

The Wicket Gate Magazine

A Continuing Witness



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At the Web Site of the Wicket Gate magazine www.wicketgate.co.uk you will also find the following recordings:

- Through the Bible with the Children – Bible Stories told by Mr Seaton.
- Congregational Praise – the singing of our Church during Worship Services
- Sermons preached by Dr Needham and Mr Seaton
- Historical Lectures given in the Church by Dr Needham

“New Year Thoughts”

(The Pastor's Letter January 1976)

Dear Friends,

Whatever this new year brings us, we may rest perfectly assured that it brings us but nearer to God. As Paul writes to the Roman believers of his day, “Now is our salvation nearer than when we (first) believed.” And as we so often sing at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper: -

“Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet, passing points to the glad feast above.”

This year will run its course (if God permit) until the years have all run their course, and the Lord appears from heaven to receive the remnant of His Church at last and bring them into the fulness of the deliverance that he has accomplished for them. Our salvation *is* nearer than when we first believed; each passing feast *does* point to the glad feast above; and each passing year *does* bring us nearer to our God. But as we weigh up and receive such an indisputable fact, we may reflect on what any intervening years between now and the Lord's coming for His people may hold out for them in the way of spiritual life and spiritual well-being.

It was a question like this that confronted the prophet Habakkuk so many years ago, as he knelt down before the throne of God's grace to weigh up the spiritual prospects of the nation of Israel now about to be carried away captive into the city of Babylon for a period of something like seventy long years. Habakkuk has settled in his mind, of course, that the nation of Israel is receiving every just recompense for its sins before its God. He is also quite settled in his mind that the Lord his God is dealing in absolute righteousness and justice with that nation. And he is further persuaded that the Lord's hand will eventually “reverse” this state of things that is coming to pass, and that the nation of Israel will once again be returned to the land of

Judah, and be the people that God has called them to be – worshipping Him in His temple day and night. In other words, the “captivity” won't last for ever; the years will run their course, and God will deliver the nation out of all its bondage.

But although Habakkuk, no doubt, rejoices in that future coming day, he nevertheless has a great concern in his heart and soul for the intervening days – and weeks, and months, and years – that his people will have to spend in that city of Babylon; and so, there comes his famous and heartfelt cry in the 2nd verse of the 3rd chapter of his prophesy: “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known.” You see what Habakkuk is driving at there, of course? “Yes,” he is saying before the Lord his God, “Lord, I know and believe all that you are speaking to me; and I know and believe that this state of affairs won't last for ever – that there is a day of reversings coming; and when the years of captivity have run their course Thou wilt surely deliver Thy people from all their afflictions. “***But Lord,***” he is saying, “What about *the midst of the years?* What about the years *in between* until that great and final deliverance?” And so, the prayer of his heart spills out of his heart via his mouth into the ear of his Almighty God: “Revive thy work in the midst of the years in the midst of the years make known.” “Don't only favour us with that final great deliverance, O Lord, but favour us with Thy reviving graces – even during those dreadful days of our captivity – until that final great deliverance really and fully comes to pass for us.”

And so, as we come face-to-face with yet another year that brings us face-to-face with yet another reminder that all the years of God's purposes will one day be fully realised and the Lord will come to deliver His people for evermore, we may well diligently enquire concerning those intervening years of the dear church's captivity in the Babylon of this world, and learn to cry out like the prophet Habakkuk, “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known.” It is, surely seldom wrong to ask the Lord to look upon us in blessing; and it is, surely, not out of place to consider such a subject for a few lines at the commencement of this new year.

For, of course, here is the point: the Church of the Lord so often knows the experience of *“a captivity within her captivity.”* In other words, as she must live out her existence in this world until her Lord shall come and finally deliver her, there are also times when that same Lord's hand is heavy upon her in chastisement and correction so that He leads her away into a spiritual and moral captivity until she learns something of the kind of lessons that a book like Habakkuk sets before her, and learns to cry out in the words of the prophet of so long ago. For one of the first things that a call for deliverance from spiritual bondage and barrenness entails is an acknowledgement that it is the very hand of God himself that has sent us into captivity on account of our sins and our transgressions against Him.

You see, Habakkuk's prayer for reviving in the midst of the years doesn't actually begin on that note, or with those words we have quoted from his book. Oh, no; Habakkuk's prayer for reviving begins on an entirely different note altogether. Listen to how he bends the knee before the Lord's throne of grace: - “A Prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth,” it says, “O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid: O lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years” etc. What is Habakkuk the prophet saying before the Lord, my friends? Habakkuk the prophet is simply saying before the Lord that he believes what God has said. God has just, in fact, said that He is going to judge His people Israel by permitting them to be led away captive at the hand of that Chaldean host. And as far as Habakkuk is concerned, if God has said that He is going to judge this people of Israel, then judge them he most certainly is. And the prophet need not take all these adverse events that are coming upon this backslidden nation at this time and interpret them in any other way, but the hand of his Almighty God is upon them. “O Lord, I have heard thy voice.”

Now, that's very important, surely? If Habakkuk had turned to the Lord and said, “No Lord, I just can't bring myself to believe that you would permit these things in your beloved Israel, and what we are seeing and witnessing has something to do with luck, or ill-fortune, or a bad chain of events that just happen to be abroad for us today;” my friends, if Habakkuk had prayed like that, then what right would he

have had to pray in the first place, and what effectualness would that prayer ever have had before the face of his God in heaven above? And we may learn it well: one of the first things that we need to do is to come to an honest and clear assessment of just what is taking place in the church and in the world in these days in which we live, and then, from that honest assessment (by the grace and enabling of our God) begin our long trek back, seeking the Lord's hand to come mercifully upon us in the midst of such years as these. And where do we come to a right assessment of our present state? Only in the Word of God alone. That's the whole burden of Habakkuk's words - "O Lord, I have heard thy speech." And it points us to the clear essentiality of the preaching of the whole Word of God in our present day. Habakkuk is not arriving at this conclusion by his own notions and man-made theologies, but by the Word of the living God resounding and ringing in his heart and ears. And if we but weighed up the behaviour of the professing churches of Christ over the past century in the whole light of the whole word of God, we would clearly see that God's hand has now fallen heavily upon us in these days. Having sown the wind, we are now reaping the harvest of the whirlwind. And one of the great pre-requisites for calling on the Lord for reviving grace and preserving grace in our day, is to clearly and honestly come to terms with the fact that the Lord is clearly justified in having a terrible controversy with those who have taken on His name to be called the churches of the living God.

Needless to say, of course, this is not an easy thing to come to terms with. You see even how poor old Habakkuk felt within his heart and mind as soon as he believingly laid hold on the truth that God was surely at work in a terrible fashion in that land of Israel? "O Lord," he says, "I have heard thy speech, and was afraid." So be it, my friends! And there is nothing that makes our hearts tremble more than the realisation that God can and God does judge His very own people at times. So the tendency among both preachers and hearers alike to lock such doctrine and truths away in some convenient theological cupboard. Yet, you see, until these truths are released, and served and swallowed down – no-matter how unpalatable they might be – we are never even getting to the first steps of calling upon the

Lord our God to revive His work in the midst of the years. You'll find that principle at work in the midst of the years. You'll find that principle in Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians where he reminds them of the unpalatable truths of chastisement and correction that he brought before them in his first epistle, but what great and glorious results the embracing and believing of those truths have meant to them. "For, behold," he says, "this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort." And the results of that? "What carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal," and so forth. And such was the process with Habakkuk: - first, he honestly realises that they are such years as they are; second, he assesses aright by believing the words of the lord how such years have come about; and third, although the realisation takes its toll upon his poor old heart and mind, he receives the realisation, and so, cries out to the Lord in the only way that he knows how - "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years." And need we make mention of Habakkuk's follow-up to his request? As he prefaces his prayer for revivings with an acknowledgement that it is God's hand that has brought them to their present state on account of their sin, so he concludes his prayer for reviving by acknowledging that it must also be God's hand alone that will deliver them out of their present and future state on account of His mercy: - "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Habakkuk sums up that prayer exactly right: "Lord," he is saying, "whilst thou art exercising thy just prerogative in judgement, grant that it might please thee to also exercise thy gracious prerogative in mercy." Note that there is not one word about Israel's merit; that Habakkuk doesn't ask that the work might be done on the grounds of his prayer; it is God's free, unmerited favour alone that will grant an answer to that prayer if answer there is going to be. Even the actual word of the prayer itself sets that truth clearly before us: - "O Lord," says Habakkuk, "revive **Thy** work in the midst of the years ...". He looks to God that God might remember and not forsake the works of His own hands. May we learn to bear that in mind also. As one has said, "O Lord, look upon the **wounds** of Thy hands, and forsake not the **works** of Thy hands." and as another has put it, "Into His

hands let us commend our spirits, sure that even though the works of our hands have made void the works of His hands, yet His hands will again make perfect all that our hands have unmade.”

We know not what the morrow may bring forth, nor, indeed, how many years there are, if any, until our Lord will finally come. But on account of that very fact are we not under continuous obligation and restraint to call upon our God, “O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy”?

May the Lord be with us all and all His people throughout the earth during the permitted days of this new year.

Yours sincerely,
W. J. Seaton.

Philip and Matthew Henry *(Part 2 concluding)*

That desire of the Henrys to “Mark providences that they might have providences to mark,” must have been often reflected upon in relation to those sad days of 1662. Philip Henry moved with his family to Broad Oak towards the end of the September of that year; three weeks late there was born into the family the second son whom the father and mother named Matthew. “Moses my servant is dead, now therefore, arise, Joshua ...” “Today you are cooking a goose,” said old John Huss at the stake, “but tomorrow a swan (Martin Luther) will rise out of the ashes.” And with the birth of Matthew Henry, whose voice was to go out into all the world, the Lord was, surely giving a blessed token that His Word will never be bound nor silenced no matter how violently men may rage against it. God was raising up “the pen of a ready writer,” and that diligence and faithfulness of Philip Henry in expounding the whole counsel of God where God had set him, was to be the human instrument in putting an edge to that pen.

Like his father, Matthew Henry had a great capacity for learning at a young age, and this was exploited to the full. However, it is with regards especially to his growing “in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” that the prayers and efforts of Broad Oak were directed. One of the greatest joys, surely, that the Christian parents can be afforded is to learn that they have been used of the Lord in the conversion of their very own children. On the 7th December 1678, this joy began to dawn upon the ejected minister of Worthenbury. It was a Lord's Day afternoon that the young Matthew approached his father to be “examined”, as he puts it, as to whether or not he had “the marks of true grace” within his heart. “I told my father my evidences,” he says, “he liked them, and told me, if those evidences were true (as I think they were) I had true grace.” A few years earlier, Matthew Henry, still only a boy of thirteen, had begun to draw up “A Catalogue of God's Mercies” towards him. In that Catalogue, he looks back three years, to a time when he was only ten years old, and traces the day that he first began to feel that God was stretching out His hand in salvation towards him. “I think it was three years ago,” he writes, “that I began to be convicted, hearing a sermon by my father on Psalm 51:17, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” That text smouldered and burned in the young boy's heart until, that day, some five or six years later, it burst into flames by the fanning of God's Holy Spirit when the rejoicing father was taken up to glorify God even in the life of his own flesh and blood.

Shortly after this, Matthew was sent to London to study under that “holy, faithful minister, Mr Thomas Doolittle, who then lived at Islington.” From there he moved to Gray's Inn during the Spring of 1685 with the intention of studying law and spending his life in that occupation. During this Gray's Inn period, however, we find him ever-straining at the leash to be away and about his father's business of preaching, and when things began to ease around the year 1687, his call to the Christian ministry and to the church at Chester had been extended and accepted.

Of his “work of faith, and labour of love” at Chester, volumes could be written. At the time of his ordination, he had prepared “A Serious Self-examination Before Ordination”, this runs to ten pages, but seems to have formed the basis of all that he did during his twenty-five years with the Chester congregation. His heart was knit to the people of that place, although the shadow of death fell across his path on numerous occasions. Married in August of 1687, he was bereft of his young wife eighteen months later, at the young age of twenty-five. He was urged by his in-laws to remarry, which he did in 1690, but death soon visited the home in the removal of their little daughter in 1692. An entry in his diary at this time sums it all up, “I have been this day doing a work I never did before, burying a child:” Sadly, it was a work that was to become familiar for April of 1693 was to see him lay another infant daughter in the grave, and November 1698, yet another, while in between those two events had come one of the saddest visitations of death in the home call of his father. Although absolutely reconciled to the nature of life and death, time and eternity, Matthew Henry's true heart felt the blow upon it; “And now, what is this that God hath done unto us?” he writes. This was recorded in no bitterness, but in honest enquiry as to what God had to teach those who remained. The lesson finally applied itself to the young man's heart, to make himself more and more ready for the hour of death, “that when it comes,” he resolved, “I may have nothing to do *but* die.”

Death, in fact, came relatively early for Matthew Henry, for he had only reached his fifty-second year when a fall from his horse proved fatal to his already failing and faltering health. Yet, how much was produced in that one shortened life is probably epitomised in the massive volumes of commentary that grace, and have graced, the shelves of generations of ministers and preachers, and the people of God everywhere. This “Exposition of the Whole Bible,” of course, was only part of his literary work in the gospel, but, standing as it does in all its width, probably overshadows everything else. “And now,” Mr Spurgeon seems to be saying as he takes a deep breath at the commencement of recommending expositions in his introduction to *Commenting and Commentaries*. “First among the mighty for general usefulness ...” Few would disagree with that. How often, when a

passage has been exegeted in the study, expounded precisely to our minds, overlaid with all the science of hermeneutic and textual evidence, have we still lacked one thing needful – that clothing of the who with warm flesh and blood – and have found it in the pages of M.H.? And that's precisely what he intended his work to be; “When the stone is rolled away from the well's mouth,” he says, “by a critical explication of the text, still there are those who would drink themselves and water their flocks; but, they complain that the well is deep, and they have nothing to draw with; how then shall they come by this living water?” So, he explains, “Some such may perhaps find a bucket here, or water drawn to their hands; and pleased enough shall I be with this office of the Gibeonites, to draw water for the congregation of the Lord out of these wells of salvation.” that office has been well discharged, as the testimony of generations of able men witness: Isaac Watts, Philip Doddridge, John Ryland, William Romaine, Adam Clark, Robert Hall would all gladly take their stand on that. Robert Hall's biographer relates how that eminent pastor, “for the last two years (of his life) read daily two chapters of Matthew Henry.” Whitefield read through the commentary four times, and always on his knees; while Spurgeon designates William Jay of Bath as, “Matthew Henry preaching.” “The great Mr Henry,” Whitefield called him, and all should want to add an Amen to that.

The last two years of Matthew Henry's life were spent in the pastorate of the Independent church at Hackney in London. To this he had moved in 1712 after much heart-searching and heart-rending in leaving the people at Chester. At Hackney, he completed the fifth volume of the Exposition – Gospels and Acts – but died before he could complete the final part of the work. He had, of course left much material in preparation for the last volume, and a group of friends took in hand to do this. But, as one writer has said, “they completed a sixth volume, but they did not continue Matthew Henry.” Nevertheless, what an output those completed volumes represent for those years since the Exposition's inception: he set his hand to it in 1704, issued the Five Books of Moses 1706, the Histories 1708, the poetical books 1710, the Prophets 1712, and the gospels and Acts in 1714 just before he died. We may well-remember that all this was accomplished in the

midst of family and pastoral life and not simply executed in “the studious cloisters pale.” Let one extract from his diary show this clearly; “Between two and three o'clock this morning, while my wife was ill, I retired to seek God for her and the children. Being willing to redeem time, I did a little at my Exposition ...”

“By little strokes, men fell great oaks.”

So, Matthew Henry laboured on faithfully with an eye to heaven, so that, when it came for his time to die, by the grace of God, he had nothing to do **“but die.”** As mentioned, it was due to a fall from his horse on the way to Nantwich where he was heading to preach after two weekends with his old congregation at Chester. He fulfilled his preaching engagement after the fall, but the health that had begun to decline several years before due to diabetes, was insufficient to sustain his life after the injury, and he passed away on Tuesday 22nd June 1714. Neither persecution, nor death itself, can silence the Lord's voice through those that “He delights to defend” and to use for his purposes in grace.

BOYS AND GIRLS PAGE

Dear Boys and Girls,

At this time of year most people have been thinking about the new year that has just begun. I'm sure you have heard somebody say, “Well, this is the start of a new year – a time for new beginnings.” It is good to look back on our lives and see how we have lived, and then, to look forward, determined to live better.

Where better to look for help and guidance than to God's Word, and right to the beginning of God's Word, when life on this earth first began. (Genesis Chapter 1 verse 1) “In the *beginning*, God ...” That's it boys and girls. At this beginning of a new year let us all resolve to look to God; put God at the beginning of all our thoughts and actions, and then, surely, we will live better lives.

“God be in my head, and in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking.”

Love,
Mrs Seaton

Gleanings in the Psalms

(Psalm 72 continued)



Verse 12. “For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth ...” Omit prayer, and you fall out of God's testing into the devil's temptation. You get angry, hard of heart, reckless. But meet the dreadful hour with prayer, cast your care on God, claim Him as your Father though He seems cruel – and the degrading, paralysing, embittering effects of pain and sorrow pass away, and a stream of sanctifying and softening thought pours into the soul; and that which might have wrought your fall, only works in you the peaceable fruits of righteousness. You pass from bitterness into courage of endurance, and from endurance into battle, and from battle into victory, till at last the trial dignifies and blesses your life.

S. Brooks

Verse 13. “He shall ... save the souls of the needy.” A famous ruler used to say, that he would rather save a single citizen than slay a thousand enemies. Of this mind ought all princes be towards their subjects. But this affection and love rose to its highest excellence and power in the breast of Jesus Christ. So ardent is His love to His own, that He suffers not one of them to perish, but leads them to full salvation.

Mollerus

Verse 16. “there shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.” No better description of the glories of the gospel, even from the beginning, could be found than this. Who would give any hope whatsoever of a harvest being reaped with only a handful of corn? And not only that, but the handful of corn being sown on a naked and storm-swept mountain top, where no depth of earth would be found, but only a shallow and rocky region? Yet, says the psalmist, “the fruit thereof” - the fruit of such a husbandry - “shall shake like Lebanon” - like the mighty cedars of that fair land. So, the gospel! Who would have given two farthings for that “handful of corn” gathered in the upper room after the Ascension of Christ to the realms of glory? And yet, within a few short weeks “they of the city” of Jerusalem itself were to “flourish like the grass of the earth.” May we know such glorious plantings in our own land again.

Verse 16. “ ... an handful of corn ...” doubtless it has been familiar to you to see corn merchants carrying small bags with them, containing just a handful of corn, which they exhibit as specimens of the store which they have for sale. Now, let me beg of every one of you to carry a small bag with this precious corn of the gospel. The most difficult place, the steepest mountain, the spot where there seems the least hope of producing fruit, is to be the first place of attack. And the more labour there is required, the more is to be given, in the distribution of the seeds.

J. Sherman

Verse 17. “His name shall endure for ever ...”

The metrical rendering of the verse is beyond compare -

“His name for ever shall endure;
last like the sun it shall:
Men shall be bless'd in him, and bless'd
all nations shall him call.”

Verse 19. “And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.” “Amen” is a short word, but marvellously pregnant, full of sense and spirit. It is a word that seals all the truths of God and every particular promise of God. But it is never likely to arise in the soul, unless there be an almighty power from heaven to make it say, “Amen.” there is such an inward opposition of the heart, and an innate rebellion against the blessed truth of God, that unless God, by His strong arm, brings the heart down, it never will nor can say, “Amen.”

Richard Sibbes

Verse 20. “the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.” The son of Jesse. It is the note of true humility and sincere love to God to abase ourselves, and acknowledge our low condition, wherein God did find us when He did let forth His love to us. So David does teach us here how to commend the riches of God's goodness and grace towards us.

David Dickson

Verse 20. “The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.”

There are several other psalms of David yet to come, this conclusion must either apply to the close of this “First Book” of psalms, or else to the close of the psalms which David himself had gathered together. Whatever the case, sure it is that David came to the point where his prayers did end with his mortal breath. Not so the prayers of David's greater Son which ever plead for us.

Spurgeon's Eccentric Preachers

Part 8 – Edward Brooke. 1799-1871

Squire Brooke came of a substantial Yorkshire family, which possessed a considerable estate among the wild moorlands of the North. His parents belonged to the Established church while Edward was in his boyhood, but were brought to know the Lord in after years by the preaching of their zealous son. Edward was not sent to Eton or Harrow, as he should have been; but following the bent of his inclination he was allowed to remain upon the farm, to fish, and hunt, and shoot, and to develop a fine constitution and an original mind. Amid the rocks and the heather, the forest trees and the ferns, Edward Brooke, with his dogs and his gun, found both sport and health; or dashing over the country after the hounds, he enjoyed exhilaration and trained his courage in the hunt. Up to the age of twenty-two he seems to have been devoid of religious thought; but as we Calvinists are wont to put it, the time appointed of the Lord drew near, and sovereign grace issued its writ of arrest against him, resolving in infinite love to make him a captive to its power.

“Early in the year 1821, Edward Brooke rose one morning, intent on pleasure. Equipped for his favourite sport, with gun in hand and followed by his dogs, he was crossing the Henley Moors when a lone man met him with a message from God. The man was a Primitive Methodist preacher, named Thomas Holladay. “Intent upon his Master's work, 'in season and out of season', Holladay was prompt to seize an opportunity of usefulness. Passing the young sportsman, he respectfully saluted him, and said, with pitying earnestness, 'Master, you are seeking happiness where you will never find it.' On went the man of God, perhaps little dreaming that the arrow thus shot at a venture had pierced the joints of the armour encasing the young

sportsman's heart. Yet so it was. Here went the wounded sportsman, the words of Holladay still sounding in his ears. 'Master, you are seeking happiness where you will never find it'. The time was opportune. It was a day of visitation for that neighbourhood. The Spirit of God was moving upon the population. A great revival was in progress.

The awakened young gentleman began to attend cottage prayer meetings and to converse with the godly men of the neighbourhood, and thus his anxiety was greatly deepened, and his desire for salvation inflamed.

“It was the day of his sister's wedding. Ill-prepared to join in the festivities of the occasion, because of the sorrow of his heart, Edward Brooke spent the previous night hours in reading his Bible and wrestling with God for salvation.

'All night the lonely suppliant prayed,
All night his earnest crying made.'

About four o'clock in the morning, whilst kneeling by the old armchair in his father's kitchen, still pleading for mercy through the mediation of Jesus, his soul grew desperate, and like Jacob wrestling with the angel till the break of day, he resolved, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'

“That mighty importunity was the manifestation of true faith. He was enabled to receive Jesus as his Saviour, and believing with the heart unto righteousness, these words were applied to his heart, as distinctly and impressively as though spoken by a voice from heaven: 'Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee, go in peace and sin no more.' All fear and sorrow vanished, and, believing, he rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“Exulting in his wonderful deliverance, his first impulse was to make it known. He hastened to his sister's chamber and told her the glad news that Christ had save him – a glorious announcement on her

bridal morn: then early though it was, he ran out into the village and roused a praying man called Ben Naylor, whose heart he knew would be in sympathy with his, and told him how he had found the Lord; and they two called up a third, named Joseph Donkersley, to share their joy; and from the rejoicing trio up went a song of praise, the jubilant and sweet notes of which were music in God's ear, and woke up the songs of angels, and gave new impulse to the happiness of heaven, 'for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.'”

From that moment Edward Brooke was what he would have called “a brand new man.” He could do nothing by halves, and therefore he renounced once for all his former course of life, and finding field sports to have too great a charm for him, he gave them up in the most resolute manner. “Sir,” said he to a Christian friend, “I found that the gate was strait, and so I pressed into it myself, and left my horses, and dogs, and the world outside.” Edward Brooke frequented cottage prayer-meetings, talked with the work people at the mill, exhorted in his father's kitchen, and instructed wayfarers by the roadside; he began, in fact, to put himself in training to become a mighty hunter before the Lord,” a consecrated Nimrod whose game would be the souls of men.

Mr Brooke's early career illustrates the great usefulness of small meetings in rooms and cottages, where the uneducated, the poor, and raw beginners may feel at home in their first attempts at speaking. Had it not been for such gatherings he might have remained silent, for he could not have dared to make his first essays before a large congregation.

“In such meetings, Edward Brooke first ventured to deliver the message of salvation, which was as a burning fire shut up in his bones, till he was weary with forbearing and could not stay; and there he found encouragement and strength for further service.

“After prayerful consideration and consultation with Christian friends, it was arranged that Edward Brooke should submit his convictions of

duty to the judgement of others, by preaching in James Donkersley's chamber, a large room which answered the threefold purpose of a workshop, a bedroom, and a place where the neighbours might gather to worship God. The service was duly announced, and great interest awakened in the young squire's first appearance as a preacher. The chamber was thronged, and many a heart uplifted in earnest prayer that God would encourage and help his young servant in this first trial of his pulpit gifts. The preacher took for his text a passage in harmony with his intense convictions; 'The wicked shall be turned into hell.' Acting upon a sense of duty, and humbly relying on God, the preacher was divinely assisted, and the effort was a success.

We cannot pretend to give even an outline of Mr Brooke's long and useful life, but must content ourselves with citing incidents which illustrate both his eccentricity and fervour.

“Driving to some village in Derbyshire, where he was expected to preach in the after part of the day, the squire pulled up at a wayside inn. Having seen his horse fed, he ordered his usual refreshment of ham and eggs. A fine, healthy-looking countryman entered the room and sat down to rest. The squire made some friendly observations, and when his repast was spread, invited the young man to join him. The offer was gratefully accepted. Whilst enjoying their savoury dish the youth's heart opened, and there was a pleasant flow of conversation. 'We are expecting a very strange preacher,' said he, 'at our village to-night. He is a great man for prayer-meetings, and tries to convert all the folks into Methodists.' 'Indeed,' replied the squire, with evident interest in the topic, 'have you ever heard him?' 'No, I haven't,' said the youth, 'but my brother has.' 'Well, what did your brother say about him?' enquired the squire. 'Oh, he told me he never heard such a queer chap in his life; indeed he didn't know if he were quite right in his head; but,' said the young man, 'I intend to go and hear for myself.' 'That is right, my lad,' said the squire, 'and get your brother to go too, he may have a word to suit you both.' they did go, and greatly to the young man's surprise, as the preacher mounted the pulpit, he recognised his friendly entertainer at the wayside inn. As the squire proceeded with the service the young man's heart was

touched and his brother's also. At the prayer meeting they were found amongst the penitent seekers of salvation and were both converted not merely into Methodists, but into Christian believers.”

Here is a specimen of his characteristic letters: brief, but all on fire: -

Dear John – In reply to yours, I beg leave to say that our labour at Honley was not in vain. A new class has been formed, and about a dozen have gone to it. Two found peace. Praise the Lord! We shall rise. All hell is on the move, but we must go round about the bulwarks of our Zion, and mark well her palaces, and we shall ultimately and finally triumph over all. I say all. Go on, John, in the work. Live near to God. Be a giant in religion; one of the first and best men in your day. Plead with God. Live in the glory. 'Advance' is the Christian's motto. Onward to certain victory over sin, the world, and hell. Trample down worldly, fashionable conformity. Know the will of God and do it. Do it heartily, cheerfully, fully, eternally, and heaven will be your guide, defence, and all in all. Our kind respects. “And in your prayers, remember

“Edward Brooke”

(This is the end of this present series).