart:—

*"And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And mind and memory flee,
When Thou shalt in Thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me."*

On the evening of the Friday the last church meeting was held at which Dr. Brock would preside as pastor. Into the details of that meeting it would be superfluous to enter. The end came. Two brethren offered prayer, and then the voice of the pastor, tremulous with emotion, gave out the words:—

*"Come, Christian brethren, ere we part,
Join every voice and every heart:
One solemn hymn to God we raise,
One final song of grateful praise."*

*"Christians, we here may meet no more,
But there is yet a happier shore;
And there, released from toil and pain,
Brethren, we all shall meet again."*

*"Now, to our God, the Three in One,
Be everlasting glory done;
Rehearse, ye saints, the sound again—
Let every voice repeat Amen!"*

Prayer and the Benediction followed, and then Dr. Brock went to the door, and shook hands with all, "after the old manner," and the bonds of pastor and people were thus dissolved in love and peace; but not without hope of a reunion in the "House not made with hands, ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN.

THE sunset had come: the battle was to cease: the pulpit was to be vacated for the last time. The final work of Dr. Brock's life as a preacher is thus described by the Rev. F. Trestrail, of Newport, in the Isle of Wight, in a letter dated November 25th, 1875:—

“As the services in which Dr. Brock took the chief part on the 17th ult. were the last public services of his useful and active life, it will be interesting to your readers to know something of the effect produced by them, not only on the minds of the members of the Castlehold Church, but generally in the town. The attendance at all the services was very large, and not only were the people deeply attentive, but, being, perhaps, above the average in intelligence, they thoroughly appreciated what they heard. Preacher and congregation were in mutual sympathy. I copy, therefore, the following remarks from the *Hampshire Independent* of the 17th inst., a very ably-conducted paper, and having a very large circulation in the island and the county:—

“Those of our readers who attended the services at Castlehold Baptist Church on Sunday, October 17, when the Rev. Dr. Brock was the preacher, and who also heard the address he delivered on the following Monday evening, must have experienced a painful shock when they learnt that the eminent Baptist divine had passed away, his death taking place at St. Leonard's on Saturday last. We believe that the last public meeting which Dr. Brock addressed was the one held in Castlehold on Monday evening, October 18, and as now a special, though melancholy, interest attaches to the last words he uttered on that occasion, we reprint them from the *In-*

dependent of October 20:—“I am not very well,” said the rev. Doctor, “but I have done the best I could, and if I have left upon any young heart an aspiration after life and immortality and upon any older heart the consolations which are neither few nor small, I shall go away right thankful to Him who sent me here; ours will be the benefit, and His shall be the praise.”

“To myself this visit of my departed friend will always be one of peculiar interest. The church was most cordial in giving the invitation, for though he had only in their recollection, and in that merely of a few, visited the town twice, the memory of his discourses, and of a lecture which he delivered on ‘Commercial Morality,’ had not wholly passed away. But in pressing the request on the ground of our almost lifelong friendship, for I first knew him as a student in Stepney College, I well remember saying in my letter, ‘At our advanced age, it may be the last opportunity which you may have of doing a kindness to your old friend.’ And so it has proved.

“Dr. Brock was suffering from a cold when he came, but by taking good care of him, and preventing all unnecessary fatigue, he was enabled to preach with comfort to himself and very much to our edification. The morning's sermon, on the affecting incident of the woman breaking the alabaster vase of precious ointment over our Saviour's head, was full of tenderness, while his interpretation of our Lord's rebuke—‘Why trouble ye the woman; let her alone’—was beautiful exceedingly, and pervaded by a pathos which moved all present. I have since heard many references to that discourse, and without doubt shall hear more, now that the preacher's voice is still in the silence of death.

“The sermon in the evening was from the words, ‘Life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel.’ I never heard my friend to greater advantage. The doctrines were so admirably explained and enforced, and the whole argument was sustained by quotations from the Scripture, selected with such remarkable judgment, that

one felt that the case was complete, and that the preacher 'spoke as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.' A mournful, but touching interest will long continue to gather round the recollection of these services, and perhaps the unexpected decease of the preacher may deepen the impressions which his earnest and emphatic utterances produced, while to myself, several years his senior, they will be invested with peculiar and touching significance. My friend left us in better health than when he came. He spoke of his visit as one of great enjoyment to himself, and he more than once referred with marked pleasure to the tokens of spiritual life which existed among us. He had a few hours' intercourse with some old London friends whom he had baptized in their youth, and whom he had not seen for a long time. I parted from him in the hope that his valuable life would be prolonged for some years to render to our churches such effective services as he had rendered to us, and little thought I should see his face no more."

Presuming the evening sermon to have been the same he delivered shortly before in Bristol, then these were Dr. Brock's

LAST WORDS AS A PREACHER :

"By this book you may get to know what those are doing who are gone to be with Christ. 'Father, I will that those whom you have given Me may be with Me that they may know My glory.' 'There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written down in the Lamb's book of life.' 'Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of them shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' These things are mightily instructive to us. Existence with Christ, service with Christ, assimilation

to Christ, approximation world without end. The bitterness of death has gone from many. They see not through a glass darkly. They are the spirits of the just made perfect. They know not the penitential psalm now. They have no need of it. No adversary has been able to keep them out; sorrow and sighing have fled away. They have no one to sorrow for or to grieve. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,

"Once they were mourners here below,
And poured out cries and tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears."

No more mourners now—sorrow and sighing have fled away. They are ministers to do God's pleasure. Bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, they are changed and made like unto Him. The Spirit of the Lord shall work upon thee, we are told, and this we desire above the things of this earth. Their powers have found useful employ; our inward foes shall all be subdued. No wonder John was told to write, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.' They are the participators of our Lord's exemption from death. Lastly, the promise is the bestowment of life and immortality. I tell you of the best that I can. I do not say look at those streets of gold, over which nothing that is unclean can ever pass. I do not say look at those gates of gold never to be opened by any invading army; look to those walls of precious stones, never to be scaled by the enemy; look at the River of Life, which no ripple can disturb. I am not here to say look on these things only. I say look at those streets, at those gates, at those walls, at the river, and then I tell you they may be yours—yours, every jot and tittle. He giveth eternal life. None shall perish. He bids me say, come up, and you may have it all for the taking. Immortality shall be yours, fulness and blessedness, the great unfathomable abyss shall be yours, and all without money, and without price. His death will avail for you, His intercession will avail for you, and remember that nothing else will avail. Treaties cannot

procure for you immortality. But, I say, look here, for to this end was Christ born, and for this end did He come into the world that He might bear witness of the truth. He has spoken by the Son, and whosoever believeth the Son shall have everlasting life. The Father's will against all obstacles and difficulties; the Father's will against ourselves. Given, the Father's will, and if you believe, you *must* be saved. It is from the lips of Him who cannot lie; then believe, I pray you. Oh, for a life like this. Become to-night inheritors of this, so that, living or dying, you may be the Lord's. How? By believing His message. Here is my heart, take and seal it, Lord. Death is abolished, so that you need not perish, and you may have joy unspeakable and full of glory."

The first intimations of the approaching sunset of his life were given when Dr. Brock had returned from the Isle of Wight to the house of his son, Mr. George E. Brock, of Croydon. He there felt indisposed and depressed, and as soon as possible departed for Orwell House, St. Leonard's. There he became worse, and, at length, his medical attendant suggested that his sons and daughter should be sent for, and they hastened to the chamber where he lay sick unto death. Most tenderly did they watch and nurse their venerable father, but they could not shield him from the piercing shaft of the Dark Angel. In an interval of consciousness, on Wednesday the 10th, the twenty-third Psalm was repeated in his hearing, to which he responded Amen. On Saturday morning, November 13th, the sleep of life was changed into the sleep of death, and the first pastor of Bloomsbury Chapel ceased from his labours.

The mortal remains of the beloved deceased were brought from St. Leonard's to the residence of his son, the Rev. W. Brock, at Hampstead, from whence, on Wednesday, November 17th, they were conveyed to Abney Park Cemetery, to be interred in the same grave where, in days of sorrow, he had buried his wife and daughter to await the coming of the Lord. The funeral,

in accordance with Dr. Brock's imperative instructions in his will, was strictly private. There was no spectacle, procession, or public service except that conducted at the grave by the Rev. George Gould, of St. Mary's, Norwich. The day was gloomy, and heavy rain fell from heaven as the coffin was slowly borne to its resting place, followed by the Rev. W. Brock, Mr. George E. Brock, Mr. R. Pattison, Mr. Dermer, Sir Morton Peto, Bart., the Rev. W. B. Bliss, and Messrs. Augustus, James, and John Benham, Frederick Brough, John Carter, James Harvey, R. T. Hogg, Samuel Mart, S. R. Pattison, T. P. Price, Henry Stuart, W. R. Stuck, Henry Sturt, and Henry Woodall, past and present deacons of Bloomsbury Chapel. The Rev. J. P. Chown could not be present in consequence of an engagement to open a new chapel at Leeds, but a large crowd of pastors, deacons, representatives of religious societies, and other Christian friends were voluntarily present to testify their esteem and love for the great man who had fallen in Israel. When the coffin had been lowered into its appointed place, and trembling hands had cast white flowers upon it, the Rev. George Gould, of St. Mary's, Norwich, spoke the following simple but appropriate words:—

"And now, my friends, in the faith of Christ, who is 'the resurrection and the life' of His people, we have laid the body of our dear brother in Christ in this grave, expecting the resurrection of the just, when that which is 'sown in corruption' shall be 'raised in incorruption,' and that which is 'sown in weakness' shall be 'raised in power.' May that God who gave him grace during his life to live as the Gospel of Christ enable us to hold fast the beginning of our confidence in Christ steadfastly unto the end, and enable those of you who have not yet laid hold of the life that is set before you in the Gospel to fly for refuge to Christ, the Saviour of our souls."

A brief prayer by Mr. Gould followed, the Benediction was pronounced, and the unadorned ceremony was over, the mourners retired, and the deeply affected spectators

pressed to the edge of the grave to gaze with tearful eyes on the coffin, which bore the inscription :—

WILLIAM BROCK, D.D.,

Died Nov. 13, 1875.

AGED SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS.

In reference to his father's illness and burial, the Rev. W. Brock made the following interesting statements through the organs of the Baptist denomination :—

"The illness had been coming on for two or three weeks, but came to a sudden crisis on Tuesday, the 9th. I was summoned next day, and of course stayed with him till the end. The disease was capillary bronchitis, with a break down of the whole system, leaving it powerless to cope with the attack. There was no acute suffering, and the end was quite quiet. He fell asleep at 1.30 on Saturday morning." "I am glad also of the opportunity to explain that the private character of the funeral is not at the mere dictate of family preference, which might justly be expected to give way before the general desire for a more public service. We fully appreciate the friendly spirit which has suggested such a wish, and given it most emphatic expression. But we are acting in obedience to the distinct injunction of my father's will, which we do not feel at liberty to set aside."

The death of Dr. Brock constrains us to review the long succession of distinguished men and ministers with whom he was associated for so many years, and the startling deaths of ministers which have recently produced such solemn thoughts and searchings of heart throughout the denomination to which he belonged. "Your fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever? Where are the men who were his fellow-students at Derby? All dead. Where are the men who studied with him at Stepney? Few of them are left to labour for God. Where are Joseph John Gurney and John Alexander, with whom he associated in Norwich? They have passed away, and shine as the stars for ever."

Where are the two mighty men of God who preached at the opening of Bloomsbury Chapel—the Rev. John Harris, Doctor of Divinity, and the Rev. Benjamin Godwin, Doctor of Divinity? Both of them dead. Where are the ministers who sat at the table with him at the banquet when the chapel was opened? I believe scarcely one of them is left. Where is John Leifchild? Where is James Sherman? Where is Dr. Cox? Where is Dr. Archer? Where is Baptist Noel? Where are Norman McLeod and the eloquent Thomas Guthrie? Where is James Mursell, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne? Where is Charles Vince? Where are the learned Dr. Davies and the excellent Dr. Brewer? Where is Mr. Wilshire, of Derby? Where is Dr. Prichard, of Wales? Where is William Best, of Watford? And where is William Brock himself?" "These all died in faith," and concerning them all we may surely say with John Bunyan about Christian and Hopeful, "Now I saw in my dream that these men went in at the gate, and, lo! as they entered, they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harp and crowns, and gave them to them;—the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour. Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, 'ENTER YE INTO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD.' I also heard the men themselves that they sang with a loud voice, saying, 'BLESSING, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, AND POWER, BE UNTO HIM THAT SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB FOR EVER AND EVER.' Now just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the city shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold, and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps to sing praises withal. There were also of them that had wings, and they answered one another without intermission, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!' and after that they shut up the gates: which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TRIBUTES OF HIS BRETHREN.

WHEN a great soldier falls in the field, his comrades honour him in his burial with solemn music and military salutes, and when Dr. Brock died there were many pulpits where he was mentioned with loving tones, eloquent words, and fervent praise, such as Christian men accord to one who had fought the good fight and bravely fulfilled his course.

Few men ever excelled Dr. Brock in their willingness to aid other pastors and churches. He did not dwell alone in isolation and cold indifference. He delighted to preach for his brethren, and to help them in the work of the Lord. Whether he had to preach in a vast edifice like the Metropolitan Tabernacle, or in some little Bethel, up a narrow street, and far away from popular observation, he was ever ready to deliver one of his massive discourses, and do his best to cheer the heart of a brother in Christ. His *honorarium* was sometimes of the scantiest sort. He once left Bloomsbury Chapel, on a Thursday morning, and hastened off in a cab to a famous new chapel, to attend the close of the inauguration service, and then returned home to dine. In the evening he went again, and delivered a powerful discourse. As he was proceeding to his cab afterwards, he was presented by one of the wealthy deacons with half-a-sovereign! He laughed as he told me the munificent gift, which, I believe, he kindly gave to a poor widow. In the light of such labours for others it is not surprising that he was so highly beloved by his brother ministers.

The Rev. J. P. Chown, of Bloomsbury Chapel, in his admirable funeral sermon, said:—"They glorified God in

their dear brother because of the ministry in which he had been engaged for so many years. How many there were now gone before who glorified God in him, to whom his ministry had been blessed, and whom he had brought to seek the love of God! What numbers there were in different parts of our own land and in foreign climes who glorified God in their dear friend! They glorified God in him because of the manifold blessings that had flown from his ministry; partly on account of the special gifts and powers that were granted to him; partly on account of the central and commanding eminence from which he was permitted to engage in the work of the ministry; partly on account of the circumstances under which, by God's gracious providence, the work was carried on; partly because of the band of faithful and devoted friends who cheered him by their love and encouraged him by their prayers; and partly on account of the social surroundings and Christian associations that supported him. They glorified God because the ministry of their friend was long continued; even as to the mere number of the years which it occupied it was so; but in the more becoming computation by which they ought to regard it, looking at its working power and at the results which it had achieved, it was seen to be still more so. If the time had been twice as long and the work no greater, it would still have furnished abundant cause for thankfulness. He questioned whether there had been in the last half-century or even century in connection with their denomination so much of sanctified Christian enterprise and sacred power applied for the furtherance and development of the principles they held dear as by God's blessing was accomplished by the deceased pastor and his people in the twenty-four years of his ministry. Looking back upon that pastorate, upon the time when it began, and the state of the churches, it furnished a theme for devout thanks to God for the work then originated."

The Rev. Dr. Landels, in a discourse delivered in Regent's Park Chapel, very appropriately referred to

the devout spirit of his friend: "This was seen in his manner of conducting worship generally, and especially in his prayers. So distinguished was he in this respect, that the devotional exercises at Bloomsbury were often felt to be the most profitable part of the service. It was a part to which properly he attached great importance, and took pains to have it conducted in an orderly manner, and to impart to it such freshness and variety as made it profitable to all. But no amount of attention and skill in the manner of conducting it would have rendered it such an efficient means of grace, but for the devout spirit of the leader. His prayers were often singularly felicitous. If we may use a common expression, we should say that he was singularly gifted in prayer. Often his hearers felt how well his petitions gave expression to their feelings and their wants, and how soothing, and subduing, and elevating was their influence as they accompanied him to the throne of grace. Two or three prayers I have heard him offer, of which I can truly say, that prayers more comprehensive in their range, more devout and reverent in tone, more humble and earnest in their breathings, more moving and quickening in their influence, I never heard from human lips. If he had faults no one could confess them before God with deeper contrition. If he was strong, and could deal sturdy blows against error and sin, no man, as he knelt by the bedside, could enter with greater tenderness and sympathy into the case of the afflicted, or present petitions which were better fitted to bring them consolation. He prayed in public like one who was familiar with prayer in private, and was accustomed in his approaches to God to give free expression to his heart's deepest feelings; and praying as he felt himself, his prayers being the echo of his own experience, he was enabled to meet the varying phases of the spiritual life of his people. And to the fulness, and to the fervour, and to the faith of his prayers, was owing in a great measure the salutary influence he was enabled to exert, and the blessing which attended his ministry from its commencement to its close."

In a discourse delivered by the Rev. W. Barker, of Hastings, we find some extremely interesting reminiscences of Dr. Brock:—

"He was a man who had many high friends, but in all the allurements of that social position he never swerved from what he considered the principles and elements of his faith and church. Bishop Stanley, the father of Dean Stanley, who was then Bishop of Norwich, was his friend. Mr. Brock went to dine with the bishop frequently, and on one occasion the bishop playfully asked him for a short outline of the history of his (the Baptist) Church. Mr. Brock rose from his chair and reached out for a Bible. He began to read the 'Acts of the Apostles,' amid the smiles of the company. This showed the unflinching character of the man, which shone out in all he did. He was never an eloquent preacher, but always a powerful one. His sermons were always carefully prepared, and many were watered with his tears. He was indeed no ordinary man. Early brought to Christ—never forget that point—as was Moses, and Joshua, and Daniel, and David, and Timothy, his friend's early piety sanctified his every effort, quickened all the impulses of his mind—his one great motto being that, by the will of God, he would dare all things, sustained by his love of Christ. It was his (the preacher's) privilege to be early associated with him, and become acquainted with his great work. It was frequently the case that American ministers from the Southern States would come to London; but at that time there was the great blot of slavery resting on many of them, and, ever true and firm to his love of freedom, Mr. Brock would not open his pulpit to these men. 'No!' he said, 'we can have no complicity in worship with men who sell human flesh.' He brought much odium on himself for such conduct, but he held on. He was always one of the persistent and able advocates of the freedom of the coloured races. Their missionary societies will never be able to calculate the tone which he gave them. He had a large influence in forming the character of the rising generation of young men—the highest and most honourable work a man can do. He (the preacher) had

seen him in committee of the House of Commons, had gone side by side with him into the presence of Royalty to present memorials, but he never saw him truckle to any man—he was always the same quiet Nonconformist minister. He was a man who felt he had power and knew his own usefulness, but it never lifted him up, and he was always anxious to give God the glory. A great man in Israel had indeed fallen; a standard-bearer had passed away.”

Some touching reminiscences of Dr. Brock were spoken in a funeral discourse by the Rev. W. G. Lewis:—

“Loyally devoted to the prosperity of Bloomsbury Chapel, he was not less heartily interested in the welfare of all the churches of Christ. The London Association of Baptist Churches, which has been so eminently blessed to the consolidation and the growth of our own denomination in the metropolis, was formed in his parlour at Gower Street, and always found him prepared to render his best services for the promotion of its usefulness. In the recent meetings of the Baptist Union at Plymouth, the part which he took in the proceedings would never be forgotten by those who enjoyed the privilege of being present. The address to the four young brethren then set apart to foreign missionary work will hold a permanent place in the literature of the Christian Church. Its vivid representations of the necessities of the heathen, its powerful assertion of the sufficiency of the Gospel to meet the requirements of a perishing world, its incisive criticisms of modern objectors, and its prophetic confidence in the final triumphs of the Cross, were crowned by the hallowed unction which suffused the terms of encouragement and counsel in which he addressed the missionary band. He spoke as though his feet were already planted on the steps of the throne of God and the Lamb; it was his apotheosis, and our eyes were holden, or we had seen the celestial convoy eager to bear him to the heavens. ‘On the afternoon of that day,’ said Mr. Lewis, ‘I walked with him on that historic ground,

the Hoe of Plymouth, in the first instance, in company with a few loved brother ministers, and afterwards we two alone. He disclosed some circumstances in his private history hitherto unknown to me, spoke lovingly of the young men whom he had addressed in the morning, talked of Charles Vince, planned a visit to my house, which was, alas! not to be accomplished, sent long messages to one and another, and then a parting grasp, which has left an impression never to be erased.”

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, in his published recollections of Dr. Brock, says:—

“Our deceased friend was above all things genial and warm-hearted. He looked like a man of war from his youth, but there was no war in his heart; his face and head of late used to remind us of a weather-beaten old bluff, but forth from that craggy rock were hurled bolts of fiery wrath. Many who heard his bold, decided utterances may have supposed *force* to have been his characteristic, but we have not found it so; obstinacy was not in him, nor any preponderance of the sterner qualities; he was a companionable man, almost too fearful of offending, and ready at all times rather to side with you than against you. He must have been a noble husband and father, he could not have been happy without loving and being loved. One could see at a glance that everybody in the house studied him because he studied everybody. He made you feel at home at once, and for a pleasant and withal gracious hour he was *the* man above almost all the choice spirits in the circle of our acquaintance, and they are not a few. We remember when, being somewhat indisposed, as is, alas, too often our lot, we went to spend a quiet day or two at a beloved friend’s mansion in Regent’s Park. We were dining, and Dr. Brock was one of our little company. Mention was made that the Stockwell Orphanage was building, and that cash for the builder would be needed in a day or two, but was not yet in hand. We declared our confidence in God that the need would be supplied, and that we should never owe any man a

pound for the Lord's work. Our friend agreed that in the review of the past such confidence was natural, and was due to our ever faithful Lord. As we closed the meal a servant entered with a telegram from our secretary to the effect that A. B., an unknown donor, had sent £1,000 for the Orphanage. No sooner had we read the words than the Doctor rose from the table and poured out his utterances of gratitude in the most joyful manner, closing with the suggestion that the very least thing we could do was to fall upon our knees at once and magnify the Lord. The prayer and praise which he then poured out we shall never forget; he seemed a psalmist, while with full heart and grandeur both of words and sound, singularly suitable to the occasion, he addressed the ever faithful One. He knew our feebleness at the time, and while he looked upon the gift of God as a great tenderness to us in our infirmity, he also seemed to feel such perfect oneness with us in our delight that he took the duty of expressing it quite out of our hands, and spoke in our name as well as his own. If a fortune had been left him he could not have been more delighted than he was at the liberal supply of our wants in the Lord's work. We sat and talked together of the goodness of God around the fire, and our heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. Among the very last things we spoke of together when we last met on earth was the evening at Mr. Krell's, and the great goodness of the Lord in response to our faith. While we write the record our heart wells up with new gratitude for the choice benefit. Surely if in heaven the saints shall converse together of the things of earth, this will be one of the subjects upon which two comrades of twenty years may be expected to commune."

Mr. Spurgeon adds:—

"Our last earthly fellowship with our departed friend was at the hospitable house of the son of Mr. Horton, of Devonport. We went down together from the Baptist Union Meeting, to see the venerable old Baptist pastor of Devonport, and to dine with him. It was very pleasant to hear the brotherly salutations of the two aged men,

and their joy as they talked together of former times, and the way in which the Lord had led them. Theirs was certainly not a gloomy view of life, but one bright with gratitude; they neither regarded the present as inferior to the past, nor the future as likely to be less happy than the present. Both viewed matters around them in the clear light of faith, and expressed themselves with cheerfulness, thankfulness, and hope. Little did we think that the younger of the two fellow-soldiers would be in heaven so soon. The loving words with which they endeavoured to cheer on their younger brother, and the gratitude to God which they expressed for his past usefulness, were wonderfully hearty and fervent, and such as bring tears to our eyes as we think of them. Aged men are tempted to decry their successors, or at least to be very chary of encouragement, but it was not so with these two veterans, who were more generous in their kindly utterances than it would become us to repeat."

The Rev. John Clifford, in a most glowing eulogium on Dr. Brock as a preacher, remarks:—

"A prominent feature of his preaching was the manifest proof it bore in every part of elaborate workmanship. He wrote his sermons—wrote them fully, carefully—and retouched them after they were written. He never shirked labour. Sermons, lectures, addresses, all alike gave indication of hard and persistent work. There was nothing slipshod, awkward, or involved in his utterance; nothing haphazard in his choice of words or themes. His language was often ponderous, immense, like the man, affecting Latin derivatives rather than Saxon; but it was always selected. The structure of his discourses was artistic in a high degree. Every sermon we had the privilege of hearing had the ring of the anvil in it; a ring so distinct and resonant, that we could not always forget the worker in listening to his work. The finished sentences were to a large extent given from memory; yet with none of that painfully introspective glance and sentence-hunting aspect, so often characterising *memoriter* preachers. His manner

was free from constraint; and his 'delivery,' save for the reminders it contained of the artistic construction of the different parts of the discourse, as fresh as the most extemporaneous utterance."

From the text, "Thou shalt be missed, because Thy seat will be empty," the Rev. Arthur Mursell delivered an eloquent sermon, in which he spoke gratefully of an incident in his own life, which we very well remember:

"When first launched on public life, a mistaken zeal upon the part of friends, and a mistaken self-conceit upon my own, led to my essaying a public lecture, as a very young tyro in such things, at Exeter Hall. And when asked whom I should like as chairman, I thought at once of Dr. Brock, whose earnest words during his earlier ministry at Bloomsbury had been so helpful to me as a lad in business, far from home and friends. His ready consent was only like himself; and his kindly encouragement when we stepped upon the platform, which I ought never to have mounted, to face an acreage of empty benches instead of the crowded throng my weak ambition had presaged, warms my heart towards him at this interval of well-nigh twenty years as I recall it. It was his strong, healthy support which kept me from sinking down with very shame, and shedding tears of wounded pride; but he helped me jovially through the ordeal, and when I said a great many foolish things he counselled me like a kind father, instead of snubbing me like a sour priest; and it was the fault of my own head and heart, and not of his, if I were not a better and a wiser man for the experience."

Mr. Mursell contributed, in his sermon, a touching description of his last interview with his venerable friend:—

"While this place was closed in the summer, and I was preaching on one of the Sundays in August at Llan-dudno, Dr. Brock was present at the morning service, and sent word into the vestry that as he meant to come out in the evening he would speak to me then. Instead of meeting him, I found a note to say his throat was

troubling him, and he dare not come out. So after the evening service I went to see him at his lodging, and he chatted with me kindly of my own bereavements, and asked after quite a number of friends here, whose names I was surprised he knew. I told him I expected to be away three Sundays in November—would he preach on all, or two, or one of them? He said he would *promise* one, and try to give me two—which of the three would I prefer? I said November 14th was my birthday, and I should like him to preach for me then. 'It's a bargain,' he said, heartily, 'I preach for my friend Arthur on his birthday.' I know if he had done so, some kind, good wish would have been uttered in sermon or in prayer; but it was not to be. A letter came from him six weeks or more ago to say he must keep close quarters through the winter; and we all know how his willingness to serve a friend was the cause, humanly speaking, of his death. But who shall say the good wishes have not been expressed? From his place in the bright temple where he ministers before the throne of the Saviour whom he preached on earth, he may have called to mind the service he would have offered from the lower temple, had he tarried here, and thought of us in heaven. We know not. We cannot *accompany* though we hope to *follow* him, by keeping humble hold upon his Master's garment."

The final words of Mr. Mursell contained an interesting anecdote and a wise appeal, which we commend to the ministers of Nonconformist churches:—

"His ministry is the focus of the living hopes and dying trust of many, because his ministry was *Christ*. We see laboured attempts to tabulate statistics of spiritual results from this 'movement,' and that ministry, and the other effort. But it is vain and foolish. We may not lay our poor ledgers alongside of the Lamb's Book of Life, and steal the hallowed entries. There are more names, thank God, in His book than ours; more ministries are 'blessed' than advertise in newspapers. Lying at death's door in the house of a member of this church, at the age of 92, is a worn, old Christian, dimly looking through the gates,

and waiting for the summons of her Lord, who was first roused to the living force of Christian truth by the ministry of William Brock. *She never told him, and he never knew it.* But there is his work; and this old saint will join him soon, and startle him with a new jewel in his crown. It was not printed to his credit in the organs of a 'movement,' but it was written in a fairer type, and on a more reliable enrolment. O let us be content with the faithful *unpuffed* ministry of Christ, with the steady exhibition of the Cross of Jesus before dying men; not novelties, 'movements,' or excitements, but faithful Christian witness-bearing; it is this must win the world till Jesus comes to claim it for Himself."

Such golden words are not for every pastor. They form a tribute of honour and love to one who greatly loved his brethren in the ministry, and who was dearly beloved by them, for the sake of his incessant devotion to their Master and Lord.

This volume is my tribute to Dr. Brock's memory. I could not build him a stately monument, but I have made a humble cairn, which, perhaps, may perpetuate in the homes of Christian families, the colleges of students, and the studies of ministers, the name of a brave Englishman, a true Nonconformist, a faithful pastor, and an eminent Christian. We shall see him no more on earth, for by Divine love he has ascended to his high place, in the City of God, and there joined the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, and the noble army of Martyrs, of whom the world was not worthy; for he said, "I WILL MAKE MENTION OF THY RIGHTEOUSNESS, EVEN OF THINE ONLY."