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Account of Thomas Fawcett  
and Methodism in Steaford.

1839

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A

SHORT ACCOUNT

OF THE LATE

MR. THOMAS FAWCETT.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF METHODISM

IN SLEAFORD.

“ And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.”—Rev. xiv. 13.

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## TO MRS. FAWCETT.

MADAM,

Not with any feelings of self-importance, but in humble dependence on the blessing of Jehovah, have I undertaken to pen the following pages. You will find they contain a few interesting facts relative to your late excellent and valued husband, and the rise, progress, and establishment of Methodism in this town, of which he was, in the hands of God, the principal instrument. It has been suggested that something ought to be done to record the fact, and rescue his name and decided attachment to the cause from oblivion. Ministers and friends have urged me, as I am the oldest member now living, and the only one left to tell the beginning, to take the matter in hand. This I should have done before, but waited, not feeling myself adequate to the task, and knowing that there were greater minds and abler pens to perform the work; but as nothing has been done by others, I determined to write down the following few plain truths, knowing them to be such.

Near forty years have elapsed since Providence brought me acquainted with my departed friend, your late excellent husband. Our early friendship, and the many pleasing associations connected therewith, are as fresh in my memory as ever; and though now for a season our intercourse with him has ceased, yet is it to



be renewed again, we hope, in that upper and better world, where all is purity, peace, and love. The affectionate husband, the sympathizing relative, the faithful friend, has entered the haven of eternal rest; he has washed his robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and is now before the throne of God day and night. May you and I wash in the same fountain, be found clothed with the same righteousness, and bow with him before the same throne; ascribing to Him who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, glory for ever and ever.

Your acceptance of the following brief and simple narrative will oblige,

Madam,

Yours respectfully,

CORNELIUS GREENWOOD.

## MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

## MR. THOMAS FAWCETT.

IN presenting this short and authentic memoir of my late respected friend, Mr. Thomas Fawcett, I may be permitted to say, that his family and relatives have for more than a century been respectable inhabitants of Sleaford. Of documents before me, one bearing date April 19, 1731, states, that William and Mary Fawcett were married in the parish church of this town. Their son William, born January 14, 1733, was the father of our departed friend. Their relative, the Rev. Benjamin Fawcett, also born in Sleaford, in 1715, was pastor for thirty-five years over a congregation of Baxterians at Kidderminster. He abridged the pious Baxter's "Saints' Rest," "Dying Thoughts," &c.; he wrote several works, and was counted a good divine. "He being dead, yet speaketh." I am informed they were related to a warrior too, Sir William Fawcett, who served as aid-de-camp to the Marquess of Granby; he died at Chelsea the beginning of this century, and was buried with great military honours. The Woodfords ought to be named as relatives and patrons of our esteemed friend. Their family, as proved by documents and monumental inscriptions, from the latter end of the sixteenth century, have been very respectable inhabitants of Sleaford; but, in 1816, that name, so long known, and much respected, became extinct. Time and death level all distinctions, and justly may we say with the poet—

"How loved, how valued once, avails thee not;  
To whom related, or by whom begot;—  
A heap of dust alone remains of thee—  
'Tis all thou art,—'tis all the proud shall be."



The house and premises where Mr. Fawcett, senior, lived, and where our friend was born, are in the possession of Mr. Edward Forster, Sadler. An old chapel, formerly belonging to the Presbyterian denomination, stood in the garden belonging to this house. In those days Dissenters were not protected as we are now, but were frequently disturbed. A lady informed me, that she has heard some of her ancestors say, the almost lawless people of Sleaford once dressed up an ass, and thrust it into the chapel while the people were at worship. Whilst we pity their ignorance, we rejoice that we can worship where we please, and as we please, without molestation. This was doubtless the place where that excellent man, Mr. Scoffing, an ejected minister, preached; his history informs us, he was pastor of a congregation in Sleaford for forty years, and that the close of his life, like the constant tenour of it, was undisturbed serenity and peace. Two other ministers resided here after their ejection, one a Mr. Moses Mell, ejected from Kirton-in-Lindsay in 1662, when he removed to Leasingham, and about the year 1665 he removed to Sleaford, where for fifteen years "he went about doing good," till his dismissal from this vale of tears. The other was Mr. Theophilus Brittain, rector of Brockelsby in this country, till ejected by the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and imprisoned at Lincoln. He was afterwards appointed chaplain at Colonel King's, at Ashby, near Sleaford, where he preached publicly till the Colonel's death, when he removed to Roxholm, in the parish of Leasingham, and took a small farm. In Monmouth's time, he, together with Mr. Wright and Mr. Drake, of Leasingham, were committed to Grantham gaol; he lived a few of his latter years at Sleaford, where he died in 1696, aged sixty-three. Those three venerable men now sleep within our ancient pile. "The memory of the just is blessed."

The chapel after this fell into disuse, and became so dilapidated, that it was taken down whilst Mr. Fawcett, senior, was living. The next was built in Hen Lane, in 1776, principally at the expense of Mr. Bond, who was accidentally killed. I am informed he was a man of excellent character and undoubted piety. We find a few in all ages who loved and feared the Lord, and spake often one to another.





About this time, a lady belonging to the Wesleyan body, residing at Grantham, was in the habit of visiting the late Mrs. Gardner, of this town, and occasionally holding meetings with a few who at that time met in her house. Very different was the state of things in the early days of the subject of this memoir from that which we see around us. Then, only a few met together, and they despised; we live in a brighter era; the gospel trumpet is sounded around us; ministers unfurl the banners of the cross; many have bowed in submission and found mercy, and numbers more are seen "flying as doves to their windows." He had, however, advantages which many have not; he was restrained by his parents from evil habits and excesses which many fall into to their souls' great danger. It is evident, that his respected father had discernment of religious truth, as he preferred a gospel ministry in the church when he could have it, and walked many miles at different times to hear the Rev. Dr. Peckwell, an evangelical minister of the day. The last time he went to hear him, he took cold by sitting in his wet clothes, and laid the foundation of the complaint which brought him to the grave. This was in 1786, in the fifty-sixth year of his age;—a mournful loss to his widow and rising family.

The subject of this memoir was apprenticed to Mr. Burgess, linen and woollen draper, of Billingborough. His master dying before his apprenticeship expired, that God who—

"Watches every numbered hair,  
And all our steps attends"—

directed him to Mr. Broadhurst, of Manchester. His new employer was a Wesleyan Methodist; whilst resident with him, he bowed at the family altar, and was led to the house of God. Though these things were new to Mr. Fawcett, he did not object to these requirements of his master.

At that time, those venerable men, Messrs. Mather and Benson were stationed at Manchester, and under a sermon by the Rev. Joseph Benson, he was led to feel his sin and danger, and to flee to Christ as the only Refuge for a wounded sin-sick soul. Through the atonement of Christ he sought and obtained mercy;

his desires, pursuits, and companions were changed; the language of his lips and heart was—

“ Let worldly minds the world pursue,  
It has no charms for me;  
Once I admired its trifles too,  
But grace has set me free.”

Neither did he confer with flesh and blood; he was not depressed by the thought that none of his relatives or friends were Wesleyans, or the views they might take of this change; but he at once wrote to his sister, Miss M. Fawcett, a long letter apprising her and the rest of his friends of what had taken place. In this letter, he says: “ Blessed be God, I can plainly see the necessity of saving my own soul. I do and will, through grace given me, embrace every means; for I can truly say, it is the delight of my soul to mix myself with his people, (which, thank God! are many in Manchester,) and am determined not to spend the future part of my life as I have done the former.” He cast in his lot with the people of God. The Rev. J. Benson gave him his first note of admittance, Feb. 23, 1794, which he carefully kept by him, and which is now before me.

It was under the roof of Mr. Broadhurst that my friend met with Ann Cutler, known by the name of Praying Nanny. I have heard him speak of her in the highest terms, as being a woman of strong faith and mighty in prayer. Mr. Bramwell wrote an account of her life, which I have: she died as she lived, full of faith and holy expectation.

In a journal of Mr. Fawcett's, written about this time, he says, “ I left Manchester on a journey to Scotland, and came to Preston the same day. Found steadfast confidence in the Lord, whose Spirit still continued to apprise of danger near.” In this journal he gives an account of his visiting Carlisle, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other places; what preachers he heard, the subjects of their discourses, and their mode of treating them; he speaks also of the company he met with at the various inns on his route, the snares which were laid for him, and how he escaped. Sometimes we find him on the mount, and sometimes in the valley; but the Lord preserved him, and brought him back to Manchester in

safety. He remained in Manchester till 1795, when he left for Chesterfield: his note of removal, given him by Mr. Mather, is dated March 28th of that year.

The subject of this memoir did not long remain at Chesterfield; Providence was preparing him to move in a different sphere. It seemed to be the design of infinite wisdom that he should be the principal instrument of planting the gospel, as preached by the Methodists, in this place. For, some time after this, his wealthy relative, Mr. John Woodford, wanting a young man to superintend his business, sent for and engaged with Mr. Fawcett. He had now new difficulties to surmount, but decision marked his steps. The shop had been opened on a Sabbath morning till church service commenced; he at once told Mr. Woodford he could not sell on the Sabbath, but must have the whole day to himself. This was granted, though not without much hesitation. He continued firm in the word and doctrine which he had received, believing them to be the most consistent with the sacred Scriptures. He did not take things on hearsay, but read authors of different sentiments; these, however, only tended to confirm him in what he had heard preached, and had with joy believed. He was not a bigot; Christian philanthropy ever glowed within his breast; and the man who loved the Lord Jesus, whether he believed in general or particular redemption, he acknowledged as a friend and a brother. Though he did not always meet with such treatment, it availed not to move him from the even tenour of his way.

About this time a family residing at the Paper-mill opened their house for preaching, where Mr. Crickett and Mr. Hunter ministered in their turn; but as things were not pleasant, it was given up. Upon which our friend had again to look around him; and in those days Normanton was the nearest place where he might obtain that spiritual manna which might refresh his hungry soul. All alone in the stillness of the night has he crossed the almost trackless heath from Normanton to Rauceby, it being then open common. Twice he missed his path, having neither moon nor stars to guide him; once he fell into a deep stone-pit, but mercifully found his way out unhurt. Another time he missed his path, and made up to a respectable farm-house, where he

knocked loud and long ; at length some of the inmates appeared at the window, and endeavoured to direct him, but in vain. Again he returned, called and announced his name, but to no purpose, they would not let him in ; he at last took shelter in an outhouse until dawn of day, when he made his way home, where his anxious sister awaited his return. This exertion on the Sabbath did not, however, prevent his being ready for the increased stir and business of the Monday morning, being market-day.

After thus travelling many miles on a Sabbath to hear preaching, and mingling with the people of God to worship, and receive good by the ministry of the word, he began to have a conviction on his mind that he was called to give as well as receive. Hence he ventured, about the year 1797 or '8, to give a word of exhortation, and next to take and expound a text ; and often, whilst he endeavoured to water the souls of others, his own soul was watered. Though not a very fluent speaker, I am acquainted with those still living, who were converted under his ministrations.

The time was now arrived for me to become acquainted with him. Having an invitation to visit a friend at Sleaford, I reached here in April, 1799, on Easter eve. On the same evening I was introduced to Mr. Fawcett. In the course of conversation he asked me my experience, and told me his. My inclination was to remain in Sleaford, being then in want of employment, but I received very little encouragement, as Mr. Fawcett told me it was a poor, barren place to come to. My coming I have always considered to be an arrangement of Providence, and at length my departed but not forgotten friend began to think so too ; for he was glad to have my company on a Sabbath : and O the goodness of God in his gracious dealings with us ! We were often blessed in our conversation, and were ready to say, " Did not our hearts burn within us by the way ? " Yes ; in those days Christian conversation was sweet. We have walked from ten to forty miles on a Sabbath before we have slept ; having gone to Aseby and back, to Great Ponton, Great Gonerby, Newark, Navenby, Skillington, and Lincoln. Often have we returned wet and weary, but strength was given both to body and mind, and we were ready on the next Sunday for the engagements which it might bring. I could point out to this day where, behind such a thicket, or in such a recess,

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we have bowed our knees before the Lord of heaven and earth, for his blessing to attend us. Prayer was answered in the calm serenity and peace which pervaded our minds; and often the warbling songsters of the grove, mounting in the air with their melodious notes, have seemed to join us in our songs of adoration to the divine Being. In this way were our Sabbaths employed.

I was under twenty years of age when I arrived at Sleaford. I had joined the people in my sixteenth year, and my parents being Methodists, and having received the preacher into their house from my infancy, I naturally had a greater reverence for the ministers, fully believing that their deportment corresponded with the doctrines which they preached: and this gave me a decided attachment to that body, its ministers and doctrines. This decision prepared me for what I had to meet with.

When I came here, and it was known I was a Methodist, I was attacked by certain professors, who said the Methodists were under a delusion,—they preached false doctrine,—believing what they did, they would never get to heaven; and one young man said they preached the doctrine of devils. I was too young to dispute on doctrinal points; I therefore brought them to the experimental part of religion. I told them I knew the time when, and the place where, God, for Christ's sake, removed my load of guilt, and caused me to rejoice in the light of his countenance; and that it was on the atonement of Christ I rested for present and eternal happiness; and those were the doctrines I had ever heard from the preachers of my choice. This staggered them, and after a while they grew weary, and left me to enjoy my own opinion. But I had other classes of people to deal with. The shop in which I worked was in the market-place, and I had all sorts of people to converse with: some insulted, others, more civil, offered to treat me with wine or any other sort of drink; others wanted to take me to the theatre, which was then over my head; but I thanked them, and told them I was in possession of far better enjoyments than those which they offered me.

At the theatre above alluded to was a favourite actor, a young man by the name of Tweedy. I was informed that he was not quite satisfied with the exhibitions of the stage; and what increased the uneasiness of his mind, the Rev. Mr. Clarke, a



gospel minister, then in this church, considered it his duty to bear his testimony against theatrical amusements; which gave great offence to some of the company then acting in this town, and likewise to some of the inhabitants; but not so to Mr. Tweedy. The convictions of his mind led him to renounce the stage, come out from a fascinating world, and unite himself with the people of God. Not knowing the steps he had taken after performing at Sleaford, I cannot describe the surprise and pleasure I felt in meeting with him some time after at Mr. Bramwell's, when stationed in Hull. He joined our people, and the result was, he afterwards became an itinerant preacher in our connexion; and after travelling in that capacity for many years with acceptance, has lately finished his course with joy.

But to pursue my narrative, I found they laid snares for me, which led me to God in prayer, to be kept from bringing a disgrace on my profession. I found divine grace to be sufficient for me. Hitherto Mr. Fawcett had seen and mourned over the nakedness of the land, and could but compare it to a wilderness, where neither fruit nor flowers grew; yet a few wrestling Jacobs were to be found,—Harrisons, of Walcott; Kents of Billingham; Puxton, of Anwick; Fawcett, of Sleaford; and Kerry, of Normanton. They pleaded for the prosperity of Zion, and mourned because they saw it not. At length the cloud gathered over us; sectarianism ran high in Sleaford; and as a house divided against itself cannot stand, a party of Dissenters that could not agree with the rest hired a room in what was then called Park's Yard, and fitted it up with pulpit and forms. This was in the month of September, 1799; when a man, though decidedly opposed to Methodism, went one evening to Mr. Fawcett, and made an offer of the pulpit and forms at such a price as was agreed to. The next thing was to get a preacher to open it, and dedicate it to God as a place of public worship amongst the Methodists. Mr. Button, who was at that time stationed at Newark, kindly came over and officiated. We, Mr. Fawcett, leader; Mr. G. Fawcett; Miss Ann Fawcett, and myself, then enrolled ourselves as members of the first Methodist society in Sleaford. All the circumstances connected with this interesting service are still fresh in my memory. To obtain a supply of preachers, we sent to Lin-

coln, and were taken on their plan. A Mr. Hannah came; (related to the present Dr. Hannah;) Mr. Daniel Isaac, before he entered the itinerant life; Mr. Francis Derry, from Grantham; Mr. George Smith, from the Spilsby circuit; and Mrs. Kerry, from Normanton, a sensible, intelligent woman, who frequently stood up in the public congregation, and was heard with pleasure and profit. At her house those reverend divines, Mr. Dodwell, vicar of Welby, and Mr. Pew, vicar of Rauceby, were in the habit of expounding the Scriptures to the people who chose to attend. The Christian philanthropy of these clergymen was well known in those parts. The former attended three of our first missionary meetings, and gave from ten to fifteen pounds each day; and before he died gave ten thousand pounds to our missionary fund; and at his death the same amount was left to the Bible Society. The latter gentleman was in the habit of receiving under his roof, and to his pulpit, divines who differed from him in some shades of opinion. The venerable Wesley was one who visited and preached at Rauceby. It may be seen, too, from the journal of the Rev. Robert Roe of Macclesfield, about the year 1784, of his residing with the Rev. Mr. Pew for a considerable time. The vicarage then was an asylum for him, while under his father's displeasure for his attachment to the Methodists; on account of which the bishop would not ordain him.

Mrs. Kerry's path was rough through life. At the commencement they were in a farm; but when it was known that they attended the Methodist meeting, the steward, accompanied by another gentleman, called upon them to say if they did not desist from hearing the Methodists, they must quit the farm. Mrs. Kerry replied, "Gentlemen, The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." Neither the love of riches nor the fear of poverty caused her to relax; the threatened discharge came, and they had to quit the farm. In after life, often had she to tread the path of adversity; but the Lord was her chief good, and he supported her under her various trials. Her house at all times was open for the messengers of salvation; she constantly bore her cross, and followed her Lord and Master; and her end was peace.

When we had been here awhile, the place not being very eligible, Mr. Fawcett looked out for another. Observing a new house

building in Westgate, he thought it would do much better than the one we had, if he could obtain it for a place to preach in. Mr. Fawcett waited upon the owner of the house, and was accepted as tenant. When finished, we had it licensed, and applied to Mr. Hicklin, then stationed in the Newark circuit, who kindly came over to open our new place of worship. And often did we feel in this place the presence of the Lord to be with us, and some manifest answers of prayer in the conversion of souls. I wish to mention one, as the first ripe fruit after preaching was established here. It was a young man where I lodged. I endeavoured to prevail on him at different times to accompany me to hear preaching, but could not. I had an occasion to go out on a visit for a few days, and on my return was surprised to find he had gone, as by stealth, to hear preaching at our place; and what he heard left the conviction on his mind, that we were right and he was wrong. He continued to hear, and light increased. At this time he was seized with a fever, which threatening to terminate fatally, his desire for salvation became intense. I endeavoured to point him to the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Business prevented my remaining with him during the day; but I was hastily sent for one morning, and on entering his room, he stretched out his hand, with joy beaming in his countenance, and said, "Pardon, pardon, has come at last." He lived only a few days, a happy witness that God, for Christ's sake, hath power on earth to forgive sin, and then joyfully resigned his breath. It was the preaching of the blessed gospel in this place which was the means of his conversion, and final triumph over death. Several others joined us, who were awakened under the ministry of the word amongst us at that time. Some have gained the haven of rest, some live to tell that they received their good in our second house, and are now steady members;—our friend Edwards for one; and several of his children have followed his example, in casting in their lot with us.

As we were taken on the Lincoln plan, they supplied us with preachers as well as they could, from those that lay nearest to us; and we begged the visits of others, who kindly came to our help. Providence graciously aided us in other ways. About this time, a young woman, named Green, came to be housekeeper to a trades-



man who worshipped with us. She, being pious, and a decided Wesleyan, proved useful to us; she assisted in prayer meetings, and occasionally met the class. The year following she was married to Mr. Stout, a local preacher from the Spalding circuit, by whom she had three sons and a daughter, all steady members of the Wesleyan society. Two of the sons, local preachers, and herself, still live to tell of the loving kindness of the Lord. Her name is again enrolled here, after an absence of thirty-seven years.

A new sect now arose in Sleaford, and fitted up a place in Mr. Clayton's lane to meet in; a man by the name of Law, from Grantham, being at their head. I shall not attempt to describe their progress, but their end. After meeting them for some time, he gave them to understand that the world would be at an end on such a day and such an hour; and several people, whom we should consider in other matters sensible and well-informed, went one Sunday to Grantham to take their exit with their false prophet. The grand conflagration was to take place there; and a favoured few were to die together. It caused a great talk in Sleaford, and many were frightened; but such as believed in that passage in holy writ—'But that day and hour knoweth no man,' were quite easy as to the result; while the favoured few had to return to their different occupations. I only relate this to show the necessity of keeping close to the word of God.

Soon after this time, providence directed Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, and their son Mr. John, to Holdingham Grange farm. They removed from Culverton, in Nottinghamshire. It was a great trial for them to leave; but the Almighty prospered them in their undertaking. They had been accustomed to the preaching of popular men, such as Pipe and Bramwell. It is well-known to numbers, how the Holy Spirit was poured out in Nottingham and the circuit, while those holy men laboured there. Mr. Bramwell used to abide at their house at Culverton. They had caught the holy flame that was kindled in so many souls, and it was not extinguished by their removal. They cast in their lot with us, and we proved that in union there was strength. Mrs. Pugson, of Anwick joined us. They came from the same village a little before Mr. Matthews; and happy were old friends to meet

again. The latter met with much trouble in her Christian course; many dark nights has she walked alone to hear a sermon; precious, indeed, were the means in those days. But Providence watched over, protected, and provided; and her last days are very comfortable. I have often admired the goodness of God in sending those amongst us that were established in the word and doctrine, as preached amongst us. This gave us stability, and we kept increasing, until our house began to be too small; yet the Lord opened all our way before us. Mr. John Martin, a farmer of Holdingham, who was in the habit of meeting with us, had a house in Sleaford that became untenanted, which was freehold property. A price was fixed; the agreement made; all was ready but the signing; when Mr. Martin was seized with a fever, and died. I believe there was hope in his death. He left a widow and an infant son; and often did some of his relations wish that when he came of age he would deprive us of our chapel; but again mark the interference of the Almighty, both in his providence and in his grace. Before this youth arrived at the age of twenty he was led to the knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins; he cast in his lot with us; and when of age, we had only to ask, and the deed was signed, besides giving something handsome towards the chapel. His mother continued amongst us, and was married a second time, to our late respected friend, Mr. Barsley. She died as she had lived, an ornament to her profession.

We might have been discouraged at the circumstance above alluded to; but God was our defence. The chapel was begun by taking the house down, all but one side; and, before a brick was laid, Mr. Fawcett called a few of us together, and gave out that hymn which begins

“ Except the Lord conduct the plan”—

And then we united in supplicating the blessing of God on our undertaking. We had few friends and little money to begin with, yet the chapel was completed in 1802. Mr. Hickling was still at Newark, and was again solicited to open our new chapel, which he cheerfully agreed to, bringing with him Miss Eggleston, now Mrs. Houghton, and Miss Wilson, afterwards Mrs. Clifton.



They came to sing, and he to preach ; and a very good day we had, though the chapel was not very full ; for, at that time, people seemed to stand aloof ; and frequently have anathemas been thundered from the pulpit, and issued from the press against us ; but we saw it to be our duty to look to God, and pray for the prosperity of Jerusalem.

In the following year, we were taken on the Lincoln plan to have the labours of the circuit-preachers, Mr. John Simpson, senior, and Mr. Thomas Vasey, at that time stationed there. They were kindly accommodated at Mr. Fawcett's house, who, I well know, did at that time to the utmost of his income for the support of the cause, and that most cheerfully. It was in this year that he was openly opposed in our chapel, while preaching from Rom. vi. 20, 21 ; but I will give it in his own words, as he put it down in his text book :—

“ This day I was openly opposed in the pulpit by Mr. Samuel Cropper, whilst insisting on the necessity of inward holiness as a meetness for the enjoyment of God in glory, which I affirmed to be alone through faith in the blood of a crucified Redeemer ; and which I considered to be the believer's privilege to enjoy in this vale of tears ; but Mr. Cropper briefly contended for the remains of the carnal mind, and its effects till death.”

I was present when this took place. Mr. Fawcett very calmly replied, he would meet him when the service was over ; he then resumed his discourse, and went on with an additional flow of liberty, quoting many passages of scripture to bear him out in what he had asserted. Accordingly, Mr. Cropper and Mr. Fawcett met in the pulpit pew, when the latter gave the former to understand that he had subjected himself to a heavy penalty by openly opposing him ; and Mr. Cropper acknowledging himself in the wrong, it dropt. We might at that time have sung the appropriate lines—

“ Let others hug their chains ; for sin and Satan plead,  
And say, from sin's remains we never can be freed.”

Opposition was not pleasant, but it had a cementing effect ; we clave to each other, and to God who was our refuge and defence,

The attendance gradually increased, until we wanted side galleries; for as yet we had only one at the end. This being completed, we had more sittings to let, and more room to hold the people. We were favoured in those days with the labours of Mr. J. Dixon, of Bassingham; Mr. Mawer, of Lincoln; Mr. Grimessen; and other excellent men, not to be forgotten by a few of us. Some of those are gone to their reward, and others are toiling to make the blessed shore.

About this time we had two local preachers raised up out of our society—Mr. John Foster was one, a native of Trusthorpe; who, living some considerable time amongst us, at length married Miss Weightman, sister to the late Mr. J. Weightman, who was a member amongst us, and who finished his earthly pilgrimage with an humble confidence in God his Saviour. I have no doubt but brother and sister have met in the realms of unmolested joy and eternal triumphs. As Mrs. Foster died first, Mr. Foster went to live near Spilsby; it, no doubt, being the design of Providence that he should go to his native place, as it was very dark. Through him the gospel was planted there, a society formed, and a chapel built; and he has lived to see the work prosper in his hands.

The next raised up was Mr. J. Matthews. He, likewise, felt he was called to confess his Lord and Master in a more public way; and often have I accompanied Fawcett, Foster, and Matthews, to the different villages around Sleaford; for, at that time, there was an increasing desire to hear the word of life around us. Many doors were open, and some that received good in those days retain it, and are left to tell of the twilight of Methodism in these parts; and others are safely gathered home. I wish I could say that of all, but some are returned to Egypt, and left the church and Christ; but not so our friend Matthews, he is still in the field and in the work of the ministry; and happy am I to record that his eldest son "is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," knowing it to be the power of God to salvation;" and, having an impression on his mind that he had a message from God to preach, he too is in the field, unfurling the banner of the cross, and crying in the ears of sinners, "Oh, every one that thirsteth! come." His grandfather, also, on his mother's side, a venerable

old gentleman, has preached amongst us several times—a man much respected for his long standing in the church, and for his steady adherence to Methodism; but he is gathered home.

There was another raised up out of our almost infant society; and, for many years, a very active, useful local preacher. Over his name I must cast a shade. “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” And, though in a foreign land, the eye of God is upon him. But, alas; where can he flee for refuge?

“Can foreign climes, or distant shores,  
Elude Thine eye, which all explores?”

Two others, who were united to us here, offered themselves as candidates for the missionary enterprise, and were accepted; the first was Mr. J. Bass Strong, Mr. Fawcett’s assistant in business. After the toils of several years on a missionary station, he returned to his native land, and is now stationed at Newark. The other, Mr. Robert Snowdale, came to live with our late friend Mr. Barsley, of Holdingham; a sincere, unaffected young man; and though he then followed the plough, there were indications of a superior turn of mind. He lived near to God, and made evident progress as a local preacher, until he was sent to a missionary station; where he, like Stoap and Jellison, fell a victim to an unhealthy climate. Blessed young men! they left their parental roofs, their weeping friends, and their native land, to see them no more. But their kindred spirits have met in a milder clime, the regions of eternal day.

Thus far we have seen that God was with us, and made a way for us. I have said we had now side galleries; we next established a benevolent society, on benevolent principles. The Rev. Mr. Keyworth, then resident preacher at Lady Huntingdon’s chapel, came forward with several members of their church, to join us in the good cause. Generally, one of their members and one of ours, of both sexes, visited together; we had rules printed, and had a sermon once a year. The first was preached by Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., of Raithby Hall; I think the succeeding ones by Mr. Moulton, Mr. Barsdale, and Mr. Roberts. I am sorry to say it dropped; and though I am acquainted with



the reasons, I cast them in the shade. I am happy to say that a few have generously come forward again, to assist the poor and distressed. Up to the time that Mr. Woodford resigned business in favour of our late friend, which, I believe, was in 1808, we found him the most unflinching friend of Methodism. He was now the master of a business, and at the head of a family, consisting of himself, his sister, the young men, and servants; and in each of those capacities he conducted himself with the greatest propriety. When he had a home, the pilgrim and the minister, both local and itinerant, found a hearty welcome beneath his roof, from him and his kind sister. Soon the sound of prayer and praise was heard in his dwelling, a family altar erected, and his family called to bow there. As a local preacher, he still attended his appointments; scarcely any weather preventing him. I wish I could say the same of all who undertake these duties. I have said the sound of prayer and praise was heard in his dwelling, which offended the ears of an eminent attorney that lived a little above in the same lane. I suppose the sound of the singing of hymns reached the dwelling of this gentleman, whose family had long used the shop of Mr. Woodford, and continued to do so with his successor. He sent a note to Mr. Fawcett, requesting his bill, and, unless that singing was done away with, the family could no longer patronise him. He took up his pen, and wrote an answer, which he read to me in his counting-house; he addressed it politely, but firmly, thanking the gentleman for past favours, and saying he should be happy, as a tradesman, for their continuance; but if he could only have those favours by sacrificing his right as the master of his own house, to have what company he chose, and spend their time as they liked, he should give up every future claim to that honour. But as God can make "the wrath of man to praise him," he overruled this, and the family continued their custom as before. He might have cringed in this instance, and much more so as it respected his wealthy relative, on whom depended all his future prospects; but he cast his care on that God who took care of him.

Lincoln and Sleaford became united as a circuit in 1813; the late Rev. Robert Ram was appointed as home missionary; our house was his first home after he left his parental roof. The

Rev. James Fowler succeeded him; and the year after, 1815, Sleaford became the head of a circuit. The Rev. John Roadhouse and Rev. James Fowler were appointed for us. And here we pause for a moment, and look back on the sixteen years that Methodism has been established here, and say, what has God wrought! He did much for our esteemed friend as an individual, both in his providence and in his grace; he had also done much for us as a society, in making a way for us, and in providing places wherein we might worship, and in sending ministers to set forth the way of salvation. How often had we said,

“Build again the dreary waste, cause the wilderness to bloom;  
Give our ravished souls to taste the eternal joys to come.”

We have realized the language of the poet; the dreary waste and the wilderness have begun to bloom; and at many times our souls have been blessed with a foretaste of that inheritance which the saints in light enjoy. We envy not the great and fashionable, with all their routine of pleasure and amusement; their cup of pleasure in a moment is dashed from their lips, when sickness and death approaches; while the Christian, be he rich or poor, can say,

“There is my house, my portion fair.”

In 1816, Mr. W. Woodford died; some time previous to which he had been prevailed on to go to our chapel. When he got home, he acknowledged he was struck with the neatness of the place, the respectable appearance of the congregation, and the talent of the preacher, which induced him, while health permitted, to attend preaching; and during his affliction Mr. Fawcett frequently talked to and prayed for him, and he willingly heard. There we must leave him: the Judge of all the earth will do right. In April, the same year, Mr. John Woodford died, brother to the above; by his death the subject of this memoir, and his sister, Miss M. Fawcett, came possessed by will of a handsome competency. But change of circumstances did not alter Mr. Fawcett; he still maintained the Christian character. Money did not make him proud; he was kind and affable, and opened his doors to the poor as well as to the rich. At the time of our

public meetings all were welcome to his table. It was in this year that our first missionary meeting was held, Mr. Broadhouse and Mr. Hutton being our preachers. In 1817 the Rev. R. Greenwood took the place of Mr. Broadhouse; and the Rev. Joseph Hutton was married to Miss Ann Fawcett, niece to our departed friend, and daughter of the late Mr. George Fawcett. In 1818, another bereavement took place in the death of our friend's respected mother, Mrs. Ann Fawcett; and again they had to put on the mourning garb, but not to "sorrow as those without hope." In this year, too, we lost one of our young members, Miss Sims, a person of modest, unaffected piety; she was one who had not a great deal to say, but having received the grace of God, it supported her under a long affliction, and in her final hour brought glory to her God. She was another instance of the power of Christ to save. We had at that time a talented and highly respected young man, the Rev. Arthur Jewitt. He improved the death of our young friend, by speaking from those words, "We all do fade as a leaf." We were sorry to part with him, but still more so to hear that the above-named passage soon became applicable to himself: he was cut off from the church militant, and from the opening prospects of a very useful life. But we must bow, and own that the Almighty is Sovereign Lord of all. I ought to have mentioned another young man that joined us named Salmon, who was called to God under the ministry of our preachers. His death was improved in a sermon by Mr. Ram. Several instances I could bring forward of others who joined us in the earlier years of Methodism, and who, in the course of Providence, had to remove to other circuits; but still held on the even tenour of their way, until called to exchange mortality for eternal life. These are some of the happy effects produced, under the blessing of almighty God, by a gospel ministry amongst us. And we challenge the infidel part of the world to prove such instances as we can of patience under suffering, tranquillity in the prospect of death, and joyful anticipation of resurrection unto eternal life.

Here I call to mind scenes of sad contrast to the foregoing. Years back I reproved Shephard Mills, a wicked old man, for the profane practice of swearing: he turned and told me I began betimes, as I was then young. I gave him to understand it would





have been better for him if he had ; it would have saved him from much evil. This man was a decided infidel, was wicked to a proverb, and used himself to speak in a most blasphemous manner of Christ, the Scripture, and the doctrine of a future resurrection. The Rev. Mr. Clarke, a gospel minister at that time in this church, called on Mills to reason with him, but to no purpose ; he treated the good man, and all he could advance, with contempt. I said one day to a friend, that if I were in the town when that old man approached his end, I should like to see him. Why, they said, he will strike you with his crutch if he can reach you. It was not very long after that the sinful old man fell sick. I soon heard of it, and ventured ; thinking, if he attempts to strike me, I can but get out of his way. I asked the nurse permission to see him, which, being granted, I approached the bed's foot, and asked him how he was, and ventured a little farther, to speak to him on the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of being ready when called for, as we all had sinned, we all had need of mercy, and so on. I proposed a prayer, all of which was agreed to. The next time I called I proposed to sit up with the nurse for the night, to assist him. Sometimes I talked, and sometimes prayed, and at other times waited on him, with a hope of being useful, knowing that nothing was impossible with God. We must rest there ; for though every thing was assented to, I could not see any marks of repentance. I called on the day he died, and while I was looking on the dying sinner,—for I perceived his eyes growing dim, and the shades of death upon him,—a young man came in as wicked as himself, called him by name, and told him to die game. He just opened his eyes, aroused by a voice he knew, muttered something, and soon after expired. Thus ended the life of the hero of infidelity in Sleaford. I am a witness that he died a coward, and happy should I have been to insert here that he died a penitent : but there is a difference betwixt assenting to the truth, and embracing it. We would invite the infidel and the man of the world to the death-bed of the Christian ;—there I have frequently attended, and found it to be a detector of the heart ; bringing with it emotions which cannot be cast aside. I attended, some years ago, a respectable tradesman on his death-bed, who had injured his constitution by un-

timely hours, and drinking ardent spirits. I sat up with him the two last nights of his life; and never shall I forget how eagerly he drank in every thing I said, nor how earnestly he accompanied the petitions that I offered up to God in prayer. But all this was mixed up with such a desire for life, that I feared all was not right: death, however, stepped in, and put an end to the mighty struggle. I followed him to the grave, and felt unusually depressed; but in a moment was relieved by that passage being spoken to my heart, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath thee are his everlasting arms." Though more than thirty years since, it made such an impression on my mind, and was followed with such tranquillity as I shall never forget. Soon after this I attended another, who for a considerable time was greatly afflicted; his constant cry was, "Oh, if the Almighty would but spare me,—if he would try me once more, how different I would be! how religious I would be!" But, alas, these promises were made in his own strength, and proved like ropes of sand; he got better, and returned to his old course of life. I mention these two, out of many more, as they left an unusual impression on my mind, and led me to say, "O that men were wise, that they would consider before it be for ever too late."

A word to backsliders. Our departed friend and myself were sent for, to see a female who was very much afflicted; she informed us she had lived near Nottingham, where she had been brought to the enjoyment of religion, and had joined our people, but had forsaken both; her distress was very great; death was approaching, and she was not ready. She asked us to sing that hymn which begins with "And am I born to die?"

When we came to that verse,

When we came to that verse,

He shall drag my soul away, to meet its sentence there;  
 "Will angel bands convey their sister to the bar,  
 Or devils drag my soul away, to meet its sentence there?  
 Who can resolve the doubt which tears my anxious breast?  
 Shall I be with the damned cast out, or numbered with the blest?"

Her agony of mind was insupportable, and she gave vent to her feelings in a flood of tears. We assured her that Christ was

ready to receive backsliding, repenting sinners who came to him; we prayed with her, and left her more composed; we called again, but some excuse was made, so that we could not see her, and shortly after we heard of her death. It is a mercy that it is written, "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" there we leave her. Another was a person from London, who was sent by his employer to a gentleman's house in this town, as house-painter and paper-hanger. After he had been here some time, he was seized with a bowel complaint, which, getting worse, a doctor was called in, but of no avail; nothing seemed to check the complaint. I was sent for, and as I approached the dying man, he threw out his arm, and grasped my hand, acknowledging himself a backslider from God and his people. He said music, singing, and company had been the cause of his being drawn aside from the right way; and what added to his distress, he was the cause of his wife's forsaking the people of God, who was, with her children, in London. Not a friend near him that he was acquainted with, I endeavoured to point him to the friend of sinners, the only refuge for the weary and heavy laden. I saw his state, and felt for him. I bowed my knees before God, to implore mercy for him; he responded to my petitions; and on parting, I observed his mind more tranquil and collected; but before seven that evening he was called to another world. I was not aware of so sudden a transition, but felt a hope that he who delights in mercy had shown mercy to him, as a penitent sinner. So uncertain is human life! He left his wife and children, to see them no more. A friend of his, a local preacher, was sent down by his widow to learn the state of his mind previous to dying; he called upon me, and I related the particulars, as above given. We have said we have seen the effects of the gospel in its awakening, quickening, cheering, and supporting influences, so as to enable its possessor to believe, and look with triumph on the tomb; and we have seen the infidel skulking out of the world; and the worldling, after a routine of pleasurable amusements and folly, wanting the long-neglected principles of Christianity, to guide and support them through the dark valley of the shadow of death. We have seen the poor, broken-hearted backslider returning again to the fountain. And here I would say,

“Lest that my fearful case should be,  
 Each moment knit my heart to thee;  
 And lead me to the mount above,  
 Through the low vale of humble love.”

Under the blessing of God we still prospered, until it was considered needful to have a new chapel erected. Our old one was taken down, and a new one built, partly on the same ground, and opened August 23, 1823, by the Rev. Joshua Marsden, and the Rev. Thomas Galland, M.A. Thus we, by the providence of God, who had our names first enrolled as members, have lived to see the fourth place of worship opened amongst us. “Hitherto the Lord hath helped us,”—not only as the circuit town, but in the circuit at large. Near forty years have elapsed since I knew it; a persecuting spirit had not then entirely subsided. I once attended the Navenby old chapel, when the rabble rolled some stones into the chapel after us. Since that time they have had a second at Navenby, and at Metheringham. I recollect being there soon after the first was built, and felt a little amused at two things: one, nearly all the females went to chapel without their bonnets; the other, a collection was made, and our good sister G. held her apron on one side of the door, for what the people were disposed to give. I am thankful to hear that prosperity still attends them. At Tanvats, Timberland, Walcott, and Billingham, the people had to suffer persecution; these, and on the Cliff Row, were places of stronghold for Satan and his agents. But Jesus the conqueror reigns, and temples have been erected for his worship; ministers sent from village to village, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation through faith in his blood; within their walls tears of penitence have been seen to flow; and the emancipated slave has sung,

“My chains fell off, my heart was free.”

Others from the church have

“Crossed secure the watery flood,  
 Hanging on the arm of God.”

And still God is carrying on his own work; and while a spirit of union prevails, nothing shall harm us.

On January the 6th, 1825, Mr. Fawcett entered into the marriage state with Mrs. Elizabeth Blanchard, widow of the Rev. Thomas Blanchard, who died at Loughborough, where they were married; and, if we follow him, we shall still find him the Christian and the affectionate husband. Death had begun to make inroads in the family, and another bereavement took place, in the loss of his affectionate sister, Miss M. Fawcett. They had lived together many years in the greatest union, but, as death takes no denial, but dissolves the tenderest ties, so it was in this case. A mortal disease shook her frame, and brought her to the grave. I saw her two days before she died; she was perfectly collected. She said to me—"There are reasons for which I wish to live; or, God knows, I am not afraid to die;" and added—

" 'Other refuge have I none;  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee,' "

I took my final leave of her that morning; and she died two days afterwards—a person much respected in the circle in which she moved. As a sister, she was affectionate; as a friend sincere and constant; to the cause and its ministers ever attentive and kind. By her own desire, fifty pounds of her money came to our chapel.

Some time after Mr. Fawcett's marriage and Miss Fawcett's death, his sister Miss Ann Fawcett, came to reside with us as boarder. She had a weakly constitution, and was often unwell, yet generally appeared cheerful and comfortable. But this was not of long continuance; the days of her earthly pilgrimage were nearly at an end. She was taken with a shaking fit on the Saturday in the forenoon; a high fever, attended with deliriousness, ensued; medical aid was called in; but to no purpose. It was only at intervals that she was collected. She said once—

" 'To patient faith the prize is sure,  
And all that to the end endure  
The cross shall wear the crown.' "

I have not a doubt on my mind as to her eternal felicity. It is just to remark, that she was a steady member of our society. For nearly thirty years I always looked upon her as a sincere Chris-



tian, and one of the best hearers I ever knew. She was not given to criticising, made no unkind remarks on this preacher or the other; but always found some portion useful to herself. And often have I wished that more of us followed her example in this respect. By her, too, thirty pounds came to the chapel.

At this period death broke our ranks in rapid succession. The Rev. Archibald Mc. Laughlin, our then resident minister, had the inexpressible grief to lose an amiable and beloved wife. A family of children was left behind to mourn the loss of one of the best of mothers, who have since been left orphans, and cast on the care of Providence, and on the benevolence of kind friends. Should this ever meet their eyes, I wish their minds may constantly be impressed with the last words of a dying mother: they were—

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“ Oh, love! thou bottomless abyss, my soul is swallowed up in thee.”

The Rev. James Waller, our superintendent minister, and his beloved wife, were left to console our friend under his bereavement; but, alas! in the short space of seven weeks, the same bitter cup was given him to drink which his colleague was still tasting, and he had to mourn the loss of an affectionate wife, and the son of an indulgent mother. The affliction of our friend was short; but those who serve God in health, he will not forsake in the hour of dissolution. “ Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.” By the desire of Mrs. Waller, her remains were interred in the chapel. Near to the place of her interment Mr. Walter put up a small tablet to perpetuate her memory, with the following inscription:—

To the Memory of Lydia, wife of James Waller,  
Who died Jan. 14, 1828, aged 48 years.

While frail remembrance prompts the tear,  
Religion's sweetest hopes arise,  
That they who once were happy here  
May meet again beyond the skies.

But, although death was permitted and commissioned to take some of our members; yet we had cause for rejoicing, in that the work revived, and our ranks were again filled up. Many were added to the Lord, and are still in the field, fighting beneath the Captain of their salvation; some raised up to call sinners to re-

penitance, while over some, who for a time bid fair for heaven, and to be useful to the church and to the world, we are called bitterly to grieve.

Time bears all earth's sons away without respect of person or character; and we now approach the close of a very valuable life, as I shall ever consider that of my friend. His health for a considerable time had been in a declining state; medical aid was resorted to, and at times appeared to give relief; at other times, his complaint appeared to gain ground, until serious apprehensions were entertained concerning him, and a journey to London was advised, and he now approaches the close of a very valuable life, as I shall ever consider that of my friend. His health for a considerable time had been in a declining state; medical aid was resorted to, and at times appeared to give relief; at other times, his complaint appeared to gain ground, until serious apprehensions were entertained concerning him, and a journey to London was advised to consult an eminent physician there. In April, he undertook the journey, accompanied by Mrs. Fawcett, and performed it in his own gig comfortably in two days. After spending some time in London, he went to High Wycombe, on a visit to a friend there; and, at the latter end of June, returned home, as he then thought, improved in his health. This was of short duration; and again he consulted another physician, who appeared to give him relief. At times flattering hopes of his recovery were entertained by his surrounding friends, and again as often damped; until, at last it was evident his constitution was fast sinking beneath the violence of his complaint. He had long found Christ to be a rock and a refuge under the storms of his past life; often had the Saviour said "Peace, be still," and there was a calm. He felt now he was established on the Rock of ages, and that it was solid ground to rest upon; the language of his heart was—

" In him I hope, in him I trust,  
His bleeding cross is all my boast."

As he drew near the confines of eternity, there was nothing ecstatic in his feelings; but faith in Christ, and in the promises of the gospel, produced a serenity of mind which supported him through the valley of the shadow of death. I saw him the last day he was down stairs, which was but three days before he died. He sat in an easy chair, with his eyes closed. As there was but Mr. Fawcett and myself beside him, we sat looking at him. The silence of death seemed to surround us. I viewed his emaciated form with considerable emotion of mind; the past scenes of more

than thirty years of unbroken friendship rushed into my mind ; I viewed the friend of my earlier years with deep solemnity, mixed with a degree of hallowed joy, knowing that the days of his pilgrimage and warfare were nearly accomplished. He opened his eyes, and seeing me sit, stretched out his feeble hand, and grasped mine. We had a little conversation together, as he was too feeble to say much. I repeated one of our hymns to him, which I thought applicable to his state. It begins with—

“ And let this feeble body fail.”

He said, it was a beautiful hymn, but his recollection failed him, he had forgot it. Nature was fast sinking ; but his countenance was an index to his mind. All within and without appeared calm and tranquil. Before he died, he made choice of this hymn to be sung at the chapel at his funeral, commencing—

“ Let the world their virtue boast, their works of righteousness,  
I, a wretch, undone and lost, am freely saved by grace.  
Other title I disclaim ; this, only this, is all my plea—  
I the chief of sinners am ; but Jesus died for me.”

The language that this verse conveys was his experience for nearly thirty seven years. He felt himself a wretch undone and lost, and was freely saved by grace. These were the doctrines he believed, taught, enjoyed, and testified, to the last. A day or two before he died, a friend being in the room who was a farmer, he asked him when he should begin harvest. He told him the next week. “ Ah,” he said, “ I am going to a land of corn, and wine, and oil.” He continued in a happy, tranquil frame of mind, and gently fell asleep on Saturday morning, August 13, 1831, in the sixty-first year of his age. By his own desire he was interred in a vault prepared for him in our chapel, and at his request the Rev. James Waller attended on that solemn occasion. He selected the following passage to be spoken from at his funeral—Ephes. ii. 8, 9. “ For by grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast.” His funeral, which was respectably conducted, and attended by a large number of friends and rela-



tions, took place on the Saturday following. Few men descended to the grave more deservedly respected. As a man, he was unostentatious; as a Christian, humble; as a husband and relative, affectionately kind; as a friend, sincere and constant; as a member of the Wesleyan body, decidedly attached to its principles and interests; yet not a bigot, as he considered that spirit inimical to the spirit of true Christianity, and could not enter a heaven of love beyond the grave. Reader! follow him as he followed Christ; and the result, I have no doubt, will be present and eternal felicity.

In the month of February following, the only surviving brother, Mr, George Fawcett, was removed by death from the ills of human life. For a length of time his constitution had been sinking, and his eyesight almost gone. His exit at the last was sudden; but I trust, safe. He was one of our first members when we became a society.

Thus we have seen, in the course of this narrative, in a very few years the mother, two sisters, and three brothers, beside the two Mr. Woodfords, taken from that family. And we—

“ Like trees that in a forest stand,  
And some are marked to fall,”

Were death an eternal sleep, as some vainly imagine, or did the Christian's enjoyments end with life, death would be a gloomy subject. But it is not so. The Christian's enjoyment here is but a foretaste of that glory which will open to his astonished vision, and that happiness which will be perpetuated in an eternal world; else it would—

“ Unparadise the realms of light,  
And drink up all our joys.”

Our friends continued to drop. The esteemed wife of the Rev. Ralph Gibson had been unwell for some time; but the stroke at last was so sudden and unexpected as to cause a general shock; it plunged her widowed husband and family into the deepest sorrow. The friends felt keenly for the bereaved family on this trying occasion. Though the stroke was sudden, not a doubt was entertained as to her eternal happiness. Previous to her dying,

she spoke to some friends and in her class, of her enjoyment of the Divine presence; and her amiable and pious deportment recommended that religion she professed to enjoy. Her demise took place in May, 1835. And, as though death could not be satisfied with arresting the above as his prisoner, in May following, our respected friend Mrs. Harrison, the wife of the Rev. William Harrison, was removed from the church militant to the church triumphant. Her affliction was but of short continuance, and very severe. The conflict was soon over, and the weary pilgrim entered the haven of eternal rest. Her loss was keenly felt by her family and the church. Her leisure hours were spent in distributing tracts, visiting the sick, taking an active part in the prayer meetings, and in every good work in her power. The surviving widowers of these excellent women have erected stones to perpetuate their memories; and, likewise, the widow of my late friend has put a plate of brass on the floor over the vault which contains the mortal remains of her late affectionate husband, and a very neat tablet with the following inscription.

In a vault in the centre of this chapel  
Are deposited the mortal remains of

THOMAS FAWCETT,

Many years resident in this parish.

He died August 13, 1831, aged 61 years.

In life respected and in death lamented.

To commemorate his many virtues, and to record her own deep sense of them,

This tablet is erected in grateful and affectionate remembrance,

By his Widow.

Thus far I have given a brief sketch of my late respected friend, and those who were related to him, or connected with him and the cause. While some have been removed by the hand of Providence to other circuits, and others by the stroke of death, our ranks have been filled up, and God is still with us in his convincing and saving power. We have had many difficulties to surmount, many discouragements thrown in our way; the sneer of the infidel, the bitter reproach of the world, and the bigotry of others, have been levelled against us; but we can exultingly say, "The God of Jacob has been and still is, our refuge."

We had a heavy debt upon our chapel, which has been partly liquidated by penny-a-week subscription, amounting to a little more than forty pounds; and a further deduction by a public tea meeting last summer, when several benevolent friends came forward, and gave sums of money to the amount of more than seventy pounds. Still are we blessed with a prospect of prosperity; our chapel is well attended; the sittings let; and union exists between preachers and members.

Amongst others who have cast in their lot with us, are three of my own children out of six. I pray that they may never tarnish their profession, or have their names removed from the Wesleyan body. But may their children's children, to the latest generation, be found the supporters and defenders of that cause which Almighty God has so signally owned for near a century. I am thankful to record here, that my children make a part of the fourth generation of Wesleyan Methodists. My ancestors were amongst the first race; those venerable men, Wesley, Nelson, Hampton, Mitchell, Carlisle, Brown, Mowett, Kershaw, and others, visited them, sat at their table; their house was opened for them to preach in, they shared in their persecutions, and unflinchingly stood by them in their reproaches; they looked upon them as men sent from God to evangelize the world; they heard the word, and proved it to be the power of God to their salvation; and, after witnessing a good confession before men, and sharing the triumphs of the cross, they are taken to share the glories of another world.

Happy would our late friend have been to have been with us at our late centenary meeting, to have witnessed the liberality of the friends on that occasion. But I felt happy that he was not forgot, as his respected widow gave five pounds in remembrance of her late esteemed husband, Mr. T. Fawcett, and likewise five in remembrance of the Rev. Thomas Blanchard. Another sovereign was given by a gentleman on the platform, out of respect to the memory of Mr. Fawcett. I wish I could have delineated the character of my late friend in a clearer and more forcible manner, and likewise showed the friends of Methodism what God has done for us, and wrought by the administration of the word, and the various means, in a more lucid manner. But I hope every inaccuracy will be overlooked, as I know that I have truth on my

side in what I have asserted, and that is perhaps the best polish to memoirs of this description. I have accomplished what I intended in stating a few facts.

Forty years have just expired since I visited and came to reside in Sleaford; and, in taking a retrospective view of those bygone years, the involuntary sigh rises, and compels me to say, Oh, that I had been more faithful to the light and grace given. On the other hand, on reflecting on the endearments past of Christian fellowship and friendship with many that are now before the throne, I am ready to say with Bishop Horne—

“ Past scenes my fancy wanders o’er,  
And sighs to think they are no more.”

But, pleasing thought! virtuous friendship commenced on earth will be renewed in heaven. To the year 1799 I still advert, as being the time when a brighter era began to dawn, and the mists of prejudice in some degree began to evaporate before the bright rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and the purity of a gospel ministry. But, what do we now see? “The wilderness and the solitary places have begun to blossom; the mountain is becoming a plain before our Zerubbabel.” What have I now lived to see in 1839? Chapels erected, others enlarged, men of affluence and influenced coming forward to the help of the Lord against the mighty, some giving the ground on which to build, others bringing the materials, and the pious poor casting in their mite to the treasury, for the erection of temples wherein they may worship the true and living God. Are not these indications of an abundant harvest of immortal souls being added to the kingdom of our Immanuel? What glowing language would the immortal Wesley find were he now on earth to set forth the praises of God for what he has done, and is now doing for perishing souls, while almost a century ago he penned the following verse?

“ I ask in amaze, who hath begotten me these;  
And inquire from what quarter they came?  
My full heart it replies, they are born from the skies;  
And with singing to Zion return.”

The centenary lists are a most convincing proof of what the

Almighty has done through the instrumentality of a Wesleyan ministry in this and in other nations—the funds having reached the astonishing sum of two hundred thousand pounds; and the number in connexion with us now exceeds one million and seventy thousand. Let union prevail, and then neither Socialism, nor Catholicism, nor any other *ism* shall have power to harm us. The time is come when Christians of different denominations should unite in making a mighty effort against the malignant powers that now oppose and endeavour to subvert and undermine the very vitals of Christianity. Yet much is there to encourage us in the signs of the times: prophecy is fulfilling, the latter day is dawning, the angel is flying through the midst of the heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach; and our hopes are raised, that that time will soon come when “the kingdoms of this world shall be the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.”

“ Lord Jesus, ride on till all are subdued ;  
Thy mercy make known, and sprinkle thy blood ;”  
Display thy salvation, and teach the new song,  
Through every nation, and people, and tongue.

AMEN and AMEN.