
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<https://books.google.com>





600017675W

THE
LIFE OF SAMUEL BRADBURN.



ELLIOT STOCK, LONDON.

THE LIFE
OF
SAMUEL BRADBURN,

The Methodist Demosthenes.

BY
THOMAS W. BLANSHARD.

"During forty years Samuel Bradburn was esteemed the 'Demosthenes of Methodism.'"—*Abel Stevens, LL.D.*

"He was considered one of the best preachers in the land for all the higher powers of persuasive eloquence."—*Minutes of Conference.*



LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1870.

210. f. 390.

P R E F A C E.

THOUGH the name of Samuel Bradburn has long been a household word in Methodist circles, yet comparatively few possess any authentic information respecting him. A considerable number of second-hand anecdotes of him are in circulation, which, in another generation will be forgotten, or retailed in mutilated forms by professional story-mongers—those social bores, who will doubtless infest society until the Millennium. A man who was considered “one of the first preachers in the land, for all the higher powers of persuasive eloquence,” certainly deserves a better fate.

Shortly after his death a volume of *Memoirs** was published by his daughter, in which he was represented as a man of very ordinary intelligence and piety, whose life was a long conflict “with strong

* *Memoirs of the late Rev. Samuel Bradburn; consisting principally of A Narrative of his Early Life, written by himself; and Extracts from a Journal, which he kept upwards of Forty Years.* By Eliza Weaver Bradburn. London, 1816.

natural passions, with adverse fortunes, and often with the dark demon of insanity itself." Little or nothing was said of his sparkling humour and impassioned oratory,—the heart and soul of his great popularity; hence the book failed to give a just impression of his character and abilities, and consequently disappointed and displeased even friendly readers.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to remedy these defects, and present an impartial likeness of the veritable Samuel Bradburn, of whose sayings and doings we have so often heard our fathers tell.

The stones of this biographical structure—to use an architectural simile—have been fetched from many quarries, and have been fitted together with as little *mortar* as possible.

To the friends who have aided him with kindly counsel, copies of original letters, &c., the compiler tenders his grateful acknowledgements.

T. W. B.

December 29th, 1869.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Birth and Boyhood.

	PAGE
Romantic Marriage of his Parents—Their sojourn in Flanders and Gibraltar—His Birth—Godly Training—Apprenticed at Chester—Joseph Guildford—Awakenings—Effects of bad Company	1

CHAPTER II.

The Great Change.

Settles with a pious Family—Religious Convictions—Becomes a Methodist—Reformation—Triumphs of Christianity	12
--	----

CHAPTER III.

Call to the Ministry.

A Local Preacher—Exercises as to his Call—Visits Fletcher at Madeley—Liverpool—Takes Mr. Morgan's place in that Circuit—Goes to London to collect for Wigan Chapel—Appointed to Liverpool—Meets Wesley—Scriptural Character of his Call	29
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

Itinerancy.

	PAGE
Hopper—Morgan—Extracts from Journal—Visits London again—Slander—Mother's Death—Difficulties—George Escrick—"Brought to the last Shilling"—Wesley's laconic Letter, and Bradburn's humorous Reply—Pembroke—John Prickard—Extracts from Journal—Officious Steward	43

CHAPTER V.

Marriage.

Limerick—Extracts from Journal—Dublin—Accident—Henry Moore—Rev. Edward Smith—Conference—Amusing account of Courtship and Marriage—Cork and Bandon—Letter from Wesley—John Hampson—Extracts from Journal—Unjustly suspected of Arianism—Letter to Dr. Coke—Christianity survives its Defenders	60
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

The Loyal Methodist.

Keighley—Roughness of the country—Extracts from Journal—Travels with Wesley—Wesley's Income and Generosity—Bradford—Small Stipend—Extracts from Journal—Birstal Chapel—Letter from Wesley—Leeds—Refuses the offers of the Independents, and resolves to live and die a Methodist—Ecclesiastical poaching disreputable and <i>Perverts</i> sorry game	86
--	----

CHAPTER VII.

Grief and Joy.

Leeds Conference—Bristol—Letter on Early Rising—Extracts from Journal—Illness and Death of his Wife—Jeremiah Brettell preaches Funeral Sermons—Bradburn's ill health	
--	--

	PAGE
and Grief—Letter from Wesley—Wesley visits Bristol, and takes Bradburn with him on his preaching tour—Bradburn meets Miss Cooke—Second Marriage—Wesley's Letter to Miss Cooke before her Marriage—Removes to London—Extracts from Journal—Charles Wesley's Death—Bradburn's Letter to Bardsley—Charles Wesley's Character—Extracts from Journal	108

CHAPTER VIII.

The Ecclesiastical Legislator.

Death of Wesley—Bradburn writes a Sketch of his Character—“Halifax Circular”—Meetings of Preachers—Conference—Thompson, President—Bradburn preaches—Effects of the Sermon—Ludicrous Incident—Peaceable Termination of the Sessions—Assists Clarke in forming Strangers' Friend Society at Manchester—Letters to Rodda—He and Benson misrepresented by Clarke—Ordinations—Conference condemns the ordinations—Two Parties—The Lot—Kilham—Bradburn wears gown and bands at Bristol—Rev. W. Embury—Disturbance in Bristol Societies—Pamphlets—Visits Wales—Debate on Sacraments at Leeds Conference—Preaches before Conference—Letter to Kilham—“Bishop's Plan”—Lichfield Meeting—Thomas Taylor's Letter—Action of Conference—Removes to Bath—Henry Moore and the Bristol Dispute—Bradburn's efforts to restore peace—Letter—Moore's Character—Manchester Conference—“Plan of Pacification”—Kilham as an Agitator—Bradburn's proposal to have Travelling Bishops rejected—Letter to Kilham—Kilham's expulsion and resentment—Bradburn Preaches—Elected Secretary of this Conference—Rules of Debate—Leeds Conference—Elected Secretary—Scene in a new Chapel—Bristol Conference—Elected Secretary for the third time—Extracts from Journal—Death of Thompson—Funeral Sermon—Manchester Conference—Elected President—Extracts from Journal—London Conference—Secretary for the fourth time—Benson's Sermon—“Stick tull her, Mon.” . . .	137
---	-----

CHAPTER IX.

The Eloquent Orator.

	PAGE
True Oratory—Bradburn's oratory—Appearance, Manner and Speaking Powers described by Everett, Dawson, Entwisle, Keeling, Adam Clarke, Watson, Jackson, Bunting, &c.—His Naturalness—"Speak with your Mouth, Man"—Printed Discourses—"Demosthenes of Methodism"—Demosthenes and Cicero compared—Methodist Orators	185

CHAPTER X.

The Gospel Preacher.

Preaching Requisites—"A Prayer before Preaching"—Rules for Pulpit Preparation—Rules to be observed in Preaching—These Rules more for Use than Ornament—Letter to a young Preacher—"Stick to your Text"—Sermon on "Equality"—Five degrees of Preachers—Remarks as to the best mode of Preaching—Preachers and Readers—Warmth of Manner—Evangelical—Usefulness—Isaac Bradnack—Had not always "a Good Time"—Benson's Remark—Solicited to publish his Discourses—Remarks .	205
--	-----

CHAPTER XI.

Humour and Eccentricity.

Genial Disposition—"Rules for Conversation"—Bardsley—Odd mode of getting rid of a Class—Alarms a Chapel-Keeper—Drives a Drunkard out of a Class-Meeting—Effect of the Weather on Religious Experience—Shower of Soldiers from Heaven—Reproved by Wesley—Witty Rejoinder—The two Scolds—Double Sacrifice—Reproves a pompous Preacher—Cures two Ladies of Tale-bearing—Fleshy Preachers good Tempered—Singular Texts—Betty's Text—Goes in Search of Adam Clarke—Parish
--

	PAGE
Clerks and Church Psalmody—Argument on Existence of God—Lincolnshire Pamphleteers—Persecuting Clergyman defeated—Robert Robinson—Dignity—Wit and Humour legitimate when kept within due Bounds . . .	222

CHAPTER XII.

Shadows.

Danger of Apostacy—Salutary Dread of Falling—Opens Burslem Chapel—Blameworthy Conduct—Censured and Suspended by Conference—Mitigating Considerations—His Remorse and Restoration—Invited to Wakefield—The Folly of Disappointed Stewards—Extracts from Journal—"Finger on the Scar"—Scripture Characters faithfully pourtrayed—Warnings	246
---	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Declining Years and Death.

Bolton—Opens Bridge-street Chapel and Wrexham Chapel—Publishes the Sermon—Extracts from Journal—Wakefield—Vicar of Wakefield—Extracts from Journal—Writes Preface to Hymn-Book—Bristol Conference—George Sykes—Appointed to Bath—Extracts from Journal—Removes to Bristol for the third time—Extracts from Journal—Opens Chester Chapel—"Poor old Pe"—Liverpool—Mr. Brocas—Extracts from Journal—Letter to Entwisle—Removes to London—Speaks at Formation of the London District Missionary Society—Last Entries in Journal—Illness, Death, and Burial—Sleeping comrades—Their Shout of Triumph at the Resurrection . . .	262
---	-----

ADDENDA.

Bradburn's Leather Apron—Manuscript Text and Hymn Book—Portrait by Orme—First visit to Bolton—Two of Wesley's original Letters	289
--	-----

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH AND BOYHOOD.

“ A youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.”—*Wordsworth.*

SAMUEL BRADBURN'S father was born at Atcham, near Shrewsbury, in the year 1719, and “was bred to the business of a gardener.” His mother “was the only daughter of Samuel Jones, a noted gardener at Wrexham.” They first became acquainted in the year 1738, and their romantic courtship and subsequent marriage might suggest ample materials for a volume of fiction. They were united in the bonds of wedlock, in the beginning of the year 1740, at Chester, “without the consent or knowledge of either of their parents, or any of their friends.” This hopeful husband “was scarcely twenty-one,” and his trusting help-meet “not nineteen years of age,” and both being “ignorant of the difficulties of life,” they looked at the bright side of things, and never dreamed of sorrow and

care. Not many days after their marriage, and before they had seen their parents, "they were plunged into inexpressible distress by the following circumstance: Bradburn, senior—like Bradburn, junior—"was naturally fond of company, and having business one evening at an inn"—(a place where few young men have any business to have any "business")—"he met an old acquaintance with whom he spent the time, seemingly in the greatest friendship; but when he was about to go home, his false companion told him he should not leave the room that night, and added, 'You have now no master but the king, and you must serve him, as you have taken his money.' Bradburn, putting his hand into his pocket, found three guineas more than his own money, which the vile caitiff had conveyed thither unknown to him. He threw the money on the floor, and would have forced his way out; but this infamous wretch had provided against that, by securing the door; and, being armed, he kept him there till next morning, and then swore before a magistrate that he had enlisted, and my father," continues his son, "was deemed a legal soldier, and in two days after, without being able to inform his friends, that they might procure his freedom, he was hurried away to the regiment, which in a short time went abroad. The distress, or rather distraction of my mother's mind, was almost inconceivable,

when on the following morning she heard the affair. And how dreadful was the alternative—either to be separated from one she so tenderly loved, or to launch into an ocean of the most disagreeable circumstances! The former was too much even to think of. She chose the latter, and accompanied my father through all the dangers to which he was exposed, both by sea and land; and was with him in several battles, in one of which he was much wounded: She bore her part of all his troubles; and I must say, in justice to her memory, that I never knew, or heard of a more affectionate wife, nor of a more tender indulgent mother, and have seldom heard of a more afflicted woman. They lived together in love upwards of thirty-five years, had thirteen children, and I have every reason to believe her latter end was peace. My father being a strict Church of England man, and having in Germany frequently heard the Methodists, many of whom were in the army, he began to think and live more than ever agreeably to the Bible; and, finding his family increasing, he endeavoured to obtain his discharge when the peace was made in 1748; but was disappointed, as the regiment was sent to Gibraltar, at which place” his son Samuel, to whom we are indebted for these particulars, was born, the 5th of Oct. (o.s.) 1751, and where he spent the first twelve years of his life.

Having such a large family his parents were too poor to give him the advantages of a regular education. He often used to tell, that during the time his parents resided at Gibraltar, he went to school a fortnight at *one penny* per week ; but on the terms being raised to *three half-pence*, his mother took him away, finding it inconvenient, or thinking it unnecessary to spend so much out of her husband's scanty allowance in her son's education. The education of one of the greatest modern pulpit orators only cost *twopence* !

The earnest preaching of John Haime, and his Methodist military associates in the camp of Flanders, was not forgotten by Bradburn's father. Though he did not formally join the Methodists, he was "convinced of the nature and importance of true religion, and having some degree of experience in the Divine life, used every possible method to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Samuel says : "He constantly took us with him on the Sabbath-day to preaching, made us daily read some portion of Scripture ; and every Sunday evening spent an hour in catechising us, and hearing us repeat the Psalms." The effects of this godly training upon young Samuel's mind will be best described in his own words : "Nor was it a task to my mind to be thus employed, but rather a pleasure ; for I was amazingly delighted in reading the

histories of Joseph and Samson, both of which I could nearly repeat without book before I was eight years old; and I remember with peculiar satisfaction how the good Spirit of God used to strive with me, sometimes filling my soul with the most pleasing ideas of heaven, and the sweetest sensations of Divine love,—at other times alarming my fears in such a manner that I was constrained to cry mightily to God for mercy. I ever found myself subject to awful apprehensions of spirits when alone, and had a constant sense of the nearness and connection of the visible and invisible worlds; and being truly convinced of the heinous nature of sin, this disposition was of singular use to me; for if I did or said anything wrong in the day, I was sure to suffer severely for it at night. Here, I cannot but remark how foolish and blame-worthy those parents are who endeavour to make their children infidels in this respect. Nor is their objection good; ‘it spoils children, and makes them fearful to be in the dark alone,’ for notwithstanding their fearfulness (as undoubtedly it will impress their tender minds with a solemn awe, so God intended it should), yet if parents, instead of endeavouring to destroy, would avail themselves of this disposition, it might be made subservient to the best of purposes—viz., the fear of offending God; and this, far from spoiling them, would lay a foundation for

lasting piety, and arm their souls against the affected incredulity of the present age. I bless God, it was serviceable to me; not only in deterring me from sin, but likewise in bringing to my mind serious and deep reflections on eternity; which at times made me very earnest in my prayer to God, for that inward peace which alone could reconcile me to death; for the remembrance of it was truly bitter to my soul, especially if at any time I was afflicted, though in ever so slight a degree, as I always concluded at such times, I was going to die. An odd and simple method served to satisfy me with respect to the fear of death. It was this: to go into the churchyard, or some lonely place at night, and if I found myself afraid, I cried and prayed till the fear was removed; if I found no fear, I was satisfied. In this way I continued till I was about thirteen years of age, accounted by all who knew me, to be one of the best boys in the town."

About this time he was apprenticed to a shoemaker in Chester, and he lodged and boarded with his father, who had settled in that city after he received his discharge from the army. He retained the fear of offending God, and continued to go to preaching as often as opportunity served, and though often condemned for being careless, "was greatly affected while under the sound of the Gospel."

There was a Methodist preacher stationed at that period (1765), in the Derbyshire circuit—of which Chester appears to have been a part—named Joseph Guildford, whose earnest and powerful discourses produced a deep impression upon young Bradburn's mind; for his "words like a mighty torrent, seemed to bear down everything that stood in the way." "One evening in particular," he says, "being exceedingly cast down, and finding an uncommon weight upon my spirits, I went to preaching, and while Mr. Guildford was describing the happiness of the righteous in glory, my heart melted like wax before the fire. In a moment all that heaviness was removed, and the love of God was so abundantly shed abroad in my heart, that I could scarcely refrain from crying out in the preaching-house. All my sins seemed as if they had never been; and I appeared, to my own apprehension, to be in the midst of the glorious throng of saints and angels, of which he was then speaking; praising and adoring God and the Lamb. When preaching was over, I went into a place near St. Martin's church-yard, which adjoined the preaching-house; and there I poured out my soul before the Lord in prayer and praise, and continued rejoicing in God my Saviour most of the night. This was in the beginning of the year 1765, and I held fast a degree of this happiness till about the month of April following; though not without frequent inter-

ruptions from different causes. I then found the spirit of those with whom I wrought stealing upon me, so that I grew quite remiss in private prayer, and every other means of grace. Consequently, I became more fond of the ways of the world, insomuch that at St. George's races, in the beginning of May, I went along with others to that cruel sport. This was truly as the letting out of water to me. I now became acquainted with many of the vilest of the vile; and by degrees, as 'evil communications corrupt good manners,' I first imbibed their spirit, and then followed their example; and being naturally of an impetuous temper, when I lost God and forsook His ways, I gave full scope to every hurtful passion, becoming an absolute slave to the devil and sin.

"It is impossible to express the feelings of my mind, on some occasions, during this apostacy from God; especially once, when one of the greatest reprobates I ever knew, was constrained to own that he was shocked to hear me swear such oaths as I often did. Here shame, fear, grief, and revenge, seemed to claim each a share of a soul that once possessed the love of God, and walked in the light of His countenance. For a moment I felt a degree of compunction, but gave way to despair, and drowned the conviction. I lost even the remembrance of those blessings I had enjoyed; and if any one happened to mention the Methodists, I cursed them in the most

impious language I could think of, and have frequently gone into the preaching-house to make sport, and have sometimes struck the people who were near me, while they were at prayer.

“In this deplorable condition I still retained my fondness for reading, but changed my books from religious ones to the most profane and obscene, and the more wicked any publication was, the better it pleased me. With shame, I remember selling several religious books, unknown to my father, that I might have money to game, which was now my chief delight, and almost ruin ; for, first, it caused me to neglect work most shamefully ; secondly, it abused my health, by inducing me to sit up, often three nights in a week, which I could not accomplish, but by going to bed and rising up again, and going out of a window without my parents' knowledge ; by which means I frequently caught violent colds, and laid a foundation for many ailments, in a constitution, naturally very strong and free from every defect ; and, thirdly, it swallowed up the little pocket-money I had, so that I went in debt, and was sometimes obliged to use methods which were by no means laudable to extricate myself.

“By pursuing these courses for about four years, I became quite hardened in wickedness ; nor can I recollect one good property belonging to me, except the affection I had for my mother, whom I still loved as

my own soul ; and not being able to bear her tender reproofs for this misconduct, nor the sight of those tears it frequently caused her to shed ; and being reprehended by my father, for some complaints which had been made to him of my wicked practices, I took that opportunity to leave home, and went to lodge with some abandoned young men, in order to have my full swing without being curbed by any one ; and as I received half the wages I earned, I resolved to maintain myself on that ; so I now deemed myself independent, which appeared to me a very clever thing.

“ Oh, the madness of unthinking youth ! Having now my own will, and my own way, I devoted every Saturday night and Sunday to gaming and drinking, and often idled away Monday in some silly diversion ; so that I have frequently been obliged to work all night towards the end of the week, and have many times lived two days on a penny loaf, rather than let my parents know I wanted anything ; yea, such was the pride of my deceitful heart, that I would not accept of any assistance from my mother, lest it should cause me to become less inflexible to her entreaties, which I never had courage to withstand, and could only disobey by flying from her presence.

“ I spent almost a twelvemonth in this truly pitiable way of life, and during that time do not remember enjoying one satisfactory moment. My clothes were

now almost worn out, and my wages were not sufficient to supply me with more ; yet, such was my folly, I still persisted in the same way, glorying even in my shame, till my life seemed nearly finished, and the measure of my iniquity almost full ; and, to all appearance, there was but a step between me and everlasting death."

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT CHANGE.

“ He wept, he trembled,—cast his eyes around
To find a worse than he,—but none he found !
He felt his sins—and wonder'd he should feel—
Grace made the wound, and grace alone can heal.”

—*Cowper.*

AT the age of eighteen, without any previous design of his own, Bradburn was led by the hand of Providence to work in the house of a Methodist ; and soon after his settlement in this godly family, he says, “ I was much afflicted with pains in my bones, so that at times I could not work, and as my parents still urged me to come home, I at last consented. Being now in some measure restrained from that excess of wickedness, both at home and where I wrought, the good Spirit of God strove exceedingly with me ; but bad habits are not easily conquered, and my mind being now quite dark as to the things of God, and confirmed by almost five years' practice in the ways of sin, I made use of various methods to evade the force of conviction, particularly by disputing against the truth. But this, instead of evading,

rather strengthened the convictions, and so far roused me from the deadly sleep into which I had fallen, that I began to think of my wretched condition, and the dismal consequences of dying in such a state. In this half-awakened disposition, one evening, in the close of the year 1769, while I was making a few cursory remarks on the season, and looking at some decayed flowers, in a garden adjoining the house I worked in, I was suddenly carried, as it were out of myself, with the thoughts of death and eternity. At first I attempted to banish these ideas, but my fears were so alarmed that I said in my heart, almost unawares, 'Lord help me!' and instantly felt as if thunder had sent these words into my soul, 'not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.' Like the prodigal, I now came to myself. My sins were set as in battle array before me, particularly that of ingratitude to a good and gracious God. This caused my very bones to tremble, and my soul to be horribly afraid. Hell from beneath seemed moved to meet me. I stood motionless for a time expecting the devil to take me bodily away. Now I truly experienced that sin, though it be pleasing for the present to the carnal mind, 'at last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.'

"The effects of these convictions were such that

I could scarcely reach home, though but a little way off. I went to bed, but found no rest. I sunk under the weight of my distress, gave myself up to despair, and for some time lost the use of my reason. My friends concluded I was in a high fever, for I often raved of the day of judgment, and the eternity of hell's torments. I strove sometimes to pray, but could not, for the distracting anguish of my mind, and the gloomy apprehensions of a dreadful hereafter, which continually haunted me. In a few days I began to be something better, and was so far recovered as to be able to read and walk about the house; but seemed to be stupified as not to feel my misery. This proved of bad consequence to me, for three or four of my most intimate companions, who came to see me, perceiving I was better, must needs have me out with them. I endeavoured to put them off, but did not absolutely refuse, so they prevailed. Having thus yielded a little, I lost the power of resisting, and went to a public-house, where I remained till near ten o'clock, notwithstanding it was Sunday night. When I came home my conscience tormented me to such a degree that I could not lie in bed, but arose and lay on the floor, lamenting I ever had a being. I then found it was not possible voluntarily to keep wicked company without committing sin. So true are those words, 'a companion of fools shall be destroyed.' I therefore resolved,

that from that moment I never would go into the company of sinners, unless necessity obliged me ; and, glory be to God, I have hitherto been enabled to keep my resolution.

“ The natural reluctance I felt to speak of my experience, together with the devices of the devil, kept me from telling my condition, and much, very much did my soul suffer from this quarter, and would have suffered far more, but for the man in whose house I wrought, whom God, I believe, directed to speak to me. He extorted some expressions, by which he discovered the state I was in, and advised me to seek God with all my heart ; mentioning, at the same time, some of his own experience, and also the willingness of Christ to receive sinners. Though I do not remember receiving any particular benefit at that time, yet his speaking to me answered two valuable purposes : viz., first, it opened the way for further conversation on religion ; and secondly, convinced me that my case was not singular ; a notion which had greatly perplexed me.

“ Being now able to go abroad, I had a particular desire to attend preaching, but was ashamed to be seen, partly, because of my old companions ; and partly, on account of my bad conduct towards some of the Methodists. This shame was, however, soon removed by the spirit of bondage unto fear, which swallowed up every other passion, so that I seemed

to be dead to all things but how to gain the favour of a sin-avenging God. In order to attain this I took every method I could devise. I rose very early, that I might pray alone before preaching, and often (mistaking the time) have been at the preaching-house at two o'clock in the morning instead of five, in the dead of winter, and have continued walking to and fro, crying and praying, till the preacher began. I was frequently hindered from working by the most intolerable head-aches, which grieved me much, as I had a deep sense of the duty I owed my master, and a real desire to make restitution for the time I had lost.

“I have often wondered, that I should so far lose the knowledge of religion, as to endeavour to save myself by my own works ; nay, so dark was my mind grown, through the deceitfulness of sin, that I did various kinds of penance. I fasted to an extreme ; I roamed about the fields till the wind and rain almost caused the skin to peel off my cheeks ; I often put my feet in cold water, and sat on the side of a ditch, till the pain nearly took away my senses. But what I wonder the most at is, that notwithstanding I attended the preaching of three able men, who were then in the Chester circuit, I never received the least benefit from their ministry, but always came away as I went. I believe this was the Lord's doing, that I might put no trust in man. I read every religious

book I could get ; but all seemed in vain, for I daily grew more wretched, till my bodily strength was so reduced that my legs could scarcely support me. I now looked for nothing but a speedy death and a miserable eternity. I remained in this despairing state about three months, except whilst some short-lived gleams of hope darted across my mind ; which, however vanished away, leaving me more miserable than before.

“ Sitting alone one day after dinner, musing on my melancholy condition, this verse came into my mind with great force :—

“ ‘ Arise, my soul, arise,
Shake off thy guilty fears ;
The bleeding sacrifice
In my behalf appears.
Before the Throne my surety stands ;
My name is written on His hands.’

I strove to sing it, and found a small degree of comfort for some minutes. I went to work, and endeavoured to sing this verse again ; but I could not say that Christ was *my* surety, that *my* name was written on His hands ; and therefore concluded that I had no right to any comfort : this instantly threw me back into the depth of despair. I then felt such anguish and horror overwhelm me, that I exclaimed, ‘ Lord Jesus Christ, Thou didst die for sinners ; if there be yet mercy for me, oh ! reveal Thy love in my poor.

tormented heart ; but if Thy mercy be clean gone for ever, send down Thy judgments on Thy sinful creature !' This I said in the bitterness of my soul ; for truly life was a burden, yet I feared to die. I went alone, and kneeled before the Lord, but could hardly find one word to utter. I came back, having no rest ; I returned several times the same way, and did little else than pray till about seven o'clock in the evening, when, being almost spent, I took up an old book which lay by me, called *The Door of Salvation Opened by the Key of Regeneration*. The part I opened on was a description of the happiness of the saints. I read a page or two to myself, and felt a sweet calm begin to spread itself over my troubled spirit. I continued reading till my whole soul was filled with such a pleasing serenity and composure as resembled the obedient elements, when the Lord of glory said unto them, 'Peace, be still.' I paused for a moment, lifted up my heart to God, and was going to proceed in reading, but the first words I cast my eyes upon were, 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' I could read no further. Such an unspeakable power accompanied the words to my soul, that being unable to contain myself, I arose from my seat, and went into the garden, where I had spent many a melancholy hour ; but, oh ! how changed now ! Instead of terror and

despair I felt my heart overflowing with joy, and my eyes with grateful tears. My soul was in such an ecstasy that my poor emaciated body was as strong and active as I ever remember it, and not at that time only, for the strength and activity remained. I now had no fear of death, but rather longed to die, knowing that the blessed Jesus was *my* Saviour; that God was reconciled to *me* through Him; that nothing but the thread of life kept me from the enjoyment of His glorious presence. Now the whole creation wore a different aspect! The stars, which shone exceedingly bright, appeared more glorious than before. Such was my happy frame, that I imagined myself in the company of the holy angels, who, I believed, were made more happy on my account; and, doubtless, those ministering spirits did feel new degrees of joy, on seeing so vile a sinner, so wretched a prodigal, come home to the arms of his heavenly Father! O, Thou eternal God! Thou transporting delight of my soul! preserve and support me through life, that I may at last enjoy the heaven of love which I then felt over-powering my spirit.

“ Being thus brought from darkness to light, and experiencing such amazing sweetness in religion, I delayed not to join the [Methodist] Society, though I trembled in every joint when good Mr. Bardsley gave me the first note of admittance. I thought it was so solemn a thing to join a people of whom I conceived

so high an opinion, that, but for the caution of a friend, who forewarned me, I should have thought they were all deceived, when I became a little better acquainted with some of them. I considered every one who was in the Society as little inferior to the angels, and consequently expected them to live as such, instead of looking upon the Society as an hospital, wherein are different kinds of patients, who are seeking the help of the great Physician of souls.

“God rarely blesseth one soul alone; His grace generally diffuseth itself to many at the same time. It was so amongst us; numbers of young people especially were stirred up to be in earnest. One youth, about twelve years old, a son of the man with whom I wrought, was justified in as clear a manner as St. Paul, and died in the triumph of faith. In short, there was a general revival of the work of God. I could do nothing now but praise and adore my blessed Redeemer, who was truly precious to my believing soul. Every day seemed the beginning of a new life. God was first and last in my thoughts and affections. I arose in the morning with Christ in my heart, very often singing some sweet verse of a hymn, or repeating a portion of Scripture. I constantly repaired at five o'clock in the morning to the preaching-house, where there was a prayer-meeting or a sermon. I then went to work, and many blessings awaited me,

while endeavouring to make some amends for the time I had trifled away.

“ As there were two or three of us together of one heart and mind, we talked of God and religion, and sang hymns during the time we were at work all day, prayed with one another before we parted at night, and enjoyed almost a perfect paradise. Two things I have often observed, in which many people are wrong: first, supposing that attending to religion will make a man negligent in his business; and, secondly, that being diligent in business has a tendency to make him careless about religion. I have frequently proved the very reverse of these reasonings, never finding a greater inclination to work than when my soul was happy in God. Nor did I ever feel much greater happiness than sometimes when busy at work.

“ I continued in this heavenly state till the month of March, 1770, and received my first ticket from Mr. Shaw, at that visitation; resolving, by the grace of God, to live and die a member of the Methodist Society: and, blessed be the Lord, I have never yet had even a temptation to the contrary. How mistaken are young converts with respect to their future life! I now looked upon myself as being out of the reach of every foe, and vainly imagined my warfare was over, when, alas! I was only entering the field of battle.

“The first proof of my weakness and ignorance of Satan’s devices, was my being overcome by anger against one of the Society, a young man who upbraided me with the profession I had made. I checked the evil at first, but yielded so far at length, that I was overcome by a temptation to strike him. I instantly felt condemnation, and attempted to make up the affair; but he, being in the same, or a worse, spirit, urged the matter so far, upbraiding me in such a manner with my profession, that I felt shame rising in my heart, on account of a person who was present, and coldly said, ‘What did I profess?’ He directly replied, with some warmth, ‘What! will you deny the work of God? that is the sin against the Holy Ghost.’ That moment I felt as if my heart turned in my body. I trembled like a leaf with fear. I immediately went to prayer, which afforded me some relief; but I had lost my confidence in God, and the enemy gained such advantage over me that I fell into despair, and all the distress I laboured under before seemed nothing to this. I could not pray; I thought every creature knew what I had done. I read the account of Francis Spira, and concluded I had committed the same crime in effect, and should suffer a similar punishment. I was ashamed to let any one know my case, lest I should be made a public example of God’s just displeasure. I continued thus about four days; during which time I could

scarcely eat or sleep. I never paid much attention to dreams, but the following made so great an impression on my mind, and was attended with such consequences, that I could not help thinking it came from God. I thought I was walking in the street in which the preaching-house is, in the utmost distress imaginable, crying to God for mercy; but heaven seemed shut to my petitions, till, turning my eyes upwards, I saw the appearance of a long advertisement on the wall; but I could not read any part of it, except the name of JESUS, which was printed in capital letters at the top of it. I was exceedingly anxious to understand the advertisement, but could not. I awoke, rather eased of my burden, but still much troubled. On the following morning I related my dream to a person, who said it was, perhaps, sent for a blessing. We conversed together for some time on religious subjects; at length I found freedom to tell him my condition. He cleared up the matter to me from the Scripture, in such a manner that I was satisfied I had not committed the unpardonable sin; nor any that bore the least resemblance to what our Lord speaks of, viz.: the assertion that the miracles which Christ wrought were done by the power of the devil. I no sooner believed that there was a place for repentance, than I began to pray with all my heart, and that very evening once more recovered the comfortable assurance of God's favour. Thus my blessed

Lord, by this simple means, restored my soul to the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake. I again resolved to walk therein, and, glory be to God, I found the way very pleasant, till another unsuspected snare of the devil was laid for me.

“ Having now changed my way of *living*, my *companions*, and my *books*, and finding an insatiable thirst after religious knowledge, I inadvertently plunged into a sea of polemical subjects. I had also a disposition to controversy, and having an opportunity of reading a variety of books of this sort, I began to dispute with every one I met; by which means I often hurt the minds of the children of God, grieved the Holy Spirit, and injured my own soul. Not that this is by any means a necessary consequence; for man may *dispute earnestly* for religion, and yet neither be *proud* nor *angry*: but without great care, and a single eye to the glory of God, one or both of these deadly evils will gain an advantage over him. This, experience taught me; for while striving to split hairs in points of opinion, my faith was weakened, my love grew cold, and my heart, in a degree, departed from the living God. At first I was not sensible of any decline, nor did I properly know that my affections were not set on things above, till they were entirely captivated by the creature.

“ My soul was now much distressed; but I did

not find power to pluck out the right eye, and cast it from me. I wished, indeed, to please God, but, at the same time, desired to gratify myself, and do my own will; therefore, could gain no ground, but grew more and more infatuated every day. Instead of the spirit of prayer and praise, my mind was filled with nothing but the romantic reveries of a blind, delusive passion, which rendered me very disagreeable to myself and others, and exposed me to many and various devices of the devil.

“While I was in this perplexed situation, my soul struggling between God and the creature, a peculiar providence wrought out a complete deliverance for me in an unexpected way. I have already observed the tender affection I had for my mother, even while I was in the way to destruction; this was now, if possible, greatly increased, and I promised, in my own mind, to atone for the grief I had caused her, by spending my future life agreeably to her will. Just at this crisis, it pleased God to visit her with a very heavy affliction, which so roused my soul, and called off my attention from every other concern, that it answered two good ends: first, it made me pray with the family, when my father was absent, which I had been striving against for nearly twelve months; and, secondly, it was a means of my being saved from the

temptation under which I had for some time laboured.

“ My mother having recovered a degree of health, and circumstances being then favourable, I was greatly stirred up to seek for that blessing mentioned by St. Paul, 1 Thess. v. 23: ‘ The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.’ I saw clearly this was a blessing which even some believers did not enjoy, or why should the Apostle pray that God would bestow it upon them? I saw likewise that they might possess it, or his prayer would have been vain.

“ The blessings I wanted were not of a different nature from those already bestowed upon me—viz., humility, love, peace, joy, and resignation to the Divine will—but I desired, first, to enjoy each of these in a higher degree than I did at that time; secondly, to experience them without any intermission; and, thirdly, to possess them without any of their opposites. I still see it my privilege and duty to press after these continually.

“ Having now a blessed prospect of much good before me, and my soul being happy beyond expression, in the enjoyment of God, I felt an earnest desire that all my friends, and, indeed, the inhabitants of the whole earth, might possess the same blessings. I, therefore, strove, by every means in my power, to bring all with whom I had any con-

versation into the way of peace. I reprov'd sin wherever I saw or heard it. I constantly pray'd at home in the family, and frequently with Christian friends abroad; especially among those who met together on Sunday evenings after preaching, to provoke one another to love and good works."

In this circumstantial and interesting account of Bradburn's early religious experience, the scriptural doctrine of the New Birth is clearly illustrated. He had felt the full force of the Saviour's words—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He deeply deplored his destitution of "grace," and his unfitness for "glory;" and as a "hopeless, helpless, undone sinner," he "cast himself upon the mercy of God in Christ," and old things passed away, and all things became new.

These marvellous triumphs of Christianity attest its truthfulness, and prove its divinity; for if it were not of God, it could not effect such astonishing moral transformations. Its regenerating agency quells the fiercest passions as easily as its Author subdued the tempest on the sea of Galilee—it says, Peace, be still; and there is a great calm! What ground, then, is there for doubt or despair, concerning the conversion of an erring son, or a way-

ward daughter? Let us take courage, and though our prayers be unanswered during our life-time, it may be that years after our heads have been laid low, these wanderers may return to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls!

CHAPTER III.

CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

“Great duties are before me, and great songs ;
And whether crowned or crownless when I fall
It matters not, so as God’s work is done.”

—*Alexander Smith.*

SOON after young Bradburn had tasted the sweetness of God’s pardoning love, and had become, to some extent, established in grace, it was evident to himself, and to the more intelligent members of the Church, that God intended him for something greater than merely fastening pieces of leather together ; and concurrent circumstances gradually and plainly showed that he was inwardly and outwardly called to preach the Gospel.

He says, “ I frequently accompanied the preacher on the Sabbath day to country places, where I had many opportunities of praying with the people, and of enforcing the things which they heard. Nor was my labour in vain, for while thus employed we had many comfortable seasons. This encouraged me greatly to go forward, till the thought came into my

mind, at the very moment Mr. Wesley gave me the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that I was called to preach. This disturbed me greatly, and ascribing it entirely to diabolical agency, I instantly went to prayer, the only method I could take in such a case; but it proved of no great service on this occasion. I felt such a damp seize my spirits, that even my body was much affected thereby. I endeavoured to banish this thought, but found the first impression fixed and rooted so deeply in my heart, that I could not overcome it. For a moment I yielded to think, perhaps this impression is from God; and that instant light and power sprang up in my soul; but my notion of a preacher so far exceeded every idea I had of myself, that I gave way to a chain of reasonings which soon threw me into darkness and stupidity, so that I could neither read nor pray as I ought. I grew dull and melancholy, and could hardly work at my business. My temper, likewise, became so morose, that I was a trouble to myself and those around me. I therefore went home to work in a room alone. Here, I had many blessed visits from God, and many grievous struggles with the enemy of souls. All these I kept in my own breast, and resolved that they should never be known to any mortal; nor should they, had not God brought things to pass of which I had no conception. I was often surprised to hear several of the most

sincere people in the Society say it was strongly impressed upon their minds that I should be a preacher; and they warned me against resisting the Spirit of God on this point. I put these off with an indecisive answer, but never gave them to understand my own thoughts on the subject. Having been frequently pressed by persons in the Society, and also by some of my mother's relations, to spend a few days with them at Wrexham, I took an opportunity of going thither at Easter, 1772. I found every one very loving and free, and I might have been happy, had not my mind been so perplexed about preaching; but the distraction of my thoughts induced me to return home the day after I went, in a most disagreeable frame of mind. As the same people continued to importune me, and my time was now at my own disposal, having completed my apprenticeship (January 1, 1772), I went at Whitsuntide, and spent several days among them, more to my own satisfaction than before. I met their class, prayed, and sung hymns with them from house to house; they even prevailed upon me to give two or three public exhortations to the people, who assembled with a desire to hear preaching. In these exhortations I found much freedom both of spirit and speech, but still stifled the thoughts of preaching as much I could, though my conscience smote me, and many severe threatenings passed through my mind; till finding

no rest, and nothing prospering that I undertook, I determined to leave home, and travel till the end and nature of these things more clearly appeared; but I soon observed that change of place availed nothing. I went to Liverpool in the month of July, 1772, God knows, with a very heavy heart. Here I met with a most friendly people, who behaved as if they had been related to me. Such is the power of Divine love! During my stay in Liverpool, which was about four months, I frequently met a class, and spent many happy moments with honest James Edmunds, in whose house I worked. But still, my coming to this town was so far from answering the intended end, that I was often asked to preach by some of the leaders; and therefore returned home in November, fully resolved to live near to God, let the consequence be what it would, relying on His faithfulness to fulfil His own promises. This resolution helped me a little, though my distress was so extreme at times, especially when at preaching, that life became a burden, and death seemed the only way of deliverance. I continued in this disagreeable state till Christmas, endeavouring by various methods to obtain that peace I enjoyed before these thoughts disturbed my mind; but finding no rest, I solemnly promised God, in prayer, that if it were His will that I should preach, and if He would make my way plain before me, I would be obedient. I instantly felt per-

fect ease, and remained happy in some degree, about three weeks.

“At this time I went to see my old friends at Wrexham, designing to remain and work there till the Spring, intending then to go to London, but God appointed otherwise. During my stay at Wrexham I wrought with one of the leaders, who is now in Paradise. He often spoke closely to me on the subject of preaching, frequently mentioning the sad *woe* if I obeyed not, insomuch that I was quite overwhelmed with fear, lest I should be disobedient to the call of God, or should run when He did not send me. However, I kept my former resolution, prayed much, and lived near to God, and He made darkness light before me.

“On Sunday, February 7th, 1773, Mr. Gardiner, of Tottenham, intended to preach at noon, and as I was going to the preaching-house, Brother H. said ‘Something makes me fear that Mr. Gardiner will not come; if he does not, I hope you will no longer let the devil keep you silent.’ I felt my mind greatly afflicted while he was speaking to me, but did not say a great deal, not having much doubt of Mr. Gardiner's coming. As he was an admired preacher, a crowded congregation attended to hear him. We waited in the room till the people began to go away, when I was requested to preach. O, my God! Thou alone knowest what I then felt. My whole frame was so affected that I could scarcely speak or see; I trembled

D

in such a manner that, but for supporting myself by the pulpit, I should have fallen to the ground. While they were singing the first hymn, I lifted up my heart to God, and prayed that if I were going to act agreeably to His will, He would assist me; if not, that I might be kept from proceeding. I continued very long in the first prayer, found much enlargement of heart, and a good degree of courage, though I could not look the people in the face during the sermon. Some days before, I had been reading the account of St. Paul's proceedings at Corinth and Ephesus. On opening the Bible I was led to the same passage, and took for my text part of the second verse of the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, 'Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?' I endeavoured to show in what sense every Christian receives the Holy Ghost, viz., as a convincing, assisting, comforting, and purifying Spirit, and pointed out as well as I could the necessity of thus receiving the Spirit of God, from the state we are in without Him, being ignorant, helpless, miserable, and unclean creatures. I then exhorted them to examine themselves whether they had thus received the Holy Ghost, etc. Upon the whole the people seemed much affected, and I found such satisfaction in my mind, that I gave notice we should meet again in the evening; but I durst not say I would preach, being afraid to call myself a preacher.

“In the evening many of the congregation were obliged to go away for want of room, and I felt myself so raised above everything I had ever experienced before, that I spoke between two and three hours on that sweet passage which had been often blessed to my soul, John i. 43, and following verses. I preached at Wrexham the Thursday and Sunday following, and on Monday returned home, where I found my friends and acquaintances quite divided in opinion concerning me. Some were pleased and some prejudiced, as is generally the case on such occasions.

“Having heard much of the Rev. John Fletcher, and having read all his excellent writings which were then extant, I resolved to go and see him, in hopes that God would, by this blessed man, further discover His will concerning me; for notwithstanding the goodness of God, in leading me into the work as already mentioned, and the satisfaction I felt in my own soul while engaged in it; yet, when I returned to my business, many doubts and fears arose in my mind. I therefore prayed the more fervently, giving myself up to God, to assist and direct me as He saw good. I went to Madeley the week before Easter, expecting great things from that worthy man of God; nor were my expectations vain. I preached in his house on Easter-day, and found much satisfaction in conversing with him; but his example affected me the most. O that I may tread in his steps, as he does in the

steps of Christ ! I thought, like the Queen of Sheba, concerning the fame of Solomon, 'the half was not told me.' He advised me to go forward in the name of the Lord, to be humble and diligent ; and added, 'If you should live to preach the Gospel forty years, and be the instrument of saving only one soul, it will be worth all your labour.' These words were very encouraging to me ; my soul was sweetly refreshed, and I returned home pleased with the journey, fully resolved to devote myself to the Lord, and to preach whenever an opportunity occurred. This determination I kept, but not without many hard struggles, and much opposition from without and within. However, my strength was proportioned to my day.

"My method was to work four or five days in a week, and to preach on the Sabbath-day, at Wrexham, Mold, Northup, Flint, Rushton, Alfrom, and several country places within ten or twelve miles of Chester. By these means I had many opportunities of seeing the effects of my preaching, which, to say the least, were very encouraging ; and though my body was often much fatigued with walking, sometimes twenty miles, and preaching three times in a day, and at some places meeting with very rough usage (particularly at Flint, where the people were more like savage beasts than human beings), yet the comfort I experienced in my own soul was an ample reward for every hardship.

“In gratitude, I cannot but mention the friendship which many of the people in Chester, and in several parts of the circuit, manifested towards me, particularly Mr. T. Lowe,* who lent me horses on various occasions, and made his house as free to me as if it had been my home. O God, remember them all for good, when thou makest up Thy jewels!

“My sphere was now enlarged; Mr. John Oliver, who was then our superintendent preacher, sent me sometimes through the circuit in his place, and got me to preach at Chester while he attended the London Conference. From that time till Christmas, I assisted Mr. Oliver and Mr. Briscoe, as they required me; working very little at my business, but endeavouring to improve myself in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures, by reading, meditation, and prayer.”

In the beginning of the year 1774, at the request of some friends, Bradburn visited Liverpool, intending only to spend a few days there; but Providence plainly indicated that God was about to employ him in the sacred work of the ministry. The first entry in his published journal shows the state of his mind at this time.

* Mr. George Lowe and Mrs. Moss, now residing in Chester, state that it was their grandfather, George Lowe, and *not* Thomas, who thus befriended Bradburn. There was a Thomas Lowe, brother to George, but he did not reside in Chester, and had no connection with Methodism.

“*Liverpool, January 31st, 1774.*—What is before me in the womb of Providence, I know not; but Thou, O my God! Thou knowest, and that sufficeth. I now dedicate my soul, my body, my time, my talents, to Thy service. O, preserve me from ever bringing any reproach on Thy cause and people! Make me more and more useful and holy, that I may, with confidence, look up to Thee for all I want through life; and especially for protection and comfort in the hour of death! I do not, and never shall, *in myself*, deserve anything but punishment at Thy hands; because I am, and shall be, while in the body, a sinful creature before Thee; but I renounce myself, my sins, and my duties, with everything that I have done, suffered or received, in point of merit; and recommend myself to Thy mercy, in and through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ alone; on whose obedience, unto death, I entirely depend, by simple faith, for pardon, holiness, and heaven! To Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.”

The concluding portion of his autobiography informs us how he was employed from this time to the Conference. He says, “I preached several times, and at the desire of Mr. Morgan, who was lame, went in his place through the Liverpool circuit; and finding the harvest plentiful, at the request of the people, I continued in this circuit,

particularly at Bolton and Wigan, till the month of July.

“The room at Wigan being a very inconvenient place, and rather small for the congregation, application was made to Mr. Wesley for permission to build a chapel; he readily consented, on condition that money could be raised for that purpose. Mr. L. and Mr. D. immediately subscribed fifty pounds each, and about fifty pounds more were given by the rest of the society. It was then proposed to make a collection among our brethren in the neighbouring circuits. Mr. L. offered to go to London, if I would accompany him, to try our friends there. I consulted Messrs. Roberts and Morgan, the two preachers then on the circuit; they both thought the plan was eligible, and advised us to go. We accordingly obtained a recommendatory letter from Mr. Wesley, with another from the preachers, and left Wigan the 6th of June. We went through Manchester, Sheffield, Rotherham, Critch, Derby, Nottingham, and Loughborough; at each of which places I preached, explained the affair, and made a collection. We arrived in London on the 22nd of June; and were well received by both preachers and people, who in general seemed willing to lend a helping hand to the good cause.

“I was much delighted with the friendly, noble spirit which prevailed in general wherever we went.

I hope the acquaintance then formed will continue to the end of my life. We stayed in London ten weeks, about three of which I was confined by a violent fever: my life was despaired of, but my work was not done. The brotherly love evinced towards me by the Methodists in London was so great that my heart was deeply affected at parting with them, and I wished to live and die with such a people.

“Our business being finished, Mr. L. and I left London, the 1st of September, and returned to Wigan, through Wycombe, Oxford, Worcester, Birmingham, Wednesbury, and Newcastle-under-Lyme. At Birmingham we met with Mr. T. Olivers, who showed us every mark of brotherly love, as became a man of God. He made an excellent speech after preaching, and obtained a good collection for our chapel.

“While we were absent from Wigan, some of the enemies of religion said many ill-natured things concerning our undertaking; I, therefore, took the first opportunity of explaining in public the whole of our proceedings. I heard no more of their malevolent remarks, and we pursued our way with satisfaction and success.

“When the preachers returned from the Conference, Mr. Mather gave me the Minutes; and I was exceedingly affected at finding myself appointed

for the Liverpool circuit, with Mr. Hopper, and my good friend Mr. Morgan. The importance of the work made so deep an impression on my mind, and I had such a sense of my own weakness, that I was greatly cast down for some time. For though, before that, I had often preached two or three times in a day, yet I considered myself as free, having no care of any particular people. This made the task abundantly more easy; but now I looked upon myself as bound to be the servant of all for Christ's sake, and to bear a part of that burden which St. Paul seems to have thought heavier than his afflictions, 'The care of all the churches.' However, as I was stationed with a people whose love had been already proved, and among whom I had seen some fruit of my feeble endeavours to save souls, and knowing Mr. Morgan to be a judicious, honest, tender-hearted man, I was rather comforted, and found a willingness, though with fear and trembling, to begin the vast and important work of a regular travelling preacher."

It was probably about this time that Bradburn was first introduced to Wesley. He says, "I was greatly struck with his cheerfulness and affability when, with a pleasant smile, he took me familiarly by the hand, and said, 'Beware of the fear of man; and be sure you speak flat and plain in preaching!' It is not easy to express the good

effect this advice had on my mind at the time: it was a word in season."

That Bradburn's call was of the true apostolical order there can be no doubt. He had the requisite grace and gifts: the inward call of the Holy Ghost, and the outward call of the Church, to take upon himself "this office and ministration;" and a Christian man, thus elected by Christian men to preach the Gospel, is as Divinely authorised to engage in this sacred work as the proudest prelate in the land!

It is a source of great grief to many good people, that so few young men of wealth and learning enter the ministerial ranks, "to rescue religion from the hands of didactic artizans and consecrated cobblers!" As it was in the beginning, so it is now, and so it is likely to be; and the Church must be content to take the men whom God sees fit to call. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence."

CHAPTER IV.

ITINERANCY.

“ Jesus instructs His servants here,
Detach'd from persons and from place,
Their providential course to steer,
And follow Him in all their ways.
To whom they shall dispense the Word,
Or when or where extend their line,
They leave entirely to their Lord,
And still adore the choice Divine.”—*C. Wesley.*

AT the Conference of 1774, as he has already informed us, Bradburn was received as a preacher on trial, and appointed to the Liverpool circuit, along with Christopher Hopper and John Morgan.

Christopher Hopper was a native of Low-Coalburne, in the county of Durham. He was converted to God in the year 1743, and soon afterward became a preacher of the Gospel. He was an energetic and powerful speaker, and stout-hearted sinners trembled under the awful and alarming message his Lord gave him to deliver, and multitudes turned from their evil ways in the circuits where he laboured. He is described as a man of peculiar integrity, and of most unblemished morals. He toiled hard in his Master's

service for the space of fifty-seven years, and died triumphantly at Bolton in the eightieth year of his age.

John Morgan appears to have been a kind-hearted colleague and a useful preacher. In the "Minutes" for the year 1782, Wesley thus describes his character and death:—"John Morgan, a plain, rough man, who, after various trials, and a long painful illness, joyfully committed his soul, his wife, and his eight little children to his merciful and faithful Creator."

With such men for his colleagues, Bradburn, in the twenty-third year of his age, entered upon the toils and trials of an itinerant preacher's life. He soon discovered that there was a great difference between the position of a local preacher and that of a regular minister. Only a small number of sermons had been needed hitherto, but now, having often to appear before the same congregation, his small stock was speedily exhausted, and, like many young men in similar circumstances, he was greatly discouraged, and almost tempted to give up the work in despair. He writes in his journal:—

"*Liverpool, Sept. 30.*—I feel that the work I am engaged in is of the utmost importance. Greater gifts and graces than I possess are requisite to do it as it ought to be done. I have already said all I know about religion; how then shall I get through the year? O God, my sufficiency is of Thee! If

Thou has sent me to preach Thy Word, Thou wilt teach and assist me; if Thou hast not, O let me not continue to preach.

“*Bolton, Oct. 31.*—I find much inward trouble, feeling my extreme ignorance, and having none to teach me anything. I have found more matter this month than the last, but have so little time to read and write, and so frequently to preach, that my mind is unhinged, and my thoughts quite scattered abroad. O, Lord God Almighty, assist me for Christ’s sake! Preached forty-nine times this month.

“*Nov. 30.*—By not preaching often in the same place, I have not stood in need of much variety; about forty sermons have been my extent. I now find myself greatly straitened. I see, indeed, abundance of matter in the Scriptures! But alas! I know not how to bring it forth; nor even, at times, what to do for a text. Lord help me!

“*Dec. 31.*—I conclude this year in peace of mind and thankfulness to God for all the mercies I have received. I have travelled many hundreds of miles, and preached several hundreds of sermons since this time twelve months, and have endured more afflictions of body than ever I did in all my life, except when I had the small-pox. Added to this, I have been sorely tried by some who ought rather to have strengthened my hands. Yet, I bless Thee, my God, I am spared, and determined to live to Thee.”

The work of God prospered in different parts of the circuit, especially at Northwich, where there was no preaching-house, and a proposal was made to build one; but the people were very poor, and consequently unable to do it themselves. A Mr. Barker gave them ground to build on, and a handsome donation towards the chapel; and as Bradburn had been so successful in his begging excursion for the chapel at Wigan, he and Mr. Hampson were appointed to go to London to beg money towards the proposed chapel at Northwich. They left home Jan. 9, 1775, and met with a friendly reception on their arrival in London; but this second visit does not appear to have been so satisfactory as the former one. On his return home at the end of the month, and after recording in his journal that he was "greatly troubled in mind for not reproving a man that swore in the coach," he writes:—

"Liverpool, Feb. 1.—Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, that I am safe in my circuit again. Collecting money for preaching-houses is not my business.

"Warrington, Feb. 28.—I have, without intending it beforehand, made some memorandums of my experience and remarks on various occasions—a method which, I begin to perceive, may be made useful to myself in future. Through this month I have been much assisted in preaching at some places; but greatly embarrassed at others for

want of ability to arrange my ideas in a clear and distinct manner. Yet I feel a dawning hope that the Lord will bless my endeavours, and give me the help I want. My mind is exceedingly perplexed, though not condemned for any known sin. Head of the Church, look upon me!

“*Chester, March 7.*—An unkind report having been circulated that I was turned Socinian, I thought it my duty to go and confute such a falsehood, by preaching expressly upon the subject.

“*Bolton, March 31.*—On Monday, the 6th instant, I went home, partly to confute the false report of my being a Socinian, and partly to see my poor dying mother. My mind was distressed, almost beyond bearing; but hearing that our friends at Rushton were hurt by this vile slander, and that they expected me on the 7th instant, I left Chester to go thither, though my horse was very ill. On the road he grew worse, and I was forced to leave him, and ride an unbroken colt. Great God! save me from such another night.

“*Liverpool, April 8.*—On the way from Prescott, I was taken ill; a little before dinner I grew worse; and, notwithstanding my friend Mrs. Wagner, at whose house I was, got me every help in her power, I continued in the most excruciating pain till Sunday morning. I then found ease, but have been very ill ever since.

“*Chester, April 21.*—While I was at breakfast a messenger came to inform me of my mother’s death. She died on the 20th instant, aged fifty-three years. A most affectionate mother she was to me! One circumstance constrains me, in some measure, to be resigned; God spared her life nearly *twelve years*, in answer to a prayer that I offered up, when she seemed to be dying, in which I begged she might live twelve years exactly. I was then very young, and could not bear the thoughts of losing her, but imagined I should be able [to part with her after those years.

“*Proud-Preston, May 16.*—(New place.) I found great liberty in preaching, and joined a few in class. Great God, the work is Thine! O, prosper it!

“*May 31.*—I feel my heart too easily affected by the company I happen to be in: hence, lightness of spirit often carries me I know not whither, and makes me ashamed to go to prayer, either with the company, or alone when I retire.

“*Wigan, June 30.*—This has been a month of great exercise to both my body and mind. I have found it hard work to get matter to preach; and have been perplexed beyond measure for a proper method of arranging my subjects. Yet, I have been very happy sometimes in preaching; and, if I may trust my hearers, some good has

been done. I have travelled a great many miles on a poor old horse, that is ready to fall under me, and have no money to buy another. O, could I but commit my cause to Thee, Thou guide of my youth! these little things would not try me as they do. Above all, I lament that I have not a friend to converse with, from whom I receive any relief. O, God, look upon me, for Christ's sake! Fifty-nine sermons [this month].

“*July 31.*—Leeds Conference began. I am glad this year is out. It has been a tedious, uncomfortable time to me, except at some particular seasons, while preaching, or when I have been retired from all but God. I am afraid of not continuing to travel, and I fear to travel. Thou supreme Jehovah! I beseech Thee, direct my way, and give me power to do Thy will joyfully, for Christ's sake!

“*Leeds, Aug. 1.*—I am now admitted into full connexion, and appointed assistant* for Pembroke Circuit with Mr. Prickard.”

When Bradburn returned from Conference, to arrange for his removal to his new circuit, all the money he possessed was ten and sixpence, and his horse was so completely broken down by reason of old age, hard toil, and scanty fare, that it finished its career at Wigan, where he had stopped to dine.

* Superintendent.

E

On being reduced to such extreme want and difficulty, he was oppressed with anxiety, and his mind bordered on despair; he prayed to Him whose "kingdom ruleth over all," and help speedily came from unexpected quarters. He records the interesting particulars in his journal:

"*Haverfordwest, Aug. 23.*—When I left Leeds, I had but one half guinea in the world! George Escrick* gave me another, at Bolton; and Mr. D.

* There is a memoir of George Escrick, in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1808, written by Thomas Taylor, which is well worth reading. He was born in the neighbourhood of York. The village of Escrick is supposed to have derived its name from some of his ancestors. He used to speak of one of his relations, who was Lord Mayor of York, putting the gold chain about his neck, when he was very young. Through his father's intemperance, the family was reduced, and removed to Bolton, and George was one of the first Methodists in that locality. He was rough in temper and manners, and was fond of having his own way, but no one had a kinder heart than he. He was a true friend to the poor, and would never allow a preacher or his family to want anything that was needful. He was much esteemed by Wesley, whom George always welcomed under his hospitable roof. Indeed, his house and table were open to all that came during Wesley's stay. In one of Wesley's journeys to the North, George was informed that he had not Bolton on his plan; and hearing that he was at Liverpool, thirty-one miles distant, he set out that evening on foot, saying, "I will neither eat nor sleep till I see him." He got to Liverpool next morning in time for the five o'clock preaching, at the close of which he followed Wesley to his lodgings, and said to him, "So the devil may take Bolton for you!" repeating the words, and then with-

another, at Wigan. Out of this I paid for horse hire eleven shillings and sixpence ; with twenty shillings only, and no horse, I knew not what to do. I stayed in Liverpool four days, in great anxiety. On Saturday, the 12th, Mr. F. told me he would buy me a horse, and I might pay him when I could. Some friends gave me a few pounds, which brought me to Brecon, where I unexpectedly met with Mr. Wesley coming hither.

*“Pembroke, Aug. 31.—*The beginning of this month was very unpleasant to my feelings. It appeared as if everything was against me. Blessed be the Lord, it ends well! My journey was long and lonesome ; and had I not met with Mr. Wesley at Brecon, I should have been quite at a loss, being brought to the last shilling. Glory be to Thee, O my God! Thou didst send me timely aid. I am now in want of nothing. This circuit seems easy, and the people agreeable. O, holy God, make me useful, and enable me to glorify Thee in all things, through Christ, my Saviour!”

To be “brought to the last shilling” was no undrew. He was an extraordinary walker. He walked many times to Manchester—twelve miles from Bolton—to hear the preaching at five o'clock in the morning, and returned home to breakfast. He was nearly eighty-two years of age when he died, and a little before his death he walked to Chester—near forty miles—one day, and came back another, and only spent fourpence on the road.

frequent occurrence in Bradburn's history. He was one of those men who know not the value of money, and, consequently, was always poor, and scarcely able to keep the wolf from the door, much less to make ends meet. "How a Penny became a Thousand Pounds" was a problem he never had occasion to solve. Hence his life, as Sydney Smith would say, was often an example of the ancient and melancholy struggle of genius with the difficulties of existence. His poverty was caused, not so much by reckless spending, as by reckless giving. His warm, benevolent heart was affected by any tale of distress, and he would sometimes give to others when he himself stood in greater need of pecuniary aid. Tradition tells that, either on this or a subsequent occasion, when Wesley had befriended him, he told Bradburn not to be afraid of applying to him when in financial difficulties. An opportunity soon presented itself, and he wrote to Wesley an ingenuous account of his distressed state; and received the following laconic reply, with an enclosure of five pound-notes:

"DEAR SAMMY,—Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Yours affectionately,

"JOHN WESLEY."*

* Wesley sent a similar letter to Jonathan Crowther, but minus the "expository notes":—"The sum of the matter is, you

Bradburn replied :—

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I have often been struck with the beauty of the passage of Scripture quoted in your letter, but I must confess that I never saw such *useful expository notes* upon it before. I am, rev. and dear sir, your obedient and grateful servant,
“ S. BRADBURN.”

Though Bradburn was only twenty-four years of age, and seven years younger than his colleague, they seem to have lived and laboured together very happily. Mr. Prickard bears generous testimony to his youthful Superintendent's uniform kindness, and brotherly demeanour. He says: “Mr. Bradburn was exceedingly kind to me; he took as much pains with me as if I had been his brother. That year we had some fruit of our labours, especially at Carmarthen; but we had many trials also. However, I can bless the time that I was appointed there, if it were only for the sake of being a year with Mr. Bradburn.”

John Prickard is described by Wesley, in the “Minutes,” as “a man thoroughly devoted to God,

‘want money,’ and money you shall have, if I can beg, borrow, or—anything but steal. I say, therefore, ‘Dwell in the land, and be doing good, and verily thou shalt be fed.’”—See Stevens' *History of Methodism*.

and an eminent pattern of holiness." He was born at New-mote, in Pembrokeshire, in the year 1744. After his conversion, he offered to go to the West Indies, as a missionary, but Wesley appointed him to the Glamorganshire Circuit instead. Three years afterward a project was under consideration respecting a mission to Africa, and he made a free offer of his services for this proposed mission, but the Conference disapproved of the project, and it was laid aside. He always thought "they were too cautious" in the matter; and it was his settled opinion that he ought to have gone out. His race was soon run. He caught a violent fever while on the Lynn Circuit, from the effects of which he never fully recovered. Unable to do his work, he removed to London, at Wesley's desire, where all possible means were employed to effect his recovery, but in vain, for "he soon finished his course with inexpressible joy."

When Bradburn got fairly settled in his new sphere, he endeavoured to put the different societies into a more orderly state. There being no class-leaders at Carmarthen, his plan was to meet the Society himself, in four divisions: "The married men after dinner on Sunday; the married women on Thursday evening; the single men on Saturday evening; and the single women on Sunday evening. The whole Society on Tuesday evening." This plan was pro-

ductive of good, both to the Society and himself. He writes in his journal :—

“*Haverfordwest, Sept. 30.*—By frequently meeting the classes, my spirit is greatly united to the people. It likewise furnishes me with many useful hints for preaching. This has been a very pleasant month to me ; but I know not that I have grown in grace. Having a new field of action before me, and being abundantly better furnished with subjects, my whole stock being new here, I find a tendency to self-sufficiency. O God, I know Thou canst confound me in a moment, and take my understanding from me : I lay my spirit in the dust before Thee, and give Thee all the praise, for all I have, and all I am, and for all the good that is, or can be, done.

“*Carmarthen, Oct. 31.*—While meeting the Society, the 24th inst., I was seized with a violent pain in my head, which continued till I had done. I went home with some friends to supper, and endeavoured to be cheerful ; but was so ill in the night, that I looked for nothing but death. I was bathed in a cold sweat ; my throat grew very painful and swelled exceedingly. Every symptom of a fever appeared, nearly the same as in London ; but by a more timely application of proper remedies, it did not reach so high a degree of malignity. I am still confined to my room ; but, bless the Lord, I have no pain. I feel my mind very stupid, which makes me uneasy ; how far the

disorder may be the cause of this, I do not know. Quicken Thou me, O Lord, for Christ's sake!

"*Nov. 4.*—Still confined, but so well that I could preach if the doctor would permit me. Lord, accept a willing mind!

"*Nov. 30.*—I have been confined since the 13th, by a violent return of the fever. Saturday, 11th, I was remarkably low and feeble; but being unwilling to disappoint the people on Sunday, endeavoured to preach twice, though I was so hoarse, they could scarcely hear me. On Monday, 13th, I almost lost my senses, and continued in a high fever till Sunday, 26th. Since then I have been mending slowly. One thing has hurt me much: I never was blistered before, and knew nothing (even if I had been perfectly reasonable) of the treatment that is suitable at such times. The blister drew exceedingly, and I was burnt up with thirst; those about me, of whose love I had no doubt, not knowing how to act, and fearing to do wrong, would not give me anything to drink; the doctor was out of town, and I was obliged to remain in that situation, I know not how long. The consequence was, a greater affliction to me than any I have known. Yet I find no fault with any of my kind friends, to whom I desire to be very thankful, as I believe they all did their utmost to serve me.

"*Dec. 17.*—This fortnight has been a time of sore

temptation to my mind. I am pained exceedingly that I cannot do my part of the work in the circuit. O God, my evil heart would say to Thee, if it durst, Kill me, or make me quite well! Christ Jesus, forgive me!

“*Pembroke, Dec. 31.*—O God, Thou hast been good to me all my life! Yet, what returns have I made? I have been an ungrateful sinner, a prodigal son, and unfaithful servant! Thou knowest, O Thou Searcher of hearts, that I want sincerely to be wholly Thine; but oh, how far I am from being what I wish! Oh, help me to improve the ensuing year!

“*Jan. 1, 1776.*—This day I narrowly escaped being drowned in crossing Milford-Haven. I ventured beyond human prudence; but I was in my duty, and God preserved me. The storm was very awful, but the Master of the universe was with me. Glory be to Him!

“*Haverfordwest, Jan. 31.*—I still find my body very weak, and a sort of pettish spirit, that is easily offended, does me much harm. The cold is so severe that I cannot bear it in the country, and am hurt by being confined.

“*Carmarthen, April 30.*—There is certainly a revival of the work of God in this place; but the people are very ignorant, and there are some very bitter adversaries. O my Maker, help me to do them good! I find it a greater task to preach one sermon to these

people, who are mostly new hearers, than to preach ten to experienced people. I fear I look too much at my own performances, and not enough to the Lord.

“Heakin, May 15.—I see little good can be done by merely preaching once a fortnight, in places where there are no leaders to keep the people together.

“Carmarthen, May 31.—All glory be to Thee, O my God! When patience had its perfect work, Thou didst deliver me from the trial. Everything concerning me is now right: my soul is happy, my way is plain before me, and the good work prospers. All this is Thy doing, O, Thou Most High! Blessed be Thy name, for ever and ever. Amen.

“Pembroke, June 30.—I feel a deep sensibility of the least favour which I receive from man, and would sooner die than be ungrateful, but I am daily loaded with Thy benefits, O Lord, and yet how ungrateful is my wayward heart to Thee! Oh, assist me to flee youthful lusts, which dreadfully war against my soul!”

In this circuit he was happy and successful, and fully expected to remain in it a second year; but the Conference removed him to Limerick.

For this removal, he had to thank an officious circuit official, whose forwardness had not flourished under Bradburn's superintendency. The disappoint-

ment was great, but he meekly submitted, saying, "Perhaps God has work for me in Ireland. I put myself, O Lord, into Thy hands, and go cheerfully, believing that Thou wilt be with me."

CHAPTER V.

MARRIAGE.

“ Such tales as, told to any maid
By such a man, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.”—*Wordsworth.*

BRADBURN sailed for Ireland early in September, 1776; and a few days after his arrival at Limerick, he “spent his last shilling.” He entered upon his work “with fear and trembling;” but God gave him “great favour in the eyes” of the people. “I am once more,” he writes, “agreeably settled, having food and raiment, and amazing congregations. O Lord! make me useful to this loving, trifling people. The chief danger I perceive is from wit and facetiousness, to which I have always been addicted. Eternal God, save me!” During the month of October he preached fifty-seven times, and on the 29th of that month he conducted a watch-night service, and “preached, prayed, and sung four hours without intermission;” but in the midst of this hard toil he was “often very happy.”

While preaching on Tuesday morning, November

12th, he had a severe attack of illness; and after struggling against it for some time, he "at last fell, apparently dead, on the floor;" and for more than a fortnight he was unable to preach. Symptoms of consumption made their appearance, and his bodily strength wasted daily. He was also greatly tried at this time by his "familiar friend, a gentleman and a scholar!" who stole "most of the poor's money" out of his desk! and, a few days afterwards, he "was most severely tried by an ungrateful, worthless man, the father of him who stole the poor's money." There was, however, a ray of sunshine which gleamed through this gathering cloud, in the shape of "a timely present of £8 from kind friends in Haverfordwest," which he acknowledges with a grateful heart. On the 31st of December, he writes:—"Another year of my little life is gone, to be recalled no more! A great part of it has been dissipated by my journeyings. I have several times narrowly escaped the snares of the devil; but glory be to Thee, O Lord, I have hitherto been preserved! Oh, let me die, rather than be suffered to bring any reproach upon Thy good ways! Amen!"

Scarcely four months had passed away, when Wesley removed him to Dublin; and young John Hampson came to take his place at Limerick. With the exception of "a cowardly, overbearing,

ignorant, rich man," the people in Dublin manifested great love to him; and having less to do than when in Limerick, his health gradually improved; and, when preaching, he felt "a heavenly sweetness," and souls were converted under the Word. In the month of June, 1777, when he was riding, his horse fell down as if shot, and crushed his knee in such a manner, that he had to keep in bed nearly a week. He preached and "made the first Kingswood collection" on Sunday, July 13th; and on the following Tuesday he had a relapse, and was obliged to go to bed at the house where he breakfasted; and there he remained until the 21st, "frequently delirious through the extremity of pain." Sea-bathing at Ringsend helped to remove the pain, and his health soon returned, and he was able again to "both preach and walk." At the Conference of 1777, he was re-appointed to Dublin; and towards the end of the year he had another severe illness, "much resembling what he suffered in London in 1774, and in Wales in 1775;" and he felt the effects of the fever so much, that he was compelled, for a time, to refrain from early-morning preaching.

Henry Moore—afterwards the friend and biographer of Wesley—was under religious conviction about this time, and he went to hear the Rev. Edward Smyth, an Irish clergyman, who had been published to

preach in the Methodist Chapel, Dublin. He says: "I went with great expectation, hoping that he was the man appointed to lead me into all truth, and especially that which I particularly needed. How great was my disappointment! A layman—with his plain coat, where I expected the gown—ascended the pulpit. My first thought was to leave the chapel, and I even rose up from my seat to accomplish my design, when I seemed to be asked, 'Did not you come hither to receive good for your soul?' The answer in my mind was, 'I certainly did; I am wrong. I will hear the sermon.' I accordingly resumed my seat with entire composure. The preacher was the late Mr. Bradburn, whose preaching soon removed my prejudices to his lay appearance. The text was, 'The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them; and blessed is *he* whosoever shall not be offended in Me.' The sermon was throughout highly impressive, and some parts of it came home to my case. He strongly inculcated the 'poverty of spirit' which is essential to a right reception of the Gospel, and showed largely that it was the poor, and especially *such* poor, who in every age had preached it and received it. My mind was impressed in a remarkable manner, and I departed with thankfulness to God that I had staid to hear the discourse."

This Rev. Edward Smyth, though an archbishop's nephew, had been expelled from his curacy in the North of Ireland, for the crime of being a Methodist. He became one of Wesley's preachers, and caused considerable excitement in the Irish Societies, by his earnest attempts to persuade the preachers and people to break off their connection with the Established Church. On the 7th of July, Wesley held a Conference in Dublin, "at which about twenty preachers were present," when the question of separation was fully considered, and it was agreed to leave such subjects alone, and to attend to their proper work of saving souls.

A few days before the Conference just referred to, Bradburn was united in marriage to "the amiable Miss Nangle," whose charms almost distracted him the first time they met, at a place called Rosey-Bower (!) the third day after his arrival in Ireland. His case very appositely illustrates the old saying that the course of true love seldom runs smooth. Nearly two years passed away before the young lady consented to marry him, which severely tried the patience of her impetuous lover. A few months before his marriage, he writes: "My heart is so entangled with the love of the creature, that I fear everything is going wrong with me. I cannot read, I cannot preach, as I used to do. I have no desire to be free, and the object of my affections appears to

be entirely out of my reach! I have many friends, yet none that I dare trust in the matter. O God! my help in every time of need, for Christ's sake, direct me!" Again, he writes:—"I ventured to trust a friend with the cause of my distress. . . . I am inclined to marry, because I think I shall be much more steady, consequently more happy and useful in such a state than I can be single: it will also prevent foolish, lying reports about me where I preach. People are always talking of one and another as proper for me, and unprofitable conversation is the unavoidable consequence. A courting, fortune-hunting preacher I detest. O Lord, assist me to get the woman I love!"

There is a tradition about him and a brother minister who occupied the same bed one night; and Bradburn's mind being so harassed with the perplexities of courtship, he could not sleep; and getting up, he knelt by the bedside, and after praying for Divine direction in the choice of a wife, he added with touching fervency, "But, Lord, let it be Betsy!" His bed-fellow, whom he thought fast asleep, humorously responded "Amen," and then broke out into a hearty laugh at poor Bradburn's expense.

In telling the story of his courtship and marriage, his frank and simple earnestness is all the more diverting, as he seems utterly unconscious of saying

anything calculated to raise a smile. Here are the particulars, written a month after the wedding :—

“I write the following account of my courtship and marriage to Miss Nangle, as a perpetual memorial of the goodness of God to me, and as a testimony in favour of a particular Providence governing the affairs of men, especially of those who commit their cause to God.

“My lovely and beloved Eliza’s father, Mr. Martin Nangle, was a jeweller, in Crampton-court, Dublin ; he died when she was only three years old, leaving a handsome fortune, but no will. In little more than a year, her mother, through the persuasion of friends, married Mr. John Karr, jeweller, without making any settlement, either for herself or the children, of whom there were four, namely, my Betsy, her brother George, and two Mr. Nangle had by a former wife. About a year after this marriage, Mrs. Karr died, leaving the four children entirely to the mercy of a step-father. In a short time, Mr. Karr married the widow of Mr. Palmer, cabinet maker, of Dublin, a woman of considerable property, and a member of the Methodist Society ; she brought the children to preaching, and seemed fond of my Betsy, who was very soon deeply affected by the Word, and found peace with God when she was about fourteen years old. In a short time she joined the Society, and has continued an ornament

to it ever since. She then began to be uneasy at the nature of her situation, seeing herself wholly dependent on a step-father and step-mother, who had an increasing family of their own; and reflecting that their kindness might be withdrawn, or they might die as her own parents had, and leave her friendless and helpless. She, therefore, obtained their consent to learn to engrave seals in stones of every kind, that being a business, in some measure, connected with her father's. This sweet girl was genteelly maintained by Mr. Karr, at whose expense she received a good education; he also paid for her instruction, till she was a complete mistress of the above-mentioned art. She was turned nineteen when we first met. It was at Rosey-bower, Mr. Karr's country-house, the third day after my arrival in Ireland, September 9th, 1776. The moment I saw her in the garden, my mind was uncommonly agitated, and almost lost in confusion. I trembled as if guilty of some mischief, and never felt more awkward than during the time of dinner, though I wished to behave as well as possible. When going away, my very existence seemed ready to dissolve. After remaining five nights in Dublin, I went to my appointment in Limerick; and while there (having poor health) I attempted to forget this lovely woman, especially as I heard another preacher had made her an offer. But in spite of my endeavours, a fear

possessed me lest she should marry; and the information that she had rejected him, afforded me as much pleasure as though a beloved friend had escaped some evil. Yet I was not sensible of my passion till the Conference following, when I expected to be removed. O, my God! how hast Thou seen me struggling with myself to gain sufficient resolution to give her up, which I never could.

“ Mr. Karr’s treatment of the preacher who had addressed Miss Nangle, made me dread the thoughts of his knowing my attachment, and I deemed it ungenerous to let *her* know, when she did not consider herself at liberty to marry without Mr. Karr’s consent. I therefore endeavoured to conceal my passion from every creature. Being rudely treated one day by her step-father, who was drunk, she determined to reside under his roof no longer; and therefore removed to the house of Mrs. King, a very holy woman, and a real friend to all the preachers, particularly to me. Here I had an opportunity of being often in Miss Nangle’s company, and indeed, had little happiness out of it. I was fully persuaded Mr. Karr would never consent to our union, nor did I imagine that she had any affection for me, more than as a preacher; though I find since our marriage, she has loved me from the time we first met, which gives me inexpressible pleasure. O God, how kind

art Thou to me! that such a woman should thus love so unworthy a creature. Nothing could, as I thought, be discovered like a particular regard for her in my conduct; but many saw and spoke of it. This gave me great uneasiness; especially when she told me one day, with some warmth, that people talked of my being so often at Mrs. King's, and requested me to refrain from coming. I had now but one way left, my sanctuary in every time of trial; I prayed earnestly, very often till midnight. Mr. Wesley had written several times, desiring me to go to Londonderry. I prayed for something to prevent this journey; and verily believe God sent afflictions and other hindrances in answer to my petitions. Being almost distracted, especially since I had discovered my affection to my darling (who therefore absented herself), I determined to inform my faithful friend, Mrs. King, of every particular. I accordingly told her my whole heart, as a child would a tender parent. She encouraged me greatly, and conversed on the subject with Mrs. Karr, who had always expressed a great friendship for me. That lady would have spoken to her husband on my behalf; but he was sick, and she requested I would visit him. On Sunday, the 29th, I found Mr. Karr very ill in bed; the following day he was much worse, with every symptom of a putrid fever; but remarkably penitent and self-condemned, for

having so often grieved the Spirit of God. I laboured to comfort him, and prayed for his happiness. On Tuesday evening I stayed till very late; returned again early on Wednesday morning, April 1st, and as the clock struck nine, I saw him expire. What a confluence of passions I felt, God only knows, when the only man on earth I dreaded lay a lifeless clod before me. Mr. Wesley arrived the next day, and drew all my attention to the concerns of the Society; he said I was to remain in Dublin till the Conference, and appeared remarkably kind. But one morning he seemed very much displeased; began to question me about marriage, and talked of my removing with him into the North.

“ Having had no proof of any particular affection from my Betsy, I was the more embarrassed. If I refused to accompany Mr. Wesley, I must renounce him, and that very circumstance might cause her to refuse me. My trouble was excessive, which he perceived, and softened very much towards me. I then simply told him all. He immediately promised, not only to let me remain in Dublin, but also to use his influence to bring the matter about. I took the first opportunity of letting my precious Betsy know what had passed; but to my surprise, she declared her determination to do nothing without the consent of Mrs. Karr, whom she considered as her mother. As soon, therefore, as Mrs.

Karr had recovered a little from the shock of her husband's death, I freely told her my mind. But oh! what were my feelings, when she declared that she never would consent to my proposal. I wrote to Mr. Wesley, entreating him to help me. He immediately sent letters to Mrs. Karr and Betsy. Mrs. Karr returned a complaisant answer, assuring Mr. Wesley, that were Miss Nangle her own daughter, she would be guided by him, imagining he would return the compliment, and not interfere. Instead of which, he considered the letter as a full consent, and informed both Betsy and me that he had settled everything. This satisfied my beloved's mind, and I gained her consent. Before Mr. Wesley's arrival, I prepared everything, giving Mrs. Karr to understand our design; but she gave me equivocal answers. Contrary, however, to her expectations, Mr. Wesley invited her to breakfast with him at Mrs. King's the morning after his arrival, being his birthday; as soon as she entered he began the ceremony, and married us in the parlour. Pride would not let her affront Mr. Wesley, and she was forced to appear satisfied. Thus were the wise taken in their own craftiness. Everything has conspired on the occasion to increase my joy. Conference began the 7th instant. The preachers are all pleased with my choice of a wife, and I trust we shall spend a

comfortable year in Cork and Bandon with Mr. Hampson."

Wesley, more than once, took up cudgels for his preachers when in difficulties of this kind; but not in such a summary manner. Bradburn carried off his prize in triumph, and chuckled over Mrs. Karr's discomfiture with irrepressible glee.

"After a tedious and fatiguing journey," he says, "our reception in Cork was not very inviting; however, all is peace at present, and I am resolved to live to God and do all the good in my power." A month later, he writes: "Though the accommodations in Bandon are very disagreeable, yet, as my lovely Betsy is content, with her I cannot but be happy. I do not think that Eve was more suited to be a helpmate for Adam than she is for me. In Cork we have all we want, and are surrounded with friends, many of whom are old experienced Christians, and truly alive to God."

Cork and Bandon at that time (1778) formed one circuit, and the two preachers appointed were required by the "Minutes" to "change monthly." It would seem, from the following hitherto unpublished letter, that Bradburn had been obliged to complain to Wesley of his colleague, John Hampson, who appears to have declined taking his regular monthly appointments at Bandon, where "the accommodations" were "very disagreeable."

“ London, October 17th, 1778.

“ DEAR SAMMY,—I think you judge exactly right. You are called to ‘obey *me* as a son in the Gospel.’ But who can prove that you are called so to obey any other person? What I require (according to the Twelfth Rule of a Helper) of John Hampson or you is, that each of you, in his turn, spend four weeks, and no more, first at Cork, and then at Bandon. When, therefore, you have been four weeks at Bandon, I desire you to return to Cork; and if John Hampson will not then go to Bandon, I will order one that will. Pray show this letter to Mr. Mackrie (?), whom I beg to assist you in this matter.

“ The Friday following the full moon is the Watchnight; the next Sunday but one the Love-feast.

“ Pass smoothly over the perverseness of those you have to do with, and go straightforward. It’s abundantly sufficient that you have the testimony of a good conscience towards God.—I am, with tender love to Betsy, dear Sammy, yours affectionately,
“ J. WESLEY.”

The above letter probably caused the wound which festered in John Hampson’s heart a few years afterwards, when he took unreasonable offence at his name not being inserted in the Con-

ference Deed, left the Connexion, and wrote a not very amiable life of Wesley in three volumes.

In his journal Bradburn writes:—

“ *Sept.* 30.—This month has been very pleasant, and I humbly trust some good has been done. I feel great pleasure in preaching; but I by no means approve of addressing the same people every morning and evening without any change. Yet, I find it useful to myself, as it makes me read and study very closely. I feel an essential difference in this work, now that my mind is calm and happy, from what I did when it was all confusion. What devil suggests that this happiness will not continue?

“ *Bandon, Dec.* 31.—Watch-night, the happiest time I ever had here. A wonderful year has this been to me! What pains of body have I felt! What distracting anxiety of mind have I endured! What astonishing answers to prayer have I received! and oh! what transports of joy have I experienced! But—

‘ The past as nothing we esteem;
And pain, like pleasure, ’s but a dream.’

“ I conclude thee, thou chequered year, in bearing my testimony that God does all things well. I now feel His love, and praise His adorable name for everything past and present.

“*Cork, Jan. 31, 1779.*—I have often been much cast down through this month, owing chiefly to forebodings about things which may never happen; and even if they should, they may be for the best. I want more faith, and greater evenness of temper. I am either exalted above measure, and then trifle; or I am sunk down to the earth, and ready to despair.

“*Bandon, Feb. 12.*—This day the Lord wrought a great deliverance for me. Coming up Calady Hill, with my Betsy, in our one-horse chaise, the wind and rain met us full in the face, and the head of the chaise being up, the horse was not able to draw, but running backwards down the hill, on a sudden he ran to one side, and overturned the chaise into a ditch, falling upon it, with us under all. He lay quiet till I and my wife crept from under it—then, giving a sudden spring, he rose on his feet. It is very remarkable that we were neither of us hurt in the least. Some men who stood by helped me to get everything in order, and we came hither in safety.

“*Cork, March 31.*—I have read and written much this month, but sadly feel the want of a friend to direct my studies. All with whom I have any intimacy, know nothing of my meaning when I speak of my ignorance. They praise my sermons, and consider me as a prodigy of learning; and yet what

do I know? A little Latin, a little philosophy, history, divinity, and a little of many things; all of which serves to convince me of my own ignorance!

“*Bandon, April 12.*—Surely vain is the friendship of man! I am here in a strange country, with a delicate wife, in very low circumstances, in an indifferent state of health; and the man who ought to be a father to me, seems even envious because the people are kind to us. O my God! Thou knowest what I feel, and have felt these three weeks. Oh save me from the strife of tongues, and from the power of my enemies. Thou knowest that I am an enemy to none upon earth. Oh that I had more faith! that I might with greater confidence commit my all into Thy care. Oh save me from the anxious suspense with which I am tormented! Surely Thou wilt not leave me in this trying hour.

“*Cork, May 7.*—At half-past one in the morning, my wife was delivered of a lovely boy. Oh what tongue could describe the feelings of my heart, when I saw the wan countenance of my Betsy, surrounded by her dishevelled hair, striving to smile when I received my first-born! Never was she so lovely in my esteem. My God, what is Thy happiness, when such a creature as I can feel so much!

“*May 18.*—This day my precious boy was baptised. I have called him Ebenezer, not from a notion that the name will affect him; but to put me in mind

that I ought always to be grateful to my good and gracious God, and never distrust Him who has been my helper to this day.

“*May 31.*—The beginning of this month was a very trying time. My body was greatly afflicted, my mind was grievously tempted and cast down, and my circumstances exceedingly straitened; but, glory be to God, all is well now. My precious Betsy is charmingly recovered, my darling child is well, my health restored, and my soul happy in and thankful to the Most High for all things. Hallelujah! Oh, the fond feelings of a father’s heart!

“*Bandon, June 30.*—On Friday, the 4th inst., while dining at the other end of the city, I heard the drums of the army and the independent companies beat to arms. On hastening into town, I found all in confusion;—women crying, children frightened, the shops shut or shutting, and a universal panic spreading. The occasion of this was a report that the French had landed, and were within a few hours’ march of the city. I went home, secured a few valuable articles, and committed myself and family to God in prayer. In the evening I opened my Bible on Isa. xxxvii. 6, 7; and as there were very few people, I encouraged them as much as possible. In the morning it proved a false alarm.

“*Cork, August 31.*—I have been very diligent in studying and preaching, and have enjoyed much

comfort, through the whole of this month. I feel a great desire to do good, but am ready to faint at the thoughts of preaching to the same people another year, especially as I am appointed the Assistant [Superintendent]; however, my trust is in the Lord, who is all-sufficient. Thou Guide of my youth, stand by me! Fifty-two sermons [this month].

“*Sept. 30.*—Blessed be the Lord, I have spent this month in a way that gives pleasure on reflection. I have frequently felt the presence of God in a very powerful manner, and have been assisted in preaching. I am truly thankful to Thee, O Lord, for Thy goodness to me and mine. I have all and abound.

“*Nov. 30.*—I found much comfort in going through the Epistle to the Ephesians; yet, it does not seem to be the preaching that suits some of the people. I often fear lest, by being accustomed to hear only the doctrines set forth, they should lose their taste for anything else. Family religion seems much neglected; and close, practical sermons make many quite miserable. I bless the Lord I have dealt very faithfully with all who have heard me. Oh, that I could reach their consciences!

“*Feb. 29, 1780.*—I have enjoyed much peace, and frequently felt close communion with God; but at other times I have trifled. My greatest danger is among our own people, where I expect no harm.

I often perceive the amazing sublimity of the Divine Word; but oh! how weak is my capacity when going to set it forth to others. By frequently preaching, I am kept, in some measure, in the spirit of the Word; and were it only on this account, I am thankful for being put into the ministry. Fifty sermons [this month].

“*March 31.*—Preaching has ever been my delight, unless when my mind has been distressed almost beyond bearing. The more I preach, the greater light I receive; and though I still think the present plan of one person’s preaching every morning and night, to the same people, is by no means the most eligible, yet I am assisted in such a manner as leaves me no room to complain. Surely I may say, ‘In thy law do I meditate day and night.’ O Lord, give me to understand, and preach it aright, and bless Thou it to Thy people! Fifty-three sermons.

“*Bandon, April 30.*—Oh that I could always think and feel as I do now, and always act consistently with these feelings! Help me, O Thou transporting delight of my soul! ever to rejoice in Thee as my chief good, and everlasting portion. Glory be to Thee that ever I was born to enjoy such exalted happiness. Thou didst see my distress, and didst comfort me. Surely it is a token for good. O Lord, I do not depend upon even these raptures,

but receive them with deep humility, as the streams of Thy free love in Christ, my Saviour. Glory, glory, glory be to Thee, O Lord, most high! Forty-seven sermons.

“*Cork, May 31.*—My soul has been borne for the most part above all care, by the comfortable sense of the Divine favour which I have enjoyed. My few enemies have either become friends, or have lost all their influence; so that at present I enjoy outward as well as inward peace. Praises unbounded and eternal be unto Thee, O Lord! Fifty-one sermons.

“*June 30.*—I cannot but observe how differently men feel when death is approaching, to what they do in health and strength. No man has been more furious against me than Mr. M.; yet how glad was he to have me visit him, when laid low by affliction. I attended him with the greatest tenderness several times, and found him humbled before God. On Sunday evening, 18th inst., he died in my arms.

“*July 31.*—Suffered much, part of this month; but, eternal praises to my good God, all is well with me now. I have two lovely boys, and their more lovely mother is in a fair way to recover speedily. My own health is restored, and I have every temporal blessing I want. O Father of Mercies! strengthen me with Thy Spirit's might, to hold fast whereunto I have attained. What a comment do

I feel on that text, Ps. ciii. 13, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Forty-six sermons.

"*Cashel, Aug. 30.* — On my way to Dublin, being appointed for Keighley in Yorkshire. Eternal praises to Thee, O Lord, for Thy many mercies to me while in Cork. My reception was unpromising; but never did I experience greater friendship than the people have showed to me and mine. Lord, reward them, for Christ's sake! My amiable Betsy has suffered a great deal of pain; and I have frequently been afflicted: but, thanks be to God, we are brought through; have now good health, two lovely boys, and a gracious Benefactor in heaven, who never will forsake us.

"*Dublin, Sept. 30.* — This month has been a time of severe inward exercise. The way of Providence is very dark. My youngest child ill—my money nearly all gone: those who were once my warmest friends, seem scarcely to know me; and the preacher far from being brotherly. O, my constant Friend! my God and Saviour; in simple faith, I cast myself and burden upon Thee! Thou seest good to humble me where I was once highly exalted. O, do Thou work in me a willingness to be whatever Thou wilt!

"*Oct.*—From the 6th till the 12th, waiting in wretched anxiety for a ship; being determined to go

to my appointment, if possible. Heavenly Father, my trust is in Thee. O support my darling wife, and make our way plain before us!

“*Liverpool, 13th.*—On sea twenty-four hours. Thanks be to God for being brought safe to England!”

During Bradburn’s sojourn in Ireland, some persons unjustly suspected him to be an *Arian*, and mentioned their suspicions to Dr. Coke, who wrote a “friendly epistle” to him on the subject, which elicited the following reply:—

Cork, 1779.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—As I have every reason to believe that a sincere love of truth was the only motive that induced you to take the trouble of writing your friendly epistle of the 1st instant, I delay not a moment to send you a plain categorical answer. I do this the more freely, as there is no error in the world I more sincerely detest and abhor than that of which the preachers, to whom you allude, are pleased to accuse me.

I am truly surprised that any man should ever suspect me to be an *Arian*, as I never preached many sermons, immediately following one another, wherein I did not professedly, or relatively, speak in the most explicit manner of the divinity of Christ.

The only shadow of a reason that any one can assign for entertaining such an unjust and uncharitable suspicion of me, is, that I was once very intimate

with a gentleman, who was at that time intimate with another, who was an *Arian*. But surely this will prove too much; for I am intimate with several in this kingdom, and in England, too, who are *Romanists* and *Calvinists*; but I hope I shall not be suspected to be either the one or the other, because I converse with them; yet, I declare again, I know no other reason any one can have for suspecting me to be an *Arian* than the above.

At Leeds Conference, 1775, I signed the Minutes of Conference. This I thought was in effect declaring to God and the world that I believed and taught the Methodist doctrine, and no other. In London, 1776, Mr. T. T—— taxed me with preaching *too much* on the divinity of Christ, and with being *too warm against the Arians*. I suppose the reason of this was, lest, being a young man, I should go out of my depth. I told Mr. Wesley I used none but scriptural arguments, and all seemed satisfied. I came from the Conference to Ireland, and have been here ever since, during which time I have not varied a hair's breadth from what I then believed.

But to put the matter beyond all doubt, I now most solemnly declare, I always did, and do now, believe that "Jesus Christ is the one Supreme, Eternal, Independent, Self-existent Jehovah; that He is, in the most extensive sense of the word, equal with the Father. I do believe the same Jesus who tasted

death for the sin of the world, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and buried in Joseph's sepulchre, was, as touching His human nature, *as truly man as I am*; and as touching His Divine nature, as truly Almighty God from all eternity as the Father. The distinguishing tenet of *Arius* was, he believed *there was a time when the Son was not*: *Socinus* believed *he had no being at all till he was conceived in the Virgin Mary*: I believe in the grammatical sense of the Athanasian Creed, that *Jesus Christ is, as touching His Godhead, without beginning, the Father of eternity*. In other words, I believe a distinct personality and precise co-equality in the glorious Trinity. What can I say more? I believe if Jesus Christ be not God Almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, and eternal, He is not only a "worm" but an arrant impostor. If He, Jesus Christ, be not *truly and essentially God*, not by office or investiture, but according to the proper meaning of the word, the infinite and incomprehensible Jehovah, the Scriptures are nothing but lies, the Gospel is a mere fiction, and the whole Christian dispensation is false. In fine, if Jesus Christ be not the eternal God, He is a greater deceiver, and consequently a greater sinner, than Judas, Pilate, or Mahomet; I might add (with reverence to the adorable name of my precious Redeemer) than the devil himself; for I do not remember any of these professing to be God; but Jesus "thought it no robbery to be

equal with God" in His essential attributes, His works, and the worship due to His Divine Majesty from men and angels.

SAMUEL BRADBURN.

To the Rev. Dr. Coke.

The divinity of Christ was always one of Bradburn's favourite themes; and if in his youthful discourses, he spoke as strongly on the subject as he does in the above letter; we can hardly be surprised that, like most polemical preachers, he should have been misunderstood and misrepresented. When preaching before the Manchester Conference, thirty years after this period, and when treating on the Saviour's divinity, he advised his ministerial brethren to be sparing on the subject: "once a year," he said, "is enough for this doctrine to be handled—for if it be not well defended, it only creates suspicion in the mind."* Few members of an ordinary congregation can give an intelligible definition of *Arianism*, *Sabelianism*, or any of the other 'isms, without consulting a dictionary; and even *they* seldom care to be reasoned with, as if they were heretics or infidels. Our holy religion is too often damaged, more by the imprudence of its apologists than by the direct opposition of its foes. It is not one of the least proofs of its divinity that Christianity has survived its defenders.

* Memoir of Rev. G. Sykes, p. 183.

CHAPTER VII.

THE LOYAL METHODIST.

. . . "Unmoved,
Unshaken, unsecluded, . . .
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal."—*Milton.*

THE wearisome journey from the City of Cork, to the wild, mountainous neighbourhood of Keighley, was at last accomplished; and though, in many respects, Bradburn was better off than he expected to be, "particularly as to the house, furniture, &c." he complains that "the places are very distant from one another; the country is mountainous, dirty and cold; the manners of the people are very rough: but what is the most distressing, one of the last year's preachers has, by his misconduct, brought a great reproach upon the cause and upon his brethren." For a fuller description of the state of the country, and of the manners of the inhabitants at this period, we must refer the reader to the well known Lives of Grimshaw and Charlotte Bronte. If we may judge from the following extracts from his journal, this year was not a very happy one.

“*Dec. 31.*—Bless the Lord we have been hitherto preserved ; and though I have been greatly tempted in my mind for the most part of the last four months, yet all is well at present. It is my wish to set out anew, and to do all the good I can. Seven years since, I left home without scrip or purse, and blessed be the Lord, I have neither saved a farthing of money or money’s worth, except a few books. And though I have a family to provide for, I can trust Thee, O my God, as well as when alone. May faith and gratitude fill my heart.

“*Keighley, Feb. 28, 1781.*—I have sometimes, of late, found preaching a grievous task. Confusion and deadness prevail in my mind, and quite oppress me. I fear the cause is my concern for the affliction of my precious wife. I am confounded and miserable to see her so weak, but what can helpless love do? I would lay down my life to rescue hers. O Lord, if ever Thou didst hear me, hear me now, and spare her to me, for Christ’s sake.

“*Manchester, March 31.*—How mysterious a creature am I ! I have prayed more this month than ever I did any month of my life, and I am sure the Lord has heard me, and is graciously restoring my dear wife ; but how strange that at times I should be overcome by a trifling spirit ! Is it that nature driven to one extreme rebounds to the other ? And that my joy is rapture and my grief despair ? Be what it will,

I am pained exceedingly on account of it. O my God, look from heaven upon me and mine, and make us what Thou wouldst have us to be.

“*Keighley, April 30.*—O Lord, Thy ways are unsearchable! May I ever be enabled to adore Thee, and to give everything into Thy hands. Thou dost not delight in the affliction of Thy creatures, but layest Thy rod upon them for their good. I give Thee thanks for hearing prayer daily, and restoring my Betsy. If it be Thy will, O God, remove the affliction of my Samuel; or, if Thou art about to take him to Thyself, assist us to be resigned. He is much more Thine than ours, and Thou hast overwhelmed me with mercy in sparing his mother. All praise be to Thee!

* “*May 31.*—Though greatly distressed to see my dear little boy dying, as it were by hair-breadths, and unable to get him relief; yet blessed be the Lord I have enjoyed more satisfaction this month in my own soul, than I have since my departure from Cork. Glory be to Thee, O my Father and Friend, that Thou hast so wonderfully restored the wife of my youth, and strengthened me to labour in such a manner amongst these people. Fifty-one sermons. [This month.]

“*Heldwick, June 30.*—The beginning of this month was a time of great inward exercise. I was very poorly in body, occasioned by trouble of mind on

account of my child's illness and death. [He died on the 2nd inst.] I feared for my precious wife, lest she should be thrown back. But, blessed be the God of all grace, everything is now right. Thou, O my God! didst accept the least sacrifice, Thou hast taken the child and spared the mother. O that we may live to Thee, as we have been enabled to live most of this well-employed month! And do Thou accept my thankful heart, and seal it ever Thine, for Christ's sake. Fifty-five sermons.

"*Keighley, July 31.*—O Lord, assist me to realize death, that I may see the true end of life, and be every moment enabled to begin again to work out my own salvation."

This year, Bradburn tells us in his Sketch of Mr. Wesley's character, that he travelled with Wesley through several circuits, "by which means," he says, "I had an opportunity of knowing how his accounts stood; and I know that he gave away within the year, from the Bristol Conference, 1780, to the Leeds Conference, 1781, in private charities, above fourteen hundred pounds! I do not mention that year, as if he never did the like before or since, but because I know he did it then. He told me in London, in the year 1787, that he never gave away out of his own pocket less than a thousand pounds a year. To enable him to do this, he had, first, the profits of the books which the preachers sold (except ten per cent., which some

of them took for about eighteen years past). This proves (let him have died worth what he may) that all he had in strict justice belonged to the body of the preachers. These kept themselves low to put it into his power to be thus liberal, because they loved him; but for them, he could not have done it. . He had, secondly, from London and Bristol on an average, about £150 per annum by private subscriptions. Thirdly, the Society in London gave him £30 a year, which was all the fixed stipend he had. Fourthly, every year almost there were legacies left him. Fifthly, as he went his journeys, the friends in each large society where he preached generally gave him a few pounds when he was going away. Thus, literally having nothing, he possessed all things; and though poor, he made many rich. His manner of bestowing his charity was truly pleasing: he never relieved poor people in the street, but he either took off or moved his hat to them when they thanked him. And in private he took care not to hurt the most refined feelings of those he assisted."

He removed from Keighley at the end of the year, to Bradford, in Yorkshire, where he laboured two years. Shortly after his arrival in that circuit, he writes, "I have a pleasant comfortable house and garden; numbers of loving people to preach to; nor is the circuit so wide as the last. I have been much assisted in preaching; but there are several narrow-

mind ed men who will probably be very troublesome. O God, wherein can I act more for the general good than I do? I beseech Thee show me Thy glory, and assist me to be more watchful." And again, "I find great pleasure in my work, and great thankfulness for being well received. Were it not for my poverty and other afflictions, perhaps, I should be exalted above measure. O God, Thou art infinitely wise, powerful, beneficent, and just! Thou canst have no delight in my misery; Thou dost therefore keep me down in order to do me good. Lord, sanctify my want, for Christ's sake!"

The Bradford circuit, about this period, was either too poor, or too stingy, to allow its ministers more than a mere pittance. Here are the items of allowance, as entered in the Circuit Book for 1770:—

	£	s.	d.
The preacher's board, thirteen weeks, at 3s. 6d.	2	5	6
The preacher's quarterage	3	0	0
Ditto ditto for the wife	1	17	6
Allowed for servant	0	12	6
Allowed for turnpikes	0	6	0
	<hr/>		
	*£8	1	6
	<hr/>		

The whole of a preacher's yearly income was therefore less than £33! The financial state of the Circuit was not much improved when Bradburn was stationed

* See Stamp's *Methodism in Bradford*, p. 55.

there in 1781-2. He says:—"I have not above £50 per annum, to maintain myself, wife, child, and servant." The wonder is, not that he should have been reduced to absolute want, but that he should have kept out of gaol! We subjoin a few extracts from his Journal:—

Dec. 31.—In general I have peace with God, and, upon the whole, find no decay of faith and love; but I might get forward more swiftly, were I faithful to the grace and opportunities with which I am favoured. I want more stability, that I may not be so easily moved with every wind, with every change of circumstances and condition in life. I look back with grief upon some parts of the past year; yet, I praise God for the grace which supported me. Hallelujah.

Feb. 28, 1782.—When I went out to preach on Sunday morning, 17th inst., nearly four miles off, my lovely boy was poorly; but as he had every help, I vainly imagined he would soon be better. In the midst of my sermon I found a most extraordinary impression upon my spirits, which caused me to burst into tears. Having gone through my discourse with much difficulty and confusion, I hastened home, and was told, at the door, of the child's death; upon inquiry, I found he departed at the very time I was so affected. I am now childless, and feel most acutely the loss of my pretty boy; but as his mother is spared, I ought not to

repine. I wish him not back in this wretched world, which to me is more wretched for want of him.*

• The following letter, written by Mrs. Bradburn to Wesley, describing their grief, is so full of tender, womanly feeling, that it was deemed worthy of a place in the *Arminian Magazine* :—

“ Bradford, Feb. 24th, 1782.

“ Hon. and very dear Sir,—Since I received your last kind favour, the Lord has been pleased to bring me through the furnace of affliction. O, that I could say I have come out seven times purified as gold. For ten weeks past I have laboured under a complaint of a very trying nature ; indeed, the most so that I ever suffered in my life. But my God, who is jealous to have my whole heart, did not see this chastisement sufficient for me ; and, therefore, suffered me to be tried in a much severer manner than I could be from an affliction which concerned myself alone. You may remember, dear sir, to have seen our little boy at Keighley, who was almost three years old, and just beginning to be a most engaging child, full of health and spirits. He was taken a little poorly on Monday the eleventh, and continued to be so two or three days. We apprehended he was taking the small-pox ; but not seeing any appearance of an eruption, though he continued to show symptoms of pain in his head, and sickness in his stomach, I was rather alarmed : therefore, his father went early on Friday morning for Mr. Floyde, who came immediately, and told me I need be under no disagreeable apprehensions on his account, for, though he thought it a fever, he would give him some powders, which would, with the blessing of God, relieve his head and stomach. I believe they were of use, for he did not complain near so much the next day, as he had done before. On Saturday night when I went to bed, I left him (as I thought) much better ; but this did not last long, for he began to be greatly agitated about two o'clock, and at five he fell

“*May 31.*—I often observe, that when I preach very indifferent sermons, and to myself quite uncom-

into strong convulsions, the first of which lasted, without interruption, two hours; notwithstanding, we got all the assistance we could for him, from the doctors in Bradford. At seven his poor father was obliged to leave me, with a heavy heart, as he had to preach at Eccleshill at eight; fearing he would never behold him alive any more. His fears were but too well grounded; for at half-past nine he breathed his last. I know, my dear sir, you are possessed of too much sensibility, not to judge more justly what my feelings were, on this distressing occasion, than would be in my power to describe. His father was afflicted above measure, at his return, which was about ten, and has ever since been very ill; more so than I ever knew him to be since we were married. He again engaged in his labours yesterday, and is now in the circuit; having no person here to assist him in preaching. I am myself very [poorly, and am not sure that I have quite five weeks to reckon. I request, my dear sir, you will remember in your approaches to the throne of your heavenly Father (in whose sight I know you are precious), your weak, distressed child, and help me by your fatherly admonitions. May I flatter myself that what I hear is true, that you intend visiting these parts this summer? If so, I need not tell you what pleasure your presence will give me; as I am persuaded you do not doubt, either of the sincerity or strength of my love or gratitude. But oh, my dear sir, if the Lord should be pleased to spare me to have that privilege, I could wish to feel myself more what I know would give you satisfaction; I mean, to have more of the mind of Christ, I find, glory be to Him! that I have a measure of it, but still I feel an ‘aching void;’ I am not yet filled with His fulness. Lord, help me to be all in earnest, for I see that nothing less than striving and agonising will do.—I am, honoured and very dear sir, your very affectionate, though unworthy child,

“ELIZA BRADBURN.”

fortable, the people are much blessed: on the contrary when I preach both comfortably, and in my own judgment, the greatest sermons, little or no notice is taken of them; nay, sometimes they are even blamed. This may be partly owing to the people's ignorance; partly to an unsuitableness in some sublime discourses to their wants; and partly to the wisdom of God, blessing the most, where human wisdom is least concerned.

“*Halifax, Aug. 31.*—My journey to London was rather agreeable than otherwise, a few circumstances excepted; and the Conference more pleasant than usual in several respects; but some disaffected men have made my way very rough since I returned. At present my temporal concerns give me great uneasiness, and my temptations are very many. O God! can I be in the call of Thy providence, and be thus straitened? Yes; for temporal things are no sufficient rule to judge by. Help me then, my Maker, to trust Thee, without tormenting fear.

“*Bradford, Oct. 31.*—I find great enlargement of heart, and much comfort, both when preaching and in private. I have also, very often, great light given me in the Scriptures, even to my own astonishment. But I do not enjoy that constant sense of the Divine presence, nor that settled habit of holiness which I greatly admire and recommend, and faintly strive to gain.

“*Dec. 31.*—I am more than ever convinced that there is nothing in this world worth living for, if viewed with no other end than itself; but when considered in reference to a future state, it is not a curse but a blessing. I suffer much by not always keeping the connection of both worlds in view. Surely, if in this life only I have hope in Christ, I am the veriest fool on earth to remain in my present situation, but by looking forward to an eternity of happiness I am supported.

Furzingly, Jan. 31, 1783.—I have had frequent opportunities this month of searching my own heart, and have often been very happy, but I am kept low by manifold temptations which no one knows of, but only Thou, to whom all things are naked and open. O God, save me from my fears, and strengthen this feeble soul, for Christ's sake!

Bradford, May 31.—I bless Thee, O Lord, my God for sending me timely aid. O assist me to trust in Thee at all times. I have found many blessings this month while preaching, and in private have been wonderfully comforted. My way is clear; I am again blest with two children, and my precious wife is recovering fast. Bless the Lord, O my soul! Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

“*Bramley, June 30.*—Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for enabling me to go through the pleasant labours of this month. Often hast Thou comforted me in my

own soul, while I have been striving to comfort others. Everything in this circuit is now in a good way. An open door is before us, and the Word is lovingly received. Most gracious Father, help me to be, in all things, the Christian I exhort others to be. Holy Jesus, Thou Head of the Church, with whom I expect to dwell through endless duration, bless my endeavours, and preserve me faithful unto death. Fifty-four sermons." [This month.]

When Bradburn was stationed at Bradford, an attempt was made to settle a Methodist chapel, upon the plan of Independency, at the neighbouring town of Birstal; and Wesley, probably fearing that Bradburn might be misled by the disaffected promoters of this scheme, wrote to him the following letter:—

“London, November 9th, 1782.

“DEAR SAMMY,—I abhor the thought of giving to twenty men the power to place or displace the preachers in their congregations. How would he then dare to speak an displeasing truth? And, if he did, what would become of him? This must never be the case while I live among the Methodists. And Birstal is a leading case, the first of an avowed violation of our plan. Therefore, the point must be carried for the Methodist preachers now or never, and I alone can carry it, which I will, God being my helper. You are not a match for the silver

H

tongue, nor brother Hopper. But do not, to please any of your new friends, forsake

“Your true old friend,

“JOHN WESLEY.”*

The Conference of 1783 was held at Bristol. Bradburn attended its sittings, and was appointed for Leeds. After entering upon his ministerial labours in that town, he says: “I have no reason to doubt that God sent me to this circuit. The people seem well pleased, and I have found much satisfaction in preaching. But I see plainly, unless I give myself trouble, I may go without the conveniences of life. Surely this ought not to be among such a people as these.”

His peace of mind was greatly disturbed, both here and at Bradford, by the Independents, who offered him a much larger stipend than he was receiving, if he would leave the Methodists and join them. Though the Independents at Bradford made him “very large offers,” he refused, conscientiously “believing that temporal advantages ought not to sway” him. The proposals of the Leeds Independents met with no better success. Under the date of *Feb. 29th, 1784*, he writes: “I am now in a situation peculiarly trying. My income is far short of my expenses, which distresses

* Wesley's Works, Vol. xiii, p. 99. See also, pp. 241-4.

me exceedingly, as I would rather die than go in debt. I have a very good offer from the Independents in Leeds, but what shall I do with my principles and conscience? These will I support, therefore must decline their kind offer, and trust God." And again:

Leeds, March.—Having suffered a good deal, both in my character and mind, on account of my manner of preaching in Dublin, particularly in regard to some expressions I used in the sincerity of my heart, relative to the Calvinian controversy, and which many of my friends thought much too strong; I began, on my removal from thence, to examine whether I could not be equally useful to others, and more comfortable in my own soul, by dropping those expressions, which, however true, seemed to be hardly laudable. I made the trial, and soon found that my preaching was much more satisfactory, both to myself and the people. I therefore determined to avoid, as much as possible, meddling with any of the contested points, and to preach the truth in as inoffensive a manner as I could with a good conscience. In this spirit I came to England, and spent my first year without any uneasiness about doctrines. When I went to Bradford I had not the most distant thought of any wrong use being made of this moderation, but some who were of the opposite opinions took occa-

sion to represent me as a Calvinist; and not a few of our own people expressed a great deal of jealousy about me. I immediately cleared myself to any who spoke to me in private; and more expressly, if possible, at the Quarterly Meeting, and at large in the Society. I even preached some sermons on the most doubtful points in dispute. These steps, together with my absolute refusal of the new Independent chapel, which had been offered to me, seemed to satisfy even the most scrupulous that I was a real Methodist. However, I was urged by some warm friends to preach more pointedly against the doctrines of *particular redemption* and *unconditional perseverance*, as those were the only points about which they doubted; I did so a few times, as many of the Methodists can testify. And always, in conversation with any of the Calvinists, avowed my belief of *general redemption* and *conditional perseverance*. For about nine or ten months before I left Bradford all was peace, or seemed to be so.

“ On my removal to Leeds I thought of nothing but going forward in the simplicity of my heart, without paying any regard to what had passed. Herein I was exposed to a temptation quite unforeseen. The Independents, under the care of Mr. Edwards, had heard something, but not the whole, of what had passed in Bradford. Many of them came frequently to hear me preach; and as I touched

very little on the few doctrines that distinguish them from us (as the Leeds Methodists seemed in no danger of leaning too much towards Calvinism), they expressed their satisfaction, not only among themselves, but to some of our people, who, talking to others, raised suspicions in their minds, which made them catch at some of my words, and put constructions upon them, often the very reverse of what I designed. I had scarcely heard anything of this, when two or three of the principal members of the Independent church informed me that some of their friends wished me to give them a sermon at the White chapel; and Mr. Edwards himself (whom I one day unexpectedly met) expressed an earnest desire that I would preach for him when I had time. My answer was, 'I have no objection to give you a sermon when the long days come, that we can preach at seven in the morning.' There was nothing new to me in preaching at such a place. It was agreeable to the Methodist plan, to the Bible, and to Mr. Wesley's declared judgment.

"Before any opportunity offered of complying with their request, I was applied to by both their deacons, to know if I would leave the Methodists and settle with them. I was not a little surprised at this application, thinking they must have heard of my answer to the people at Bradford. I, there-

fore, answered abruptly, 'I shall never suit you in my manner of explaining the Scriptures;' and instanced Matt. xxv. 29, and 1 Tim. i. 19, and added, 'I do not believe there is a damned soul in hell but might have been a saint in heaven, if it had attended to the grace of God, as it might have done.' They told me they did not want a minister to preach points of doctrine only, but one that would take care of their souls; and that, as I believed our total fall in Adam, or original sin, and that our recovery must be by grace, through Jesus Christ as the only foundation, they were satisfied. They wished me not to answer them then, but to consider the subject seriously, and make it a matter of solemn prayer. I came home, and revolved it in my mind for several weeks, and avoided going to preach for them on account of this proposal. Before I called upon any of them again, they sent for me, and said they had had a meeting with Mr. E., who told them he grew very infirm, and was not able to do as he had done; and that he offered either to take me as a co-pastor, or to give up the concerns into their hands, and preach when he could; and that they might allow something to support him during his life. It was agreed by all that Mr. E. should remain there while he lived. They observed farther, that the seats brought in £130 per annum, and they subscribed £30; that I

should have the whole, with the dwelling-house, when he died, and they would give me at least £80 a year till then. I told them I had thought very seriously about the matter, and prayed over it; but that my way seemed quite shut up; for I did not see that I was called of God to leave the Methodists. They desired me to consider that a call from a body of the faithful had generally been deemed a call from God, and requested me to weigh the good I might do, and the disadvantages I laboured under as an itinerant, with the greater good I might do, and the advantages I should enjoy, as a settled minister. I then spoke to my friends, and found them divided in their judgment. Some, whom I greatly loved, advised me to continue in the old way, giving me their reasons. Others said, if I went to the White chapel they would go with me; while others advised me to get a chapel built for myself, assuring me of their assistance. To this I paid no attention, as I determined never to take any step of the kind. I examined my present situation, and compared it with the offer of the Independents. At present I had vast numbers more to preach to than I should have with them; but I did not know their state so well, nor could I take that care of them which I could if settled among them; yet they were taken care of by the help of leaders, &c.; this, therefore, had but little

weight. At present it is very disagreeable to remove every two years at the farthest; but this has an advantage, being often the means of stirring up the mind, and preventing lukewarmness; and if anything disagreeable happened, the time was soon at an end. At present it is very displeasing to be so often absent from my family, and exposed to colds in bad lodgings; but this was doing good that would be attended with blessings, the loss of which there was no opposite good to counter-balance.

“Whether, therefore, I considered my own soul, or my usefulness, I could not see that I should be either more holy, or more useful by settling. The only thing which remained to be examined was the temporal advantage. At present my whole income did not amount to much more than £60 per annum. At the utmost it is not £70; and there are many ways to take some of this away, which I should be free from by not travelling: so that I neither did, nor ever could make it answer. If I embraced the present offer, the lowest sum that ever was named to me was £80 a year; and this only for the present, with at least £130 in prospect; besides the strongest assurances, from the chief of the community, that they would advance whatever sum I thought necessary. This was undoubtedly a very great temptation, and many would have readily accepted it. I

looked at the subject in every light, and reasoned very much concerning it. Whenever I gave way to the thoughts of complying, my mind was in darkness and distress. I therefore came to a conclusion, that temporal advantages, however great, are not sufficient motives to authorize a minister of the Gospel to leave one people and go to another, without a clear probability of his doing at least as much good as he did where he was. I did not think it was possible for me to be so useful, if I left the Methodists, as I might be with them ; and therefore determined to stay, and trust God, who had always sent me help in time of need. On the 16th of February, I told the two principal men that I did not find liberty to come to them, and would therefore have them place no dependence upon me. It was from principle and conscience I rejected this offer ; being resolved to go forward in the way wherein God had called and blessed me ; and to live and die a Methodist Preacher."

"Thou shalt not covet," is a commandment binding upon churches as well as individuals, and when God raises up a powerful, eloquent, and soul-converting minister in another section of the Church than our own, all feelings of envy should be suppressed, and we should glorify the grace of God in him. In the distribution of ministerial gifts, God is no respecter of churches ; and all churches who

are contented with a heaven-sent ministry, will receive their due share of pulpit ability. The Episcopalians have a Wilberforce, the Methodists a Punshon, the Baptists a Spurgeon, the Independents a Binney, the Presbyterians a Guthrie; and thus, Ephraim has no cause to envy Judah, nor Judah to vex Ephraim.

Ecclesiastical *poaching* is a shabby, disreputable business, and no one can engage in it, unless he casts off all sense of honour, and says in his foolish heart, "There is no God." And they who are entangled in the net of these fowlers, are, as a rule, but *sorry game*. Ministerial perverts seldom find rest for the sole of their foot outside the ark which first gave them shelter. They may have a larger salary, a grander parsonage, and more worldly honour; but what are these if peace have fled from the conscience and joy from the soul?

Bradburn owed more to Methodism than he could, ever repay. It took him from the dunghill, and set him among the princes of Israel. It was it under God, that arrested him in his vicious career, curbed his wild passions, sanctified his energies, and set the latent fire of his genius ablaze. This he was ever ready to acknowledge; and throughout life he loved Methodism with a fervour which nothing could cool, and with a constancy that nothing could shake. Hence, when tempted with

the offer of an easier and more lucrative pastorate, he says—to repeat his noble words—“It was from principle and conscience I rejected this offer; being resolved to go forward in the way wherein God had called and blessed me; and to live and die a Methodist Preacher.”

CHAPTER VII.

GRIEF AND JOY.

“ Hand in hand through all our ways,
Joy and sorrow travel;
Making life a tangled maze,
We may not unravel.”—*Punshon.*

THE Conference of 1784 was held at Leeds, where Bradburn resided. A dispute took place between Wesley and four of the preachers. Fletcher, of Madeley, was present, and reasoned with the four brethren, who were to blame, but without avail. He then fell on his knees before them, and they were so struck with his humility and affection, that they were melted down into a spirit of reconciliation.* The “Conference ended in great peace” on the 2nd of August, and two days afterwards Bradburn was at Sheffield, on his way to Bristol, the place of his appointment. When settled in his new sphere, he wrote the following letter to Miss Strickland, of Leeds (afterwards Mrs. Thomas Tatham, of Nottingham):—

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1830, p. 660.

“ Bristol, Oct. 19th, 1784.

“ MADAM,—Your last gave me a good deal of satisfaction, and I would have answered you sooner, but have been so engaged, partly with Mr. Wesley, who stayed here above four weeks, and partly with my wife, who has been for some time, and is still, confined by a violent pain, which alarms me much and makes me almost unfit for anything.

“ The satisfaction I mentioned arose from being made acquainted with your true state, so that I have no longer to write in the dark. I cannot but observe that the giving up a beloved object such as you mention, was indeed a great sacrifice, and God will not forget it. And, trifling as dress is, yet, as the world goes, there must be something more than nature to enable you to lay it aside. I pray God you may be always preserved from these two evils. I see many who call themselves religious that make no conscience of either; but their sin may be easily read in their punishment, though not always immediately. With regard to the third thing, that of early rising, there is no doubt but it is essentially necessary to real religion where health will admit of it. And I am firmly persuaded that thousands in England would enjoy better health than they do were they to rise early. And to lying long in the morning, I ascribe the deadness of soul, of which many of our own people complain. Nor did I ever know a healthy

man or woman that indulged this sluggish disposition but was always barren in soul. All this you allow, but how shall it be cured? By nothing less than the mighty power of God. This I know from experience. What I would therefore advise you principally to do is, to pray earnestly to God for power. This I would have you do to-night, looking no further than *to-morrow morning*. And never extend your thoughts to a second or third morning. Do not set your mark too high. Find out what number of hours you can keep awake, so as to be fit for mental exercises. By this means you will know how much sleep you want. Only you must not form your judgment too suddenly, nor would I advise you to be too critical, especially at first. For my own part I find it impossible to be always regular. As my office obliges me to lead a kind of nomadic life, sometimes up late, I cannot rise at the same hour as when I get to rest early; yet, I rarely am in bed above seven hours at once, and I would never be less if I could help it, though sometimes I cannot be six. Much depends upon the time of your getting to bed. I find upon repeated trials that my wife requires two, and, at times, three hours' sleep more than I do. So that when we go to bed at ten, she can, and does, when well, rise at seven, and not much sooner without being worse for it. I can rise about five without any inconvenience. When I preach in the mornings,

which I do about a fortnight out of every month, I endeavour to be in bed about half-past nine, and rise about half-past four, and then I am in better spirits than at any other time. O, my friend, think of Jesus, on the Mount a long time before it was day! Think of the joys of heaven, and the torments of the damned in hell, and shake yourself from your drowsiness. To hear that you are more than conqueror will give great pleasure to, Madam,

Yours truly affectionate,

S. BRADBURN."

The state of his wife's illness continued to cause serious alarm. Her strength was evidently failing, and he began to be tormented with the dread of losing her. The following extracts from his journal show that his fears were too well grounded:—

"*Kingswood, Nov. 30.*—O God, Thou hast showed me great love through this month. Thou hast sent such temporal helps that I am now clear of all debt, with something to spare. Thou hast relieved my beloved wife, and in a good measure restored her.

"*Bristol, Dec. 31.*—Glorious Lord, accept my unfeigned thanks for all Thy mercies through the past year. I have suffered at times a good deal on account of my Betsy's affliction, and my own folly and wretchedness, yet, blessed be Thy holy name,

Thou hast borne with me, heard my prayers, and supplied every want.

“*Bristol, Feb. 28, 1785.*—To this moment of my life, Thou, O my Saviour! hast done all things well. Thou hast again raised up my wife in answer to prayer. My three children are well, and I owe no one anything but love.

“*April 30.*—Suffered inexpressible anguish of spirit, on account of a preacher’s having fallen into sin, and bringing a reproach on the Gospel. I see and feel that we are only kept by the power of God. I am deeply sensible of the evil of sin, and from my soul abhor it; but I am no better than the vilest of sinners, any further than God has held me back, and changed me by His grace. I find Jesus Christ alone saves me. Glory be to Him for ever; He is precious to my soul beyond all expression!

“*Almondsbury, June 30.*—How uncertain is every earthly comfort! My lovely Betsy seemed better in health than usual, and I fondly expected her entire recovery, but she is now seized with a spitting of blood which greatly alarms me; the cause I know not, unless it be a fright she had last Wednesday night. There was a great noise in a public-house, and our window was open, the weather being very hot. She rose to shut it without awaking me. I heard the window, and supposing thieves were breaking in, flew out of bed, and was just

aiming a blow at my soul's beloved (which must have killed her) when she spoke, and saved me. I have not gained ground this month, but rather fear I have suffered loss. The death of that glorious light of the world, Mr. Fletcher, affected me greatly. O that a portion of his spirit may fall on my poor unworthy soul! O Lord, I know Thy grace is able to make me all I wish and ought to be. Gracious God! increase my faith, and enable me to love Thee with all my ransomed powers.

“*Midsummer-Norton, Nov. 30.*—A very chequered month. Sometimes I have been overwhelmed with joy, and at others swallowed up with unutterable distress. I feel such misery at the bare apprehension of losing my poor declining Betsy, that I am almost careless what I say or do. O God, look upon me, for Christ's sake. ;

Bristol, Dec. 31.—I end this year in exquisite pain of body and mind. Coming home from Bath, the morning after Christmas Day, with a design to take my darling Betsy to the Hot-wells, my horse fell with me on the ice, rolled over my leg, and crushed me in such a manner that I reached home with great difficulty. Here I am, without power to stir, and my dear wife unable to assist me in anything; being so shocked at my situation that it has increased her disorder, and her life seems in danger.

“*Jan.* 31st, 1786.—Never did I spend such a month as this has been. Suffering great pain in my sprained foot, and in horrible dread of what appears coming. I have not been in bed, nor taken off my clothes, for six and twenty nights. I have felt this day all the torment that I think my soul could bear, and this moment I apprehend myself to be the most miserable man on earth. My dearly beloved Betsy cannot be many hours in the body without a miracle. And oh, what will become of me without her? And yet, Almighty God, I blame Thee not. I have had my day, and now night, dismal night, is before me! Thou knowest all things, and hast all power, or Thou wouldst not deserve our confidence nor our worship; and a thousand things prove that Thou dost not delight in the misery of Thy creatures. Good Being! pity the most wretched of men, that would not willingly sin against Thee, and yet is far from being resigned to Thy dispensations. Alas! how can I be resigned? The wife of my youth expiring before me, in the twenty-ninth year of her age! An emaciated body, worn out with pain and watchfulness! Three children, the oldest not four years old! And I have not sufficient money to defray the funeral expenses.”

“*Feb.* 28.—On the first day of this month, about ten o'clock in the morning, my darling Betsy died, leaving me the most wretched of mortals!

What I have passed through during this month is beyond all expression! Despair and killing anguish have drunk up my spirits, and nearly consumed my body. When the precious remains of my lovely wife fell as lifeless clay in my arms, I was supported by a power I never knew before; but when on the eighth day she was to be buried, my grief was horrible! Since then, nature being worn out, I have at times found a degree of resignation. My dearest Betsy is mine no more! Her triumphant soul is for ever safe in the paradise of God. Her sufferings were great, but her patience was greater. A gloom is spread over all nature by her absence, which only Thou, O God, canst remove. I wish to give myself up to Thee, that Thou may do with me as seemeth Thee good. My dearest Betsy, take my last proof of love in thine epitaph, which flows from my poor heart.

“On her tombstone in Temple Church:—

“*Of whom the world was not worthy.*”—Heb. xi. 38.

“Of humble spirit, tho' of taste refin'd,
Her feelings tender, but her will resign'd;
Call'd by affliction every grace to prove,
In patience perfect, and complete in love:
O'er death victorious, thro' her Saviour's might,
She reigns triumphant with the saints in light.”

Jeremiah Brettell was stationed in Bristol at the time, and, when speaking of his sojourn in that

city, says:—"Both my colleagues [Bradburn and Murlin] lost their wives in January, within a fortnight of each other. They were both eminently pious women. I preached a funeral sermon on the death of Mrs. Murlin, on January 24th; and another on that of Mrs. Bradburn, on February 7th. The services were both very solemn seasons; and some persons were then awakened who became great ornaments to religion."

Mrs. Bradburn's amiability and piety were such, that the heart of her husband safely trusted, and almost adored her. During eight chequered years, his "lovely Betsy" had been the joy and pride of his life; and now that she was no longer by his side, we see how he was oppressed with gloomy forebodings, and fancied he should never be happy again. His health gave way under this sore trial, and for some weeks he was altogether unable to discharge his ministerial duties. Wesley, hearing of his great loss, wrote as follows:—

"London, January 14th, 1786.

"DEAR SAMMY,—It is well we know that trouble springeth not out of the dust; but that the Lord reigneth. But still, even when we can say, 'It is the Lord,' it is hard to add, 'Let Him do what seemeth him good.' I remember formerly, when I read these words in the church at Savannah, 'Son

of man, behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke,' I was pierced through as with a sword, and could not utter a word more. But our comfort is, He that made the heart can heal the heart. Your help stands in Him alone. He will command all these things to work together for good. To His tender care I commend you; and am,

“ Dear Sammy,

“ Your affectionate friend and brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

Wesley—then in the 83rd year of his age—left London, February 26th, and was pushing his way through the drifting snow to aid and comfort his two bereaved “Helpers” at Bristol. In hopes of recovering his health, Bradburn was forced out by his friends to meet Wesley at Bath, where he was to preach, February 28th. Next day he accompanied the aged veteran to Trowbridge, at which place, says Wesley, “ I had appointed to preach at noon. But we could not get thither till half an hour after. I then preached without delay; and in the evening in Bristol, on ‘O, death, where is thy sting? O, grave, where is thy victory?’ ” Wesley remained nearly a fortnight, preaching every evening; he got Bradburn to assist him in meeting the classes, upon whose mind it produced the intended effect. He writes somewhat hopefully:—

“My soul, I know not how, gains some kind of confidence that God will yet make me a blessing, and give me to see good days.” On the 13th of March, Wesley says—“I left Bristol, taking Mr. Bradburn with me, as I judged a change of place and objects would be a means of calming his mind, deeply affected with the loss of a beloved wife. In the evening I preached at Stroud,” where they appear to have slept. Next day—perhaps at five o'clock in the morning—Bradburn “spoke on Isa. xl. 31,” at Stroud. “Eleven weeks since” he “had preached before!” At noon Wesley preached “at Painswick with uncommon liberty; and in the evening at Gloucester.” And hereby hangs a tale.

There dwelt, at that time, in the city of Gloucester, an excellent young lady named Sophia Cooke, an intelligent and godly Methodist. Five years previously, while conversing with the celebrated Robert Raikes, the benevolent and philanthropic publisher of the *Gloucester Journal*, he pointed to groups of neglected children in the streets, and asked, “What can we do for them?” Miss Cooke answered, “Let us teach them, and take them to church!” The suggestion was tried, and Raikes and she “conducted the first company of Sunday scholars to the church, exposed to the comments and laughter of the populace as they passed along with their ragged procession.” Such was the origin

of our present Sabbath-school system, which has done so much for the Church and the world.

It was through Wesley's kindly interference that Bradburn secured the wife whose loss he so deeply mourned. Whether the kind-hearted and considerate old man thought that the best cure for his young friend's excessive grief would be to get another wife and with this design had brought him to Gloucester to introduce him to Miss Cooke, we cannot say. Any how, they were introduced to each other, and "as soon as ever I saw you together," says Wesley, "I believed you would be more nearly united." Bradburn was so captivated with this amiable young lady, and fell so inextricably in love with her, that Wesley had to proceed upon his journey without him. In a week mutual affection had ripened into a solemn engagement; and though his wife had not been in her grave six weeks, he would have married Miss Cooke then and there had she not been less impulsive than himself. He writes in his Journal:—

London, March 31.—My soul seems like the sea immediately after a storm. By the providence of God I was led to Gloucester, where I met Miss Cooke, who, in many respects, resembles my Betsy. I spoke to her on the 21st concerning my situation, and proposed marriage, to which she soon agreed; and I now look upon myself as her husband before Thee, O my God.

Bath, April 30.—While in London I preached

so often, and was so much among friends, that my mind was greatly strengthened; but when I returned to Bristol my trouble was again renewed. Though I verily believe God directed me to the amiable Miss Cooke, as a helpmate for me, yet, such is the custom of the world, I must not have her for several months, and by being much alone I am often truly wretched. O God, I look to Thee, my constant refuge; save me, I beseech Thee, for Christ's sake.

“*Stroud, May 31.*—Miss Cooke being on a visit at Stroud, I have frequent opportunities of seeing her, which greatly tends to relieve my mind. Her temper and conduct convince me, that God, who saw my trouble, provided her for me, and inclined her heart to love me. Yet, I pray Thee, O God, let us never be united unless Thou seest it will be for our real good. We have agreed that when we are with each other we will pray together every day at twelve o'clock, and when absent, that we will retire and meet each other's spirit before the throne of grace at the same hour. This I find very profitable.

“*Bristol, June 30.*—The power of God generally attends my preaching, and I am often happy in my own soul, but owing to my unsettled condition, my mind is restless and uncomfortable for the most part. My witness is in heaven, that I sincerely wish to be a consistent character, a real Christian in all the fluctuations of human life; but, my God! I am weak-

ness itself, and imperfect in everything. My forlorn state,—the recollection of what is for ever past,—and the hopes and fears of what is before me, agitate my soul exceedingly. Well! I leave all to Thee, my God!

“*July 31.*—This month, especially the beginning of it, has been a time of care and trouble. Having lodgings to provide for the preachers, and everything to prepare for the Conference, Mr. Wesley to attend, and various tempers to consult, I have had full work. Yet, even this may have been useful to me, as it has diverted my attention from my own concerns.

“*Gloucester, Aug. 10.*—This day I was married to the amiable Sophia Cooke.

“*London, Aug. 31.*—When my lovely Betsy died I thought myself undone for life! Even when I was enabled to resign myself to God, I expected to go mourning all my days, as I thought I never could love another woman; but, blessed be the Lord, I was mistaken. God has given me one equally gracious, and every way suitable.”

To those who would censure Bradburn for his hasty marriage, as being disrespectful to his deceased wife, we commend the apposite remarks of Dr. Johnson: “Not at all, sir. On the contrary, were he not to marry again, it might be concluded that his first wife had given him a disgust to marriage; but by taking a second wife he pays

the highest compliment to the first, by showing that she made him so happy as a married man that he wishes to be so a second time." Whatever may have been the opinion of others, his conduct was perfectly satisfactory to Wesley, who stationed him in London, as his assistant in superintending the temporal affairs of the Connexion. Here is a letter which Wesley wrote to Mrs. Bradburn a few weeks before her marriage:—

“Crowle, June 20th, 1786.

“Surely you never can have need to use any ceremony with me. You may think aloud, and tell me all that is in your heart. As soon as ever I saw Mr. Bradburn and you together, I believed that you would be more nearly united. His former wife never wanted anything; neither need any of our preachers' wives. They neither want nor abound. They have all things needful for life and godliness. But I am not a fair judge; I am partial. I long so much to have you under my own roof, that I cannot divest myself of prejudice in the matter. I can only say, ‘Give yourself to prayer; and then act, in the name and in the fear of God, as you are fully persuaded in your own mind.

“I am, yours affectionately,

“JOHN WESLEY.

“*To Miss Sophia Cooke.*”

Though it was a great honour for so young a man as Bradburn to be Wesley's assistant, and to live under his roof, yet the entries in his journal show that his new duties were irksome to him, and that he had a full share of griefs and cares.

"*Poplar, Nov. 30.*—Though I have had a great deal of care and trouble through this month about public concerns, yet I have enjoyed many very precious hours with God. In this great city, and among the richest people in our Connexion, I am poorer than ever I was. This Thou knowest, O God; and Thou permittest it for some good end. In Thee I trust, and am persuaded Thou wilt some way supply my wants. O assist me to cast my care upon Thee, who hast cared for me all my life."

"*London, Jan. 31, 1787.*—My mind is exceedingly encumbered with temporal business; I could not be much more troubled with it were I in trade. This is, nevertheless, my official calling while here: and as it is to serve the Preachers, I feel some satisfaction in taking up my cross. The preaching so seldom is quite contrary to my inclination, as those might serve tables as well who cannot preach at all. However, I am where God placed me, and I wish to be content.

"*Feb. 28.*—On Friday, the 2nd instant, I went to visit a man in a fever, and had not been many minutes in the room before I caught the infection.

I strove, however, to meet the classes till Wednesday, the 7th, when I was forced to take my bed, and soon became delirious. By the friendly and skilful assistance of Dr. Whitehead, I am once more in a good degree restored, and have preached twice. During this illness I found no remarkable joy, but a sweet submissive peace, and a yielding to the Divine will, which I would not change for a thousand worlds. I would not neglect any means of preserving my life; yet I look, through all second causes, to God, well knowing that

“‘Commissioned by His Sov’reign will,
Poison can cure, and balm can kill.’

“*March 31.*—I have preached some of the most comfortable sermons to my own mind this month, that I ever delivered. I have been exquisitely happy in God several times, for which I wish to be thankful. Yet, I bless God, I do not make a saviour of certain feelings. No! my dependence for all things is upon the Christ who hung upon the Cross—on the Jesus who is passed into the heavens. He alone is my foundation, and on Him I build my hope of present and eternal salvation. To Him be endless glory!

“*Chelsea, May 31.*—There are three sorts of people in our Society. The truly spiritual; the regularly sincere, who live much below their privi-

leges ; and the scarcely awakened—outward-court worshippers—who just conform to the rules enough to be kept in Connexion. My God, what am I ? Glory be to Thee. I know I am Thine, but I am very weak.

“*Rainham, June 30.*—I praise God for having the blessed opportunity of meeting with some select preachers. While they make me ashamed of myself, they stir me up to diligence. I feel a great thirst after useful knowledge, and an earnest desire to be holy and serviceable to mankind. I have no wish to live, but that I may do some good. O my God, make me what Thou wilt, only preserve me from sin. All is well with me at present.

London, Aug. 31.—How uncertain is every earthly good ! In the beginning of this month every thing wore a most promising aspect. My dear wife recovering charmingly, my children well, my own health never better, and clear with the world ; and now, alas, all is reversed within the compass of a few days. When I came home from Snowfields, on Wednesday, the 15th, I found my wife very poorly. Her complaint became alarming, and proved to be an inflammation in her bowels. Several times the physicians gave her up, and all despaired of her ever getting better. But God has heard prayer, and for some days she has recovered amazingly. Seventeen nights I have not been in bed. I am now greatly

fearful for myself, having no appetite for food, and feeling almost worn out. For my own part this would signify nothing, but I would not willingly leave my family in its present state.

“*Deptford, Sept. 30.*—I end this month well; but oh! what a time of trouble it has been to my soul and body! Yet, blessed be the Lord, I have been supported under my affliction, and preserved from yielding to some dreadful temptations when there were the fairest opportunities. My Sophia is getting better, and I trust will soon be perfectly restored. My soul is truly happy, and once more I praise Thee for all things.

“*London, Oct. 31.*—I thought I should have had a pleasant time at Islington, but never was more mistaken. My wife’s trunk was left in the coach (with above twenty pounds’ worth of things in it) and entirely lost. Maria’s complaint proves to be the small-pox, which I thought she had had. Add to this, my own mind is greatly tried by some busy selfish people.

“*March 27, 1788.*—Sat up all night with Mr. Chas. Wesley.”

Two days afterwards, March 29th, the soul of this sacred hymnist, which had warbled so long and so sweetly on earth, was set free from its cage of flesh, and soared upwards to chant the songs of the skies. A brief account of this solemn event was sent by

Bradburn to Wesley, but in the hurry the letter was improperly directed, and did not reach him until the day before the funeral took place. Wesley thus speaks of it: "If Mr. Bradburn's letter of March 29th had been directed to Birmingham, where I then was, I should have taken coach on Sunday, the 30th, and been with you on Monday, the 31st. But all is well. By that mistake I am much farther on my journey." The following letter was addressed to his old friend, Samuel Bardsley.

"London, April 15th, 1788.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—It always gives me pleasure to hear from you, and anything I can do for you I am yours to command. Mr. Charles Wesley died just as any one who knew him might have expected. I have had the pleasure and profit of his acquaintance and correspondence for years, and shall have a great loss of a true friend now that he is gone. I visited him often in his illness, and sat up with him all night, the last but one of his life. He had no disorder but old age. He had very little pain. His mind was as calm as a summer evening. He told me he should die in March some months before. He often said, 'I have no particular desire to die; but I want the whole will of God to be done in me, and by me.' He always seemed fearful of suffering something dreadful before death. In this he was quite disappointed, for

no one could pass easier out of time than he did. He said many things about the cause of God, and the Preachers, that did him much credit. He frequently said, 'I am a mere sinner, saved by the grace of God my Saviour.' This sort of language one would expect from most professors, but from one of his years and experience it was truly pleasing.

" His general character was such as at once adorned human nature and the Christian religion. He was candid, without cowardly weakness; and firm, without headstrong obstinacy. He was equally free from the cold indifference of lifeless formality, and the imaginary fire of enthusiastic wildness. He never was known to say anything in commendation of himself, and never was at a loss for something good to say of his Divine Master. His soul was formed for friendship in affliction, and his words and letters were as a precious balm to those of a sorrowful spirit. He was courteous, without dissimulation; and honest without vulgar roughness. He was truly a great scholar, without pedantic ostentation. He was a great Christian, without any pompous singularity: and a great divine, without the least contempt for the meanest of his brethren. He died, or rather fell asleep, on Saturday, March 29th, 1788, in the eightieth year of his age. I preached his funeral sermon at West-

street, and at the new chapel, on Sunday, April 6th, to an inconceivable concourse of people, of every description, from 2 Sam. iii. 38—"A prince and a great man is fallen this day in Israel." I am not sure but I shall publish the sermon. Our chapels are hung in black around the pulpits, desks, &c., and all the people are in mourning. Mr. John Wesley is very well and hearty. He did not come to the burial.

"I am, my dear brother,
"Your truly affectionate,
"S. BRADBURN."

Honest *Sammy* Bardsley was, doubtless, not a little startled at the receipt of such a laboured epistle from his son in the Gospel; and, after shaking his wise head, would probably conclude that it was an *extract* from the funeral sermon Bradburn had so recently preached, and which he had some thoughts of publishing!

Almost to the very last Charles Wesley retained the high-church prejudices of his early life against a lay ministry; nor was he careful to conceal his illiberal sentiments, but was "long accustomed to speak" most ungenerously of the Methodist preachers when he met the societies. "In the year 1785," says Jeremiah Brettell, "I was appointed to Bristol with Mr. Bradburn and Mr. Murlin. Here I became

K

more acquainted with Mr. Charles Wesley, as he generally spent some months in Bristol every summer. This society was, at that time, I suppose, the most opulent in the kingdom. Mr. Charles Wesley being of high-church principles, did not conceive how the good work, begun in his day, could be carried on without the guidance of pious *clergymen*. When he met the society he used to exhort them to abide in the Church, and ventured to say, that on his death, and that of his brother, the Methodist preachers would divide; some would go into the Church, and others settle as Dissenting ministers; but the people must abide in the Church, and they would get safe to land. He did not know the piety and stability of the preachers so well as his brother did. When I heard him address the society thus, I thought the people could not love us, and felt somewhat discouraged. I had left a lively, affectionate people in the North, and thought the society in Bristol, hearing these reflections upon the preachers, must be very different. I mentioned this to my colleagues, and they told me that Mr. Charles Wesley had been long accustomed to speak in this manner, and that few or none took any notice of it. But his remarks no doubt laid the foundation, in some degree, for that partial separation which took place in Bristol a few years after, when some alterations became necessary on the death of his brother. "The year following Brettell was sta-

more acquainted with Mr. Charles Wesley, as he generally spent some months in Bristol every summer. This society was, at that time, I suppose, the most opulent in the kingdom. Mr. Charles Wesley being of high-church principles, did not conceive how the good work, begun in his day, could be carried on without the guidance of pious *clergymen*. When he met the society he used to exhort them to abide in the Church, and ventured to say, that on his death, and that of his brother, the Methodist preachers would divide ; some would go into the Church, and others settle as Dissenting ministers ; but the people must abide in the Church, and they would get safe to land. He did not know the piety and stability of the preachers so well as his brother did. When I heard him address the society thus, I thought the people could not love us, and felt somewhat discouraged. I had left a lively, affectionate people in the North, and thought the society in Bristol, hearing these reflections upon the preachers, must be very different. I mentioned this to my colleagues, and they told me that Mr. Charles Wesley had been long accustomed to speak in this manner, and that few or none took any notice of it, But his remarks no doubt laid the foundation, in some degree, for that partial separation which took place in Bristol a few years after, when some alterations became necessary on the death of his brother. "The year following Brettell was sta-

tioned in London, where he "had many opportunities of hearing and being in company with the two Messrs. Wesley, who were always affectionate, kind, and instructive." The testimony of Bradburn, to the effect that on his death-bed, "he said many things about the preachers that did him much credit," leads us to the conclusion that Charles Wesley's *heart* was a great deal better than his *creed*.

We conclude this chapter with a few quotations from Bradburn's journal :—

"*June 30.*—Several times this month I have been most shockingly tempted to a once besetting sin—anger. Blessed be God, I have escaped. O, my God, I thank Thee for every degree of preservation. I have also been greatly straitened for money, nor can I yet tell how to clear my way; but my trust is in God. If I am in His work, He will send me help; if I am not, may He convince me of my error by leaving me to want in the time of trouble! I would not willingly waste anything; and if I be a preacher sent of God, He will provide. In Him I trust.

"*London, July 28.*—Conference began; different preachers supplied in the mornings, and Mr. Wesley, as usual, every evening. Hitherto, there is no jar of any consequence among the preachers. Oh, that all the ministers on earth were subject to some such examination of their characters! Surely, nothing can remind me more of the Day of Judgment. I feel

myself a poor sinful creature before Thee, O God ; but I praise Thy name ; man can lay nothing to my charge. O, help me to devote myself to the service of Thy people. Thou knowest I would fain be right.

“ *Aug. 6.*—The Conference ended in great peace.

“ *Aug. 31.*—I desire to be unfeignedly thankful that I feel peace with God and all mankind. I experience what I preach in a degree ; but I want to experience it more, and without interruption and free from the contrary. My will is to do right, and this is Thy work, for once I had no such inclination. I find a power I once had not ; this also is from Thee. Thou hast done great things for me ; praise be to Thy holy name. Still keep me, my good God, that I may answer Thy design in all things.

“ *West-street, Sept. 30.*—I have much to praise God for through this month ; good health ; my wife and four children well ; my wants all supplied ; our friends numerous and agreeable ; an excellent house and every convenience ; peace in our borders, and a prospect of doing much good ; plenty of time to read and study, and every help I can desire. Still I am, at seasons, in great heaviness. I see attainments in the Bible which I have not, and without which I cannot be completely happy.

“ *Oct. 25.*—Now more afflictions ! My George and Sammy very ill. *Oct. 31.*—Involved again in temporal trouble. My wife's being obliged to go to

Bristol, where my two boys are sick, and various circumstances have greatly pressed down my mind. But what should I do, or be, without affliction? *Nov. 1.*—About twelve o'clock, this night, my Sammy died. *Nov. 2.*—Walked to Bromley, preached, and walked back (twenty-four miles) without sitting down or dining. *Nov. 10.*—Robbed of my watch, and other things worth twenty pounds. *Nov. 15.*—Twice to-day in private I was almost overpowered with the love of God.

“*Nov. 30.*—The expenses attending my lovely Sammy's funeral, his brother's illness, and my wife's journey to and from Bristol, sunk me greatly in debt, which is always a kind of hell to me. I thought I must have sold my fine watch to help me; but I was robbed of that and other valuable articles. I saw the hand of God in this, and cast my soul and burden upon the Lord, and He put it into the hearts of two friends, to send me equal to what I could have got for all that was lost. Glory be to God!

“*Dec. 31.*—It is now the solemn noon of night. The old year is just gone, and the new is this moment beginning. Thou alone, O, my Maker, art present, and seest the secrets of my soul! I thank Thee for the many mercies bestowed upon me through the past year, especially through the last month. I see that, when every prop is taken away, Thou canst interpose, and send relief. I bless Thee for the happi-

ness I have lately enjoyed ; and for the last token of Thy notice, that a friend gave me this day a watch, apparently better than the one which was taken from me. I know I am Thine, and shall be with Thee to all eternity.

“ *Jan. 31, 1789.*—I bless my God, He gives me proof that it is good to be much in private with Him. I see it is possible to drive about with a hurrying religion, which is neither good for me nor the people.

“ *April 30.*—Much oppressed with a cold—not able to preach. I never fear death ; yet I feel a desire to be more useful, if the Lord will, before my removal hence. This is just as His Sovereign will shall appoint ; good is His pleasure at all times to me. Only, if indulged, I would fain not out-live my usefulness.

“ *June 30.*—I end this month in a pleasing frame of mind. I have certainly much to praise God for ; but my little Tommy's illness is a great deduction from my comfort. He is in Thy hand, and I wish Thy will to be done ; yet, I have a will of my own, O God ! If I had no will, where would be the virtue of being resigned ?

“ *Gloucester, July 31.*—Though my dear child's long illness made his death rather desirable than otherwise, yet there is something painful in losing part of one's existence ! O, Death, I like thee not in thyself. God of life, save me from its sting ! O,

merciful God, go with me to [Manchester] the place of my appointment, or suffer me not to reach it.

“*Manchester, Sept. 30.*—I am once more very agreeably settled. I have an excellent house, with every convenience; many good friends; and, above all, a prospect of being extensively useful.

“*Oct. 26.*—Most dreadfully afflicted with the first touch of the gout, owing to a fall from my horse.

“*Nov. 30.*—A month of sore affliction. Not willing to believe my disorder was the gout, I treated myself improperly, and on Tuesday, 3rd instant, drove it into my head and stomach, and was not only delirious, but outrageously mad till Friday, 13th instant. I took laudanum and musk in great quantities, and was blistered in several parts.

“*Dec. 7.*—This day sold above one hundred volumes of excellent books towards paying my debts.

“*June 30, 1790.*—I bless the Lord for the many mercies, spiritual and temporal, bestowed on me through this month. Clear with the world; my family all well; my own health excellent; and my soul truly happy in God. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for all my past trials. O, take me for Thine own, and mould me as Thou wilt. I am unworthy of Thy notice; but there is abundant worth in Christ Jesus, and in Him I trust.

“*Bristol Conference, July 31.*—I feel much gratitude

to God for sparing my life when the coach was overturned, and for preserving my dear wife in so wonderful a manner. Hitherto, all is well in Conference. Surely, I have great reason to be humble and serious.

“*Oct. 31.*—Preached at Failsworth and N. Oldham. My health, my family, my character, and all my concerns call for praises unceasing to the greatest and best of Beings. O, that my every breath were praise!

“*Nov. 30.*—I have hurt my mind by trifling. Yet, through all, in the very worst of times, Thou, O, my God and Saviour, knowest that I love Thee. Thou triest me with poverty that I may feel for the poor, and that my blessings may be received from Thee. I thank Thee, Friend of my soul, for all things.

“*Middleton, Jan. 31, 1791.*—The having several spare days now and then is of great use to me. What pains ought to be taken in preparing for the pulpit! O, God, I feel myself ashamed before Thee, that I am not more devoted to study!

“*Oldham, May 31.*—Never had greater temptations to sin, nor fairer opportunities of committing it; but blessed be the Lord, I have been preserved. O, God, I thank Thee for interposing when sin is nigh. Thou knowest I would not offend Thee to gain the world.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL LEGISLATOR.

“As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began ;
* * * * *
Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star ;
Who makes by force his merit known,
And lives to clutch the golden keys.”—*Tennyson.*

ON the 2nd of March, 1791, the Methodist Connexion sustained a heavy loss in the death of its venerable founder. Bradburn, who resided in Manchester at the time, published a clever and interesting pamphlet, entitled, *A Sketch of Mr. Wesley's Character*, which was appended to a sermon preached by his Superintendent, Mr. Rodda, on the occasion of Wesley's death. A short extract from this “Sketch” will show the style and spirit in which it was written, and the intimacy subsisting between Wesley and himself. “I had not time,” he says, “to publish a large volume; though I thought it right, as a son, to say something of my father in the Gospel. And very few

of his sons have had greater opportunities of being thoroughly acquainted with him during the last seventeen years. I have slept with him hundreds of nights: I have travelled with him thousands of miles: I lived in what he reckoned more immediately his own family, in London and Bristol, five years together: I have conversed freely with him on a variety of subjects: I knew his opinions, his disposition, and the very secrets of his heart. Had he not discovered that he was man by a few instances of human frailty, those who knew him would have been in danger of idolatry. His life showed to what degree of greatness a man may be raised; and his death shows that the glory of virtue alone is solid and eternal. The pomp and pageantry of state, wealth, and titles of dominion, have contributed to gain some the name of great. These would have been useless appendages to him. He was great in himself; great in the energy and powers of his own mind; great in the superiority and sovereignty of his soul over most other men."

In the closing paragraph, he dexterously availed himself of the opportunity to throw out a few hints as to the course the Preachers should pursue at the approaching Conference. "The chief point in which the death of Mr. Wesley will affect the Methodist Connexion is, the Preachers thereby lose their 'centre of union.' They considered themselves as his sons in the Gospel; and to his direction they freely sub-

mitted. But they owe no such submission to any other man. It is, therefore, impossible that there should ever be another king in our Israel. But it does not follow that our union will be destroyed. The Preachers never called Mr. Wesley, Rabbi, in the sense which our Lord forbids. They never acknowledged any head of the Christian Church but Jesus Christ; and He is 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' Under His gracious influence, the Preachers are well qualified to govern themselves. Their plan is in part, not only fixed, but published in their enrolled deed, and the Minutes of the Conference. It is probable they will appoint a President and a general Committee every year, to act in concert during the Conference only; their office and power to end with the Conference. While they are assembled, they can divide the three kingdoms into districts (a given number of circuits to form a district). They can then choose a committee out of every district; and each committee can choose its own president for the year, who can convene the committee in case of any business that cannot be done in a single circuit. Thus it will be easy to preserve our union indissoluble; and to perpetuate the itinerant plan in the good old way."

Within four weeks from the day of Wesley's death, Bradburn and a few of the leading preachers appear to have met at Halifax, where they drew up

the following circular, which was printed and sent through the Connexion:—

“To the Methodist Preachers in general, and to the Conference and Assistants in particular.

“DEAR BRETHREN,—We whose names are underwritten, having seriously weighed the present state of our affairs, beg leave to lay before you the result of our deliberations.

“Ought not the preachers in each circuit to consult with their neighbouring brethren, and appoint who shall attend the ensuing Conference? For, would it be prudent for *all* to go, as the circuits would then be left for a considerable time without preachers, and it will be impossible to find accommodations for *all* among our own friends in Manchester. Yet, ought not as many of the members of the Conference as possible, with the assistants (superintendents) and preachers who are to be admitted, to attend? Likewise to take into consideration our form or mode of government for the future, that you may not have *all* to do when you meet at Manchester.

“There appears to us but two ways, either to appoint another King in Israel, or to be governed by the Conference plan, by forming ourselves into committees. If you adopt the first, who is the man? What power is he to be invested with, and what revenue is he to be allowed? But this is *incom-*

patible with the *Conference Deed*. If the latter, we take the liberty to offer our thoughts upon that subject.

“ 1. Fill up the vacant places in the *Conference Deed* with preachers according to their *seniority* in the work.

“ 2. Choose a President for *one year only*, according to the enrolled deed.

“ 3. Appoint a Secretary and Stewards for one year only, except for the Preachers' Fund.

“ 4. Appoint a person from year to year to hold a Conference in Ireland.

“ 5. Appoint different Committees which will take in all the circuits in the three kingdoms, to manage the affairs of their respective districts from one Conference to another.

“ 6. Let these Committees, during the time of Conference, appoint their own presidents for the ensuing year. And let their names be inserted in the Minutes, that they may convene the committee in case of the bad behaviour or death of a preacher, or any other emergency.

“ 7. Let each of the presidents bring an account of their proceedings to the Conference, and there let them be finally determined.

“ 8. Let every preacher that is recommended at the Conference, and approved, but not *then wanted*, have his name inserted at the end of the Minutes,

that the aforesaid presidents, or committees, may know where to apply for a preacher, when one is wanted in any of their respective districts.

“9. In case the number of these preachers be not sufficient to supply the vacancies that happen between Conference and Conference, let the committee agree with a local preacher to supply till the next Conference only.

“10. If the number of clergymen who do not travel, superannuated and supernumerary preachers, be not limited, may not our government, in process of time, fall into the hands of men who cannot properly be called travelling preachers?

“11. Should it be necessary to settle any more clergymen, or to make more supernumerary preachers than a *given number*, will it not be wise to put out of the deed the *first clergyman*, or *supernumerary preacher*, and put a travelling preacher in his place? George Whitfield, or the book steward for the time being, excepted.

“N.B.—Read the Conference Deed, and you will be convinced that no person has a right, *by that deed*, to go to *Ireland*, or *elsewhere*, to hold a Conference: and had not our last Conference appointed our ensuing meeting at Manchester, we *must* have gone to London, Bristol, or Leeds.

“We submit these thoughts to your consideration, and earnestly pray to God that you may have wisdom

to improve, amend, or reject them, as shall be most for His glory, and the CONTINUATION of ITINERANCY among the METHODISTS !

“ We are, dear Brethren,

“ Your affectionate brethren,

“ WILLIAM THOMPSON. RICHARD RODDA.

“ JOHN PAWSON. SAMUEL BRADBURN.

“ ROBERT ROBERTS. THOMAS TENNANT.

“ JOHN ALLEN. THOMAS HANBY.

CHRISTOPHER HOPPER.

Halifax, 30th March, 1791.

“ *Just Published*, An Account of the Character of Mr. Wesley, by Messrs. Rodda and Bradburn.— Price 6d.”

At meetings of a similar nature which were subsequently held elsewhere, the “Halifax Circular” met with general approval. Shortly before the Conference, Rodda and Bradburn, and some of the senior Preachers, including Thompson, Mather, Pawson, and Roberts, met in Manchester to make final arrangements, and on the 26th of July the Conference assembled in that town, “and was more numerously attended than any former one; above two hundred Preachers were present, and all seemed deeply affected” as they thought of him who would preside over them no more. Some of the Preachers appear to have been a little jealous of Dr. Coke and Mather,

who had almost ruled the Connexion in Wesley's name for some time previous to his death. Both had received special ordination at his hands, and some feared that they might claim to be recognised as his authoritative successors, in virtue of this ordination. These fears were probably groundless; but if Coke and Mather had any such designs, their ambition was certainly not gratified; for the Conference passed them by, and elected as their President for one year, William Thompson—a modest, amiable man, “of remarkably strong sense, a fertile genius, a clear understanding, and a sound judgment. He was supposed by many to be one of the closest reasoners, and most able speakers, that ever sat in the Methodist Conference.”*

“During the Session of the Conference, Bradburn preached before that venerable body. He referred pathetically to their recent loss, to the danger of fatal disunion, and to the necessity of a common and hearty adherence to the faith and discipline of Methodism. Gradually he kindled into the highest oratory, and, anxious to make the best of the effect he felt he had produced, raised his voice, and appealed to those of the preachers present, who intended to stand by the ‘old plan,’ to rise and testify it. Every preacher in the chapel sprang at once upon his feet. There was a solemn silence,—broken, shortly, by a cry from

* Atmore's *Methodist Memorial*, p. 420.

the gallery,—‘ Here’s a woman in distress!’ ‘ Hold your tongue!’ screamed Bradburn, indignant that attention should be thus diverted from his real object. None dared to smile, but all knew that the benefit of the sermon was irreparably lost, more by his own than by any other interruption of the current of thought and feeling.” *

Bradburn writes with evident satisfaction,—“ The Conference has been conducted in a manner worthy of wise and good men. God is with us, and all our enemies will be disappointed.” And Dr. Clarke says,—“ I have been at several Conferences, but have never seen one in which the spirit of unity, love, and a sound mind so generally prevailed.” The business of the Session was thus pleasantly settled, and these soldiers of the Cross valiantly buckled on their armour for another year’s campaign.

Bradburn was appointed to Birmingham, and Benson was removed from Birmingham to Manchester; but, in consequence of a mutual arrangement between these preachers, the change did not take place until the month of May, 1792.† When the excitement of Conference was over, and Bradburn was once more engaged in his beloved work of preaching the Gospel, he says, “ I am once more at rest. How pleasing is the thought of being eternally

* *Dr. Bunting’s Life*, p. 74.

† *Macdonald’s Life of Benson*, pp. 232-4.

at rest in heaven!" In the month of November he had "some keen trials," and was so "straitened in temporals" that he could not replenish his library with "the very books" he "wanted;" but in December, "all is once more well, and the work prospering." In a letter written about this time to Rodda, he says, "Mr. Clarke and I have instituted a new Society, called the Strangers' Friend Society; it succeeds beyond our most sanguine expectations. We have many pounds in hand. It is certainly very affecting to hear of the good done every week by it." He sent a copy of the rules of this Society to Rodda, on the back of which he writes:—

Manchester, December 18th, 1791.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—According to promise I send you the rules of our infant society. I have no doubt you will wish it prosperity. It is the instrument of great good:

"I may state to you that Mr. Clarke and I have given up the use of sugar in everything, except medicine which has sugar in it; and this we shall continue till the slave trade is abolished. We have avowed this both in public and in private, and have induced numbers to leave off that drug, a drug composed of the *slave dealer's sin* and the *slave's misery*.*

* Bradburn published an *Address to the People called Methodists, concerning the Evil of encouraging the Slave Trade*. Manchester, 1792. 12mo., p. 24.

Nor have I tasted tea since the 10th of October; and, I believe, I shall never taste it again. Leaving it off cost me a few head-aches at first; but I glory in having obtained a complete conquest over that which led me captive upwards of twenty years.

“ Mr. Richard Barlow is doing all he can to justify Dr. Whitehead. I wish you would send me, without delay, a copy of your full answer to all that he advances in his printed letter. The subscriptions are at a full stop, in consequence of Mr. Barlow having read (of course in my absence) the Doctor’s letter to the Leaders. What are the executors about? Their names are the foremost of, I suppose, forty—however, of a great many, who have signed his letter. Send me, I beseech you, all the help you can on this head; for as Manchester is, so will many surrounding places be. Rely upon this; I will spare no pains to serve the Preachers, and strengthen the hands of the London Committee. No one can be too zealous in this cause.

“ I am, your truly affectionate friend,
“ SAMUEL BRADBURN.”

The last paragraph has reference to the misunderstanding that subsisted between Dr. Whitehead and the Preachers, relative to his intended *Life of Wesley*.

Though few men were more completely free from little-mindedness than Adam Clarke, yet his great

talents and learning drew around him a host of flatterers, and, at times, he was slightly dogmatical, and more than slightly egotistical. He is accused by his biographers of unjustly aspersing the conduct of Bradburn and Benson, who were his colleagues in Manchester, and of extolling his own conduct at the expense of theirs. He charges them with taking opposite sides of the great political questions which then agitated the country—"one pleading for the lowest Republicanism, while the other exhausted himself in maintaining the Divine right of kings, and regular governments, to do what might seem right in their own eyes, the people at large having nothing to do with the laws but to obey them." The learned Commentator "was not sufficiently guarded in his expressions." It may be true that Messrs. Bradburn and Benson ranged themselves on opposite sides; that Mr. Bradburn took his stand on the side of liberty, and Mr. Benson on that of order: but there is no evidence to prove that the one was so violent a champion of "legitimacy," or the other so determined "an advocate of the lowest Republicanism," as Dr. Clarke represents them to have been. Both these celebrated ministers may have been betrayed by a well-meant zeal into the occasional introduction of their political speculations into the pulpit; but it is monstrous to suppose that from Sabbath to Sabbath they carried on a systematic warfare. Mr. Clarke

must have been misled by the reports of ignorant or designing men, who, being themselves, perhaps, violent partisans, tinged everything with the deep hue of their own excitement; for, while discharging his own duties with the zeal with which he always did discharge them, he could not be engaged in collecting the evidence upon which he founded his statement. Mr. Bradburn, indeed, published a sermon on 'Equality, in which his prime end was to show that a firm adherence to the principles of unlimited religious liberty was perfectly consistent with a stedfast attachment to the king, whom he earnestly prayed God to bless, and to the constitution, which, in itself, was excellent, and of which he highly approved. 'If there had been no such Scripture,' he remarks, 'as that which commands us to *honour the King*, we,' the Methodists, 'as a people, have reason to love King George, and to be pleased with the civil government.' To such an extent, indeed, did Mr. Bradburn carry his views of loyalty, that he maintained it to be the duty of the Methodists 'to be loyal, were a Pagan upon the throne;' for he adds, 'what with some is mere policy, is with us a case of conscience.' The whole scope of the discourse is to expose the levelling politics which were then so warmly advocated." *

Most of the preachers whom Wesley had ordained administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to

* Hare's *Life of Adam Clarke*, LL.D.

the societies which desired it. Bradburn, and many of his unordained brethren, were also resolved to accede to the wishes of the people in this particular, believing with Luther, that a Christian man, elected to preach by Christian men, was as truly consecrated as if the hands of all the bishops had been put upon his head. But, to prevent unpleasantness, he and a few others judged it expedient to be ordained. Cownley and Atmore consecrated three of their brethren at Newcastle; and Pawson states that he was asked to go over to Manchester to "meet Messrs. Hopper and Hanby, in order to ordain Messrs. Taylor, Clark, and Bradburn, and perhaps Messrs. Roberts and Myles." In a letter, dated April 14th, 1792, Pawson adverts to the subject again. "I had been invited to attend the Manchester District Committee. We had a very friendly and agreeable meeting indeed. Mr. Hanby and another, with myself, ordained Messrs. Thomas Taylor, Samuel Bradburn, and George Snowden; after which we received the Sacrament together. Messrs. Robert Roberts, Adam Clarke, and William Myles were also present. We should have ordained these also, had not they preferred waiting until Conference. Mr. Clarke seems determined to be ordained, but wishes it to be done publicly." These ill-timed transactions were strongly condemned by the ensuing Conference; and it was resolved, that if any brother shall *ordain* others, or be *ordained* him-

self, without the consent of the Conference previously obtained, *he does thereby exclude himself.*

The Sacramental question caused considerable excitement at this Conference. The Connexion was divided into two parties—one party resolved to abide by the “old plan,” and go to the parish church for it; the other resolutely demanded the liberty to receive the sacred ordinance at the hands of their own ministers. Each party had powerful supporters among the preachers, and a division seemed inevitable, whatever conclusion the Conference might come to. “After debating the subject for some time,” says the Conference address to the societies, “we were greatly divided in sentiment. In short, we knew not what to do that peace and union might be preserved. At last Mr. Pawson proposed that we should commit the matter to God by putting the question to the lot, considering that the oracles of God declare that ‘the lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty.’ We accordingly prepared the lots; and four of us prayed. God was surely then present; yea, His glory filled the room. Almost all the preachers were in tears: and felt an undoubted assurance that God Himself would decide. Mr. Adam Clarke was then called on to draw the lot, which was—‘You shall not administer the Sacrament this year:’” whose “voice in reading it,” writes John Valton, “was like a voice from the clouds. A solemn

awe rested on the assembly; and we could say, The Lord is here of a truth. All were either satisfied or submitted, and harmony and love returned."

A great deal of this Sacramental clamour was raised by Alexander Kilham—a young preacher of six years' standing; whose ecclesiastical principles were of the republican order, and whose disposition and judgment were warped by chronic biliousness. In the early years of his ministry, he got the unfortunate habit of wearing yellow spectacles, of more than ordinary magnifying power, and, consequently, he viewed things in wrong colours, and in exaggerated proportions. When scarcely thirty years of age, he made the profound discovery that Wesley was *not infallible*, and that Methodism was *not perfect*; and other discoveries equally precocious. Wesley's corpse was hardly cold, when Kilham felt himself called upon to use his efforts to remodel the constitution of Methodism. As early as the month of April, 1791, he addressed a letter to Bradburn, in which he referred to what he deemed Connexional grievances, and urged him to make an attempt to effect their removal at the ensuing Conference. After this he wrote his famous Newcastle pamphlet; for which he was tried at the Conference of 1792, and though Bradburn defended him in a powerful speech, he was censured, and the pamphlet was condemned

as calculated to spread division and dissension in the Methodist societies.

The discussion of these important questions took up so much time that the Conference did not end until the 15th of August; on which day "We sat," says Bradburn, "above seventeen hours, being determined to finish our business."

Bradburn went direct from London to his appointment at Bristol. Soon after his arrival, he and Mr. Roberts conducted the opening services of Portland-street Chapel, in that city. At the request of some of the trustees, they on that occasion put on gowns and bands, and read the Liturgy (slightly altered), in a surplice. This conduct gave great offence to the minister of the parish; and he published a letter to the Methodist preachers, condemnatory of such proceedings. To this publication Mr. Bradburn immediately produced a smart reply. No sooner had Mr. Bradburn's letter appeared than the trustees of the "Old Room" (the original Methodist chapel in Bristol), who had from the beginning evinced the greatest anxiety for the maintenance of the "old plan," prepared and printed a paper, in which they disavowed all that had been done by the Preachers in this matter. Thus assailed on both sides, Mr. Bradburn retorted by publishing a very spirited and sensible letter, detailing and explaining the whole case. All the other Preachers on the Circuit attached their

signatures to this letter, testifying their approbation of its contents, as did all the new trustees of Portland Chapel, and eighteen of the male leaders. Considering that the trustees of the "Room" were but six in number, this showed pretty clearly the general sense of the Bristol Methodists on the subject. It was very frankly stated that the Preachers had assumed these clerical vestments at the request of the trustees, and that, having worn them once, and finding it gave offence to some of the members, they wore them no more. Yet as these several papers and letters were sent throughout the Connexion, this new dispute tended greatly to increase the disquiet and uneasiness which had previously existed.* Bradburn also published the sermon which he preached on this occasion, "as a vindication of his doctrines, &c."

After conducting the watch-night service he writes: "I have had much more honour in my public preaching this year than ever, but I know not that I have done more good. O Lord, my soul and all my concerns are in thy hand, and my desire is to be a real Christian." In the month of May, 1793, "after an absence of nearly seventeen years," he says, "I paid my friends in Wales a visit. Time has altered many faces, but their love remains unimpaired. This month has been well filled. I have travelled about six hundred

* *Smith's History of Methodism.*

miles, preached forty-two sermons, expounded frequently, and prayed in public about one hundred times, besides praying in families and with several sick people. I bless God I am now well and hearty, and determined to live to God."

The Conference of 1793 was held at Leeds. Charles Atmore, who was present, thus speaks of it: "*Lord's day, July 28th.* Mr. M'Allum preached in the morning at seven. I heard Mr. Bradburn at half-past ten, Mr. A. Clarke at half-past one, and Mr. Mather in the evening. I found it good to be there, particularly in hearing Mr. Bradburn. *Monday, July 29th.* Our conference began. There appeared a blessed spirit of love amongst us, which I hope is a token for good. On Tuesday our grand debate respecting the administration of the Sacraments began. Never did I more clearly see the gracious interposition of 'the God of Peace,' or the manifest defeat of the designs of the sower of discord. The subject was discussed on both sides with great candour and impartiality, great earnestness was evinced, but no undue warmth of spirit. The result was, that we should submit to each other in the fear of God. We, therefore, resolved that, in those places where the members of the Society were unanimous in their desire for the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at the hands of their own preachers, it should be

granted; and that all distinctions between *ordained* and *unordained* ministers should cease; and that being received into full connexion by the Conference, and appointed by them to administer the ordinances, should be considered a sufficient ordination without the imposition of hands. The preachers who were in favour of these propositions amounted to eighty-six; those who voted against them were forty-eight; so that the measure was carried by a majority of thirty-eight." It was also resolved, that "no gowns, cassocks, bands, or surplices, shall be worn by any;" and that "the title of *Reverend* shall not be used by us toward each other in future." The resolution forbidding *gowns, bands, &c.*, had special reference to Bradburn's recent injudicious conduct at Bristol. This old rule is still in force, and is wonderfully effective in keeping the Methodist pulpit free from priestly flunkeyism. The advocates of the "Old Plan," called the "High Church" party, thus got the *clerical vestments*, the title of *reverend*, and *ordinations* abolished; but the "Friends of Freedom," as they were called, carried the day on the *sacramental* question, and both parties were, to a great extent, satisfied for the time.

Bradburn preached a characteristic sermon before the Conference, from 2 Cor. viii. 23. It was printed in the magazine for the following year. Here is a letter written by Bradburn to Kilham, which shows

among other things, how party feeling makes good men misunderstand and mistrust each other:—

“ Bristol, December 12th, 1793.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,—Through the mercy of God I am returned in safety to this city, after an absence of six weeks, which I spent to good purpose, in visiting the churches in Taunton, Collumpton, Plymouth, St. Austell, Redruth, and Penzance circuits. Blessed be the Lord, the good cause is prospering in every place I visited. I gave the Lord's Supper at Plymouth Dock to about five hundred people, and truly God was with us. Mr. Rhodes assisted me, and is quite hearty in our cause. While I was away my youngest son died, which greatly afflicted Mrs. Bradburn. At the same time I was laid up in Cornwall, having hurt both my feet in viewing the wonders of nature in that amazing county. The sprain brought on a touch of the gout, which lost me several days, though not one Sunday; for Timothy Crowther—a sound man—carried me on his back to chapel, and I preached sitting in the very fit, which, I suppose, no one was ever mad enough to do before. Yet I do not repent it, though my pain was exquisite.

“ While I was away your letter arrived, which accounts for your not receiving this sooner. Be assured it was not want of love that prevented your hearing from me when at Conference; but I could

send you no pleasing news, and I determined that the unpleasant should find its own way, which I knew it soon would. But fear not, all will be well. Everything is in a good way. We make no laws but what we can rescind. I was glad to get some ground to begin to build upon. Mr. Thompson was the chief opposer of the Liberal plan. But I have no doubt of throwing him again into the minority. I baptize and bury without control, and last Sunday week I gave the Lord's Supper at Kingswood to about four hundred people ; many being there from Bristol. Just as I gave it to a poor trembling soul, the Head of the Church justified her fully. She proclaimed His love aloud, and great was our rejoicing. That forenoon will tell well in eternity. Our church bigots here dare not molest me, though Rodda has espoused their cause with all his power. I have told him my mind freely, without anger, and all is (and has been ever since Conference) outwardly peaceable ; and I hope to keep it so till it comes round again. Elliot is a stanch friend, and helps me much.* I purpose giving the Lord's Supper again on Christmas-day, when I hope to see more of the Bristol friends. The people are very, very kind to me. My health and spirits are charming. I have not a doubt that, in the next Conference, a simple majority of any society will be allowed the Lord's Supper, and something more

* This was his colleague, Richard Elliot.

than that. Remember, I tell you this day, the high-flyers among us are coming down apace, and great will be their fall. I will not give my privileges away to please a few inconsistent *ignoramuses*, though I submitted for a season to their unreasonable decrees. Mr. Moore gives the Lord's Supper every month regularly at Bath, and has a blessed work going forward. I really believe the little interruption we met with will do us good. Do not destroy your gown and bands, nor suppose they are for ever done with.* You will know better soon if the Lord will. We must have a Methodist constitution, or plan of discipline explained, and we shall in due time. (I wish I durst tell you all I know and propose; but a letter may miscarry and I am bound to secrecy. *This parenthesis to yourself most sacredly*).

"I will send you a hundred sermons soon; the other pamphlets are all gone. Never mind the money. Sell what you can, and give the rest away to any that will use them. My love to Mrs. K., Mr. Sanderson, &c. Write soon and often to, dear brother,

"Yours in Christ,

"S. BRADBURN."

The reference in the "parenthesis" was, doubtless, to a project which acquired the name of the "Bishop's

* Kilham was appointed to Aberdeen the previous year, and it would seem that he had provided himself with these "clerical vestments," to suit the prejudices of the Scottish people.

Plan." The President (Pawson), Dr. Coke, Bradburn, and a select number of their brethren were, at this time, privately corresponding with each other as to the best means of securing to the societies the full Scriptural ordinances of the Christian Church, and they arranged to have a private Conference at Lichfield, in the month of April, 1794, for the discussion of the subject. Thomas Taylor, who was present, thus speaks of it—"Messrs. Mather, Pawson, Clarke, Rogers, Coke, Bradburn, Moore, and myself met at Lichfield to see if any accommodating plan could be hit upon, previous to the meeting of the Conference. I hope our meeting was not in vain. We were un-animously of opinion that some kind of ordination is necessary to prevent confusion; and that every preacher that is admitted shall be admitted by being ordained deacon; and when he is permitted to celebrate the Lord's Supper he must be ordained priest; and whenever a majority of a society desires the Lord's Supper, they ought to have it. Our friends thought we should assemble without being known, and, therefore, fixed upon Lichfield, a place where no Methodists are, for that purpose. I was pretty certain we could not be hid; and, accordingly, it was known in a day or two. Mr. Benson was not invited, and he is making a horrible stir, as though we had been consulting how to get the whole government of the Methodist Connexion into

our power ; and this, I suppose, he will propagate far and wide. I expect when Thompson is informed he will storm at no small rate : and yet the above is the substance of the meeting, excepting that a proposal will be laid before the Conference of having a kind of executive between Conference and Conference, as it is thought that the Districts do not answer the end.*

Adam Clarke states that the "proposed superintendents" were "Dr. Coke, Dr. Mather, Dr. Pawson, Dr. Taylor, Dr. Moore, Mr. Hanby, Mr. Bradburn." Messrs. Hanby and Bradburn had not been ordained by Wesley, and that may be the reason why they were not dubbed "Dr." with the others. It was certainly a very *modest* proposal to recommend *themselves* to the Conference as Connexional Bishops! No wonder that Benson, who "was not invited," should make "a horrible stir, as though we had been consulting how to get the whole government of the Connexion into our power!" With all deference to "Dr. Taylor," their conduct was open to such suspicions. Their deliberations were in danger of being brought to an abrupt and comical termination. There was much political excitement in the country, occasioned by the revolutionary proceedings in France and the coming together of eight strangers, and their secret meetings, which continued for several days, excited strange surmisings ; and it is said that the city

* Letter to Kilham. .

officials received orders to watch them, and had not a commercial traveller come to the inn, to whom several of them were known, they might have been lodged in Lichfield Gaol! "We had, upon the whole," writes Pawson, "an agreeable but very expensive journey. It cost above £9." This secret conclave was looked upon with distrust by both preachers and people. Jonathan Edmondson, when speaking of the different members of this secret committee, says, "Bradburn would make as good a Bishop as any of them, for he is a liberal soul; but perhaps his rising to the eminence might cramp him, and, therefore, he is better where he is." Others denounced it in more severe and sweeping terms, and at the Bristol Conference "a vote passed that none of its propositions should be brought forward or noticed," as they tended "to create invidious and unhallowed distinctions among brethren." The "proposed superintendents" were somewhat crestfallen at the summary collapse of their scheme.

At the close of the Conference Bradburn removed to Bath. When settled in his new home, he writes—
"I feel much gratitude to Thee, O, my God, for the prospect of good being done in this circuit. I wish to be holy and useful; but no creature can be weaker than I feel myself. I am now forty-three years old. Nearly twenty-two of these have been spent in preaching the Gospel of Christ. I have never saved a

penny ; on the contrary, I have been often straitened. I feel no decay in my powers of either body or soul ; but reason tells me I am not likely to be long so, considering how I have wrought and suffered. O, God, leave me not when my strength faileth ! I would not willingly outlive my usefulness. I see the amazing folly of being anxious about the world, because of the shortness and uncertainty of life. Yet my mind is troubled at times, lest, when I cannot travel any longer, I shall be brought into great distress. I cannot make myself easy while I consider things in themselves ; but my God and Saviour ! Thou canst, yea, and Thou wilt, help me : to Thee I look."

This year the entire Connexion was greatly convulsed by an unhappy dispute in the Bristol societies, which originated in the following manner : The Lord's Supper, and service in church hours, had been recently introduced in Portland Chapel, where Bradburn had worn the gown and bands the previous year. Henry Moore was his successor, and as he had been doing the same things at Bath, these new customs were not likely to be abolished. This consideration excited the bitter hostility of the trustees of the Old Room and of Guinea-street Chapel against Moore ; and they employed an attorney to write to him, charging him, at his peril, not to trespass on *their* premises, as they had not appointed him to preach therein, and because no other persons had any authority so to do.

Unfortunately, Messrs. Benson, Rodda, and Vasey—the other ministers in the circuit—took the part of the trustees, and, by way of retaliation, the Portland Chapel was closed against *them*. A circular was issued by Moore, explaining the whole case to the Connexion, which was signed by nine trustees and stewards, and by forty-four class leaders out of fifty-two belonging to the Bristol Society, and countersigned by Thomas Coke, Samuel Bradburn, Thomas Rutherford, and Richard Elliott. The trustees published a reply, in which they charged Bradburn and Moore with continued attempts to disturb the peace of the society at Bristol in 1790-93, by raising a party in favour of the ordination scheme; and with having insidiously succeeded in the erection of Portland Chapel for the purpose of having service in church hours, and for the administration of the sacraments. A special district meeting was summoned to attempt a settlement of the dispute, but failed. It, however, unanimously approved of Moore's conduct, and at the same time expressed its opinion "that Messrs. Benson, Rodda, and Vasey had virtually seceded from the Connexion by sanctioning the proceedings of the disaffected trustees." This matter continued to agitate the entire Connexion, and pamphlets were circulated on every hand by both parties, tinged with their respective prejudices. A broad sheet, by "A Member of the Conference," was distributed among the

preachers, which violently assailed Benson ; charging him with envying Bradburn, and insinuating that he fostered the disaffection of the trustees, that by these means he might rise to power. Some good, however, came out of this evil. The Bristol Methodists resolved to show this handful of trustees that they were not going to be allowed to tyrannise over a whole society, and commenced the erection of Ebenezer Chapel, which was opened in the course of the year, and virtually superseded the " Old Room."

This unhappy dispute began to assume such serious proportions, that Benson, Moore, and Bradburn were apprehensive that, if steps were not speedily taken to settle it, there would be a serious connexional division. In the month of February, 1795, these three ministers met by appointment at Kingswood ; and after much conversation agreed upon the basis of a plan for removing the causes of these disputes, and reconciling the parties so violently opposed to each other. On the 1st of April the same parties again met in the same place, and for the same purpose, and made further progress with the plan for pacifying the discontented.* A kind friend has procured for us the following interesting letter, addressed by Bradburn to " Mr. Joseph Sadler, Doveridge, Derbyshire " :—

* See Crowther's " Portraiture of Methodism," *Wesleyan Mag.*, pp. 319—323, and Smith's *History of Methodism*, vol ii.

“ Bath, May 12, 1795.

“ DEAR SIR,—My having been in the country when your letter arrived, occasioned it not being answered so soon as you desired. However, I hope it will not now be too late, especially as I have only to say that I heartily approve of your four propositions, and know not that I can alter them in any respect. You are for *peace*, and for *liberty of conscience*. I want no more. I enjoy these in this circuit in the very way I wish. Those societies who desire the ordinances have them; those who do not are quiet. This is our true ground of union, which I trust will never be broken.

“ I declare I cannot think of a division of the preachers without horror. Yet we must not give up our consciences to obtain even peace. Nor will there, I trust, be any that desire it, when we look each other in the face.

“ I have laboured much to bring about a reconciliation of our contending friends at Bristol, but hitherto it has been to little purpose. I have appointed our district meeting to begin on the 27th inst., and have some hope of Messrs. Mather and Pawson coming to help us. If so, I trust our labour will not be in vain. Mr. Benson seems desirous of peace, and has consented to grant more than I expected.

“ I think you do right to strengthen the hands of the Salford brethren; they are worthy men. That

God may prosper His good work, and bless your labour of love, is the sincere prayer of, dear Sir, your truly affectionate,
" S. BRADBURN."

It is not often that religion thus triumphs over human nature, and that common sense gets the better of prejudice and bigotry. Moore belonged to that large and useful class of men who " will stand no nonsense." *Nemo me impune lacessit* is their motto. His inflexible firmness bore a striking resemblance to obstinacy, which, on a certain occasion, extorted a playful rebuke from Bradburn: " Brother Moore," said he, " was born without joints." In this instance, however, " these three good men, while zealous in the support of the particular courses which they believed to be most accordant with Scripture and reason, were equally ready to extend the right hand of fellowship to each other, and to unite for the purpose of restoring peace to the societies."

The Conference of 1795 was held at Manchester, and the preachers employed the whole of the first day in fasting and prayer that God would enable them to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Bradburn writes:—" *July 31.*—Hitherto everything in our meeting is very promising, and will, I believe, turn out well. The prayers of so many cannot fall to the ground. O, my God, I bless Thee for the spirit I have felt ever since we met. Thou rememberest how

I sought in secret, and in great distress. O, bless me always with this precious love." He preached before the Conference from Judges xiii. 23, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would He have showed us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these." It is described as a sermon of overwhelming eloquence, in which he earnestly pleaded for harmony and their common cause. "I never saw," says Entwisle, "so much love among the preachers before. It would rejoice your heart to see how all former things are laid aside, and the persons concerned declare that they will not only forgive, but forget, former grievances, and never mention them more." On the morning following the Conference fast it was agreed to choose, by ballot, a committee of nine preachers, to prepare a Plan of Pacification, in order to put an end to the disputes of the past, and to prevent the like in future. The preachers selected were—Bradford (President), Pawson, Mather, Coke, Thompson, Bradburn, Benson, Moore, and Clarke, who formed a plan which, with some modifications, was approved of by all the preachers, and by a large majority of the trustees who were assembled at the same time and place from various parts of the Connexion.

Though the "Bishops' Plan," as it was called,

met with such a signal overthrow at the preceding Conference, Bradburn imagined that the preachers might be induced this year to regard it with less dislike. Accordingly, on the 5th of August, as soon as they had returned from dinner, he moved the appointment of a number of travelling bishops, who should visit the circuits and superintend the affairs of the Connexion. "He used all his rhetoric," says Kilham, "to recommend the plan, and its benefits were held up as highly advantageous to the people: different gifts would, he said, be useful, and the preachers who thus travelled would be an universal blessing." The Conference listened to his address with murmuring disapprobation, and this feeling strengthened as he proceeded, so that by the time he had done there was a general and clamorous shout of "Down with the Bishops!" But he was determined not to be defeated easily, and accordingly, the next day, he moved to have bishops in another form. He proposed a committee of three, and named three preachers as suitable persons to constitute this committee, which should possess executive power, and that these three persons should reside in three parts of the kingdom, remote from each other, to give greater force and energy to the laws of Methodism. This proposal was also rejected, and Bradburn was reluctantly compelled to abandon the scheme.

At the close of the Conference Bradburn returned

to Bath. This year appears to have been a very trying one, from the brief entries in his journal. "Sept. 22.—Spent most of the night in earnest prayer. Sept. 25.—In great distress of mind, owing to fierce temptation. O, let this cup pass from me! Feb. 17 to 29.—A long fortnight of very great pain of body and mind. March 31.—I cannot consider this month as lost, though I have not preached once, owing to illness. I have read a great deal, and deeply considered many subjects. My heart is with the Lord, and I desire his will to be accomplished."

The censure which Kilham received at the Conference of 1792 did not deter him from the work of agitation, for which he had an ungovernable passion, and the requisite abilities. His circulars and pamphlets with fictitious signatures flooded the Connexion, and, being pretty strongly seasoned with dogmatism, ribaldry, and slander, they were, of course, greedily read. He carried on an extensive correspondence with circuit officials, and was the originator, either directly or indirectly, of nearly all the "Petitions," "Suggestions," &c., on Church Reform, sent by circuits to the Conference since Wesley's death. He also corresponded largely with his brethren in the ministry, who agreed with him on the Sacramental question, and on having service in Church hours. His biographer gives the following extracts from a letter Bradburn wrote in reply to one of his own :—

“ Frome, April 11, 1795.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,—I think with you that the scheme of the trustee party will be frustrated. The people in our societies will vindicate their rights, and convince their would-be masters of their error. Indeed, I am so sure that religious liberty will soon become universal, that I have no fear on this occasion. I rather feel disposed to break the fall of honest bigots, and let them down as gently as possible.

* * * * *

“ I am quite diverted with your caricatures of the gentlemen you bring forward in your letter, and though you are a sad fellow, yet I hope when you come upon the mercy of your peers you will have a good deliverance. My being here prevented your receiving my answer in time for your district meeting. I wonder why you have it so soon; however, as I have nothing new to offer, it won't signify. We have a negotiation on the carpet; but how it will turn out I know not.* *We must not divide. A division would be horrible!* When we meet, please God, I will tell you many things about our affairs in this quarter, which will make you stare. Fear not my firmness to the side I have espoused and endeavoured to help forward. I am at work; but my agents are at Man-

* He probably refers to the proposal for having *travelling bishops*, which, as we have seen, did not “turn out” very well.

chester. I find this the most likely method to gain my point. *I will do all I can, consistent with our keeping together, to have religious liberty; but I will, for the present, give up a good deal rather than divide the body.* We have really nothing to fear; the people are the radix of all power in our Connexion, and they are not to be trifled with any longer. All in Bristol are *in statu quo*. I have reasons for keeping from there till our district meeting, which will be on the 26th of May.

“ I am, as ever, yours affectionately,

“ S. BRADBURN.”

Hitherto Bradburn and Kilham had misunderstood each other. Because their notions were identical on some points of religious liberty, they concluded that they were agreed on *all*. Bradburn, and the preachers of his class, had been labouring to give the people the liberty to do what they *ought*: Kilham had been endeavouring to procure them the liberty to do what they *liked*; and when Bradburn fairly understood his man, he quietly gave him the cold shoulder. Hence, in the above letter, which was the last he wrote to him, he frankly declares that on no account will he be a party to a division, which “ would be horrible; ” especially as all existing grievances could be removed without resorting to extravagant and dangerous means. His biographer informs us that from this

time Kilham ceased to have the assistance of several of the leading preachers who had acted with him ; and adds : “ The generality of readers will be ready at once to ascribe this defection, on the part of Mr. Bradburn and others, to instability or the want of principle ; *but on a full investigation of the circumstances which governed their conduct*, we feel inclined to furnish another solution to this problem.” The Rev. James Everett—who has never been distinguished as an apologist for Methodistic intolerance—thus acquits Bradburn of everything dishonourable in his conduct towards Kilham : “ He was a steady and determined friend, and would only cling the closer to those who wanted him the more ; and, even in their errors, stand by his adherents, as he did in the case of Mr. Kilham, till forbearance became criminal : befriending, in many instances to self-denying, his inferiors in the ministry.” When Kilham observed the shyness of the preachers towards him, his low democratic notions began to crop up in the *Progress of Liberty*, and in the other publications which appeared bearing his real signature. They also contained many gross charges and wicked insinuations seriously affecting the ministerial and moral character of his brethren, which he was required either to prove or retract at the Conference of 1796 ; and, not being able to do the one, nor magnanimous enough to do the other, he was expelled. The official writers of

the memorial of the "Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion," say that "for publishing the pamphlet advocating the essential principles of religious freedom Mr. Kilham was tried and expelled from the ministry." This statement is more than slightly inaccurate. He was tried by the Conference, not "for advocating the essential principles of religious freedom," but for publishing "indecent and slanderous language;" and for saying that many of the local and travelling preachers had not abilities for their work; that the preachers were spiritual tyrants, who wasted the public money, swindled the circuits, and proposed improper candidates for the ministry for selfish ends; that Wesley allowed many to "creep" into the ministry "in a dark, unfair way," &c., &c.; and he "declared himself able and willing to substantiate his charges before the Conference; and, notwithstanding, on his trial was not able to substantiate a single charge; the Conference, on the consideration of the whole body of evidence, together with the disunion, confusion, and distraction which Mr. Kilham's pamphlets have made through the Societies, do unanimously judge Mr. Kilham unworthy of continuing a member of the Methodist Connexion." Surely the above were not the "essential principles of religious freedom" which Mr. Kilham advocated!

"When I appeared at their bar," says Kilham, "and

received their final sentence of expulsion, the preachers did it by their President, with all the gloom and silence of an Inquisition. To make my expulsion secure, it was not only confirmed by the preachers standing up and unanimously agreeing to it; but every person was required to sign a paper with his own hand, of the justness and uprightness of their proceedings in that matter. The paper was taken to the Communion, and laid on the place where the memorials of the body and blood of Christ are presented every Sabbath-day; and Mr. Bradburn (I cannot relate the tragical story without weeping), who had formally professed himself a friend to liberty and the rights of the people,—Mr. Bradburn, I say, stood by the rails of the Lord's table, like the governor of an Inquisition, to see that all his brethren signed." *

Kilham's superstitious reverence for Communion tables in the abstract was mainly confined to the particular "table" above mentioned. The word "Inquisition," which occurs twice in the account of his expulsion, was a favourite figurative expression, which he commonly used when he had an occasion to make "little fishes talk like whales." He does not seem to

* Bradburn was Secretary of the Conference, and merely stood at the table in his official capacity. Crowther's "Portraiture of Methodism," states that Dr. Coke was Secretary of this Conference, and the error is perpetuated in Smith's and Stevens' *Histories of Methodism*.

blame his brethren so much for expelling him as for the *manner* in which they did it. And yet, all that his piteous complaint indicates is, that the Conference did it very *solemnly* and very *unanimously*. Good Joseph Entwisle, who was present, says, "Everything was done, I am sure, to save him, but in vain. In the most serious part of the business I often saw him laughing." About a week after this unpleasant business, Kilham addressed a letter to the President, which the Conference regarded as indicating a desire to return; and as the preachers were wishful to treat him with all possible leniency, they deputed Messrs. Mather, Pawson, Thompson, Bradburn, Benson, Bradford, and Moore to confer with him; but their liberal proposals were rejected, and the Conference finally resolved "that he could have no place in the Connexion while he continued in his present opinions." He was so bent upon being a martyr that he gathered the faggots and set them on fire with his own hands.

Though the conduct of Bradburn was, in all respects, free from blame—Everett and Kilham's biographer being judges—yet he incurred Kilham's resentment, which he showed in several ways. On one occasion Bradburn was expected to preach in Sheffield, and a little before the time of service a letter was received from him to say that he was obliged to accompany Dr. Coke to Holyhead, and, consequently, he could not fulfil his engagement.

Kilham and some of his principal adherents, who were holding a sort of conference in that town at the time, came to the chapel, and took possession of the front gallery. If they intended to overawe Bradburn they were disappointed, and we do not suppose his nerves would have been much shaken had he been able to have occupied the pulpit.*

We now take leave of Bradburn's quondam friend, and return to matters which more particularly relate to his personal history. He preached a very animated sermon at this Conference, from Isa. xii. 6. "He proved, indeed," says Entwisle, "that the Holy One of Israel is great in the midst of us, and that we have just cause to cry out and shout. It has been a good day. Glory be to God!" He was appointed to Bath for a third year. On his return home, he writes:—"Aug. 12.—Notwithstanding I have been kept constantly employed, being Secretary to the Conference, yet I have found the whole a time of searching of heart, and consequently useful." The office of secretary under ordinary circumstances is no sinecure, but the duties this year were unusually heavy. Some of the old rules which had become obsolete were printed in the minutes, along with a number of new regulations, with the design of pacifying the discontented. We subjoin the following interesting extract, which explains itself:—

* See *Lowe's Life and Times*, pp. 223—5.

“ ‘ MEMORANDUM FOR THE TIME OF CONFERENCE.’—
Some years ago I wrote the following rules for my own conduct during the time of the Conference, but never let any one see them till this Conference [1796]. When I showed them to Mr. Benson, he said they ought to be put in the minutes for the general good. I intended reading them first, but in the multiplicity of business forgot it. But as the preachers to whom I showed them were all of the same mind, I have ventured to comply with their desire,

“ S. BRADBURN.”

“ 1. Be tender of the character of every brother, but keep at the utmost distance from countenancing sin.

“ 2. Say nothing in the Conference but what is strictly necessary and to the point.

“ 3. If accused by any one, remember that recrimination is not acquittance; therefore avoid it.

“ 4. Beware of impatience of contradiction; be firm; but be open to conviction. The cause is God's, and He needs not the hands of an Uzzah to support His ark. The being too tenacious of a point, because you brought it forward, is only feeding self. Be quite easy if a majority decide against you.

“ 5. Use no craft or guile to gain any point. Genuine simplicity will always support itself. But there is no need always to say all you know or think.

“ 6. Beware of too much confidence in your own abilities, and never despise an opponent.

“7. Avoid all lightness of spirit, even what would be innocent anywhere else.—Thou, God, seest me !”

These rules might be safely adopted by all debating assemblies, whether ecclesiastical, municipal, or political. They possess the admirable properties of certain patent medicines, for “correcting acidity,” “effectually curing heart-burn, *wind*, and spleen.”

Through the month of September, Bradburn “suffered greatly from grief and care and fierce temptations.” Yet he was “highly favoured many times in preaching to large and respectable congregations,” to whom he “fully delivered the truth as it is in Jesus.” When on his way to Frome, towards the end of the year, the cold was so severe that he lost the feeling of his feet, which brought on the gout, and confined him several days. On the 3rd of February, 1797, “God noticed me,” he says, “in two extraordinary concerns. He sent me a friend on the road, and money to clear my way.”

At the Conference of 1797, held in Leeds, Dr. Coke was President, and Bradburn was again elected Secretary. He writes :—“Aug. 5.—I never was more closely employed ; but am well rewarded in seeing the preachers so loving and harmonious. Thank God !” By this Conference he was appointed to Birmingham. On Sunday, Aug. 17, while he was “preaching a charity sermon in the Dissenting chapel at Kidderminster the front gallery gave way, and

threw above a thousand people into the utmost consternation! Happily, none were much hurt, as the beam was very strong, and gave way by degrees. How well," he continues, "it is to be on good terms with our neighbours. The minister and rulers lent the new meeting-house immediately, to which we adjourned and finished; so that the collection was not injured, but rather increased."

The Conference of 1798 was held at Bristol. Benson was President, and Bradburn Secretary. "I feel a secret pleasure," he remarks, "which, I trust, is innocent, on being chosen a third year Secretary to the Conference, though it is a very fatiguing and troublesome office. It delights me to be loved by such good men as the preachers. Lord, assist me so to act as to deserve their love!" He was re-appointed to the Birmingham circuit. At the close of the year, he writes:—"Eternal God, Thou knowest, and Thou alone, what distress of soul I have endured in the past year. Thou hast supported me, so that I still live. I bless Thee for my health, for having sent me help in the time of need, and for my many great mercies. I am ashamed of my unprofitableness, and sincerely wish to live more to Thy glory than ever I have done."

"Feb. 28, 1799.—By going to Walsall on Sunday, the 17th, I increased my cold very much, and became so hoarse that I lost a fortnight's preaching. The

uvula is greatly relaxed, and my voice almost gone. I have been much tempted to anxiety about myself and family, shouldst Thou, O God, take away my power of speaking; but I know Thou canst easily restore it; and as I cast my care upon Thee, I trust Thou wilt bless the means, and soon enable me to fill my place.

“*March* 31.—Though confined great part of the last three weeks, I have not been idle; for I have studied and read closely, and written much. Being naturally led to preach about afflictions, I have cause to believe many have found much comfort in hearing me.”

Thompson—the first President of the Conference after the death of Wesley—after forty-two years of hard toil, retired to Birmingham in the month of April, where he closed his useful life on the 1st of May. Before his death he often repeated the lines:—

“ Heaven already is begun,
 Opened in each believer;
 Only believe, and still sing on,
 Heaven is ours for ever!”

The last words he was heard to utter were—

“ Far from a world of grief and sin,
 With God eternally shut in.”

On the day of his interment his body was solemnly laid before the pulpit in Cherry-street Chapel, while Bradburn addressed a crowded audience from the

words: "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel." The funeral procession was supposed to have been the largest ever seen in Birmingham.*

At the Manchester Conference of 1799, the preachers showed their appreciation of Bradburn's great abilities by electing him their President: the highest honour they had it in their power to confer. He writes:—

"*Manchester, July 29.*—This morning I was chosen President of the Conference. I put my trust in Thee, O God, and doubt not but Thou wilt enable me to fill my office with propriety." Crowther says that "it was a Conference of great peace." After an interval of seven years Bradburn was again stationed in Manchester. From the entries in his journal, this year appears to have been a very chequered one.

"*Sept. 30.*—Part of this month has been very laborious, and sometimes unpleasant; but I hope good has been done in several respects, particularly in regard to Sunday-schools; this pleases me the more, as I perceive many are set against this institution. Lord, do Thou bless it!

"*April 26, 1800.*—In returning from Altrincham, on the 11th, my horse was thrown down by a cart. Through the mercy of God, I was very little hurt, but much frightened. I preached in the evening

* Atmore's *Methodist Memorial*," p. 422.

without much pain: not so on Sunday, nor have I been well since.

“*Collyhurst, May 8.*—Enjoyed much satisfaction in this lovely situation, among my dear and good friends.

“*May 31.*—At the desire of my physician, the worthy Dr. Percival, I went to Runcorn, that I might become quite strong. On the 16th, as I was taking the air gently, my horse was suddenly startled, and he thrust me so violently against the wall of the inn that my head was cut in several places very much, and is still in great pain.

“*June 12.*—Still too weak to preach. This I consider a very severe trial, but wish for resignation to the will of my God. I see, clearly, He can do what seemeth Him good.

“*June 28.*—Once more I begin to preach. Oh, my God, assist me to be faithful.”

The next Conference was held in London, at which he was elected Secretary for the fourth time. Ten years had passed away since Wesley presided over them, and many and great had been the conflicts of this Connexional decade; but both preachers and people, throughout these trying and anxious times, whilst they manfully defended their beloved church, kept the fire of their piety burning; and now they have to thank God for a consolidated ecclesiastical economy, for settled peace, and for prospects of greater prosperity.

We have heard that on a certain occasion when Benson was preaching his celebrated sermon* from the words: "*Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God,*" &c., he showed that the word *ὑπηρέτας*, rendered "*ministers*" in the text, literally signifies *under-rowers*. "Such," he said, "are the ministers of the Gospel. They are *under-rowers* in that vessel of which Christ is the Captain. Of late, some have thought that our *rowers*, since we lost our *head-rower*, have brought us into deep waters, where we shall have much difficulty to avoid being upset, especially as our ship, they say, grows leaky, and takes water fast; and even some of the *rowers*," he continued, raising his voice to what Dr. Clarke humorously called his "*squeaking pitch*," "begin to fear the vessel will not be able to hold out much longer," when he was interrupted by a sturdy country Methodist, who shouted at the top of his voice, "Stick tull her, mon!" Benson, and Bradburn, and their brave coadjutors did "stick tull her," and the old ship righted, and gallantly she still breasts the gale!

* See this sermon in *Arminian Mag.*, 1797.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ELOQUENT ORATOR.

“When he speaks,
The air, a chartered libertine, is still,
And the mute wonder lurketh in men's ears,
To steal his sweet and honeyed sentences.”

Shakspeare.

“THE end of public speaking,” says Sheridan, “is persuasion.” “Eloquence,” say the dictionaries, “is the expression of strong emotion so as to excite like emotions in the minds of others ;” and Hume observes, that “the speaker who most powerfully affects the mass of an audience ought to be considered the greatest orator.” No mortal can claim the right to be listened to unless he have firm convictions of certain truths, and an earnest desire to produce similar convictions in the mind of his auditory. A speaker may be considered an orator who succeeds in bringing his hearers into his way of thinking ; and he may be esteemed an eloquent orator who does this by a graceful management of the voice, countenance, and gesture. Such an orator was Samuel Bradburn. Possessed of a commanding

figure, dignified carriage, graceful action, mellow voice, ready utterance, correct ear, exuberant imagination, an astonishing memory, and an extensive acquaintance with his mother tongue, he could move an assembly as the summer breeze stirs the standing corn ; or, to use a Scripture simile, "as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind."

The following portraiture was drawn by the pen of one who knew and admired him : "In later life he was rather corpulent, and wore a powdered wig ; was easy, gentlemanly, and agreeable in his manners, and impressed a mere stranger with the notion of a person allied to the nobility of the land. There was, occasionally, a kind of jocose austerity in the air of his face ; a sort of, what some persons would term, visible tendency to importance, in which gravity was so whimsically counterbalanced by the ridiculous, that the jest, when indulged, was so much the more heightened as the attempt to be serious was exercised. Yet, in the pulpit, there was an expression of commanding majesty ; the distance of even a large chapel being unable, as in the case of persons delicately formed, to swallow up the minuter details, but rather adding to the manliness and benignity of his countenance, which, though not handsome, was nevertheless noble, and though somewhat turgid, or large, presented to the observer its interesting and strongly marked features. His eyes were of a lightish blue ; and this

aided the general expression which he intended to convey,—the black being generally calculated to prevent us from distinguishing in the distance, and by lamp light, those impressive variations of look, without which there is no difference between a masque and a beauty. Though corpulent, still he bore no affinity to the mere creature of blubber; but was upright and rather majestic in his appearance, standing in an attitude more commanding than even kings always know how to assume—his bearing being prompted by the affluence of intellect; while there was a conscious dignity in his mien—a graceful movement of the person—and generally a benign radiancy in the eye, when not engaged in conversation or in the pulpit.*

He had likewise the genius as well as the abilities and appearance of a natural orator: so skilfully could he modulate his fine voice, that its clear and mellow tones fell in rich cadences upon the ear, like the sweet and soothing music of the Æolian harp: and at other times it was deep, powerful, arousing—startling as the lightning's flash and terrible as the thunder's peal. Nor did he affect to be ignorant of the gift with which nature had so richly endowed him. He is reported to have said to Benson: "If you had a voice like mine, God Himself, with your capabilities as a preacher, could scarcely save you." In merely giving out a hymn, or reading a chapter

* Everett.

from the Bible, he not unfrequently gave to words a beauty and force, unseen—unfelt before. The celebrated *Billy Dawson* attended the Leeds Conference of 1793, and he heard Bradburn preach in the chapel in which the Rev. E. Parsons officiated. His subject was the Kingly office of Christ. After the sermon, he inclined his person over the front of the pulpit, and looking at the precentor, who was preparing to give out the concluding hymn, said: "I will give out the last two verses myself;" which were:

" The government of earth and seas,
Upon His shoulders shall be laid ;
His wide dominions shall increase,
And honours to His name be paid.

" Jesus, the Holy child, shall sit
High on his father David's throne ;
Shall crush His foes beneath His feet,
And reign to ages yet unknown."

These verses Mr. Dawson had never heard before, and yet, from the bare recital of them by Bradburn, he remembered them ever afterward.

A respected and venerable living minister heard him preach at the Sheffield Conference of 1811, on the same subject, and he says that he did not, because he could not, sit still on his seat for two minutes together during the whole sermon, but was in a state of intense excitement from beginning to end. The text was Isa. lii. 7.—" How beautiful upon

the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" There was considerable excitement in this country at the time respecting the movements of Napoleon, and there was a general dread of a foreign invasion. Bradburn directed the attention of his immense audience to Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, whose kingdom ruleth over all; and during the service he gave out the 557th hymn of the Wesleyan Collection, with such touching pathos that the congregation was overpowered with emotion. Entwisle, who was also present, says, "The chapel was completely filled. The singing was]delightful. It exceeded all description; such music I never heard anywhere but at Sheffield." The hymn referred to, having all the rush and energy of Charles Wesley's best poetry, is quite capable of being recited with such dramatic effect, and as it may not be familiar to every reader, we take the liberty to transcribe it:—

"Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
And publish abroad His wonderful name;
The name all victorious of Jesus extol;
His kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.

"The waves of the sea have lift up their voice,
Sore troubled that we in Jesus rejoice;
The floods they are roaring, but Jesus is here
While we are adoring, He always is near.

“ God ruleth on high, almighty to save ;
 And still He is nigh, His presence we have ;
 The great congregation His triumph shall sing,
 Ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

“ ‘ Salvation to God who sits on the throne,’
 Let all cry aloud, and honour the Son ;
 Our Jesus’s praises the angels proclaim,
 Fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

“ Then let us adore, and give Him His right,
 All glory and power, all wisdom and might,
 All honour and blessing, with angels above,
 And thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.

“ Come, Lord, and display Thy sign in the sky,
 And bear us away to mansions on high ;
 The kingdom be given, the purchase divine,
 And crown us in heaven eternally Thine.”

Similar effects were produced on another occasion, when, after preaching a funeral sermon, he gave out Cowper’s fine hymn, commencing :—

“ God moves in a mysterious way,”

The Rev. Isaac Keeling speaks thus of Bradburn’s oratory, when referring to a sermon he heard him preach at Burslem, about the year 1802. “ I was exceedingly impressed with the majesty, fluency, flexibility, and variety of his delivery. The style also was easy and masterly. But that which left the most deep and permanent impression was the exquisite purity and beauty of his pronunciation,—words, tones, cadences, all were at once manly and melo-

dious. The phrase, 'His co-eternal Son,' occurred several times, and I have never since heard those words or any others pronounced with such majestic sweetness. My idea of him as to his powers has long been that, apart from his eccentricities and weaknesses, which I ascribe in a great measure to infirmity, he was not a mere orator, but a man of fine and powerful genius, who had rich and noble faculties, and had been diligent and successful in self-cultivation. The Rev. John Reynolds, sen., informed me that when Mr. Fletcher was writing his "checks," Mr. Wesley sent Mr. Bradburn, then a young man, to assist him in his village services, and that Mr. Fletcher frequently heard him preach, and gave him the valuable advantage of his kind criticism and counsel.* His own bold, easy, and correct English was such as no man acquires without perseverance in a right use of means. His diligence may be inferred from one of his reported sayings on leaving Manchester,—that he had twelve hundred outlines of sermons untouched (not used in preaching in that circuit) at the end of three years' ministrations. The result of such endowments, improved with such assiduity, amidst all the hindrances and discouragements

* This statement seems to be an exaggerated account of Bradburn's brief visit to Madeley, mentioned on p. 35. It does not appear that Wesley sent him, that he assisted Fletcher, or that Fletcher heard him more than once.

of a laborious and harassing vocation was,—that to be comprehensive and lucid in arrangement; beautifully clear in statement or exposition; weighty, nervous, and acute in argumentation; copious, various, and interesting in illustration; overwhelming in pathos;—to wield at will the ludicrous or the tender, the animating, the sublime, or the terrible,—seem to have been habitually in his power. Too often he was minded to indulge in the ludicrous and the sarcastic, for which his own indirect apology was that the more wit a man might possess the more judgment would he need to control and direct it.”

“ His popularity,” says an anonymous ministerial friend of twenty years’ standing, “ which was that of the most legitimate sort, arose from the soundness of his doctrines, the judicious arrangement of his subjects, the simplicity, purity, and correctness of his style, and the easy and natural, but at the same time *affectionate*, manner in which he delivered his discourses. He made it a point never to speak at random from the pulpit; and hence, having properly digested his subject before he discussed it in public, he generally addressed his audience with that native ease, simplicity, and affection which all good judges admire, but which exceedingly few have ever attained. By means of much reading and close study he, through the Divine blessing, gradually arrived at the summit of his popularity, where, by continuing

to use the methods by which he rose to it, he remained for several years. He seldom or never was rapid in his delivery; and though several parts of some of his discourses were highly impassioned, yet he generally possessed so much self-command, even in the midst of his highest flights, as equally preserved him from extravagance of manner on the one hand, and impropriety of expression on the other. I say generally; for upon some rare occasions the exuberance of his wit and the liveliness of his imagination betrayed him into the use of a few expressions, which neither comported well with the dignity of his subject, nor the superior talents which he possessed."

Dr. Adam Clarke, who laboured with him in the Manchester Circuit, being asked for a description of his eloquence, replied: "I have never heard his equal; I can furnish you with no adequate idea of his powers as an orator; we have not a man among us that will support anything like a comparison with him. Another Bradburn must be created, and you must hear him for yourself before you can receive a satisfactory answer to your inquiries. Put them all 'together,' said he, referring to several popular men, he was not like any of them; they would not, all of them, make such a man. He was like no man but himself. I never knew one with so great a command of language."*

* *Adam Clarke Pourtrayed.* By Everett. Vol. i. p. 313.

The Rev. Richard Watson, when a young man, "walked twenty miles," says his biographer, "to hear the far-famed Mr. Bradburn preach; and he never lost the impression which that distinguished orator produced. He often related this adventure, and sometimes said in reference to it: 'I am not a very excitable subject; but Mr. Bradburn's preaching affected my whole frame. I felt the thrill to the very extremity of my fingers, and my hair actually seemed to stand on end.'" The same writer—the venerable Thomas Jackson—in his *Life of Dr. Newton*, speaks of "the generous and noble-minded Samuel Bradburn, whose ability as a public speaker was all but unrivalled. He had a fine countenance, an agreeable voice, which he well knew how to manage; his manner in the pulpit was simple and unimpassioned; but his command over his congregations was surprising. He could provoke their smiles, or move them to tears, at pleasure. His sermons were rich in evangelical sentiment, for he delighted to expatiate upon the glories of Christ's Person and the efficacy of His atonement. Of these, and kindred subjects, he was never weary; and he was accustomed to descant upon them in strains of the happiest eloquence. Yet he often marred his incomparable discourses by witticisms, which, to some extent, spoiled their effect. His fame as a preacher was, nevertheless, spread, and that justly, far and wide."

Jabez Bunting, when a probationer for the ministry in the Oldham circuit, was in the habit of walking into Manchester and back again—fourteen miles—and that on the Saturday evening, for the purpose of listening to Bradburn's week-night sermons; and it is stated that no other preacher, except Benson, created a stronger impression upon young Bunting's mind. The biographer of Bunting gives the following sketch of Bradburn's character and abilities, which we insert without apology:—"At this period of Bradburn's life [1774] commences the extracts from his Journal which have been disclosed to the public eye; a most suggestive record of the spiritual man, conflicting constantly with strong natural passions, with adverse fortunes, and often with the dark demon of insanity itself. But, wherever else he failed or faltered, he never trod the pulpit floor but with the assured air of an habitual conqueror. He had a pleasant and commanding person, an easy carriage, a voice exquisitely musical, a clear and comprehensive intellect, a ready and retentive memory, and a quick invention; while his style was pure and elegant, and the tone and manner of his preaching, as a rule, very warm and affectionate. But he had also that, which none of these alone, nor the whole combined, could furnish—the sympathies and powers of a natural orator. He supplied to a considerable extent the deficiencies of his early education, and what remained were covered

by the mantle of his genius. The secret of his great popularity, both within and beyond the borders of his own Church, is fully explained, if to these—its legitimate elements—be added a certain strange and savage humour, which seasoned his discourses to the taste of the vulgar rather than commended them to the admiration of the intelligent and pious. Yet great injustice would be done to his reputation were the idea conveyed that, in his best days, his sermons were flavoured very strongly, with the cheap and coarse condiments commonly retailed by the demagogue and the buffoon. There is a species of sarcasm, the use of which, even in the most sacred places and connections, is justified by the possession of the faculty to employ it, and by exact Scripture precedents; and, when Bradburn was most himself, he handled with dignity and effect that formidable weapon. He must be taken as a whole, and as we are accustomed to take far inferior men in our own day. His career was brilliant and useful; and perhaps more men longed, but durst not try, to preach like him, than like any other preacher of his time.”

Though he was so much followed and admired by his brethren in the ministry, “yet he never gave rise to anything like a school. Those who sprang up as imitators were few in number; and, besides, they became too stately for the simple dignified model;—a model not at all regulated by the authoritative rules

of those who have ventured to write on 'the art of public speaking,' but founded on simple, unadorned nature, which the ancients studied, and which the moderns are too apt to take at second-hand by studying them;—thus repairing to the stream instead of the fountain. Now, the part which nature bestowed upon Bradburn he sedulously fostered and perfected, and his imagination grew to its fulness of strength, and was competent to attain to some of the loftiest land-marks which adventurous genius had set for the attainment of its comprehension. . . . We do not hesitate to affirm, that he sometimes embodied more poetry in a single sermon than is to be found in some popular odes and epics. There was often fine fancy and original imagery, with glowing expression. He also had tenderness, with no small stock of humour, and a tolerable, though not a high power for delineating character; but wonderful ease, a sublime contempt for everything mean or selfish, a noble generosity; and matter which, though sometimes sounding, and occasionally slightly vehement, was exceedingly varied. . . . His fine parts, and these were many, and his rare accomplishments as a speaker, dazzled the eye, charmed the ear, and captivated the heart. He would sometimes, especially in later life, take splendid passages from his other sermons, and place them like episodes in the midst of less studied compositions, with a view to attract attention

on public occasions. But even these were as fresh as a morning in spring; and the most familiar of them, merely from the manner of delivery, and the spirit with which they were imbued, were listened to as for the first time. . . . Bradburn was, without exception, the most consummate orator we ever heard. With a voice articulate, winding, mellow, and full, without the least grating or harshness; with his arms, though not much in use, yet in no instance formal or rigid, but pliant and facile; with his mien disengaged from all composure or adjustment; with a noble, manly figure, and an eye glistening with the visions floating in beauty and in brightness, in sublimity and in power—a “mingling of all glorious forms” in the regions of the soul, now and then rising into pyramids of thought; with rich, powerful, and copious language at command,—with these, we say, with what thrilling effect have we heard him burst forth upon the ear, with ‘Christ illuminated the grave;—yes, He shone through every part of the caverned tomb, which was once filled with smoke, with darkness, with devils, and with death; and, opening a spacious passage through its centre, He unfolded the gates at the other end, and let in a flood of light and day; enabling the Christian, as he enters, and passes along, triumphantly to exclaim, ‘O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?’ The

sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law : but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.' So also does He rise to the soul in darkness and distress, suddenly surrounding it with an ocean of light : and when the soul of the believer quits the prison of the body, or, to preserve the allusion, has passed through the cavern, it instantly flies to the throne of God, where it is heard chanting 'the song of Moses and the Lamb.''

"Any man with grace and a common capacity may become an acceptable preacher ; but men like Bradburn are only to be met with occasionally, like comets in the heavens. When he was in the height of his glory, he had whole congregations as fully at his command, composed of thousands of persons, as ever general had an army at his beck, composed of the best disciplined soldiers that ever entered the field,—a whole congregation, as once in Manchester, starting from their seats at his bidding, as sudden as electricity, in attestation of their firm adherence to the faith and constitution delivered by Wesley to his followers. It was not a piece of declamation, with thought piled upon thought ; but it was often 'many ideas bursting from one thought, like seas of light pouring upon many worlds from one sun.' His speech was irresistible in its effects, upon the learned and illiterate—upon the bustling citizen and the

weary clown. It acted occasionally like a sunbeam shot from heaven, and was destined to wander through the Connexion, in the conversation of the people; or as an arrow winged with irresistible power. The scholar forgot his pedantry before the flash of his genius—the man of the world found the sunshine of childhood descend on his bosom, and the uneducated Christian felt his heart burning within him, like the disciples on their way to Emmaus, with the Saviour by their side. Before such a man—admitting him to have been familiar with the language—the savage of the wilderness would have stared, started, wept, wondered, and struck his hand upon his breast, as though for the first time he had seen the likeness of his own face in a mirror, feeling the influence of his genius in his bosom, as a man who is deaf, and dumb, and even blind, will startle, attempt to ejaculate, and point to his heart, at the sudden shock of artillery. Never shall we forget hearing him between thirty and forty years ago, when a friend observed to us—himself one of the most popular speakers of the day, as we were leaving the chapel—‘We may apply, in an accommodated sense to this speaker, what was said of our Lord, ‘NEVER MAN SPAKE LIKE THIS MAN.’”*

Such are the testimonies which his talented contemporaries so generously bear to Bradburn’s un-

* *Centenary Sketches*, vol. i.

rivalled oratorical powers, and which we have quoted thus largely, that the reader may have just conceptions of his abilities, and of the high estimation in which he was held. Second-hand descriptions of character—whether moral or mental—are too conjectural to be satisfactory. With so many portraits—taken from the life by such eminent artists, in which all the prominent features of this great pulpit orator are faithfully delineated—there is neither room nor necessity for the questionable representations of the literary speculator. We cannot, however, close this chapter without adverting to those salient excellences which caused him to be considered by his contemporaries “as one of the first preachers of the land for all the higher powers of persuasive eloquence.”*

Bradburn's success as a speaker is to be attributed, in a great measure, to his *naturalness* of manner and style. He knew that the Word of God, even without the embellishments of oratory, was powerful to the pulling down of strong-holds; but, at the same time, he thought a preacher might as well speak distinctly and naturally like the man, as bark, and bleat, and bellow, and bray, like the quadruped. At the commencement of his ministerial career he, therefore, resolved to avoid both the confused bawl of the town-crier and the sing-song, monotonous whine of the cathedral priest, who reads and speaks as if afflicted

* *Minutes of Conference*, 1816.

with some chronic physical malady. A young candidate for the ministry, when undergoing his examination at a District Meeting, spoke in such a husky, unnatural manner, that Bradburn was led to say, "Speak with your mouth, man!" at the same time giving a ludicrous imitation of the young fellow's mode of speaking from the stomach and throat. The Rev. Isaac Keeling, who relates the anecdote, observes, "Many of the cases of loss of voice, or 'clergyman's throat,' would probably have been avoided, if the persons concerned had been early attentive to his precept, 'Speak with your mouth, man!'"

Though his words were "pronounced trippingly on the tongue," in clear and musical tones, yet there was nothing bombastic in his style; he never "tore a passion to tatters," or was guilty of the profound pomposity of certain popular orators who "speak great swelling words of vanity," make "little fishes talk like whales," and descant in stately phrase upon a "most magnanimous mouse," or a terribly ferocious spider!—

" The mighty ocean into tempest toss'd,
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly!"

In his printed discourses we are struck with the simplicity and purity, as well as the dignity and vigour, of his language. Hence he was easily understood: his meaning stood out like rabbits' ears—as

Beecher would say—so that the most uneducated hearer could lay hold of it. We search in vain for an instance in which a sentence is made to stand on its head. There are no out-of-the-way words, nor are there any words used in an out-of-the-way sense: he never speaks of the “*outcome*” of a thing; and all angularities of expression are resolutely eschewed. He laboured not only to have something to say, but strove to say it well; and, by obeying the dictates of nature and the teaching of art, he succeeded admirably.

Bradburn has often been designated the “*Demosthenes of Methodism*,” and as the name of the renowned Athenian has long been a sort of generic term in oratorical science, we have adopted that title; though he might with greater propriety be compared to Cicero. Plutarch tells us that “*Cicero was naturally facetious; and he not only loved his jest, but his countenance was gay and smiling. Whereas Demosthenes had a care and thoughtfulness in his aspect which he seldom or never put off. Hence his enemies, as he confesses, called him a morose, ill-natured man.*” In Bradburn there was all the sarcastic pleasantry of the one, as well as the majestic dignity of the other. There was great earnestness and warmth, but apparently no tears. He could not *cry* down even crying sins, to please old ladies who found fault with him for making a congregation smile. He knew that

no amount of weeping could effectually unmask falsehood and bring truth to light ; hence, in most of his discourses, there were gleams of polished wit, and sparks of scathing satire, which flashed upon cant and counterfeit, and sent them to their own place.

Methodism has produced a host of preachers renowned for pulpit eloquence. The names of Benson, Lessey, Watson, Newton, Beaumont, and others stand out in bold relief on the page of her history ; but the highest niche in her temple of fame belongs, most unquestionably, to

SAMUEL BRADBURN.

CHAPTER X.

THE GOSPEL PREACHER.

“There stands the messenger of truth : there stands
The legate of the skies !—his theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders ; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.”—*Cowper.*

A PREACHER of the Gospel must have just and serious views of the awful responsibility of his calling as an ambassador for Christ, or he cannot expect to be successful. He must, also, never forget that he is not at liberty to speak his own words, nor teach his own dogmas, nor make his own terms : he is to preach “as though God did beseech” sinners by him ; and pray them “in Christ’s stead” to be “reconciled to God.” It was under the influence of such views that Bradburn composed for his own use—

“A PRAYER BEFORE PREACHING.”

“Great and Holy God, be merciful to me, a poor sinner. I am now going to preach in Thy name, and in Thy presence. Blessed Jesus ! I am Thine ambassador : Thou wilt judge me in the Great Day according to this work. O, do Thou so teach and assist me by Thy Spirit, that my matter and manner, my temper and design, may be approved of by Thee particularly. O Lord, enable me to be tenderly affectionate towards the people, and impartially faithful in delivering Thy Word to them.

“O, Thou King of eternity! inspire my heart with the Holy Ghost, that I may be zealous and lively, without pride and false fire; and meek and lowly, without cringing meanness. Hear me, most gracious God, and O prosper my endeavours, and make me a wise winner of souls, who shall be a cause of rejoicing to me in Thy kingdom. All and everything good for Thy name’s sake! Amen! Amen!”

When stationed in the City of Cork, in the year 1779, he drew up—

“SOME GENERAL RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN PREPARING FOR
THE PULPIT.

“*Rule 1.*—Never be anywhere, nor in any temper that would unfit you for preaching. It is a reproach for a minister of Jesus Christ to say, ‘I am not prepared to preach.’

“*Rule 2.*—Have always a number of texts on a slip of paper in your pocket, as a kind of *corps de réserve*, with the subjects of which you are well acquainted, so that you can never be taken by surprise.

“*Rule 3.*—In studying a sermon in your common duty, be more concerned about what the people stand in need of, than about gaining their applause for having preached a fine, useless sermon.

“*Rule 4.*—It is not easy always to have the mind determined on the text, so that it is sometimes perplexed in the midst of variety, even during singing and prayer. In this case be firm before you take the pulpit, and much as possible in fixing, fix! And be not moved to change your subject, because of some coming in who heard it before.

“*Rule 5.*—If possible, be alone an hour, and in the pulpit five minutes before the time, that you may be in the spirit of preaching, and have Christ with you.”

“SOME GENERAL RULES TO BE OBSERVED IN PREACHING.

“*Rule 1.*—Remember you are speaking for God: keep a sense of His presence on your mind, that you may say nothing unbecoming the dignity of a Christian minister.

“*Rule 2.*—Never lose the absolute command of your voice and temper. Avoid every appearance of haughtiness and rash anger.

If doors should be violently shut when people come in late, or if dogs should run about, children cry, or whatever disturbance may be made, recollect instantly where and who you are, that you may not speak one unguarded word: the people who assemble to hear the Word of God from you are worthy of respectful treatment.

“Rule 3.—Speak, if possible, so as to be heard by all present who are not deaf. Look when you give out the page of the hymn-book to the farthest person, and you will easily perceive if he hear you, and, of course, how to regulate your voice. Should the place require a louder voice than usual, speak more deliberately, so as to preserve a steady command of the attention of your hearers, without injuring the beauty of your discourse, or being out of breath. You cannot long speak loud and fast.

“Rule 4.—Always suppose persons present who hold opposite doctrines to those you are advancing, and that they are sensible, learned men. This will have a good effect in guarding you against asserting anything rashly, or without the best proof you can produce in favour of your thesis. Yet, beware of disguising your real sentiments, or of softening the truth for fear of giving offence, —‘The fear of man bringeth a snare.’ You may speak with becoming modesty and candour, and yet use great plainness of speech. Say nothing merely to irritate a supposed adversary, as provoking language is no argument, and ‘the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.’ In general, observe a proper distinction between doctrines and persons: argue upon one, but speak sparingly of the other, rather saying Socinianism than Socinians, Calvinism than Calvinists, unless some special reason requires you to be personal, which sometimes may be the case.

“Rule 5.—Be truly humble in your own soul, as if Jesus Christ were visibly with you in the pulpit. Feel your total insufficiency to do any good without the aid of His Spirit. At the same time, carefully avoid the despicable affectation of pretending to think yourself unfit to be so employed. This sort of cant is generally considered by judicious hearers as mere egotism, and a contemptible way of fishing for praise. Strive to draw the attention of the audience to your subject, not at all to yourself. Take care how you make the smallest apology for what you have said or

are going to say; to apologise to man for delivering to him a message from God must be utterly improper. If you 'speak as the oracles of God,' you will need no apology; if you do not, no apology can excuse you. With a modest but manly firmness be at home in the pulpit, feeling a degree of confidence in your own ability to treat the argumentative part of your subject with justice and propriety. This does not imply one spark of pride.

"*Rule 6.*—Being satisfied as to the uprightness of your design and motives, expect without fear or doubt the assistance of the Holy Ghost in your work. With the honour of Jesus Christ and the good of mankind in view, feel the importance of all you say, and enforce it with zeal and energy. Preach always as well as you can, ever faithfully attentive to the sacred suggestions and influences of the Divine Spirit,—enlightening your mind, helping your memory, and affecting your heart, still recollecting that 'No rhapsody, no incoherency, whether the things spoken be true or false, cometh of the Spirit of Christ.' See Wesley on Matt. v. 9.

"*Rule 7.*—As explaining the Holy Scriptures is one grand part of a Christian minister's work, take care that you attempt nothing of the kind till you have thoroughly examined the clear and full meaning of the Holy Ghost, according to the utmost of your power, using every help you can get to this end. Beware of allegorizing, or, as some call it, spiritualizing, lest the true sense of the Divine Word should be lost in the figurative, which proves nothing. Therefore, whatever doctrines are to be believed, whatever duties are to be performed, or whatever points of inward religion are to be experienced, have well-chosen texts to confirm what you advance. The truths being thus established, you may endeavour to impress them on the minds and hearts of your hearers by historical facts,—by the illustration of figures, parables, allegories, similes, and various comparisons: nor fear the full force of language adorned with all the fire of poetry, and the beauties of a glowing imagination; no, nor when rightly managed, shrink from giving free scope to your active and feeling powers in the richest charms of pulpit eloquence. Only remember, before you begin to enforce or apply anything, it must be clearly defined and proved in a calm and rational manner, with all the cool firmness of a Christian philosopher. In every point of your pulpit

engagement be neither an *air-balloon* nor a *steam-engine*; but be as the moon walking in brightness, and as the sun in all his glory.

“*Rule 8.*—Keep in mind on all occasions that, though your subject is, above all others, important to rational and immortal beings, yet you are speaking to those who are encompassed with human frailties, and engaged in various callings in the world, so that they have, in general, neither time nor taste for long sermons. How seldom do any people complain of the shortness of a sermon—how often of its being too long! What a fool, then, is he who spends his time and strength merely to be blamed! Besides, long preaching is mostly owing to the subject not being studied enough. Nor must you forget that mere preaching, be the matter ever so good, is no part of the worship of God. And as the worship of God (namely, praise, thanksgiving, adoration, and prayer) is the grand design of Christian assemblies, or ought to be so, then be sure always to conclude your sermon so as to leave time for singing and prayer. In general, in the week-nights a sermon should [not exceed half an hour, or thirty-five minutes. The same after dinner. On Sunday forenoon and evening it may be forty-five or fifty minutes; certainly, unless on some very extraordinary occasion, the sermon ought to be finished under the hour. Consider yourself and remember what you have felt on hearing long sermons. Upon the whole, let the *use* of your sermon appear to your hearers. Let your terms be clear and simple, and your manner loving, yet forcible and dignified, Better always to be twenty minutes under, than one minute over the hour. Beware of long introductions and definitions. Leave room for a close and warm application. O, my God and Saviour, assist me!

“Frequently read the foregoing Rules, and examine your public conduct by them, and consider whether they can be in any way improved. Look over books which relate to public preaching. Be always willing to learn.”

Few young ministers could draw up such excellent rules, and fewer still could surmount the greater difficulty of practising them. A friend of ours displays

great taste in selecting books, and great skill in arranging them upon the shelves of his library ; and, as far as the externals of books are concerned, he is a rare literary character. His study is ornamented by a neatly-written card, on which all the hours of the day are sacredly mapped out : from five to six o'clock A.M. is to be spent in private devotion ; then Hebrew, *belles lettres*, and breakfast have their allotted hours, and so on throughout the day ; and if our friend was only as clever at keeping rules as he is at making them, he would have few equals in the higher walks of literature and science. But, unfortunately for him, the royal road to learning leads to nowhere ; his alarum clock faithfully peals the hour of five, which he has accustomed himself to neither heed nor hear, and at the hour of nine he turns out of bed with little time or taste for breakfast, much less for *belles lettres* and devotion ; so that, notwithstanding these ingenious aids and appliances, his knowledge and acquirements are not much above mediocrity. Bradburn's rules were made for use and not for ornament, or they would have brought him to the same ignoble issue.

His views respecting ministerial efficiency and acceptability are admirably set forth in a "Letter to a young preacher" :—

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am well pleased with your letter, as it shows a good spirit, and a very proper disposition for one in your situation. Your questions

are of great importance ; but you must look farther than mortals to get them answered to your satisfaction. However, you need not doubt of receiving all the help that I can give you at any time.

“ To maintain variety, and to have always something substantial, it will be necessary to observe two things—read much, and study closely : without this, you have no ground to go upon.

“ Lay yourself under a rigid restraint when you are preaching, that neither deadness nor great freedom may be able to make you either deviate from your point in hand, to get a supply from foreign subjects, or prompt you to say all you can on the one under present consideration. There are two sorts of preachers that I totally disapprove of—systematical and essay preachers. The first takes a text, only that he may repeat his creed. He begins with the fall of man, and runs through a body of divinity ; so that when you have heard him once, you have, in effect, heard him always. The second makes a discourse or theme on some subject, and then puts a text at the top, as a kind of motto, which serves to introduce his harangue, and no more. Be not you like unto those : always make your sermon out of your text, and all full of substantial matter ; so you will find a rich variety, and be enabled to bring forth abundance of provision to nourish the people of God, instead of feeding them with chaff.

“ To take a paragraph of a chapter, or sometimes a whole chapter, is highly proper : only be careful

that it be a passage which you can explain, and that, when explained, it will be of some use to the people. Never be tedious, but always brief and clear. This method will greatly help you. I frequently make use of it, and never find it fail to please the congregation ; and depend upon it, if the people be not pleased with the preacher, they will not profit under him.

“It is said that ‘introductions are preachers’ crosses.’ I do not let them be mine: for if no natural, easy introduction offers, I begin without one. But in general you can be at no loss, for a thousand things may serve this purpose, as times, places, circumstances require. Only let it be short, and have an immediate connection with your subject. The conclusion of a discourse is of great consequence ; it should always lead to the disposition of mind in which you wish to leave your hearers: it should be short and pathetic, and such as naturally flows from the subject.

“Frequently to insist on the parables I would not recommend ; it requires a great deal of skill to manage a parable well. However, some of the parables are easier than others ; only carefully avoid that execrable method of making them go upon *all fours*. I mean the making a system of divinity of each of them. For instance, I heard a person take for his text Luke x. 30—35, and truly my heart ached to hear the fellow spout away in spite of common sense, telling us that the *certain man* was *Adam* ; the *thieves* were the *devil* and *sin* ; the *being wounded* by them meant the

Fall and its effects ; the *Priest* and *Levite* were the moral and ceremonial laws ; the *Samaritan* was *Jesus Christ* ; the *baast* was the *Gospel* ; the *inn* the *Church* ; the *host*, *God*, &c. In short, I am ashamed to send such stuff on paper. Yet it was preached in a parish church some time after, in the same manner, by one called a *Gospel minister* ! Now, to see the absurdity of this exposition, look at the clause of the 37th verse, ‘Go thou, and do likewise.’ What ! go and redeem the world, as Christ did ? No, but go and show mercy to everyone in distress, according to your power. Thus, in every parable you will find a pointed end which the parable is to illustrate : keep this in view, or you will crucify the Word of God, and do worse than nothing. To be concise, and yet sufficiently clear in proving what you advance, you may write your principal arguments, and clear them from every obscurity before you go into the pulpit ; and reduce them to as small a number as possible, and never let your reasoning be abstruse or far-fetched.

☞ “ You should have some knowledge of logic, and, if possible, thoroughly understand it, as it is of great service ; but never use any logical terms in the pulpit. In general, keep your divisions covered, and be as simple as possible in delivering your discourse.

“ Remember your business is to save souls, and that if this end be not answered, your reading, praying, studying, and preaching will turn to poor account at last. Spend at least eight hours every day alone.

“When you have read the books I recommended, write again to

“Your truly affectionate

“SAMUEL BRADBURN.”

Another young minister having asked his advice about preaching, he gave it in one short sentence: “Stick to your text, though it should be as dry as a stick.” The Rev. Isaac Keeling, when relating this anecdote, says, “Some have thought this a very queer direction. It was a dark saying, pithy and startling in expression, and demanding consideration. He would be a foolish preacher who would choose a text so dry. But I apprehend the meaning intended to be suggested was—that, the text being chosen, the sermon throughout should be closely connected with it, and nothing irrelevant be allowed. With the exception of his proneness to unseasonable sallies of wit, his own practice seems to have been according to his precept; while the plans and illustrations of his sermons had the marks of genius in being natural, but not obvious. I consider his fast-day sermon on ‘Equality’ an extraordinary instance of artistic skill, the plan being at once natural, surprising, and exhaustive, enabling him, without wandering from his text, to state and enforce the chief parts of Scriptural and evangelical truths, and at the same time answering the purpose of an indirect and dexterous clearing of himself from the holding French notions of equality, to which his early admiration of the Revolution of

1789 had seemed to make him liable. . . . He is said to have once stated, in substance, in his introduction to a morning sermon at Leeds, that he had carefully studied the subject three times over: First, he had been filling his mind with whatever seemed to be belonging or related to the subject, or what, without impropriety or irrelevancy, *might be said*; next, on account of the limits of the time, and of the hearer's patience and power of attention, he had been considering as to the various topics and remarks which his text naturally suggested, *what need not be said*; and he had then been considering how he might best place before them what was so appropriate to the subject, so important and essential, that it *ought to be said*. What a transformation would be effected in many long discourses, if preachers would pass the substance of their sermons through this highly rational and judicious process! 'It has been said that he professed to classify preachers according to a graduated scale of five degrees,—nearly thus, 1, excellent or admirable; 2, able or acceptable; 3, respectable; 4, tolerable; and 5, unbearable.' The mere enumeration of such classes should stimulate all who do not despair of self-improvement to do all that is possible to obtain, on a Bradburn's scale, a good degree." *

In the preface to Bradburn's Sermon (pamphlet edition) on "God shining forth from between the Cherubim," we are furnished with additional particulars respecting his manner of preaching: "Although it is

* *Bunting's Life*, vol. i. pp. 406-8.

not true," he says, "that the Methodist preachers preach without premeditation, and any regular plan, yet it is not their practice to write their sermons, and repeat them *verbatim* from memory. There is a happy medium between these extremes, which has been recommended by the best divines of various nations, and followed by thousands of the greatest exemplars of Christian eloquence.

"A few short notes, whether used or not, are all that can be necessary to help a minister of Christ to preach about his blessed Sovereign and His kingdom; and even such notes, or sketches of sermons, relate more to the order or division of his subject than they do to his matter or language. Surely, no one who sincerely trusts that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel will so submit to the pulpit vassalage of dead formality, or mere reading, as not to leave room for new ideas to be brought to his mind while he is preaching.

"I have mentioned all this now, because I have preached the following sermon in several places besides Bolton and Wrexham, without ever writing what would make two pages, or paying any attention as to whether it was in each place verbally exact or not. Yet, upon the whole, I believe there is not any alteration that can displease the most critical hearer."

Many who consider themselves extemporaneous preachers are really nothing of the sort. They pride themselves on being able, like Bradburn, to preach

for an hour from a text, without having "written what would make two pages;" but these gentlemen can manage to "let off" the same sermon half-a-dozen times over, with the marvellous exactness of the memoriter preacher, whom they so readily and contemptuously cry down. Some ministers find no difficulty in manufacturing a sermon—language and all—in their mental workshop, whilst pacing the floor of their study, and without committing a sentence to paper repeatedly deliver it with scarcely any variation in language or arrangement. Now, it is hardly fair in these men, with this peculiar cast of mind, to brow-beat such useful and soul-stirring preachers as Benson, Atherton, Bunting, Stoner, and others, who found it necessary, after having composed a sermon, to preach it sentence for sentence, and word for word, as it was written. Some could not, for the life of them, preach a sermon without having first secured it upon paper; and others would find it equally difficult to reproduce a discourse in the pulpit which they had previously manufactured in the study.* Among preachers, as well as among the rest of mankind—to quote from Bradburn's sermon on "Equality"—"there is an unequal distribution of natural talent," and it is as absurd to bind all under one rule as to make a giant and a dwarf wear garments of equal proportions.

* Professor Boyd (A.K.H.B.) tells us that his father, who was a Scotch clergyman for thirty years, wrote and committed to memory two sermons of forty minutes each every week, and that hundreds of his brethren did the same. He adds, "I could not do it to save my life."

These remarks do not apply to *read* sermons, for the simple reason that reading is *not* preaching. What are the terms of a minister's commission? "Go ye into all the world and *read* the Gospel to every creature!" Certainly not. How, then, can a preacher read a discourse without being virtually guilty of this monstrous parody? If our sermons are to be read and not preached, the more excellent way would be for a congregation to select a set of first-class discourses from the published works of our best divines—*à la* Sir Roger de Coverley—and have them read in consecutive order by the janitor: in most cases, this duty would be better performed than it is, and, as a matter of course, the expense would be considerably less.

Possessing such extraordinary powers as a public speaker, and such just and sensible views of the duties and responsibilities attached to the ministerial office, as have been described, we are not surprised at his reaching the greatest heights of popularity, not only within but beyond the borders of the Methodist community. And this popularity was not obtained at the expense of truth. He faithfully and fearlessly addressed the conscience, and shunned not to declare all the counsel of God; but, at the same time, he avoided the scowling severity of certain lecturing preachers, who constantly bring railing accusations against their hearers, and who, instead of giving food to their hungry flock, take grim delight in pelting them with stones. Having tasted the wormwood

and gall of repentance himself, Bradburn had the warmest sympathy for sorrow-stricken penitents, and affectionately pointed them to Him who "healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Like the wrecked voyager who, by the skin of his teeth, had escaped to some kindly rock, he stretched out his hand to save his sinking brethren.

His sermons were pervaded with what is called the "Evangelical element." No matter what text he selected, like Philip, he "began at the same Scripture, and preached Jesus;" hence it is said that, "when he entered the pulpit on a Sunday morning, with his mind richly charged with Gospel truth, his fine countenance was in beautiful correspondence with the sentiment expressed by his friend and contemporary, the poet of Methodism,—

'My heart is full of Christ, and longs
Its glorious matter to declare.' '*

The extracts from his journal show that he strove to keep at the remotest distance from pride, and that it was the earnest desire of his life to be a humble, holy, and useful minister of the New Testament. "My beloved father," writes his accomplished daughter, "when on earth, offered up the most earnest prayers for the conversion and spiritual improvement of the multitudes that attended his ministry. With what sacred fervour did he beseech Him who dwelleth between the Cherubim to shine forth! Those petitions were accepted at the throne of Grace, for the

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1862, p. 152.

blessed Spirit often manifested His presence by solemnizing the minds of His worshippers in an extraordinary manner, filling their hearts with holy joy and love; while my father, with inexpressible feeling, spoke of the Saviour whose mercy he delighted to repeat: whose praises he is now celebrating in the songs of heaven!"*

In the Conference obituary it is stated that, "his ministry was owned of God for the salvation of many." The late Rev. Isaac Bradnack "was powerfully awakened under his ministry." Mr. Bradnack laboured in the West Indies, and in several English circuits, and "the seals of his ministry were numerous."

Like less able preachers, Bradburn had not on all occasions "a good time," and it is reported that he once complained to Benson, after having preached what he considered a poor sermon: "I felt confident as I ascended the pulpit stairs that I should have a successful time; but I came down miserably disappointed." Benson shrewdly replied: "If you had gone up as you *came down*, you would have come down as you *went up*." A piece of advice worth remembering, though capable of abuse.

"During the height of my honoured father's popularity," observes his daughter, "he was repeatedly solicited to publish a collection of his sermons, and some years previous to his decease he informed a friend that he was engaged in a work of this kind;

* Preface to printed Sermons.

but there is reason to believe that the manuscript was destroyed during his last mournful affliction, before the family deemed it necessary to take possession of his papers. Hence, a few vestiges only of his long and shining course of ministerial labours are preserved from oblivion—oblivion which so swiftly envelops the brightest beamings of thought and the mightiest energy of language !”

A great number of sketches of sermons in manuscript were found among his papers, but they have never been printed. A volume, containing five of his *Sermons Preached on Particular Occasions*, was published soon after his death ; but it is rarely to be met with, and, having lost its freshness, it is no light task to read it through. The sermons are marked by purity of style and energy of language, but furnish a very meagre idea of his great pulpit abilities. Nor are we surprised at this ; for we might as well attempt to incase a sunbeam as to stereotype the eloquence of such preachers as Bradburn. Who could suppose, from the mere perusal of his sermons, that Whitefield was an orator ? On the printed page we have the *words*, but we lack the living voice that uttered them, and the many subtle surroundings of an animated and effective delivery.

CHAPTER XI.

HUMOUR AND ECCENTRICITY.

“ He that negotiates ’tween God and man,
As God’s ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness.”—*Cowper*.

BRADBURN’S piety, though deep and genuine, was too genial to be either gloomy or sour. No one loved and enjoyed a hearty English laugh better than he. His own laugh was not a sickly snivel, which merely distorted the surface of the face—it bubbled up from the depths of his being; glistened in his eyes; twinkled in every feature; convulsed every muscle of his portly frame; body, soul, and spirit rang out a merry peal of rollicking, innocent mirth. It was a treat to see and hear him “unbend” in social intercourse with his friends. His lively conversational sallies often went the round of the country, and added not a little to his popularity.

An anonymous ministerial friend thus speaks of his social character:—“ Mr. Bradburn possessed that fervour of generosity, that warmth of benevolence,

that sympathetic feeling for the sufferings of others, and that chivalry of friendship, which will cause his memory to be cherished by thousands, who knew him well, and had judgment sufficient to appreciate his worth. But while few men ever could boast of a greater number of real friends than he; it ought not to be concealed, that the uncommonly strong language in which he expressed himself in company, together with his not always keeping his extraordinary wit and gaiety within the bounds of prudence, procured him several enemies. Some of these who still survive (1816), and who did not form a true estimate of his character as a Christian (for of his natural and acquired abilities there was but one opinion), will probably, on perusing his Narrative and Journal, correct the judgment which they formed from partial evidence. But without attempting to justify such extraordinary sallies of wit and extravagant phrases as occasionally marked his conversation, it may be urged, by way of palliation, that as he devoted much of his time to close reading and study, he generally made the times allotted to social intercourse the seasons of his greatest relaxation. Thinking no ill, 'where no ill seemed,' and judging of others from the feelings of his own generous heart, he little imagined that any, who to the utmost limit of their capacity seemed to enjoy his wit and sprightly conversation, would, in his absence, declare him to be *nearly*, if not *entirely*, destitute of true religion. His was not the prudence of Dr. Samuel Clarke, who,

when in a state of relaxation with his learned and select friends, was in the habit of commanding them to *be serious* whenever he observed the approach of persons of ordinary capacities and attainments. Had Mr. Bradburn, when similarly circumstanced, imitated the learned doctor, he would have escaped much of the censure lavished upon him by some, who never had grasp sufficient to combine the various parts of his character into one whole, nor sense nor humility enough to doubt the justness of their own decisions."

To guard against indecorous hilarity, he drew up for his own use as early as 1780,

"RULES FOR CONVERSATION."

"As I am often obliged to be in mixed companies, and frequently among strangers, I find it is absolutely necessary to adopt some fixed rules for my conversation, in order to prevent myself from being hurt or hurting others. I therefore write what follows, in the simplicity of my heart, that I may be put in remembrance of what I think I ought never to deviate from, and that if I should I may see my error and amend."

"*Rule 1.*—When alone, be as though all the world saw you; when in company, as though none saw you but God. Then you will not err far.

"*Rule 2.*—Speak to every man and woman, in public and private, on any subject, as if you were sure that what you said would be spoken again.

"*Rule 3.*—Be always collected in your thoughts, though in ever so great a hurry outwardly. Be steadfast. Command your looks. Never let your mind be absent.

"*Rule 4.*—Never forget you are a minister of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. Act in character as such: beware of levity and joking.

"*Rule 5.*—Avoid as much as possible going into company, or

forming acquaintance with persons who are likely to tempt you to act otherwise, especially when travelling.

“*Rule 6.*—Neither in nor out of the pulpit ever mention general professions, nations, or sects in a bad sense; nor at all, unless it be in such a way that if all present belonged to such a profession, nation, or sect, they could not be offended at you, as ‘such a one is a soldier, lawyer, &c.; a Scotchman, Frenchman, &c.; a Quaker, Baptist, &c., and therefore he is something bad.’ Profession, nation, or sect can make no real difference in anyone. A French Papist lawyer may be as good as an English Methodist preacher.

“*Rule 7.*—Never mention an author unless you have read some of his works, except by way of inquiry; nor a book, unless you can give some account of the subject.

“*Rule 8.*—Never wish to be thought expert at anything which does not do credit to your official character; and, if possible, let nothing be wanting that would do credit to it. Walking, running, jumping, swimming, riding, fighting, dancing, wrestling, climbing, and the like, are exercises that if you excelled ever so much in them do no honour to your office, but the reverse; therefore, never seem to have known anything about them. The being passionately fond of painting, music, buildings, and fine sights, &c., does not suit well with the dignity of your high calling; therefore, though it is no harm to know something of these things, or to talk a little of them on some occasions, yet, as they are no embellishment to the character of a minister, beware how you discover even a knowledge of them, as that very knowledge might make some suspect you for a waster of your time, than which nothing can be a greater stigma to your character. ‘Redeeming the time’ belongs to preachers in a double sense; therefore take care that you not only redeem it, but leave no room for anyone even to *suspect* that you do not. To which end,

“*Rule 9.*—Go as seldom as possible into the same company, and never stay above an hour-and-a-half at one time, unless something very useful be the subject of conversation. If you have weight and worth enough to be desired, you have weight enough to keep your rule, and go away; if you have not the weight to be desired, the sooner you go the better for you and the company.

Rule 10.—Be seen abroad as little as possible. The closet, the pulpit, and the apartments of the sick ought to have the most of your time; therefore, beware of making your person familiar to people who frequent public walks, gardens, book-shops, or even streets.

Rule 11.—Never say anything for the sake of saying it, but always have some pointed end in view. Do not suffer your ambition to overcome your fortitude; to prevent which, imagine those with whom you are conversing to be deep-thinking critics. This will be a check upon you, and make you always willing to listen to any-one, whether he or she speak sense or nonsense. It is no great trouble to sit silent, and modesty is ever commendable. Never seem to know more than the company you are in. Never tell long stories.

Rule 12.—Let a suitableness to the company be always observed in what you say—young or old, vulgar or learned, poor or rich, proud or humble, religious or profane, grave or gay, &c. What is proper to one may be ridiculous to another. Know what company you are in before you suffer yourself to speak of particular things, lest you should do hurt rather than good, by enlarging on some vice of which anyone present may be guilty, and so make him think you mean him. A wise man may say or do a foolish thing, and you have known a very foolish man say a very good thing.

Rule 13.—Never give advice unasked, nor take part in a conversation that is not in some way directed to you; but never be ashamed nor backward to give your advice or opinion when requested, unless you see plainly that it would be attended with some bad consequence.

Rule 14.—Never be positive in your own opinion, nor contradict another bluntly, but yield to the decision of the company. Never use too strong expressions. Never seem angry at being contradicted, but (though ever so determined) be cool and cautious. Never dispute if you can avoid it, nor be ashamed to own a fault.

Rule 15.—Never seem to have heard a story which anyone tells in company for new; much less must you relate it after him as if he had not told it right.

Rule 16.—In relating anything, keep clear of repetitions, di-

gressions, and hackneyed expressions ; above all, avoid speaking of yourself, either good or bad, unless it is on some very particular occasion to a private friend ; and even then

‘ Beware, too rashly how you speak the whole
The vileness or the treasures of your soul.’

Talk sparingly of the marvellous.

“ *Rule 17.*—On things that seem mysterious in writings, which you do not want to be despised, say, as the philosopher did concerning the writings of Heraclitus, ‘ What I understand is excellent, and I presume what I understand not to be so too.’ ”

“ While the room often echoed to the accents of his elevated genius in social conversation, he would, on a sudden, with no polished lips, have turned upon the foibles, plans, or proceedings of some one or more of the party, and by one of his ‘ broad grins,’ would have dashed the whole to the ground. Even those whom time and friendship had endeared to him suffered by his occasional sallies of wit. ‘ Come, come, Sammy,’ said Mr. Bardsley to him one day, when playing off upon him, ‘ recollect, though you may have many brethren, you have but one father in the Gospel’—reminding the wit of the debt he owed to him in the ministry. That moment Bradburn started from his seat, threw his arms around the neck of Bardsley, and with a gush of tears in his eyes at the recollection of early days, tremulously, and with impassioned feeling, observed, while hanging upon him with the doating fondness of a child, ‘ The Lord knows I love you in the Gospel next to my Saviour.’ Yet, in the space of an hour, such was his vivacity, he would again, in sportive mood—but innocent as the lamb by the side

of its mother, have toyed with him—softening his play by some stroke upon himself; as when walking up the streets of Sheffield with him on one occasion, arm-in-arm, both of them huge men, puffing and breasting the steep, in the burning month of August; then pausing, and wiping the perspiration from off the forehead, exclaiming, on meeting a friend, ‘Here we are, the two babes of the wood,’ obliquely glancing at the child-like simplicity which characterised the life and manners of Bardsley.

“In remedying evils in societies and individuals he, perhaps, too often acted on the old plan of using mercury, which, on the authority of some writers, was carried to such an extent, that numbers fell a sacrifice to the remedy, instead of using a more gentle course of the same agent, as in modern times, which exerts a healthful influence without placing the life of the poor sufferer in jeopardy. We could mention cases, as to trustee concerns, and the introduction of service in church hours—say at Salford—when he employed strong measures and extraordinary language, and when milder men would have abandoned the dogma of the old school, a remedy bordering upon the brink of destruction from its own destroying influence, and would have adopted the milder. Still, though there was nothing honeyed in his language, there was little that was particularly exasperating in his proceedings; they were often more ludicrous than bitter—more seriously comic than violent; as when he ejected a class from his own residence, which had met there for a long

time, to the great inconvenience of the preachers and their families, and which could have met elsewhere without either trouble or expense—repeatedly remonstrating in vain with the leader and the authorities; and as he had, with equally little effect, requested the trustees in another place to enlarge his borders, by adding a room belonging to the chapel-keeper to his dwelling, which could have been done at a trifling expense; having in the first instance nailed down the windows previously to meeting, made a fire sufficiently large to cook a dinner for the inmates of an inn, and closed all up, with other matters not necessary to name, till the place was so insufferably hot that the leader was compelled to leave; and in the other, having one morning forced his way through the brick partition, by the powerful and skilful use of the chisel and mallet—peering the chapel-keeper in the face through the opening, who stood aghast on the other side at the inroads made upon him, asking, “Mr. Bradburn, what is the matter?” Bradburn coolly returning, “Oh, nothing particular, Joseph; I just want to see how you do,” inquiring, with demure pleasantry, after the health of himself and his wife, as if he had accidentally met him in the chapel-yard.

“His resources for mitigating, and even deciding, vexatious cases, without coming to an open rupture, appeared to be endless, and which shows his ingenuity in such a way as no other person would have thought of. A person in a state of intoxication came reeling to the door of a place in which he was giving

tickets to the members of a class, insisting on admission, and with just as much sense as to enable him to say that they had no legal authority for holding private meetings. Some of the friends were for employing physical force, and preventing obtrusion. 'Let the man alone,' said Bradburn coolly, and apparently unconcerned; adding, while looking at the man himself, 'Step in, and sit down,' pointing to a seat, and taking for the time no further notice of him, but proceeding with his work, and addressing himself separately to the respective members, saying, while looking at one of them, 'Well, my brother, you have experienced the truth of religion upon the heart.' To this the person responded, 'Yes, I bless the Lord that He ever brought me to an acquaintance with Himself.' Turning from the respondent, and waiving the hand, after a partial glance at the poor sot, swinging on his seat, and apparently pleased with the notion of his introduction, Bradburn replied, as he again bent his eye upon the member, 'Ay, that is well; it is more than this man has experienced.' Directing his face towards another, the obtruder being a little touched, and stupidly awake to the reply, Mr. Bradburn proceeded, 'Well, my sister, you have the life of God, I hope, in your soul?' 'Yes, Sir,' she subjoined; 'I am thankful the Lord has converted me, and raised me to a newness of life.' 'Praise the Lord,' returned Bradburn, again partially inclining his head to the butt of his intended remarks; 'it is more than this poor drunkard

can say ; for he is dead in trespasses and sins.' Addressing a third, ' Well, my brother, you have a good hope, I trust, through grace ? ' ' I bless the Lord I have,' was returned. Bradburn, shaking his head, and with a sigh, —while the bacchanalian, with something like returning consciousness of his situation, and a feeling approaching to shame, manifested a degree of uneasiness,—proceeded to remark, ' Ay, that is much more than this vile wretch can say ; for he can expect nothing but hell.' At this the man bounced from his seat, staggered to the door, and suddenly disappeared.

" It was impossible to be in his society, or to hear him preach, without perceiving some corruscations of genius—something that a person might carry away with him, and which would recur again and again in after days. Speaking of professors of religion, who erroneously estimated the safety of their state by the height of their comforts, he facetiously observed, ' A frosty morning will justify scores of such persons.' To the same effect, on being met by a friend and accosted with, ' Here is a fine day, Mr. Bradburn ! ' ' Yes,' he returned, referring to the influence of the weather upon the health and spirits of persons of a nervous temperament, ' many an evidence will be cleared up to-day.' When at Plymouth Dock he had to cross the Sound. The night was dark—the tempest howled—the waves rolled high—the boat was small and shallow—no one would consent to move an oar but a man stricken in years, who yielded out of the

respect he entertained for Bradburn. Every voice was lifted up in warning against both the boatman and his passenger. 'Nothing,' said Bradburn, sternly, 'shall compel me to sleep out of my own bed to-night, but a shower of soldiers from heaven with their bayonets pointed downward.' Repartee was not one of the least of those things in which he excelled, and which, when preserved within due bounds, is a convenient weapon for self-defence. Something personal and untoward having taken place between himself and Thomas Olivers, it was, of course, brought up at Conference. 'Brother Bradburn,' said Mr. Wesley, 'you do not love Tommy Olivers.' 'Sir,' returned Bradburn, 'I love him as much as you do John Hampson.' It was as sudden on both sides as an exchange of shots in a duel; each felt the ball of his antagonist as it slightly grazed the chest. Mr. Wesley was a little suspicious that there was not the most cordial feeling on Bradburn's part; and Bradburn availed himself of the fact of Mr. Wesley leaving John Hampson's name out of the Deed of Declaration, which was interpreted into a matter of prejudice, and gave offence to Mr. Hampson and his friends. That which let Bradburn down—and to which we regret we have such frequent occasion to revert, was his giving way to certain coarsenesses and conceits, in the midst of occasions the most solemn, and passages the most beautiful and sublime, and even of purity and of majesty—though in such extravagances never otherwise than easy and

happy, but invariably at the expense of the good taste of those whom he ought not to have offended, for the pleasure of those whose uncultivated taste he ought never to have indulged. Combined with expressions of daring and terror, which we refrain from perpetuating, he whimsically, yet wildly, during one of his reveries, represented 'the devil riding the sinner, a fox-hunting, through the northern regions of hell, till he sweat fire and brimstone at every pore.' "

The same writer* tells a story of his tearing the Rev. E. Parsons' gown after having preached in his chapel, when attending the Leeds Conference in 1801; but it appears too apocryphal for insertion here.

"On another occasion," writes the son and biographer of Dr. Bunting, "Bradburn requested my father, then in his first circuit, to attend at the minister's house, in Dale-street, Manchester, at a specified hour. His summons was obeyed. Bradburn was sitting in company with two aged women, and all were waiting for the young preacher's arrival. 'Now, ladies,' said he, 'I knew you had a great deal to say about each other, and that the opportunity would be very edifying; so I have sent for Mr. Bunting, from Oldham, to enjoy it: pray proceed.' First one sister, and then the other, emptied her well-stored budget of scandal and abuse, their pastor maintaining a stately gravity, and interfering only when both strove to talk at once. They soon saw how ridiculous the scene was becoming, and rose to retire. Bradburn thanked

* *Dawson's Life*, pp. 209, 210.

them for the profit afforded to himself and to his friend, and bowed them to the door, chuckling on his return into the room on the success of his endeavour to stay an evil not uncommon among professors of religion."*

Though Bradburn never paraded his humble origin, he was never ashamed of it. He had the utmost contempt for a man who, having been suddenly raised in the social scale, forgets his "poor relations," and assumes the airs of a born aristocrat—like a gilded farthing palming itself off for a golden sovereign. Bradburn detected the imposition at first sight, and, without any ceremony, nailed such coins to the counter. Several young ministers were once speaking of their having "given up *all* for the ministry." "Yes, dear brethren," exclaimed Bradburn, "some of you have had to sacrifice your all for the itinerancy; but we old men have had our share of these trials. As for myself, I made a double sacrifice, for I gave up for the ministry two of the best *awls* in the kingdom—a great sacrifice, truly, to become an ambassador of God in the Church and a gentleman in society!"

One of the old preachers, whose name we will not mention, is described "as a tall, straight, athletic, good figure, and well proportioned. Harmlessly egotistic, and fond of great names." He was present in a crowded congregation, which had assembled to hear Bradburn, and not being able to procure a seat he stood on the pulpit stairs, in his usual pompous

* *Life of Dr. Bunting*, pp. 74, 75.

attitude, displaying the comeliness of his person. Bradburn deemed it a fine opportunity for taking the starch out of him. He was speaking of the different sorts of men who are commissioned by God to preach the Gospel. "Sometimes," said he, "God calls an educated man from the higher ranks of life, as he called Paul; and at other times he condescends to employ plain, unlettered men, like Peter the fisherman. Now," he added, "God does the same thing in our religious community. For instance, there is Brother Marsden, there, in the gallery: he was a gentleman; but you all know that I was a poor, ignorant cobbler, and as for Brother G——, here,—why he was only a tinker!"

Two benevolent ladies, members of the Methodist Society in Manchester, were in the habit of visiting and relieving a poor washerwoman named Betty, who was also a Methodist. On their entering her cottage one day they found her busily ironing some newly-washed linen, and one of them gave utterance to the common-place remark, "Betty, you are busy." In an off-hand way Betty replied, "Yes, mum; as busy as the devil in a whirlwind." Betty's indecorous answer so shocked her pious visitors that they threatened to inform Mr. Bradburn forthwith of her wicked remark. When left to herself, the old woman was so greatly troubled about her unlucky saying and its probable consequences, that she resolved to go to Bradburn without delay, and acknowledge her fault. She accordingly set off, taking the nearest road, through some

back streets, and after knocking at the preacher's door she was called into the house, and found Bradburn engaged in his vocation as cobbler for his family. He listened to Betty's simple and honest story, and assured her he would put the matter right, if she would try to be more guarded in future. She had scarcely got clear away when the two ladies arrived with their melancholy story of Betty's irreverence. They were asked into the room, and seeing him at his somewhat unclerical employment, one of them observed, quite unthinkingly, "Mr. Bradburn, you are busy!" "Yes," returned Bradburn, with great gravity, "as busy as the devil in a whirlwind." This remark from Betty was sufficiently startling, but from Bradburn it was horrifying. Seeing their consternation, he explained how busy the devil was in Job's days, when he raised the whirlwind which "smote the four corners of the house" where the patriarch's children were feasting, and slew them. It is, perhaps, needless to add that the two ladies left without mentioning the object of their visit.

Benson, the learned commentator, was thin, and spare, and angular, and, like most men of his build, was sometimes a little irritable. He insinuated that some of the preachers who were so fleshy could not do their work very well, or they would not be so stout. Bradburn smilingly took up the cudgels for his corpulent brethren, and remarked that they were not in such good order because they neglected their work, but because they were so good-natured; and

if Mr: Benson was only as good tempered as they were, he would lose his leanness and become fleshy too. This clever retort convulsed the Conference with laughter, in which Benson heartily joined.

Bradburn having to preach a jubilee sermon in reference to King George the Third, could not find a text suitable for the occasion. The day for the sermon came, but no text suggested itself. Shortly before the time of service he said to his servant girl: "Betty, can you give me a text?" Betty suggested that the words, "O king, live for ever," might do very well. "Just the thing," said Bradburn; and from Betty's text, tradition tells us, he preached one of the most impressive and eloquent sermons the congregation had ever listened to.

He once preached the opening sermon in a chapel that was built almost entirely with borrowed money, and took for his text 2 Kings vi. 5, "Alas, master! for it was borrowed."

On another occasion when, on account of a snow-storm, only a small congregation had assembled to hear him, he preached from the feature in the character of the "virtuous woman," Prov. xxxi. 21, "She is not afraid of the snow."

When Adam Clarke was stationed with Bradburn at Manchester, Clarke had an appointment one night at Flixton, whence he had previously promised to return after preaching. "It was winter, and the evening closed in with a heavy snowstorm. Mr. John Wood, with whom the preachers domiciled in

that part of the circuit, persuaded Clarke to tarry till morning. Mrs. Clarke, knowing her husband's punctuality, became uneasy lest he should have braved the storm, and lost his way in the wildness of the night. She went into Mr. Bradburn's house two or three times. He had retired; but perceiving, from what Mrs. Bradburn had said, the state of mind in which Mrs. Clarke was, he, immediately on her leaving the house, most kindly arose, took a lantern, and, calling on a friend, they proceeded through the almost impassable lanes, narrowly examining every ditch with which he was acquainted as they passed along. They arrived at the house of John Wood about twelve o'clock at night, jaded, wet, and weather-beaten, having travelled several miles. Knocking up the family, and gaining admittance, Mr. Bradburn ordered Mr. Clarke downstairs with jocose authority; when, after a few words of explanation, they set out, and footed their way through the storm to Manchester. On arriving at the house of Mr. Clarke about two o'clock in the morning, Mr. Bradburn, with the frolic of youth, pushed him into the doorway before him, and said to Mrs. Clarke, 'There he is for you, take him;' then instantly turning on his heel, he repaired to his own house to repose himself on the couch he had left a few hours before, lost to the dreary interval, with its pains and perils."

The Bishop of London having complained that the singing in many churches was, in a great measure, confined to untrained charity children, Bradburn, in

his preface to the *Sunday School Hymn-Book*, retorts: "But it is less painful to hear poor children carolling as well as they can, than to witness the mock worship of God, as attempted by some parish clerks who sing alone. In hundreds of churches this is the deplorable state to which psalmody is reduced. A man, destitute of either grace or gifts for such an undertaking, is set up to perform the most pleasing part of Divine worship for the whole congregation, as if on purpose to excite in their minds, by his voice and manner, a mixture of contempt and merriment. This must be very offensive to a holy God, and is matter of sport and ridicule to infidels. It is, therefore, no wonder that the witty Lord Rochester, on hearing one of these sapients in a country church, should address him in the following lines:—

‘ Hopkins and Sternhold had strange qualms,
When they translated David’s Psalms,
Which made his heart full glad:
But had King David known his fate,
To hear *thee* sing and *them* translate,
It would have made him mad.’ ”

Speaking of the necessary existence of the Deity, he argues:—"It is certain that *nothing* can produce *nothing*; but something is produced; therefore there must be a *first cause*. I exist, and did not give existence to myself; therefore there must be a Being, who, greater than man, gave existence to the first of human beings. Hence the folly of Atheism. 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God?' Why

hath he said so? Because he is a fool! Why hath he said it in his *heart*? lest every one should *know* him to be a fool!"

The Rev. S. Breeden, in a letter to the Rev. Thos. Collins, says:—"There is nothing new. Bradburn, in his day, down in the fen country, found croakers swarming, and in his own slashing style said of them:—"These Lincolnshire lying varlets, with their spitfire pamphlets, remind me of those apocalyptical frogs spawned of the devil." Hot words; but indeed not too hot for a brood so base. Sammy was a master of invective, but even his tongue failed to furnish a designation mean enough to express the character of such creeping, crooked, slimy things."

A friend states that he had the following version of a well-known story from a member of Bradburn's family:—

"A clergyman, who was a magistrate, residing in a small town in one of Bradburn's circuits, had violently opposed the introduction of Methodism into his parish. Various attempts had been made by the Methodist preachers to preach there, but without effect; the ministers having, as was common in the early days of Methodism, been driven off by the mob, headed by the clergyman. Bradburn undertook to defeat the opposition in the following novel manner: He sent to a few poor Methodists in the neighbourhood, requesting that they would make it known that a stranger would preach in the centre of the town, on a certain Sabbath day at three o'clock. They did so;

and the clergyman being informed of it as usual, ordered constables and others to be in readiness at the place to arrest the preacher, or drive him off. Bradburn provided himself with a new suit of clothes, borrowed a new wig of a Methodist barber, and on the day appointed he went to the place, put his horse up at the inn, attended the morning service at church, placed himself in a conspicuous situation, so as to attract the notice of the clergyman, and, when the service was closed, he went up to him on his way out, accosted him as a brother, and thanked him for his sermon. The clergyman, judging from his appearance and address that he was a minister of some note, gave him an invitation to his house. Bradburn respectfully declined, on the ground that he had ordered dinner, and expressed a hope that the clergyman would dine with him at his inn. He did so, and Bradburn having entertained him until dinner was over with his extraordinary powers of conversation, managed to refer to the open-air service which was to be held, and the clergyman stated his intention to arrest the preacher and disperse the congregation, and asked Bradburn to accompany him, which he did. On arriving at the appointed place, they found a large company assembled ; and as no preacher had made his appearance, the clergyman concluded that fear had kept him away, and was about to order the people to their homes, when Bradburn remarked that it would be highly improper to neglect so favourable an opportunity of doing good, and urged

R

him to preach to them. He excused himself by saying that he had no sermon in his pocket, and asked Bradburn to address them, which, of course, he readily consented to do, and commenced the service by singing part of the hymn beginning :—

‘O, for a thousand tongues to sing,
My great Redeemer’s praise.’

And after praying, delivered an impressive discourse from Acts v. 38, 39 ; ‘And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone : for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught ; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it ; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.’ This not only deeply affected the people, but so delighted the clergyman, that although he knew as the service proceeded that he had been duped, he heartily thanked Bradburn for the deception he had practised on him, and ever afterwards, to the day of his death, showed a friendly disposition towards Methodism.”

A minister, writing to the *Methodist Magazine* for 1844, depicts him in one of his solemn moods. He says : “At the District Meeting at which I and ten others were examined as candidates for the Wesleyan ministry, the Rev. Samuel Bradburn being chairman, several of the senior ministers present gave us advice on different subjects. The late Mr. Gaulter particularly advised us to read Robert Robinson’s *Plea for the Divinity of Jesus*. He said it was one of the best books ever written on the subject, though, unhappily,

its author afterwards 'fell into the dregs of Socinianism.' On hearing this expression, the chairman rose, a flush of feeling came over his countenance, his lip quivered, and he was evidently strongly agitated. At length he addressed the meeting, as nearly as I can recollect, in the following words." [The few who knew Mr. Bradburn will be able to conjecture *how* he spoke them. To those who did not know him, a description of his manner would be vainly attempted. They were spoken with all his own peculiar emphasis], "I knew Mr. Robinson well. He was my particular friend. He trifled sadly with sacred truth. He was playful where he should have been serious. He got to the very brink of heresy, but he did not 'fall into the dregs of Socinianism.' I remember the last time he came to London: he was on his way to visit Dr. Priestley at Birmingham. He had engaged to preach on the Sunday night for Daniel Taylor, and I thought I should like to see him once more. I asked Dr. Whitehead if he would accompany me, and he said he would. I had to preach that same evening at City-road; but I made the whole service short. I preached one of Mr. Wesley's sermons. We had a hackney-coach ready, and when I had done we set off. We heard the latter part of the sermon, and when the congregation was dismissed we went into the vestry. After speaking a word or two, Dr. Whitehead said, 'Mr. Robinson, will you answer me a question?' 'I will if I can,' he replied. 'Well, then, if you had it to do now, would you publish your *Plea for the Divinity of Jesus*?' He paused

a moment, looked very serious, and then said, slowly and solemnly, 'Doctor, I would.' From London he went to Birmingham to see Dr. Priestley. His friends had often felt grieved that he seemed to hold lightly what they held as sacred. He preached for the Doctor. I know that he had often said that he hoped he should die quietly, suddenly, and alone: and so it was—he was found in the morning dead in his bed, and the clothes unruffled.' The speaker paused for a few moments, and then said, with look and tone never to be forgotten by those who were present, 'He had trifled too much with sacred things, and I verily believe that God Almighty sent the angel of death thus to cut him down to save his soul from hell!'"

Some will object to Bradburn's humorous sayings and eccentricities as not being sufficiently dignified. Well, there is ground for the objection; but we must not forget that some men cannot possibly stand upon their dignity for twenty-four hours in succession. The *spinal* uprightness and *stiff-jointed* integrity of the boarding-school must relax sometimes. When Robert Hall used to lie on his back upon the floor, with his children tumbling over him, and when Dr. Adam Clarke played a frolicsome game at marbles with his boys, and when Bradburn threw the reins on the neck of his humour, their conduct was not, in the strict sense of the word, *dignified*; but these good men would have gone mad had their life always been craned up to the severe standard of dignity. That Bradburn's wit and vivacity carried him at times be-

yond the limits of prudence and decorum, no one was more ready to own and lament than himself. Men of his temperament have especial need to keep in mind the condemnatory remarks of the Apostles respecting "foolish talking and jesting," and the yet more startling statement of the Saviour's, "But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

CHAPTER XII.

SHADOWS.

“ Though partial clouds o’ercast his end,
Yet faith was in his eye ;
And hope believes his name enroll’d,
In characters of living gold,
Above yon starry sky.”—*Joshua Marsden.*

A MAN who has occupied an honourable position in the Church, and maintained his integrity through a long course of years, may easily and unconsciously become self-confident and unwatchful, and the brilliant reputation, which took a whole life to burnish, may, in a single unguarded moment, be hopelessly tarnished. And when a man is thus “ entangled again with the yoke of bondage,” his apostacy is often attributed more to his inexperience and want of principle than to his want of grace. The Apostle Paul was a man of great experience and sterling principle, yet he writes to the Christians at Corinth, “ I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” This solemn and emphatic statement conveys to the self-confident and careless, an awful admonition. From the following entries in

his journal, Bradburn appears to have had this same salutary dread of turning "from the holy commandment delivered unto" him:—"I feel very often an awful apprehension lest I should ever bring a reproach on the good cause in which I am engaged. Yet I am not conscious of living in any allowed sin: I wish to be upright before God and man. I know, my God, that Thy grace is sufficient to keep me, and on that alone I desire to depend. O, let me be sooner cut off from life than be suffered to disgrace the Gospel of Christ." "I would rather lose my existence than sin against my blessed Saviour. Yet I am frailty itself, and, unsupported by grace, I am capable of all that is bad. I also feel I need the Redeemer's merits to justify me before God, after and in my best obedience."

He continued, however, notwithstanding these misgivings, to hold on his way faithfully until the Methodistic year of 1801, 2; when, in the zenith of his popularity, he was unhappily "overtaken in a fault." A new chapel had been built at Burslem, and he preached the opening sermon. The Rev. Isaac Keeling, who was present, gives the following account of the service:—"I first heard Mr. Bradburn at the opening of Burslem Chapel, the occasion, as I have since been given to understand, of the accusation brought against him by Peter Haslam. His voice was clear, his language perspicuous and coherent, and, with the exception of some extravagant sayings, his whole manner was self-possessed in a high de-

gree. His text was, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' I was then but a school-boy, and did not care much for plans of sermons. Indeed, then as now, I had a strong dislike for preachers who are ever saying, 'In the first place, and in the second place,' &c. I generally found that the more their sermons had of formal and arbitrary method, the less they had of natural and lucid order. But I remember the general character of that discourse, which, excepting some impertinent sallies, was sufficiently close to the text.

"Before the sermon an anthem was performed. The church singers had been engaged for the occasion. There were various musical instruments, rather indifferently played. It is said that a performer who was present, hoping to stimulate Mr. Bradburn to some curious and caustic remark, such as he had heard of, had contrived to put some of the instruments out of tune. The singing of the anthem, which comprised a bass solo, was about as articulate as the voices of the flutes and fiddles. Mr. Bradburn stood back in the pulpit during the performance, and when it closed, stepped forward, and looking down towards the singing pew, said with great gravity, 'I suppose the Almighty might understand it; but, for my part, I did not understand a word of it.' In an early part of his introduction, he said, 'Some of you have heard it noised abroad that Bradburn is going to preach; and perhaps you think you do me a great favour in condescending to come to hear me. On the contrary, I think I do you a very great favour

in giving you the opportunity of hearing me.' In alluding to our doctrines, as one of the cumulative proofs that the Lord was among us, and mentioning, with others, the Fall of Man, he said, 'Adam saw Eve was fallen, and he was resolved to fall with her; and who would not that loved a good wife?' He forgot that, just then, she was a *bad* wife; but, perhaps, he was of Dr. Clarke's mind, that a bad wife is better than none. Either way, he would not spare his jest, though profane and unseemly.* When he came to speak of the collection, alluding to covetous and niggardly people, who give little in proportion to their means, and that little grudgingly, and adverting also to certain philosophical notions concerning the infinite divisibility of matter, he said, 'A thousand such souls might be made to dance upon the point of a needle, without jostling each other for want of room.' "

Solomon says: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things." When visiting Burslem, Bradburn neglected the wise man's counsel, and was guilty of indiscretion and folly so unbecoming a messenger of the cross, that Peter Haslam, who was

* Out of fairness to Bradburn, it must be remembered that Mr. Keeling "was then but a school-boy," and that this account was written nearly *sixty* years after.

stationed in the circuit at the time, felt it his painful duty to report his conduct to the Conference held at Bristol in 1802. When he received notice of the charge he went over to Burslem, hoping, by acknowledging his fault, to kill the scandal in the bud; but Mr. Haslam could not conscientiously desist from pressing the accusation. Only three years before this melancholy event, Bradburn had occupied the proud position of President of Conference; and two years previously he had been elected Secretary for the fourth time: he now stands arraigned before his brethren to receive their solemn censure for his misconduct—the solitary instance in the annals of Methodism of an ex-President being so humbled.

Some years ago, an intelligent old preacher, upwards of ninety years of age, told us that when allusions were being made to his probable expulsion, Bradburn feelingly exclaimed, in language similar to the following: “I cannot bear to be put out of the old ship; but if you do throw me overboard, *I’ll swim after you!*”

A preacher who witnessed the scene, remarks: “Extraordinary events afford opportunities for fully displaying the virtues as well as vices of individuals and of corporate bodies. Bringing a president, a great man, and a man whom it was almost impossible to know and not to love, to the bar of Conference, to be judged for his conduct, was no ordinary event! On that solemn, but awfully sublime occasion, the Conference appeared to peculiar advantage: and never,

in all the glory of Mr. Bradburn's popularity, when listening crowds hung upon his lips, did he appear so truly great in the eyes of enlightened reason and religion, as when he not only bowed submissively to his sentence, but heartily thanked, as his *real friends*, those Preachers who had been the immediate instruments of causing his conduct to be investigated !”

The Conference suspended him for one year, and gave him a nominal appointment to Plymouth Dock, where he had been stationed as chairman of the district the previous year ; under the superintendency of Joseph Bradford.

From the subjoined remarks of Mr. Keeling, the reader will perceive that there were mitigating circumstances which the Conference should not have overlooked. “ Dr. Townley told me that those who knew Mr. Bradburn at his best, before a severe attack of fever, which he had at Manchester,* never expected to see his equal in the fine combination of oratorical powers ; and that, after that fever, he was never quite himself either in the pulpit or out of it ; that his best efforts afterwards were occasionally lighted up with some flashes of his former splendour ; but that, with these exceptions, he was but the shadow of his previous greatness ; that the fever had left traces in his brain which unsettled the balance of his mind, and rendered him incapable of those sustained and consistent exertions of mental power which, in his best days, held his hearers, of whatever class, in a

* See a reference to this illness on a previous page.

prolonged state of delight and astonishment. I am afraid that when he was degraded a harsh thing was done, and that he received hard measure. No doubt things were stated to the Conference which, as dry matters of fact, could not be gainsaid, and which filled wise and good men with grief and shame, and rendered the sentiment paramount that the morality of the body must be vindicated from the scandal. Perhaps the point of view indicated to me by Dr. Townley was not taken; and, therefore, the explanatory and mitigating considerations it would have presented were not entertained. He could not explain for himself on that principle; and had anyone attempted to plead for him on such a ground, he would probably have repudiated the plea with scorn and indignation. I suppose it did not occur to his judges to pass from the *moral* to the *mental* symptoms, and to inquire whether there were not indications of partial, yet permanent, aberration, occasioned by the long-continued delirium he had suffered a short time previously at Manchester. One of the symptoms of partial insanity which I have observed, as well as heard of, in certain cases, is a disregard of common propriety, such as many of Mr. Bradburn's strange sayings in the pulpit implied. Stopping short of a definite opinion, where there are grounds for doubt, I yet doubt whether if the signs of mental disturbance in his case had been contemplated with the same intelligent charity which, in our time, has dealt so considerably and tenderly with similar instances, there

would not have been a somewhat milder act of still needful discipline. The men of that day did their best, according to the evidence before them."

This sad event cast a dark shadow over the whole of this dismal period. On *July 16, 1801*, "George, the last of six sons, died," in the eighteenth year of his age. "*August* was a month of great confusion, anxiety, and temptation." In *November* he paid a pleasant visit to Guernsey; but the state of his mind was "very unsettled most of this month, though often comfortable in preaching." On the last day of *December*, he writes: "Though through the past year I have preached to the comfort of thousands, and have travelled a great deal, without much pain of body, yet it has been a very unhappy year to my mind. I end it, as I end every year, in the worship of God. O Lord, I never wish to spend such another." His misery increased, and at length culminated in his suspension, as we have seen. He thus refers to it:—

"*Plymouth, Feb., 1802.*—O God, I thank Thee for the proof of Thy love through the whole of this month. Thou that canst assist so effectually in one thing, canst as easily answer prayer, and help in all things. Help me, O my God, for Christ's sake, in those concerns which lie heavy on my unhappy soul.

"*May 2.*—Silent Sabbath, owing to illness. I have long observed that when I have been determined to do something extraordinary, and expected great things, I have been disappointed and brought low. This has often proved useful to me.

“*June 30.*—This month has been better filled up than any for some years past, particularly with respect to prayer. I feel a degree of confidence in God my Saviour that the painful cares which have long nearly distracted me will be removed, or at least softened, by His kind providence relieving my wants. My present case is truly awful, being in such a state of suspense about my temporal concerns. O, holy Lord God, I look up to Thee alone for deliverance. Thou canst easily help me out of my trouble.

“*Bristol Conference, July 24.*—O, what a trial had I to day. Lord help me!

“*July 25.*—What a day of painful suspense!

“*July 27.*—O, what had I to pass through to-day! My name left out of the Minutes for a year! What else could I expect for my past conduct towards Thee? Assist me, most gracious God, to become a new man, and to live as a Christian minister. I see, I feel the evil of sin; and do from my heart beseech Thee to save me from it, for Jesus Christ’s sake!

“*Plymouth Dock, Aug. 31.*—Though the beginning of this month was a time of severe trial, yet, on the whole, I bless the Lord I have gained ground in my spiritual course, and am inexpressibly happier than I have been a long time. I trust, O God, that Thou wilt help me to conquer.

“*Oct. 31.*—I feel an earnest desire to be a truly spiritual man; but I fear my heart is not sufficiently given to God, which is the real cause of my varying as I do. One thing I am perfectly clear in—that

private prayer must be strictly attended to by me, or I shall neither get nor keep true religion in my soul. O Christ, undertake my cause !

“ *Nov. 30.*—Through this month I have preached with much satisfaction, and, I trust, to the profit of the people. I feel a degree of life in my soul, increasing a little ; but still I am perplexed with care and fear about temporal things, so that I am not happy. I doubt my acceptance in Christ, at least at times, which gives me great pain of mind. I feel that humility is very imperfect in my heart, and pride by no means destroyed. I have an earnest desire to be altogether holy.

“ *Dec. 1.*—O, Lord Jesus Christ ! I believe Thou wilt completely deliver me.

“ *Dec. 31.*—This year has been a very good one in one respect ; it has, at least two-thirds of it, been used more to my own spiritual improvement than any of the last fourteen years. And though it was a severe trial to have my name left out of the Minutes, yet I believe it has made me more attentive to my own soul than perhaps anything else could have done. On the whole, I am every way better than I have been for many years past.

“ *Jan. 31, 1803.*—I thank Thee, O Lord, for the precious times I have enjoyed this month, particularly in private prayer ; but still I am not what I wish to be. I want more of the Divine influence when in company.

“ *March 31.*—I end this month in deep humiliation

of soul, and much anxiety of mind, about my temporal concerns ; yet I am truly thankful for the many mercies I enjoy.

“*April 30.*—Several times through this month I have hurt my mind by being unwatchful, and have frequently intruded on my times of private prayer by not seizing the proper moment. I have likewise rendered my preaching less pleasant to myself by not studying my sermons more, though they have been much praised.

“*June 30.*—I have suffered loss in my soul this month, chiefly owing to temporal concerns, which made me pray less than usual in private. I see, I feel, that nothing will preserve the life of religion but a constant endeavour to hold communion with God. I pray Thee, O Lord, to impress Thy presence on my heart, and inspire me more powerfully with the spirit of prayer.

“*Manchester Conference, July 29.*—These days afford little pleasure on reflection, being spent mostly in a hurry, and much confusion; yet is the state of my mind very different from what it was this time last year. O God, quicken my soul more abundantly.

“*July 31.*—I bless Thee, O Lord, for the love which the Preachers manifest towards me, and for my restoration to a proper name among them.”

A very favourable report of his conduct during the year of his suspension was presented to the Conference ; his penitence was deeply sincere, and his general demeanour such as the most fastidious could

desire and, "without a dissenting voice," he was reinstated in the position he had forfeited by his misconduct.

His fall does not appear to have affected his popularity, nor to have lowered him in public esteem. Even when under the disciplinary displeasure of the Conference, the officials of the Wakefield circuit gave him a pressing invitation to be their Superintendent, and strongly solicited the Conference of 1803 to appoint him to that post; but his brethren thought it right, considering what had so recently happened, to refuse their consent, and appointed him another year to Plymouth, under the judicious superintendency of Joseph Bradford, the President. His friends in Wakefield were much grieved, and foolishly vented their spleen on good Charles Atmore, who had been placed in the position they had wished Bradburn to occupy. "They did not hesitate to express to Mr. Atmore, on every occasion that was presented, their bitter disappointment in terms which were personally offensive and injurious. At one quarterly meeting he endured, for some time with great meekness, the insults of several present; but at last rising, with strong emphasis and deep emotion, he addressed the offending parties as follows:—'I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but God has not spoken by me, if He do not visit upon you the insults and injury inflicted on me this day.' He immediately retired, and left the Rev. James M'Donald to conclude the meeting. In a short period personal or domestic calamities of the most signal kind overtook six of the more violent of

these persecutors : two became exiles from their native land, and ended their days in poverty and misery." * Let all such "unreasonable and wicked men" take warning.

On Bradburn's return to Plymouth, after the close of the Manchester Conference, he wrote in his journal:—

"Sept. 30.—I see much to be thankful for; but this does not counterbalance what I feel about temporal things, which still lie heavy on my uneasy heart. My prospect seems dark and doubtful as to this life, and I drag on at a poor rate as to my soul; yet, I believe *all will be eternally well with me.*

"Dec. 31. *Near one o'clock in the morning.*—I concluded the past year in a very profitable, and, in a degree, a pleasing frame of mind. I blame myself in many things, particularly for not living more in the soul of prayer; but I bless God for my seeing this, and for feeling a revival of it at this hour, and a determination to begin again.

"Jan. 31, 1804.—On Tuesday night, 24th instant, in returning from Millbrook I hurt my leg, but not feeling much pain I paid no attention to it till it produced the old effects [a degree of gout in my foot], and laid me up.

"Feb. 24.—On Tuesday the 7th, the gout so affected my head that I lost my reason, and was quite mad till Wednesday morning.

"*Torpoint, May 31.*—Through Thy mercy, O my God, I have spent this month in great peace, and I

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 528.

give Thee unfeigned thanks for the answers Thou hast given to my poor prayers. In Thee do I put my trust, and sincerely wish to devote myself to Thy service. O God, assist me to be a truly spiritual man, for Christ's sake."

It is never a pleasant task to speak of the blemishes and defects in a good man's character; and not unfrequently memoirs are published containing a full record of a man's virtuous deeds, without the slightest mention of his imperfections and failings. When engaged in the perusal of such memoirs, our hearts involuntarily exclaim, "We never met with such perfect characters in real life!" And when we contrast the manifold shortcomings of our own religious life with these ideal saints who never appear to have been guilty of a single failure, we are tempted to question the Scriptural character of our own piety, and give up God's work in despair. When Alexander had his portrait taken, he sat, it is said, with his face resting upon his finger, as if he were meditating, but really to hide an unsightly scar, which did not add to his beauty. So it is with not a few biographers, who show their heroes to the world divested of their weaknesses and imperfections: they put their *finger on the scars*, so to speak, and the portraiture is remarkable for its *unlikeness*.

It is not thus that the "Old Masters" paint the "Scriptural Gallery of Portraits." If they speak of Peter's boldness and pious fervour, they also tell us of his craven conduct, when with oaths and curses he denied

his Lord. If they describe David as a man after God's own heart, they do not omit to mention his scandalous behaviour in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. Bradburn, like Peter and David, fell; and when, like them, he "wept bitterly," and "acknowledged his transgression," God "forgave the iniquity of his sin," and "restored unto him the joy of His salvation."

These unpleasing records disappoint and grieve the most charitable reader. How lamentable that so fine a character should have been so marred! So it will ever be in this imperfect world. The sun has spots,

"Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud."

"Ah," says one, "but a man occupying Bradburn's position should have been more guarded: his conduct was really, really —." Very true; but we would ask the person who makes such a remark, whether *his* demeanour has been altogether becoming since he became a professor of religion! Bradburn's impulsiveness caused most of his failings to *come out*: his defects were mainly on the surface. We, who are not so demonstrative, have probably as great sins to mourn over, which we manage to keep to ourselves; but they frequently bring the colour into our face, and when these secrets are dragged to the light of the judgment day, we shall have little to boast of. We must wink at no man's sin; but in passing sentence upon the conduct of an erring brother, the words of the Saviour must not be forgotten, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone."

“Brethren,” says the Apostle Paul, “if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness ; *considering thyself* lest thou also be tempted.” We know not what snare we may fall into before our chequered pilgrimage is ended : “Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall.”

CHAPTER XIII.

DECLINING YEARS AND DEATH.

“ Rest with the saints whose race is run,
Whose virtues track their flight to heaven.
The goal is gain'd, the battle's won ;
To thee the palm, the crown is given,
Which conquerors in that region wear
Where all is lasting, bright, and fair.”—*Mrs. Bulmer.*

AT the Conference held in London in 1804, Bradburn was appointed to labour in the Bolton circuit. On the 30th of September he preached the opening sermon of Bridge-street Chapel; and on the following New Year's Day he preached the same sermon at the opening of the new chapel at Wrexham. The sermon was published. The subject was, “God shining forth from between the Cherubim.” He thus soliloquizes in his journal :—

“ *Wrexham, Jan. 1, 1805.*—Held a Watch-night, and concluded the year well. Thus I finish the account of thirty years : preached in that time nine thousand nine hundred and thirty-one times.

“ ‘ Where is the fable of thy former years ? ’
“ How swift the shuttle flies
That weaves our shroud ! ”

This day, thirty-one years ago, I left my father's house, and became a travelling Methodist preacher. My God, through what scenes of pain and pleasure hast Thou graciously conducted me! My race of glory and of shame is thus far run, and I must shortly be with those who rest. Last night, in a very solemn frame of mind, I ended the year among a goodly company of earnest Christians. I now, in deep humiliation of spirit before Thee, O holy Jesus, begin this year fully resolved to be a sincere and consistent Christian minister. O Thou, whom I delight to preach to mankind, have mercy upon me, and help me. In this ancient town I preached my first sermon, when I was a very poor young man. I am now fifty-three years old, and am considered by very many thousands as a great minister of Christ. What I am that is good, I am by the grace of God alone. All I know, and all I have done, but make me truly ashamed of myself. Yet I appeal to Thee, Thou judge of all, I live in no known sin, and trust in Thee alone for life and salvation, in time and eternity. To Thee be glory for ever.

“*Bolton, March 31.*—The beginning of this month was a time of great trouble and distress. Being twice attacked by an alarming swimming in my head, I was greatly cast down. O God, I bless Thee, for sending me timely relief, both in my temporal and spiritual concerns.

“*June 30.*—What with meeting the classes, visiting the country places, preaching thirty times, and printing

my sermon on Psalm lxxx. 1, no month of my life was ever more completely filled with good works; yet, blessed Saviour, never was I more truly sensible of the insufficiency of human merit before God. On Thee alone do I depend for any sort of title to heaven. O holy Lord Christ, help me to live to and for Thee.

“*April 30, 1806.*—Come life or death, I conclude this month in perfect peace with God, and all the human race. O my God, I thank Thee for all Thy dealings with me to this very hour; and from my inmost soul I wish to be resigned to Thy holy will in all that is to come. Thou knowest, blessed Jesus, that my trust for everything, here and hereafter, is in Thee alone.

“*Leeds Conference, July 31.*—I feel gratitude filling my heart for the striking proof of Thy love, O my God, to me. Among Thy many, many mercies, it is not the least, that Thou givest me favour in the eyes of the preachers, as well as of the people. O Lord, do Thou enable me to make suitable returns, by living to Thy glory!”

On his leaving Bolton after the Leeds Conference he removed to Wakefield, doubtless to the great joy of his friends in that circuit, who, as the reader will recollect, so warmly desired his appointment in 1803. When he preached crowds of people flocked to the sanctuary, and were charmed with his wonderful oratory. The vicar of Wakefield—not Goldsmith's vicar, of course—meeting him in the street one day, said, “Why dost thou put thy sickle into my standing

corn?" With a pleasant smile Bradburn responded, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

From the following entries in his journal he appears to have suffered from ill health:—

"*Wakefield, Jan. 31, 1807.*—How many weeks have I lost for want of timely care! When I struck my ankle against a coal-box on the 25th of October, how trifling did the hurt appear! I strove to preach, though I could not ride, and thus passed two months endeavouring to get well. On the 2nd of this month I was forced to yield,—took to my bed, and have never been up since, except while the bed was made. January is now gone, I am still in bed; my ankle by no means well; and I am very much afflicted with violent pains in my knees, and with gouty symptoms flying about me. That some good end is to be answered by this affliction I have no doubt, and my greatest concern is, that whatever the end may be in our Lord's design, it may be fully answered. O death, thou hast no sting for me!

"*Feb. 28.*—This confinement has given me an opportunity of proving the love of many friends which I did not know before. As my pains have not continued long at a time, I have been well employed. I have closely examined my own heart, and feel a firm confidence in Christ that all is well for eternity.

"*Nov. 30.*—Greatest and best of Beings, I thank Thee, with all my heart, for Thy protecting care of me through this month. I conclude it with much grati-

tude, and much pain of mind. My God! how Thou honourest me, and yet what poor returns do I make!

“April 30, 1808.—How mysterious are Thy ways, O Lord, towards me! In fine health, with a prospect of doing much good this week, at Leeds, Yeadon, Otley, Addingham, and other places, I was seized on Monday the 18th with a violent pain that confined me to bed for several days, when a degree of the gout appeared in my foot. I hope to-morrow to enter fully on my delightful work of preaching Christ. That this confinement is for some particular end I have no doubt, though I do not yet see it.”

While stationed at Wakefield, Bradburn “wrote a racy and characteristic preface* to a small volume of hymns, which was then published for the use of the Methodist Sunday-school conducted in connection with the Wakefield Society. Mr. William Gawtress was then resident in that town, and being connected with the office at which the volume was printed, upon him devolved the duty of waiting upon Mr. Bradburn to receive the copy of the preface.” Mr. Gawtress writes:—“In justice to that remarkable, and, I believe, truly good man, I ought to state that the preface was written on a sudden impulse, and, I may say, in a heat, on a long summer day, during which, as I had to hurry the sheet through the press, I called upon him repeatedly, and sat by him. He threw off the slips, one after another, with much rapidity, and with less apparent consideration than I have been accustomed

* This preface may be found in the *Wesleyan Magazine*, 1868.

to see my colleagues in the parliamentary galleries exercise in transcribing speeches from their notes !”

The Conference of 1808 began at Bristol on the 25th of July. “Two hundred and forty preachers” were present; “every one of whom,” says Bradburn, “has his character, and his station, with sundry concerns at heart. O Lord, assist us!” Eccentric George Sykes gives us the following “Conference Notes” :—

“July 24. — In the evening at Portland-street Chapel, heard Mr. Bradburn from 1 Peter v. 10, ‘*But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus,*’ &c. A great sermon.

“July 27.—In the course of the day the business of Conference was proceeded with, &c. While Mr. W—— was addressing the Conference Mr. B—— was relating in a low tone an anecdote to Mr. K——, which ended with a tempted man replying to Satan, ‘prithee hold thy *botheration.*’ Mr. W——, catching the last word, said with a quick and elevated voice, ‘My *botheration* is as good as yours’—a general laugh.

“Sabbath-day, 31.—Heard Mr. Bradburn at Guinea-street—text, Phil. iii. 3 : ‘*For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*’ Mr. B. was extraordinary and *super-human.*

“Aug. 2.—Wrangling about stations! Mr. Bradburn wanted to go to Bath, having received a pressing letter on the subject : Mr. H—— opposed this appointment ; when Mr. B—— at length perceived he availed nothing, said, ‘God bless you all !’

“*Aug. 5.*—Mr. Bradburn addressed the people in the evening, from 1 Cor. vi. 17 : a large congregation, but a moderate sermon. *7th.*—Heard Mr. Bradburn from Heb. xii. 1, 2. The latter part of Mr. B.’s sermon was very grand, and delivered with much animation.”

Before the Conference ended its sittings Bradburn triumphed over the opposition of “Mr. H——,” and got appointed to Bath in spite of him. On his arrival in that circuit he writes in his journal:—

“*Bath, Aug. 31.*—In the beginning of this month I had my patience tried a good deal about my station, but I was enabled to bear up with uncommon calmness, and by committing my cause into the hands of my blessed Lord, by prayer and faith, my way was made plain, so that I sincerely thank God for the trial. O my God, how kindly hast Thou dealt with me and mine! Glory be to Thy holy name for ever.

“*Sept. 30.*—In the course of my life, which has been a series of divine mercies, I never saw more striking instances of the particular providence of my God, in answer to prayer, than since I came to Bath. Everything seemed, not only against me, but even degrading to me, and lo! all things are working together for my comfort and honour.

“*Jan. 31, 1809.*—Through the first fortnight of this month I suffered greatly in my mind for want of money. This was of great use to my troubled soul in a trial that followed. When the end was answered, the Lord sent money.

“*June 30.*—How wonderful, O Lord, are the manifestations of Thy love to me! With inexpressible delight do I record them, and with my whole soul do I wish to make suitable returns. In the beginning of this month my mind was perplexed about many things, and my temper unpleasant; but being confined about a week, by a gentle touch of the gout, I find my soul entirely relieved from its gloomy bondage, and I trust, by this light affliction, I shall be an eternal gainer.

“*Sept. 30.*—How is it, O my God, that I ever feel, with Thy sacred presence in private, such inexpressible delight, and when among any people, except in the pulpit, I find it difficult to recollect a sense of Thy being there. This often grieves me very much, and makes me almost hate all company.

“*Road, Dec. 12.*—I have rode sixty-five miles this week, without being materially wet, though there has been almost constant rain. This, my God, I ascribe to Thy mercy.

“*Bath, Dec. 30.*—Through this year I have keenly felt Thy hand, O God; yet Thou hast supported me, and in some degree made the very severest trial of great use to my soul. In everything I see mercy mixed with justice. And perhaps, what has given me the greatest shock, was an answer to my own prayers.

“*June 30, 1810.*—How clearly do I see the emptiness of all worldly possessions! Yet, how painfully do I feel the condition I am in for want of a little more! The comfort I get from many of my money-loving friends is, ‘You don’t know the worth of

money!' Perhaps this is true; certain it is, that I view no man worth, for himself, more money than what he spends.

"*Aug. 31.*—Thus have I spent two years more in the Bath circuit. Had I been determined to go thither in my own will I should sometimes have felt wretched; but as I went in the spirit of humble resignation, I have been supported in some keen trials, and have cause to conclude that I was sent there by the Lord."

On leaving Bath in 1810, he was stationed, for the third time, at Bristol. His colleagues were Joseph Taylor, Joseph Cole, and Joseph Robinson; and three kind Josephs they appear to have been. He writes:—

"*Bristol, Oct. 31.*—On Monday, the 15th instant, riding through the city, on my way to Chew Stoke, the mare slipt on her side, threw me on the curbstone, and broke my shoulder bone. I soon had medical aid, and every attention; but not being able to put on my coat, I could not go to preach all this time. Surely no preachers ever behaved better to one another than my colleagues have to me. God bless them! Whatever may be the design of the Lord, in laying me aside for a season, I am certain it is for my good some way. I never had such a fall in my life, nor did I ever feel more strength to bear pain. I thank Thee, my God, for this affliction. O, bless it to me!

"*Jan. 1, 1811.*—The best watch-night I ever saw. Glory be to Thee, O God, who hast graciously pre-

served me through another year. I have ended it well. My hope is in God.

“*Feb.* 28.—In the beginning of this month, when my head was too light to bear riding, I took Mr. Robinson’s place in the city, and he kindly took mine in the country. I was tried greatly for want of money, when just in the right moment, in answer to prayer, I received an anonymous letter, inclosing a five pound note! The person, O Lord, is known to Thee, though not to me. O, do Thou bless him for ever! I took the money as from Thine own hand, and thank Thee for it.

“*March* 31.—I end this month in a blessed state of mind, glory be to God. In the conclusion of my last sermon, I was as happy as my soul could well bear, wanting only my Saviour’s order to take my flight to everlasting glory! This is the more pleasing, as my outward trials are very great.

“*April* 30.—Ever since Tuesday the 23rd, I have felt shooting pains, and disagreeable feelings in my spirit, such as have generally preceded a touch of the gout. Under the apprehension of this being the case, I am very thankful that Mr. Nind has, at Mr. Taylor’s request, taken the circuit for me. My trust is in Thee, O my God, that Thou wilt support me.

“*May* 20.—Busy getting signatures to petitions against Lord Sidmouth’s cruel bill.

“*May* 22.—Glory be to God, that the Bill against the itinerant plan of preaching was rejected in the House of Lords last night without a division.

“*May 31.*—In the beginning of this month I endured much pain in my feet, which proved to be the gout ; yet, I bless the Lord, I have not missed preaching once on the Sabbath, nor very many times on the week days, owing to the preachers’ kindness in changing with me.

“*June 30.*—Much of this month has been spent in the Lord’s work ; yet I have not prayed so much as I ought in private, and, therefore, I have not so clear an evidence of the Divine approbation as at times I feel. Yet, O my God, I thank Thee for Thy blessed aid, while I was preaching Thy Gospel to so many good hearers. Surely, surely, Thou wilt yet lift me out of deep waters.

“*Sheffield Conference, July 27.*—Being the representative for the Bristol District, this week was spent in the Stationing Committee appointing circuits for the preachers. A most important work! *Aug. 2.*—Preached on Heb. ii. 14, 15. Never less in my own eyes in all my life.

“*Bristol, Aug. 31.*—About midnight, Wednesday the 14th, between Tewkesbury and Gloucester, the mail-coach was overturned, by which I received such a blow on my head, that the passengers supposed I was dead. The pain did not continue long.

“*Kingswood, Nov. 28.*—Preached on Isa. xxi. 12 ; a good time. That God, who never fails to help me in His work, was very present !

“*Dec. 31.*—Brought through various afflictions and much trouble of mind on account of temporal

things, I end this year in health of body, and in humble prayer; hoping, if spared, to see better days in this life. O God, enlarge my coast, for Christ's sake.

"Bristol, April 30, 1812.—During this month I have been confined a good deal, and have preached but little, which is always a cross to me: preaching being my chief delight. Still I do not consider the time lost; for I have done many things which were before neglected. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for all that is past! Thou hast done all things well."

About this time he was invited by his old friends at Chester to preach the first sermon in connection with the opening of their new chapel. The late Rev. John Bowers, who was present, used to relate the following touching story:—When Bradburn came out of the pulpit into the vestry, he saw the old shoemaker with whom he had served his apprenticeship nearly fifty years before. His name was Peter Haslam; but Bradburn had been in the habit of calling him "Old Pe." He was deaf, blind, and poor, and, of course, greatly altered; and when Bradburn recognised him, he was much affected, and taking one of the old man's hands between his two, he said, as the tears streamed down his face, "Is this my old master? Poor old Pe,—poor old Pe! my heart bleeds for thee,—poor old Pe!" He then gave him all the money he had in his pocket; and at the next Conference, after making a moving speech about his old master, he stood with his hat at the door of the Conference

chapel when the preachers retired, and made a collection for "poor old Pe."

On account of his deafness, old Peter generally occupied a seat behind the preacher in the pulpit of the old Octagon chapel during divine service.

Bradburn seldom visited Chester, and it is assigned as a reason, that, when he did go, he was so sympathising and generous towards his relatives and friends, that he always left with a light purse. At the opening of the new chapel he met with his old friend George Lowe, whose kindness he had so often proved in his youthful days. He said, "Mr. Lowe, you gave me my first black coat." The old gentleman responded, "Do not mention it, Mr. Bradburn, I was the obliged person."

After spending two years at Bristol he removed to Liverpool, where, forty years before, he commenced his ministerial labours. Mr. Thomas Brocas, whom Wesley styled "the father of Methodism in Shrewsbury,"* gives the following particulars of a visit he paid to Liverpool shortly after Bradburn's arrival in that town:—

"Sept. 29, 1812.—My business leading me to Warrington, I spent two days and nights very agreeably with a pious Calvinist and his good zealous wife. As I had for several years longed to hear Mr. Bradburn, I went to Liverpool on the Saturday, and spent the Sunday and Monday there. I found Mr. Bradburn a wise, zealous, aged divine. O, what a

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1819, p. 143.

sermon I heard him preach in the morning at seven o'clock, in the Pitt-street chapel, on these words of the Psalmist, 'I am thine, save me!' At half-past ten o'clock I heard him again at the Brunswick chapel. Here the Liturgy of the Church of England was well read by Mr. Bradburn, and the congregational singing accompanied by an organ. All was to me solemn and delightful worship; and I could not forbear to call the place 'Zion, the perfection of beauty.' How did my load fall off, and how was my heart broken, while the good old man preached from these words of Malachi, 'But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.'" In Mr. Bradburn I see the propriety of old men continuing to study and to labour in private, as I was lately told how early he rises every morning to his studies. This keeps the fire of piety burning in his own soul, and renders him greatly and deservedly esteemed, let him preach where he may. I spent part of the following day with Mr. Bradburn, who would have no denial, but insisted that I should preach for him in the evening at Brunswick chapel. I did so with much reluctance, but with considerable freedom."*

Bradburn thus refers to his reception and sojourn in the Liverpool circuit:—

"Sept. 30.—My goods are all come safe. My family are as well as I could expect them to be after so long a journey. The society is in good order,—all peace at

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1821, pp. 721, 722.

the Quarterly meeting—the preachers united in love ; and the congregations large and attentive. O Lord Christ, assist me to be grateful, diligent, and useful !

“ *Dec. 31.*—Ended the year well, having a good congregation ; all, with the preachers, on our knees in solemn silence when the clock struck twelve. Then we began the new year in prayer and praise to God our Saviour. I thank Him for all that is past, and trust Him for all that is to come.

“ *Jan. 16, 1813.*—For several weeks I have been much troubled with a very disagreeable cough and short breathing, which at last compelled me to yield, and has confined me all the week.

“ *Jan. 19.*—Still confined. Death seems at the door, but Christ is mine.”

Here is an original letter addressed to the Rev. Joseph Entwisle, who was President of the Conference :—

“ April 13th, 1813.

“ **MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,**—‘Delays are dangerous ;’ I therefore begin in good time. Great expectations : am on the look out for many blessings from the Conference. I cannot say I have no fear about our borders being straitened ; but I am not in despair. Trade is very dead. There is a debt upon the trustees of £20,000, and the income quite unequal to the interest. Yet, last week they bought the large Presbyterian chapel in Ben’s Garden (the centre of the town) for the Welch in Liverpool, for which they pay

£2,000! The Society is still in debt a little. Mr. [Rev. George] Marsden is my right hand man. I and my family are as well as usual, glory be to God! Mr. West has never preached once on a week-night yet since I came here; he has sometimes within these two months on Sundays. Where do you send him? Bristol? Most affectionate regards to your good wife, and all concerned.

“I am, my dear Brother, yours in endless love,

“S. BRADBURN.

“P.S.—Sent Mr. James Davis the plans of Brunswick chapel, and referred him to you for a full explanation of them. Will you ask him how he likes them? I fear he did not get them. Dr. Clarke is expected here next year in West’s* place. He seems tired of London. Do you ever see my sweet Eliza at Mr. Pritchard’s?”

The Conference of 1813 was held in Liverpool, where Bradburn resided. He writes in his Journal:—

“July 31.—Though I felt much care and fear lest the preachers should not be well provided for at the Conference, yet all turned out well, thanks be unto Thee, O Lord. I have spent a year in this town, I hope to the good of many hundreds of souls; and now I begin again, sincerely praying to be more holy and useful than ever. O my God, assist and direct me!

* This was the Rev. William West. He was totally blind during many years of his ministerial life. See *Methodist Magazine*, 1822, p. 686.

“*Nov. 12.*—Still confined to the house, owing to the effects of the gout; however, I hope to preach to-morrow, ‘if the Lord will.’

“*Nov. 13.*—Glory be to Thee, O God!—my soul is ready for Thy call.

“*Jan. 31, 1814.*—After travelling forty years through various circuits, and enduring a share of many troubles, I appear to myself as a very unprofitable servant. Yet I have reason to be thankful that the Lord has blessed my preaching to many. I love the good work, and have never saved one penny since I set out. I now give up my all to the Lord Jesus.

“*March 31.*—I live in no known sin; but I often feel a painful shame that my very best doings come far short of what I desire. I am a poor unworthy creature before Thee. O holy Lord God, I have no hope of salvation but in Thy righteousness.

“*April 30.*—On Easter-day I preached in the forenoon at Mount Pleasant, and gave the sacrament to a large company of communicants; and was as well and hearty as ever. I preached in Brunswick chapel at three, without the least inconvenience, till I was saying, ‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,’ intending to say, ‘and the communion of the Holy Ghost, &c.’ when in a moment, as quick as lightning, my power of speech was taken away, so that I could not utter one word. I felt no pain, nor the least confusion in my reason, or mind, in any respect. I got a person to preach in the evening at Mount Pleasant, when I could but just tell the people what

had happened to me, and not that without great pain in my breast-bone, which has confined me until now.

“*May 1.*—Being twenty days silent, and not ailing anything, except being weak in my voice, engaging in the work again was like beginning to learn to preach; and oh, how pleased I was to hear myself once more!

“*June 30.*—Having a little spare time, by being so assisted by my worthy brethren, I have reviewed my life, as put down in this book, for the last forty years. I see much to be done in my heart to complete the image of Christ. In point of doctrine, I have firmly believed the whole truth as held by the Methodists, and preached it most faithfully; and in some grievous afflictions, when the spirit of prayer was divinely breathed into my heart, I was greatly stirred up, and often very happy.

“*Aug. 24.*—So far, O God, Thou hast graciously assisted me with money to get on my way. My greatest trouble is now in my eyes, which are very sore. Holy Lord God, I look to Thee for help as my good physician.”

His next, and last removal, was to the London East Circuit. He resided in what is still the minister's house, connected with the Southwark chapel. On his arrival, he writes: “My blessed Lord, Thou hast preserved and brought me in safety to this wonderful city, and restored my eyes to perfect soundness. It is a cause of great thankfulness of heart to me, that though I feel pleased at being appointed to London, it is not

of my own choice, but of the Lord's. The circuit is much more laborious than I expected."

The first Methodist Missionary Meeting for the London District was held in City-road chapel, on the 1st of December, 1814. A respectable and crowded audience assembled at six o'clock in the evening, and speeches were delivered by upwards of twenty ministers and laymen; and the *Methodist Magazine* assures us, that "*many more persons* would cheerfully have communicated their sentiments" to the meeting, "but it was judged expedient to conclude. Though the meeting was continued to a late hour, the people appeared to leave the place with reluctance." Such was the novelty of the thing, and the shortness and sweetness of the speeches! Had the "platform" been brought into earlier requisition, Bradburn—who was one of the speakers on this occasion—would have occupied a high position among the advocates of Christian Missions.*

Here are the last entries in his Journal before his hand forgot its cunning:—

"Dec. 31.—Another year is gone for ever! Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for the many proofs of Thy love which Thou hast bestowed upon me throughout the whole of it. I thank Thee for grace to help me in the time of trial, and for Thy still remaining promises.

* It is erroneously stated in the Jubilee Report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, that the first sermon in connection with the Society was preached at Armley, near Leeds, by Bradburn. The Rev. James Buckley had this honour, and the sermon appeared in the *Magazine* for 1814.

"*Jan.* 31, 1815.—Another winter month is gone. I thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast helped me through the cares and fears which it presented to my mind. O thou Sovereign Lord of time and eternity, on Thee alone I trust for all.

"*Feb.* 28.—Great God, I would fain be Thine wholly and for ever. I feel much pleasure in preaching, and meeting the people.

"*April* 30.—Glory be to Thee, O Lord, for every mercy and blessing. I have many things to praise Thee for. O Almighty Jehovah, help me in this time of need; and, in Thine own way, send me what I want. Strengthen my faith; and Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven.

"*June* 30.—Through this month many things have happened of an extraordinary nature, and many lives been lost; but, glory be to God, I am well, as are all my family.

"*Aug.* 26.—On Sunday morning, 20th instant, while I was preaching, the wind rose in my head, and hindered my speaking plainly, so that I was forced to leave off. I bless God it did not trouble me long, but went away in the evening.

"*Oct.* 1.—Forenoon: Southwark. Preached on Isaiah xl. 3. Evening: Walworth."

"This is the last sentence," observes his daughter, "in my dear and honoured father's Journal; his sight being so much impaired, that he could no longer write legibly. The mental faculties also of this great man were fast declining; and they who loved him per-

ceived, with inexpressible pain of mind, a considerable alteration in his manner of preaching. His memory often failed him, and his intellects were at times rather deranged. The lamp of his understanding, which had long burned so brightly, and had guided many a soul to everlasting happiness, now cast a feeble ray; yet, at times, there was a momentary splendour, not unworthy of his former popularity: and oh! how cheering is the blessed assurance that the flame which to mortal eyes was extinguished by the hand of death, will blaze with increasing lustre throughout the ages of eternity!

“ Though much enfeebled in mind and body by slight paralytic attacks, my father attended the duties of his station till December, when he was no longer able to declare the glad tidings of salvation. The diligence and perseverance which he manifested in the work of the Lord are worthy of remembrance. When no longer capable of preaching, he frequently attended the ministry of others, though indisposition sometimes obliged him to return home before the service was concluded. In family worship also, my father still offered up the morning and evening sacrifices of prayer and praise whenever his strength would allow. The only amusements my father had for several months previous to his death, were hearing some of the family read, and walking out with my beloved mother, who was to the last hour his constant and affectionate companion. We observed with pleasure that, notwithstanding my father's love of employment,

and natural quickness of temper, he never murmured at his bad sight, and inability to spend any part of the day in reading and writing, which were his favourite occupations. Nor was this patience the effect of insensibility, for there were seasons when he was aware of the declension of his intellectual powers, more than once pathetically saying, 'I do not feel as I used to feel ; it seems as if twilight came over my mind ; the shades of evening are stealing on my soul !'

"When the time of Conference drew near, my dear father occasionally expressed great pleasure at the idea of meeting the preachers, many of whom were much attached to him, and intended to have the gratification of once more taking his seat among them ; but we saw him daily decline, and believed that the awful hour of separation was at hand.

"July 21, the last Sabbath my father spent on earth, he was affected, even to tears, by an interview with Mr. G. Marsden. On this respected friend's making kind inquiries concerning his health, my father mentioned his great difficulty of breathing, and added, 'If I had but more breath, I could preach.' The short conversation which followed was striking, but I cannot remember what passed with sufficient accuracy to relate it. I recollect, however, that my dear father, in answer to one of Mr. Marsden's questions, emphatically said, 'Christ is my all, and in all !' The following day, while my mother was meeting her class, he went into the vestry, and prayed in a connected and very affecting manner. On Wednesday morning

he was much gratified at one of the preachers coming to breakfast ; and, with few exceptions, conversed rationally with him on different subjects. We particularly noticed his earnestness at family prayer ; and when sitting silent afterwards, he was evidently engaged in holy meditation.

“ Ah ! how little did we think that that was the last time we should sit together ! About ten o'clock, while going up stairs, he fell backwards, it is supposed, in an apoplectic fit. I must here omit some distressing circumstances, which would draw the tears of sympathy from the eyes of many who loved him well. We had not the mournful pleasure of conversing with my father after his fall, for it was with great difficulty he answered, in monosyllables, a few questions which were put to him. But he was at times perfectly sensible ; and on my afflicted mother's saying, ‘ Do you feel Jesus Christ precious ? Is He your friend ? ’ my father distinctly replied in the affirmative. Being unable to expectorate, the phlegm continually accumulated, and rendered respiration extremely difficult ; yet, not the least degree of impatience was manifested. From Thursday afternoon till Friday morning, July 26th, he was evidently dying. We felt the violent throbbings of that heart which had so often sympathised with the unhappy, and rejoiced with those whom his benevolence had made glad. We marked the hue of death on his once highly animated countenance. There are sensations which no earthly language can describe ; but they who have affectionate parents will

imagine what we felt when beholding my father struggle in the convulsions of death. Oh, at that moment of agony, what a piercing cry was uttered by the dear relatives who surrounded him! What a fervent prayer was breathed for his release! And God was nigh at hand—a very present help in the time of trouble. My father heaved his last sigh at ten minutes past four o'clock on Friday morning, July 26th. The spirits of the blessed were surely near the bed of death; but above all, the Husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless, was our consolation. My mother was particularly impressed with a sense of His divine presence, and more than once observed, 'this house seems full of God.'

“Many of the preachers who had been long intimate with my father came to look once more at their aged friend, and to comfort his family. Consoling, indeed, in the time of affliction, is the company of Christian friends, of pious ministers; and we were highly favoured in this respect. They brought to our remembrance the great and precious promises of God to His suffering children: they prayed—they wept with us; and we shall ever remember with gratitude these affectionate attentions.”

A minister who was acquainted with him many years, gives the following additional particulars of his latter days:—

“The few times that I had the melancholy pleasure of visiting him, after he had ceased preaching, it appeared to me that humility, meekness, simplicity,

and godly sincerity, were evident, not only in his conversation, but even in his silence. Without the least appearance of gloom or melancholy, he seemed to have nearly, if not entirely, divested himself of all that wit and gaiety for which he had been so long remarkable. In short, I found him in that humble, patient, happy, and resigned frame of spirit, which became an aged minister of Christ, who had so long, so often, so well, and so successfully preached the Gospel of salvation. His old and much esteemed friend, Dr. Hamilton, to whom he paid a farewell visit a short time before his death, spoke of him to me, after that event, in strong terms of love and esteem. The Doctor, who knew him well, not only when his popularity was at its zenith, but during its decline, and even till its extinction, speaks of him, not only as a man of extraordinary talents, especially for the pulpit, but as a man of sincere, unaffected piety; and observes that he witnessed with pleasure his progress in spiritual religion, from the time of his last appointment for London till that of his decease.

“ After having for several weeks ceased to write, he, on March 13, 1816, with much difficulty, wrote a short letter to his friend, the Rev. George Marsden, in which he says, among other things, ‘ I am forced to let preaching alone, and cast myself wholly on the Lord Jesus, who has been, and ever will be, my all in all.’

“ At the time of his decease, the Conference (being assembled in London), as a token of respect to the memory of a man whom they all sincerely loved, not

only appointed a certain number of the senior preachers to join the funeral procession, at Finsbury-square, on its way to the New Chapel [City Road], but waited there themselves, as a Conference, to join in the funeral solemnities. Dr. Adam Clarke read the burial service, and the Rev. James Wood and Rev. Henry Moore each delivered from the pulpit a suitable address to the immense crowd assembled upon the occasion. It will afford a degree of innocent pleasure to Mr. Bradburn's surviving relations and numerous friends, to know that his grave is separated by no more than a brick wall from the vault of his warm and venerable friend, the REV. JOHN WESLEY."

In that old burial ground a noble band of sleepers lie! Wesley, Bradburn, Bakewell, Olivers, Benson, Clarke, Watson, Atmore, Griffiths, Gaulter, Stephens, Lessey, Treffry, Grindrod, Moore, Bunting, and others. The resurrection clarion will not awake a finer group of Christian warriors! In the Bunhill Cemetery, on the other side of the street, lie the remains of Susannah Wesley, Lady Erskine, Dr. Watts, John Owen, John Bunyan, and many others, whose names are honoured in every clime. When these sleepers start from their slumbers on the resurrection morn, how grandly their voices will blend and swell in the great triumphant chorus: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

A D D E N D A.

THE following interesting particulars have come to hand since the foregoing sheets were put in type :—

The identical leather apron, used by Bradburn when he followed the calling of a cobbler, now lies before us ; also a manuscript book containing “ Select Texts of Scripture suited to most occasions ;” and “ Select Hymns designed chiefly for public worship among the people called Methodists. Extracted from their Large Book. By Samuel Bradburn.” The hymns are written out in full length, and are thus classified : “ Proper Hymns to begin with on Sunday morning ;” “ Hymns to begin with on Sunday afternoon ;” “ Hymns to begin with on Sunday evening.” Then follow suitable “ Hymns to be sung after the first prayer, or before the sermon ;” “ Hymns to begin with any time ;” “ Hymns to conclude with,” &c. The binding, and the leather case in which the book is preserved, are his own workmanship. This in-

teresting relic throws an air of probability around the story, that, when asked whether he could favour the choir with the hymns for a particular Sunday, he replied, "Yes, and for all the Sundays in the year!" The above relics, and a beautiful portrait of Bradburn, painted by Orme, are owned by Thomas W. Lord, Esq., Bank Mills, Leeds.

The reader will remember that, previous to his being received into the regular ministry, Bradburn assisted the Superintendent of the Liverpool Circuit, who, on account of lameness, was unable to take the long journeys. At that time he was very thin, and had a boyish look, and his attire and general appearance were not prepossessing. On visiting Bolton, Mr. Lord's grandfather, with whom the preachers domiciled, was so annoyed to see "a mere lad," as he called him, travelling the circuit, that he gave him an unwelcome reception, and made him take his meals and sleep in the garret, with the apprentices. On the Sunday morning the young preacher went to the old chapel in Bolton, and his host, who was ashamed to enter the chapel with him, stood at the door with the full expectation that he would break down. As Bradburn gave out the first hymn the expectations of his audience began to rise, and during the opening prayer the responses waxed loud and general; and before he rose from his knees, his indignant host had crept to his accustomed seat in the front pew, having a more

amiable countenance, and a more favourable impressions of the abilities of the stripling preacher. The sermon astonished and charmed all who listened to it, and, at the close of the service, he was judged worthy to sit in the "preacher's chair," and to sleep in the "prophet's chamber." His host soon learned to respect and love him, and throughout life was one of his truest friends; and his descendants are warm admirers of the name and fame "of this great and good minister."

Here are two original letters written by John Wesley to Bradburn at "The New Chapel, near Moorfields, London":—

"Bristol, March 13th, 1788.

"DEAR SAMMY,—With regard to my brother, I advise you—1st. Whether he will or no (at least, if not done already), carry Dr. Whitehead to him. 2nd. If he can't go out, and yet must have exercise or die, persuade him to use a [illegible] twice or thrice a day, and procure one for him. 3rd. I earnestly advise him to be electrified; not shocked, but only filled with electric fire. 4th. Inquire if he has made his will (though I think it scarcely possible he should have delayed it). The tunes, which Brother Rhodes left with you, should be immediately printed in the cheap [illegible]. Kind love to Sophy, dear Sammy,

"Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

"J. WESLEY."

“ Epworth, July 6th, 1788.

“ DEAR SAMMY,—To-morrow evening I hope to be at Doncaster ; on Wednesday at Sheffield, and to-morrow sen’night at London, bringing my daughter with me. That evening I should not object to preaching at West-street. On Tuesday morning I would breakfast in Chesterfield-street,* if my sister will be ready at eight o’clock. Then I must hide myself till Sunday. I will preach at one or the other chapel for Kingswood. Peace be with you and yours !

“ I am, dear Sammy,

“ Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

“ J. WESLEY.”

* The residence of his brother’s widow and family.

