

THE LIFE AND WORK
OF
ARCHIBALD G. BROWN,
Preacher and Philanthropist
(1844-1922)

BY
GODFREY HOLDEN PIKE,

AUTHOR OF

'Beneath the Blue Sky;' *'Albert, the Prince Consort, a Biography for the People;'*
'Charles Haddon. Spurgeon, Preacher, Author, and Philanthropist;'
'Shaftesbury, His Life and Work,' etc., etc.

With an Introduction by
SIR S. ARTHUR BLACKWOOD, K.C.B.

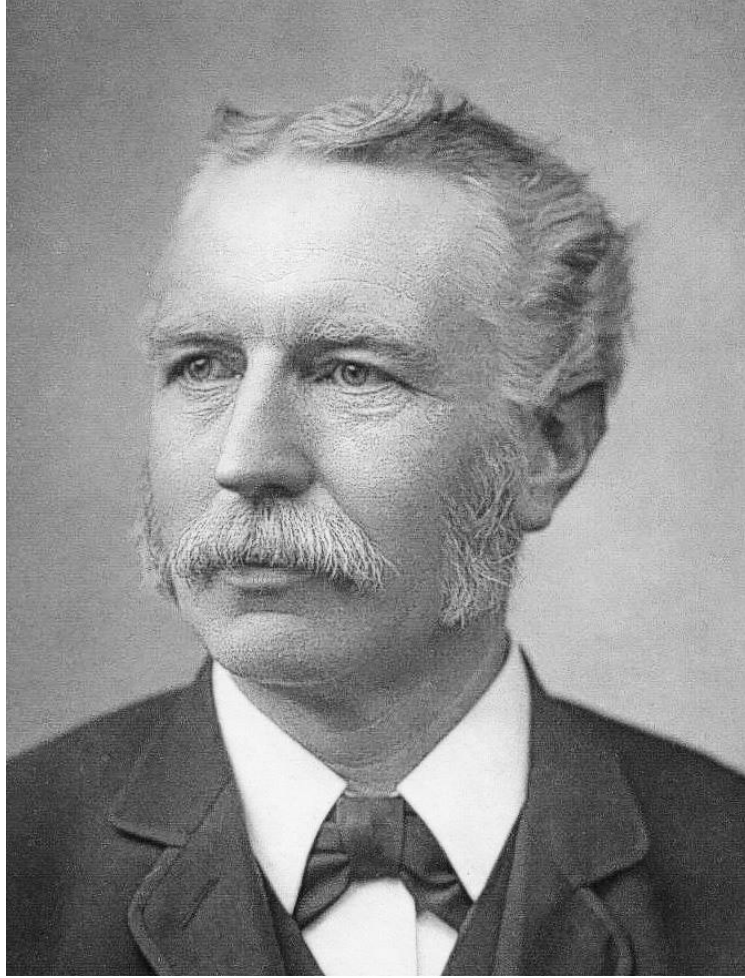
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

SOME time ago I ventured to publish, through Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, a volume entitled, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Preacher, Author, and Philanthropist," which has found some acceptance among English speaking people, while it has been translated into German. I now give an account of another preacher and philanthropist, who, next to the Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, has, I believe, gathered the largest church in the British Isles. Then, in addition to his pastoral work, Mr. Brown has probably done more service in preaching at anniversaries, and on special occasions, up and down the country, than any other man.

Hence, it is thought that the life of one who has attained to this popularity will be acceptable to a wide circle of friends. The book is also intended to be a memento of the "Silver Wedding" celebration of 1892 – the completion of twenty-five years of service in East London alone.

I am quite sure that the Introduction which Sir Arthur Blackwood has supplied will give pleasure to friends near and far away. It seemed to be indispensable, that one under whose preaching the youthful Archibald Brown was converted thirty years ago, should have an opportunity of saying a good word on such an occasion as the present.

G. HOLDEN PIKE.

WINCHMORE HILL, N.,

December 16th, 1891.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is always a delight to me to be associated with my beloved brother, fellow labourer and friend, Archibald Brown. From the day when, many years ago, in the providence of God, our paths met, like those of Philip and the eunuch of Ethiopia, and thenceforward, by the grace of God, became one, until the present, when both our heads are growing grey, I have rejoiced to echo concerning him, the apostolic words, 'I thank my God upon every remembrance of you for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.' His steadfastness in the truth, his fearless, outspoken testimony to the truth, and his exhibition of the truth in life and labours, have ever been to me a source of increasing gladness.

It is therefore a peculiar pleasure to me now, when, owing to absorbing claims of work in different and distant spheres, we can see each other so seldom, to be once more directly associated with him in the following brief record of his ministry. It does not profess to be more than a sketch, and necessarily in faint outline, of what Archibald Brown has been and has done, by the enabling grace of God. But the outline is drawn faithfully, and will serve as a pleasant memorial and a true picture, as far as it goes, for the thousands of hearts that have learned to love him whom it represents, because they have been taught to love the Saviour, to whom his voice of earnest entreaty and hand of brotherly sympathy has led them. May the day be long distant when it shall become necessary to record the story of his life in fuller pages and more detailed description!

Such men as Archibald Brown are, alas! rare. I like to think of him as another Ranani, who was 'a faithful man, and feared God above many' — as another Eleazar, grasping and wielding the sword with such determined grip and tenacity of purpose, that 'his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword' — as another Barnabas, a son of Consolation, 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.'

Despising all sentimentalism, and detesting anything like sensationalism, Archibald Brown has ever relied upon the old-fashioned gospel as 'the power of God unto salvation;' and the Holy Spirit has honoured that simple reliance by using the message through his lips as the means of changing the hearts of thousands, and of making them new creatures in Christ Jesus. Taking his stand upon the doctrines of grace, he has steadily held on his way, regardless of, and unmoved by, all the philosophies and quackeries of those who would preach some other gospel as the remedy for the sins, the sorrows, and the needs of men; and his labour has not been in vain in the Lord. It is almost amusing, were it not for the display of ignorance (or, perhaps, enmity) in regard to such a subject, to find Archibald Brown described as the preacher of a 'dismal' gospel, and a man of 'sour creed,' and 'narrowest theology.' Herein is indeed a wonderful thing (and the critic is himself aware of and unable to explain the contradiction) that so dismal a gospel should have brought gladness to so many saddened spirits, that so sour a creed should have borne the fruit of such sweetened and ennobled love, and that so narrow-minded a theologian should be so broad in his sympathies, so large-hearted in his labours of love. But this is not unusual. That 'narrow-minded evangelical,' the late Lord Shaftesbury, was the man above all others who, in our day, was distinguished for breadth of heart, for sympathy with the poor and the oppressed; and whom millions bless for his efforts for their good.

Such are still everywhere the results of that gospel which it is fashionable to decry as 'obsolete,' but which survives all attacks, and ignoring every modern panacea for the evils of sin, declares redemption through the precious blood of Christ as the only hope of perishing sinners. It is no small encouragement to those who cling to and preach that gospel of the grace of God, which is dearer to them than life, to note the unwilling testimony of its

despisers to the beautiful and blessed results of a life energized by its power and devoted to its proclamation.

As a fellow worker, though in a much smaller sphere, I must confess that I envy my beloved brother the joy of being such an honoured instrument in the hand of the Lord for turning many to righteousness; and from the depth of my heart, I bless God for his goodness in bringing us together, as a note in my Bible tells, thirty years ago.

I earnestly pray that many may be encouraged in their adherence to old-fashioned truth, and stimulated in their efforts to spread it, by the perusal of the following pages, and that he who is their subject may be blessed in every way that will be for the glory of God, for his own good, and that of others.

This is no praise of man. 'By the grace of God I am what I am;' 'Not I, but the grace of God which was with me,' are, I well know, the uppermost thoughts of him whom these pages present to us, and who is jealously anxious that no praise of the servant shall for one second obscure the glory of the Master whom he serves, and delights to exalt as the Saviour of the lost.

I have no fear that he will be 'unduly exalted' by these records of what God has wrought in and by him. Rather, and I know I judge him rightly, will he feel humbled by the sense of how little, as a sinner saved by grace, he has deserved such distinguishing tokens of the goodness of the Lord. And thus, looking at the picture of himself, as drawn by others, he will draw fresh lessons of self-abasement and of adoring praise to God.

So will the book be blessed all round. May God grant it!

S. ARTHUR BLACKWOOD.

November 1891.

LIFE OF ARCHIBALD G. BROWN.

CHAPTER 1.

ANCESTRY. EARLY LIFE. BROMLEY.

A godly ancestry — The Heath family and Old Maze Pond Chapel — Jonathan Carr and Dr. Dodd — ‘Job Heath the Fourth’ — Mr. Brown’s parents and family connections — His birth and early days — At school at Brighton — Runs away from school — First meets his future wife — Conversion — In the City — First public service — Sunday-school work — Baptized by Mr. Spurgeon — Conducts a Saturday evening prayer-meeting — ‘An uncertain star’ — Solicitude of Mr. Brown, senior — Enters the Pastors’ College, and gives up business — Work at Bromley — New Chapel erected — Lectures on Church Principles — Marriage.

It is a peculiar satisfaction to a Christian to know that he comes of a godly ancestry; and this privilege is enjoyed by the pastor whose life and work I now purpose to review. Through his mother, Mr. Brown is directly related to the well-known family of Heath, a tribe which has figured very nobly in Nonconformist history from the time when Job Heath, as a young man, was baptized at Alcester, in 1711, to the day of Job’s great grandson’s death in the autumn of 1869. The head of the family always bore the name of Job; and we are able to take account of four generations, their history being linked with that of the London Baptists, especially with the church at Maze Pond. It was a friend of the Heaths, Jonathan Carr, who, on June 27th, 1777, sprang into the cart in which Dr. Dodd was being conveyed to execution, because he noticed that the doctor had six clergymen for attendants, while another felon sat unnoticed and unpitied, no man caring for his soul. With Job Heath for a deacon and friend, Mr. Dore, the pastor of Maze Pond Chapel, considered himself to be the best cared-for Baptist minister in England, or even in the world. In the case of a good man, the ability to claim kinship with such a family tree will afford more satisfaction than could be derived from the richest estate.

‘Job Heath the Fourth,’ as the late Dr. Stanford called him in a pleasant little book about old Maze Pond Church, died in 1869, at the age of eighty-seven. When this Job attained his majority in 1802, his mother sent him a message which influenced the whole of his after-life; and ‘sixty-seven years after, this letter — almost worn to thin filaments by frequent perusal, and patched together by slips of pasted paper — was nearly the last thing seen in his hands before he died.’ This letter was worthy of being preserved. ‘You are now entering upon the stage of action for yourself,’ wrote the fond mother. ‘You will meet with new temptations; watch and pray. “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

For seventeen years, Mr. Heath was deacon at Maze Pond; but in 1856 he removed to Brixton, and till his death worshipped with the church at Denmark Place, Camberwell. This is what Dr. Stanford says about him in the little work already mentioned:

‘As the flower seeks the sun, and the bird its evening nest, so did his soul seek the mercy-seat. He was at home there. Not only was prayer his element and his recreation, it was his business. Just as a person might use the telegraphic wire, or any other instrument, to bring about precise effects, he used the instrumentality of prayer; and looked for the results as a matter of course. He could show some of these results. Among others which gave him rich delight, one in particular was the conversion of a person who was very dear to him. The story of this conversion is as wonderful as any romance, but it is too sacred and tender to tell in public. It gave him unbounded faith in the power of intercession, especially in that of parents for children. One thing that he longed for, and which he fully expected to see, was a great revival of spiritual life in the churches; and that he might excite Christians to pray for this, he would give or lend about such books as that by Jonathan Edwards on the great spiritual awakening

that he witnessed in America. He set particular value on social devotion. If you called upon him with only time for a short interview, to part without a few words of prayer was not to be thought of. This principle led him to hold a prayer-meeting every Friday night in his own house. For some time this was conducted by his grandson, Mr. Archibald Brown, of Stepney; and in the day when all secrets are brought to light, it will perhaps be seen that the history of many a conversion with which God has crowned his ministry, began in that house of prayer. On Friday, September 24th, 1869, Job Heath was, for the first time, missed at his place at the prayer-meeting. In the evening of that very day, his sleep softly deepened into death, and his spirit went to the world of everlasting praise.'

In her household, after her marriage, the mother of Archibald Geikie Brown showed that she was worthy of her father. The future pastor was thus reared in a godly household, while his connections show him to have come of a good family. Dr. Cunningham Geikie, author of 'The Life and Words of Christ,' is Mr. Brown's cousin; while other relatives of this name include the Scotch etcher, John Geikie, and Sir Archibald Geikie, the geologist.

On the paternal side, the pastor came of a most respectable Baptist stock; his paternal grandfather being known about South London as Bible Brown, having taken a leading part in the erection of Maze Pond Chapel, which has now renewed its youth in a more hopeful sphere. Archibald Brown was born at Brixton Hill, July 18th, 1844, and his father was at that time extensively engaged in commercial pursuits. Of our friend's childhood nothing remarkable is told beyond the fact that he was not designed for the ministry, his godly parents having from the first entertained no higher thoughts respecting him than that he should make his mark in the City, in the market or on the Exchange. His first thoughts respecting Christ and salvation were inspired by one of Mr. Aldis's sermons in the old sanctuary where the family regularly attended. As regards the household in general, those were prosperous, happy days; but otherwise they were not remarkable as a season of seedtime and of promise.

When we advance to the days of youth and of particular training for future work, a larger mixture of incident enlivens the story. However fortunate young Archibald may have been in respect of his schoolmasters, he did not feel quite contented under the wholesome discipline necessarily imposed. Even the never-flagging liveliness of Brighton, and the thousand-and-one advantages of that favourite watering-place, failed to reconcile the erratic genius to the confinement of school. He is said to have remarked himself, concerning his school days, that they were 'more distinguished for larking than learning.' He remained with his tutors two or three years, however; and then, supposing that he had borne a liberal share of educational thralldom, he unceremoniously forsook his tasks and startled his friends by suddenly appearing at home.

He was an unpromising boy when he ran away from school; and having voluntarily forsaken a good thing, friends perhaps wisely determined that the truant should not be made to return. If he preferred to commence business early, an eligible opening could readily be found; but while the parents were making preparations for their son's start in the world, things were happening which were destined to entirely change his course of life. He was, as a youth, devoted to the world and its pleasures, rejoicing, too, in having escaped from the toils of his Brighton taskmasters, while as yet he knew nothing about business anxieties, when he met with one who spoke a word in season, and spoke not in vain. The stranger was a young lady whose rare personal attractions were more than matched by the adornment of a meek and quiet spirit; her piety was as genuine as it was unassuming, and ere long she became in a great measure instrumental in effecting the future pastor's conversion. Already there was an irresistible charm and force about all that such a friend might speak, and she

showed great tact in all she did. In a winning way, the young lady invited the lively youth of seventeen to attend a drawing-room meeting at Streatham, which was always conducted by the present Sir Arthur Blackwood. That meeting was a turning-point in Archibald Brown's history; from that day forward he was a new creature: the grace of God touched and conquered his heart, and entirely altered the current of his aspirations. The convert returned from that memorable meeting in company with her who was destined to be his wife, and henceforth the two were agreed in all things, working happily together for a common object. About fourteen years later, thousands of persons were gathered around the open grave of 'Annie, the beloved wife and cheerful helper of Archibald G. Brown.'

Six months after leaving school, Mr. Brown was placed in the office of a tea-broker, a handsome premium being paid. Mr. Brown the elder would have been well repaid both for his careful solicitude and money expenditure had his son showed any disposition to fall in love with his new profession. This was not to be. There were impulses within, which neither the father nor the son could control. The path to usefulness and honour would soon appear straight and open.

Mr. Brown made his start as a public speaker at the meeting of a City missionary. He was politely invited by the good man to go and read to the people; this piece of service he readily undertook, as he had given some considerable attention to the art of elocution. He reasonably supposed that the reading-book would be the Bible; but on arriving at the meeting-place he learned that nothing was wanted beyond a few extracts from *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

'Is that all you're going to give the people?' cried the young reader, with characteristic warmth.

'Don't you think that calculated to do good?' replied the other, with the meekness of a man who sought to evade a difficulty.

'It may do good; but there should be preaching — preaching Christ.'

'If you think so, you'd better preach,' drily remarked the missionary, thereby placing his friend in a dilemma from which he saw no loophole of escape. Fortunately Mr. Brown was equal to the crisis.

'Well,' he said, with calm determination, 'I've never done such a thing; but rather than read *The Pilgrim's Progress* to them, I'll try.'

Having engaged to give a discourse, this amateur preacher next glanced at the congregation; and seeing that some twenty elderly ladies had possession of a room capable of accommodating one hundred and fifty persons, he thought the general aspect of affairs to be unsatisfactory in the extreme. With the approval of the City missionary, Mr. Brown undertook to collect a congregation. He went abroad in the streets, entered several public-houses, and told the men who were chatting and drinking at the bars that a sermon was about to be preached in such a room. The gentry who were thus disturbed in the enjoyment of a convivial glass were unanimously of opinion that the youngster inherited his full share of 'cheek;' but as the summons had at least the charm of novelty, thirty or forty agreed to go, several of whom offered to 'stand treat' before the service commenced. When this motley gang were seated in the assembly-room, the young Christian delivered his unpremeditated maiden sermon from the words, 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus.'

After the ice was broken in this manner, Mr. Brown desired to engage in Sabbath-school work, when he found the way obstructed by serious obstacles. He had among his youthful friends been regarded as having a genius for acting 'characters' and for mimicry in general;

but these carpet exploits were no passport to the favour of a grave superintendent. The good man supposed the applicant must have some other object in view, and accordingly behaved with cold reserve. Young Mr. Brown, with his well-known sprightliness, could not reasonably be supposed to be in earnest. He would probably introduce a pantomime into the school, or at least 'show off' among his new friends in some equally unapproved manner. There was, therefore, no class to offer him. Not willing to be put aside in this genteel manner, the applicant asked if he might be allowed to come if he brought his own class. 'If you bring your own boys we cannot keep you out,' replied the good man in charge; and that liberal concession settled the bargain. During the next week, the youth who had previously gathered a congregation from the bars and tap-rooms, was seen exploring the lowest parts of the neighbourhood, knocking at a hundred doors to ask the same question at one and all — 'Have you any children who do not go to Sunday-school?' On the following Sabbath, thirty new scholars, nearly all older than their teacher, made their appearance, and were allotted the middle of the room. This became in time a young men's class; much lasting good was effected, and one soldier who came all the way from Kingston, did so at the risk of incurring the penalty of military discipline.

On the longest summer day of 1861, Mr. Spurgeon baptized young Archibald Brown at the Metropolitan Tabernacle; but Mr. Brown did not join the church of which his father was a deacon; he became a member at Union Chapel, Brixton Hill.

Having joined the Congregational church at Brixton, Mr. Brown was prevailed upon to give an address at the Saturday evening prayer-meeting, and at last his sermonette was regarded as a regular weekly engagement. Other calls followed. He attended to business in the City by day, and preached nearly every night until health failed, and the family doctor declared that either business or Christian work must be given up. The opinion of the medical man brought matters to a climax, though in making his decision the ardent youth had no kind of perplexity. All he wanted was an opportunity of shaking hands with the tea trade, with the view of never again renewing the acquaintance.

Mr. Brown, senior, who was a deacon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, watched the progress of events with anything but unmixed satisfaction. Son Archibald appeared to be an uncertain star, tolerably well-fitted (if he did but know it) to move round the confined orbit of the Royal Exchange, but not at all likely to succeed in the anxious work of preaching the everlasting gospel. The father very seriously laid the affair to heart, and both the pastor and the officers at the Tabernacle were made fully acquainted with his complicated troubles. These brethren did not offer their brother officer any large measure of sympathy, but rather cheered him upon having such a matter to think about.

After a week-night service about this time, Mr. Spurgeon was, as usual in his vestry, when young Mr. Brown was introduced. He felt that he was called to preach the gospel, and the Pastors' College was the only institution of the kind he cared to enter.

'Oh, I know all about you,' replied the pastor. 'I have heard all about you from your father. I have been expecting you. Come in at once.'

That interview finally severed the young man's connection with the City and its business. He entered the College; and a month after, he was sent to preach at Bromley, a parish on the south side of London, where a congregation of twenty gathered in the Assembly-room of the White Hart Hotel. This small beginning became smaller in three weeks. The preacher left no stone unturned to ensure success; he himself opened the doors, dusted the forms, and carried the Bible and the water-bottle to the desk; but still his hearers numbered only

sixteen. 'If it gets any lower I'll go,' he said; for if things went on as they had done, it plainly appeared that in a couple of months no one would be left to accept a resignation. Providentially, the sixteen represented the lowest ebb of the tide. On the fourth Sabbath, the twenty seats were re-occupied, and afterwards there was a steady increase until nearly two hundred hearers filled the room. A church was formed, the first member of which was baptized at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.'

When the tide turned and success became certain, the work of erecting the present chapel, at a cost of £1,200, commenced in earnest. Mr. Spurgeon strongly recommended the case, and from a prospect of gloom the outlook became one of promise. The stone-laying ceremony took place in July 1864, when 'Job Heath the fourth' wrote to his 'very dear Archie,' a characteristic note:

'In case anything should prevent my being present at Bromley to witness the laying of the corner-stone for the chapel — where I trust you may be honoured by our adorable Redeemer in bringing many out of darkness into the glorious light of the gospel for many years to come — I wish to say I will give £5, and your aunt Sophia £2. Were it in my power it should be ten times that sum. With unceasing prayer that our Lord may be with you, I am ever, your affectionate grandfather, Job Heath.'

Thus was begun the work of providing the present chapel, which accommodates the present Baptist church in Bromley; and while this building was in progress, enough transpired to show that the poor of the district needed some enlightenment regarding Christian ordinances. The deep well on the grounds, with its ropes, planks, and buckets which supplied the masons with water, was pointed out as the future baptistery. Knowing peasants and inquisitive housewives assured one another that that was the place in which, with a rope around the waist, Mr. Brown would let down each candidate for Christian fellowship. Such was Bromley, where the pastor laboured through four years — four years to the very minute, as he himself is wont to say. At nine o'clock in the evening of the 30th of November 1862, he first set foot in the town. On the 30th of November 1866, he was engaged in the vestry with the deacons of Stepney Green Tabernacle, who had come with an invitation for their young brother to remove among them. Scarcely had Mr. Brown consented to do so when the clock struck nine. 'Hark!' he said, 'is not that a strange coincidence?'

It was at Bromley that Mr. Brown gave his memorable lecture, 'Courage and Cowardice,' which had something to do with his removal to the East End of London. The lecture was printed, and on the title-page we read:

'A lecture had been arranged to be delivered by the Rev. Stewart Williamson, on *The Two Church Principles — Compulsory and Voluntary*, and Archibald G. Brown was to have taken the chair. All was arranged, and the bills were out, when it was found that the Congregational minister, being desirous of walking amicably with the Church of England, persuaded the Society to refuse to comply with their engagement; in consequence Archibald G. Brown delivered the following lecture.'

Now that he was succeeding at Bromley, the days passed happily and the pastor was happy in his work. On October 12th, 1865, he was married to Miss Annie Bigg at Trinity Chapel, Brixton. The presents and congratulations were, of course, many; but I will refer only to one little note with its accompanying gift:

London, October 11.

Dear Friend and Brother, —

I have just managed to get the accompanying little salt-cellars, which I hope will reach you this evening. Their value is insignificant, but they will I hope remind you of me, and of the sincere interest I shall always feel in you. They may also help to remind you that the speech of all those who love Christ should be always with grace, seasoned with salt. May God bless you abundantly tomorrow and always!-Your affectionate friend,

S. A. BLACKWOOD.

At Bromley the first chapter in the working life of Archibald G. Brown may be said to have closed. The scene then becomes shifted to the East End of London.

CHAPTER 2. STEPNEY GREEN. THE EAST LONDON TABERNACLE.

Stepney Green Tabernacle — The pastorate accepted — The chapel crowded — Collecting for a new tabernacle — Concern of Mr. Brown, senior — A good beginning — Building the East London Tabernacle — First meeting in the unfinished building — Last service at Stepney Green — Mr. Spurgeon opens the new chapel — Letter from Dr. Binney — The outlook in 1872 — Progress to the present time — Characteristics of the congregation

IN November 1866, Mr. Brown was informed by letter that the church at Stepney Green had passed a resolution asking him to accept the pastorate. There was a good chapel, and boundless scope for any amount of enterprise.

At this date, Stepney Green Tabernacle had been in existence about three years, and the esteemed pastor, Mr. Ness, had resigned in consequence of failing health. The deacons looked anxiously around for a successor, conscious that their sphere was a fine one, though the church was in a critical condition. Nor did these careful officers wish to trust in their own judgment alone, for in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. They asked Mr. Spurgeon if he knew of a preacher who would do for East London. The pastor thought he knew of one — Mr. Brown of Bromley. They proposed a similar query to Dr. Brock, who likewise said, 'Yes — Mr. Brown of Bromley.' Everywhere the weathercocks pointed towards Bromley; every oracle gave forth the same word. Mr. Brown was invited to preach at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, when, unknown to himself, the Stepney deacons were present. The brethren were perfectly satisfied with what they saw and heard. Mr. Brown was unanimously elected to the pastorate, and commenced work in a densely crowded neighbourhood on the first Sabbath of 1867. Dr. Brock, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. Tucker were present at the recognition service, which took place on the 26th of February following.

Hitherto, nothing more than an ordinary congregation had assembled in the Tabernacle at Stepney Green. The chapel was planned to seat eight hundred and fifty, but thirteen hundred, towards the last, frequently found admittance. When Mr. Brown succeeded to the pulpit the congregation immediately began to grow; on the sixth Sabbath the building was densely crowded. The sermon was especially addressed to young men, and about a hundred dated their conversion from that night. The blessing has ever since continued to descend. A new meeting-place, at least three times the size of the old one, became a necessity.

Two or three years passed, and the people began seriously to entertain the project of the new chapel. Now came the tug of war. Even if built at cost price, as it really was, by the late Mr. W. Higgs, the building would cost £13,000. The projectors worked heartily, and laid the groundwork of future success by securing an eligible site near the corner of Burdett Road, Mile End, an omnibus station and a junction of main roads, which entitle the place to be called the 'Elephant and Castle' of the East. Mr. Brown, senior, heard of what was in progress, and he at once set down the scheme as a Utopian dream.

'What do you think my son is going to do?' asked the anxious father of Mr. Cook, a brother deacon — 'To build a Tabernacle to hold three thousand people!'

'Then, Brown, if he says he'll do it, he *will*, and the best thing we can do is to pray for him,' answered the other, who was for taking things more calmly.

'Where's the money to come from?' still urged Mr. Brown.

'Why, I expect he'll come down on you first,' said Deacon Cook, with the air and tone of a Job's comforter.

The proposed prayer actually ended this little conference. Side by side the good deacons knelt down and sent up to heaven their petitions for East London. How abundantly their prayers were answered, we now all know.

The proceeds of the first day's work at collecting funds were the drops before a copious shower. The pastor himself started forth on what is oftentimes a thankless errand, and the friend first called upon was a merchant in Cornhill, a member of Mr. Spurgeon's church.

'Well, Mr. Brown, what do you want?' said the gentleman, in his usual kindly tones.

'I want you to help me to build a Tabernacle in East London,' replied the pastor. 'I come to you first because you always have helped me.'

The merchant was one who wore his heart on his sleeve, a most unaffected man, and yet the expression on his face was the reverse of reassuring to an expectant applicant for money.

'You've come at a very unfortunate time,' he remarked, 'I've so many demands on me now that I can only give you a trifle.'

This seemed like a very damping reception in a place where something rather substantial was looked for, though the amount of the trifle was as yet unmentioned.

'If you will accept of £500 you are very welcome to it,' said the merchant, who is so accustomed to dispensing liberally that he did not think his present gift was of extraordinary magnitude.

That £500 was the first stone contributed to the East London Tabernacle. With a heart brimming over with joy, our friend left the office to make his next call on Mr. John Sands, who gave £250. The third person to 'come down upon,' according to Deacon Cook's prophecy, was Mr. Brown, senior. It happened to be January 28th, his father's natal day, when the collector entered the counting-house.

'Well, father, I've come to celebrate your birthday by collecting for the new Tabernacle,' cried the pastor, by way of salutation. 'How much do you think I've received in the last forty minutes?'

'Oh, well, £20,' replied Mr. Brown.

'Rather! £750!' said the son triumphantly, and then added, 'I want you to put another £100 on the top, and then I shall go home satisfied with my morning's work.'

So great was his surprise at this good beginning of the work, that Mr. Brown readily granted so modest a request. On the day following, Mr. Spurgeon gave £100; during the next week Mr. Harvey put down his name for £250; and others contributed proportionately, until £2,000 was collected within a month. After this, a systematic invasion of Great Britain by circulars was undertaken. Circulars—each accompanied with a sermon—were sent out as probably they never were before, and perhaps never will be again. Circulars by tens of thousands were despatched over the country in all directions, to accomplish their peaceful mission. A sum of £500 was expended in penny stamps alone. Every town of any note belonging to the British Isles contributed to the funds, while friends in America, India, and Japan sent their offerings.

The site for a large Tabernacle being secured in the Burdett Road, the late Mr. William Higgs set about putting up the building at an estimated cost of about £12,000. While the building was in progress, a meeting was held within its four walls, which was thus referred to at the time by the *New York Baptist Union*:

‘On Thursday evening, September 21st, we attended a very novel meeting at the new East London Tabernacle, which is being built for the Open Communion Baptist Church under the pastoral care of the Rev. Archibald G. Brown. The building is being erected on the east side of the Burdett Road, which runs from Mile End Road to the East India Dock Road, and is close to the former thoroughfare. We say “is being erected,” for it is by no means finished; and we were not a little puzzled when we reached the entrance to understand how it was that a meeting should be held in such a place. Our questions were fully answered before we left, and we saw that the unusualness of the meeting was but natural as the product of no ordinary mind. The Rev. A. G. Brown is evidently not to be tied down to precedents, but is quite capable of cutting open for himself a new, if not a better way. Hence it occurred to his active mind that it might prove profitable in a pecuniary way, if they could have a meeting in the building as soon as it was possible to do so, and not to wait till it was finished. The resolve was taken, Mr. Brown fixing £500 as the expected proceeds. The results fully justified the step, and we must congratulate both pastor and people on this improved addition to the ordinary opening services. . . .

‘The building, as we have said, is not yet finished. It is reckoned that it will take about three months to complete it. Hundreds of scaffold poles and planks had therefore to be removed from the interior, and the floor cleared for the occasion. A temporary platform was erected, and forms and chairs had been arranged for the attendance. Still, everything was in the rough above, below, around. Naked bricks with rough mortar, gallery beams and pillars, an indescribable roof — all presented an appearance anything but tasteful. To remedy this as much as possible, no small amount of work was done in the way of extempore decorations. A sea-captain, member of the church, happened to be ashore, and procured a bountiful supply of ships’ flags and streamers of all devices. These were hung in two lines on either side from the gallery upward, and did much to hide the bricks and mortar, and gave to the place a singular appearance. Flowers, etc., also helped to enliven and beautify; but the effect was complete when about two thousand people covered the area.’

The last service at the old Stepney Green Tabernacle was held on the 18th of February, 1872, when the sermon was preached from 1Chron. 17.5: ‘From one tabernacle to another.’ Considering the crowds which had congregated in what was at best an inconvenient structure, it was altogether to be ascribed to an over-ruling providence that no considerable accidents had occurred. A couple of mishaps, scarcely entitled to rank as serious disasters, are all we have to record. One night some low-bred practical joker turned off the gas; but the mischief of a panic was mercifully averted. ‘Let us have a hymn, we can sing in the dark,’ cried out Mr. Brown, with that presence of mind which the crisis required; and thereupon the people sang, “There is a fountain filled with blood,” etc.

With the restored light came a reaction, for women fainted in different parts of the building. The other misadventure mainly affected a poor old woman of earnest piety and a member of the church. The good soul was accidentally knocked down on the stone stairs leading to the gallery, when she fractured her skull in a terrible manner. Though her head was literally split open, she showed a complete resignation by looking at her misfortune on its brightest side. As she lay among other sufferers with her head amply bandaged, those parts of her face which remained unhidden wore a cheery expression — the reflection of peace within.

‘Oh, Mr. Brown, ain’t it a mercy I broke my head while going into the house of God,’ cried she, when visited in the hospital. ‘I might have broke it while going into a theatre!’

The new place, now called the East London Tabernacle, was opened by Mr. Spurgeon on the 22nd of February 1872, and the proceedings were circumstantially described in a serious manner by an East-End journal in its issue of the 17th of February; that is to say, five days

before the event occurred. Journalists have often been found nodding or tripping — only as late as May 1876, the art critic of a London daily paper denounced a quotation from Shakespeare as ‘idiotic,’ without suspecting who was the author — but this prescience of a local editor was no less novel than it was startling to common-place people. The future scarce differed from the past with this local seer, when he treated things to come as though they had already passed into history. The ‘series of services of appalling length,’ the ‘tea with hymns,’ etc., etc., were particularly mentioned. Then the pastor — ‘unaffected and hearty in his style, laying emphasis *à la* Spurgeon on his adjectives’ — was depicted. He was one of the ‘elect;’ a Calvinist; a man who ‘preaches “brimstone” with positive enjoyment;’ and so on. This circumstance is merely related as a curiosity in journalism, and as an illustration of the way in which small cavillers at the religiously earnest may miss their mark, and themselves become the laughing-stock of those they affect to criticize.

In his monthly magazine *Memoranda* for March 1872, Mr. Spurgeon remarks:

‘At Burdett Road, Bow Road, we opened on Thursday, February 22nd, the vast structure in which the congregation of Mr. Archibald Brown will in future assemble. It is probably the second chapel in London in regard to size, and is a noble monument to the triumph of the gospel when faithfully proclaimed ... Our heart is full of gratitude for the goodness of the Lord in causing such noble results to be achieved in connection with brethren trained in our College. Mr. Brown is a man of amazing power and of consecrated spirit. God bless him!’

Among those who were asked to preach in the new building was the late Dr. Binney, who sent this characteristic reply:

Upper Clapton, N.E., January 23rd, 1872.

My dear Sir, — You know not what you ask! I could no more attempt to preach to 2,500 people than I could fly. Besides, I did far too much last year, and have begun this under the new law — ‘Nothing for Nobody.’ It is utterly out of my power to entertain your request for a moment, kindly as I am sure it is meant.

Yours very truly,
T. BINNEY.

Rev. A. G. Brown.

The state of affairs at the opening of the Tabernacle was explained by the pastor himself before a vast congregation. It appeared that the church did not lose half-a-dozen members by its removal from Stepney Green. Some asked if the new building was a necessity; they could look at the figures and judge for themselves. Mr. Brown then stated that five hundred persons had been baptized, and six hundred and fifty had been received into fellowship since the date of his acceptance of the pastorate; the five hundred came direct from the world. They did not desire to attract stragglers from neighbouring churches; but when such applied for admission, they were bound to take them. They wished that their pews should be filled with those who had never before darkened the doors of any sanctuary. Mr. Brown emphatically stated that the Tabernacle was directly associated with the Pastors’ College, and he rejoiced that no less than seventy students were then present. In regard to the subscriptions, they had come from all parts of the world, and they numbered two thousand three hundred separate donations. The collections of the opening day amounted to £910, including £500 from Mr. Brown, senior, whose total contributions to the building fund amounted to £1,250. The day was a time of joy and of encouragement.

The blessing attending the pastor’s ministry has continued, and promises to continue. In his own pulpit and elsewhere he seldom preaches less than seven times a week, and oftentimes

more frequently than that, this extra labour being rendered gratuitously for the encouragement of his poorer brethren.

Since the opening of this building, what has God wrought through Mr. Brown's ministry? More than five thousand persons have been received into church fellowship; and at the present time the church, as the second largest in the kingdom, numbers between two and three thousand members. There are now nine missionaries at work among the poor, several mission chapels being used. In the year 1890, some six thousand garments were distributed among the poor, and also a sum of £2,580. The Soup Kitchen, the Boys' Home at Harley Street, Bow Road, and that for Girls at Sheering, as well as the Seaside Home at Herne Bay, and other agencies, are referred to elsewhere. It has been in all respects, a successful pastorate. As one well remarks,

'While many are wasting their energies and time in useless theories and projects for reaching the masses, Mr. Brown *has* been reaching them in a sanctified, common-sense, practical way, which harmonizes with the Saviour's example and precept.'

Reference has already been made to the commanding situation of Mr. Brown's Tabernacle. It may be added that, in consequence of its nearness to the docks and the river, the congregation chiefly consists of men, a large proportion of whom are sailors. Perhaps no assemblage of Christians in London is more affected by gales and storms than Mr. Brown's congregation; their concern is expressed in the deep *amen* which invariably follows the prayer for those who do business on the sea. The pastor himself finds it necessary to be exactly correct when dealing with nautical phrases; and a brother 'supply' will occasionally receive a friendly intimation of the need of carefulness in this respect. Ludicrous errors would arise from neglect of these precautions, errors such as would lower the preacher in the eyes of his auditors. Some years since, a brother of ready utterance was discoursing eloquently while he borrowed illustrations from the elements. At last he came to mountainous seas, black skies, and driving storms. What does the sailor do, asked the orator, when the wind roars angrily and the billows beat over the deck, etc., etc.? 'Why, keep close to the land!' he cried, by way of reply, with the air of one who had the knack of illustrating Scriptural truth from the customs of common life. Of course the gravity of the good people was upset, and one seasoned tar (sailor) could not help speaking out in tones loud enough for others to hear: 'Why don't he say, "turn her nose to windward?"'

CHAPTER 3. BOW COMMON.

A Christmas walk from the City to the East-End — The soup-kitchen at Tryphena Place — The people who come for supplies — Dock-labourers — What they say about themselves — Other characters — Bow Common as it is — Want of work — Inside the homes — Causes of the poverty and suffering — Changes for the better — Poverty reaching a more respectable class — Nine missionaries at work — Photography, a test of honesty

IN the shortening days of a certain December — the conventional ‘dark days before Christmas’ — a casual visitor to our London markets and main thoroughfares would not, from outward observation, have been forced to the conclusion that times harder than usual for the poorest of the people had settled down upon the country. There was certainly no lack of either necessaries or luxuries that our own land or foreign climes could supply. Whether large or small, the richly-stored shops were full to overflowing with the finest products of earth, and they seemed to look upon the pedestrian with winsome faces, tempting him to buy plentifully of provision for the coming festive season. In whatever direction one turned or looked, the denser throng and the fuller supplies, told unmistakably that Christmas was coming, and that the popular enjoyment of the season was not, in any sense, to be curtailed.

If, however, we turned from the City, the great centre of attraction and activity, the brilliance of the scene soon began to wear away. As we walked eastward along the main thoroughfare of Whitechapel, that ‘Essex Road’ of the olden time still wore a cheery face through its abundance of provision for every want of man, and its plenitude of trade; but nevertheless, the densely-populated streets on our right and on our left remind us that we are merely in the main great artery of the vast wilderness of the East-end. On we go until we come to Bow Road, a very ancient suburb, since Chaucer’s Prioress spoke French ‘after the school of Stratford at Bow,’ but which is now, for the most part, inhabited by the poorer classes. Probably our friend, Pastor A. G. Brown, would say that Bow Common represented one of the most interesting scenes of low London life. The name suggests a scene of rural quietude, of green sward (grass); running brooks, with the old river Lea not far away; but how different is the reality! Bow Common must be seen to be fully understood and appreciated.

To take notice of one of its pleasanter places first, let us turn into the soup-kitchen, which Mr. Brown had then just opened at Tryphena Place, with a view of making the enterprise in the main self-supporting. It is so bitterly cold, or ‘seasonable’ out of doors, as well-fed, warmly-clad people say, that the modest little engine and its coppers present quite a congenial face; and the invitation to test the quality of the savoury fare is too agreeable to be resisted. The soup is found to be of a quality that would do credit to any table in the land; and the fact that a quart of such, with a piece of bread, can be produced for a penny, is most surprising evidence of the extreme low price of provisions when purchased in quantities in the cheapest market. What would be the gratitude of many poor city clerks if they could really dine for a penny on fare as good as this? The design is to produce at least two hundred gallons every day during the winter; but it is not sold indiscriminately to all comers. Those alone who have tickets given to them are eligible purchasers.

If we desire to know who are the people that are benefited by such a timely provision, we need but to linger for an hour or so in the room. Among those who come are a number of dock-labourers who, having been unsuccessful in getting work earlier in the morning, are glad of an opportunity of making a substantial dinner for a penny. These poor fellows, being representative of a large class, merit attention; and their great anxiety to procure employment is seen in the way that they quickly empty their basins in order to be once more

at the dock gates at one o'clock, in hope of being taken on for half a day. This extreme difficulty in getting work on the part of those who are so willing to do it, is one of the saddest phases of life in London at the present time.

When spoken with, they are quite willing to be communicative. They do not parade their hardships; they rather speak about them as common-places in the battle of life, to which all are exposed who get 'down in luck.' One, who showed visible improvement after taking his quart of soup, assured us that he had earned only 2s. 11 d. in five weeks; so hard, indeed, had been the pressure, that he had not been able to have even a common lodging-house bed for two nights — he had been obliged to walk the streets. This man had been a fireman on board ship, but having met with an accident, he had been obliged to give it up. He objected to going into the workhouse, but thought that he would be able to get along if he could be landed among his friends at Shields. While expressing unqualified encomiums (praises) on Mr. Brown's soup, he intimated that he was but a sample of hundreds of others who were in a similar plight, or 'down in luck.'

This man had hardly gone when the deal-table was surrounded by a party of others who had been unsuccessful in getting work at the dock gates — a natural consequence of things being 'rather quiet.' They complained of being much more harshly dealt with at certain-docks than they were at others; and they keenly resented this grievance. Those who had only themselves to keep, found difficulty in weathering the storm; but when a wife and a number of children had to be taken into the reckoning, one could not gauge the suffering represented. Their testimony is unanimous in one particular—the outlook was worse than it was a year before. One who was well-acquainted with the grain trade said it was in a worse condition than had been the case for thirteen years. These men, then, at all events, were not idle loafers, anxious to take advantage of any charitable distribution on the one hand, or to be led astray by Socialistic adventurers on the other. The manner in which they hastened off, in the forlorn hope of getting half a day's work at one o'clock, alone testified to their sincerity.

If we turn from these poor labourers to the ordinary run of those who come after the soup, we shall find that the varied revelations of low London life will still afford plenty of food for reflection. In one respect, all show uniformity — they are all visibly anxious to have the soup; for if they could manufacture such a satisfying stew at all in their own rooms, it is pretty certain that it would cost them the price charged several times over. Among those who come are thinly-clad women, grave and careworn: but in many instances these are accompanied by little children, whose smiling interest in the process of measuring the savoury contents of the coppers into all kinds of nondescript vessels shows, once more, how lightly, under all circumstances, care sits upon the shoulders of the young. As they come up to the counter in quick succession from different quarters, they carry with them, in many instances, the characteristics of their districts.

The majority look like poor people who are honestly struggling to do the best they are able for themselves and dependents; but now and then we note things which are ominous symptoms of there being something radically wrong, quite apart from the hardness of the times. To use the publican's beer-cans for such an innocent purpose is probably a venial offence; but what does it mean when, on such a raw winter day, a boy comes up only half-dressed — without shoes, stockings, coat, or waistcoat? It represents a state of things down in the depths to which no friend of the poor can ever become thoroughly accustomed. 'I can never become used to it,' remarked Mr. Brown, when a wild-looking, unkempt girl — a feminine counterpart of the half-savage looking boy — flitted across our path in the street — 'I can never become used to it; it turns me sick.' To talk about the ills of the poor in a

conventional or sentimental manner is one thing; to come to their rescue is another. This latter necessitates a daily fight with manifold evils, and a constant exercise of faith, which God alone can sustain. Who will help to strengthen the hands of those who thus fight the Lord's battles in districts which are as little known to the world of respectability as the fields of missionary enterprise in foreign lands?

And now, what is the general outlook of Bow Common itself? It is a low-lying district, and sufficiently extensive in itself to constitute a town of considerable size; and while, in a sense, it may be called an industrial area, it would seem to be the last refuge of many who have been compelled to migrate from more respectable quarters. If one-room life is not generally the rule, a very large proportion of the people have to be content with no better accommodation.

Numbers of the men have to be included in the class of dock labourers, whose master grievance, as I have seen, is the extreme scarcity of work. Then come the pipe and match-box makers, the machinists, the waist-coat hands, the trousers makers, and many more trades besides, the victims of that 'cruel cheapness' which Mr. Brown has so scathingly exposed and denounced. When we consider the wages that are paid — or, as we might say, that are *not* paid — each business named deserves to rank rather as a system of slavery than of legitimate industry; for when close application to work yields nothing better than a penny per hour, the poor people can hardly be said to be toiling for a *living*. They are working their lives away without being able to get the necessaries, much less the comforts of life. Who can wonder that widows and weakly girls are so often found worsted in such an unequal contest? Those who are ill-fed, poorly clothed, and overworked, naturally fall an easy prey to disease.

Hence, to visit these people in their homes shows us very forcibly that one of the greatest temporal blessings one can have in this world is fairly remunerative employment. Some of the larger houses, which are let out in single rooms, present a somewhat gaunt, inhospitable look, the unfastened street-door admitting all comers to cold, bare passages, and uncarpeted stairs, which have too heavy a traffic to allow of their being kept over clean. On the top floor of one of these tenements we enter the room of a widow who is a representative of the poor sisterhood of pipe-makers; and considering that the apartment has to serve as workshop, living room, and bedroom, it is not so repellant as some others, although the effluvium (stench) is anything but agreeable. The woman has a worn, sad appearance; and from the pathetic allusions she makes to the death of her husband, we can tell that she keenly feels the hardships of her situation — not more than a shilling a day being earned by her labour when work can be obtained. She tells us that the landlady had been buried only three days previously, but adds in a more reassuring tone, that the stairs had been 'sprinkled down' — that is, disinfected.

The next room, in another house that we enter, is smaller and closer, a mother and daughter being employed at tailors' slopwork,¹ much of which requires really skilled hands to do it. The hardships of the daughter are increased by chronic ailments, which are aggravated by the cold weather. No words of discontent are uttered, although under happier circumstances the earnings of the two would not more than suffice for the support of one. In another small room, which seems to be quite crowded with a man, wife, and children, the same kind of work is going on; and our companion in this instance being Mr. Brown himself, he gladdens the young people's hearts by the promise of some new clothing. By a few questions addressed to the woman who is, of course, typical of a large class, we learned that the necessity for

¹ *Slopwork*: the manufacture of cheap ready-made clothing.

working seven days a week — the Sabbath being devoted to arrears of household duties — prevented her from attending public worship. In a home like this, the woman is the mainstay of the family. The husband in the majority of instances, ranking no higher than a dock labourer, can do little or nothing, and thus too often becomes a dependent himself rather than a help.

The cases mentioned are those in which the people's sufferings are to be traced to misfortune alone. Alcohol is certainly not the sole cause of the depressed condition of those we have mentioned; their crying need is fairly remunerative work. Of course, in such a neighbourhood, numbers will be found whose rags and squalor proclaim them to be the victims of vicious habits; and the costly structures whose landlords are able to amass a rich competence, shows that a good deal of money goes for beer and spirits, which ought to be devoted to the home. Those who thus waste their resources are not the majority, however; the poor women and girls who are toiling for a penny an hour, the half-famished men who, on the average, cannot procure one day's work a week, are not what they are because they are drunkards; and to make sweeping assertions to the contrary — as certain ardent prohibitionists are in the habit of doing — is a libel on thousands of poor people, as cruel as it is false. Mr. Brown has had too much experience among his needy constituency not to know that there are other enemies to fight quite as destructive of the people's best interests as drunkenness — evils which carry with them the blight of misery, if not of death, both far and wide. It seems as though the people needed to be reclaimed from generations of neglect. In general, they are in such a pitiable condition, that if they are prevailed upon to attend the worship of God at all, it has to be at times specially arranged for them; for as Mr. Brown has repeatedly declared, if these people were to come to the ordinary Sunday services, the respectable congregation would be frightened away.

In looking over Bow Common, the region appears to be in reality a number of colonies; at all events, the streets differ very greatly in character, and in some measure verify the truth of the old proverb, that 'birds of a feather flock together.' Many thoroughfares are fairly respectable as the ordinary homes of the toiling poor; others are more questionable. Perhaps, a few years ago, they would not in all cases have been over safe for a belated traveller after dark; and one notorious quarter which the neighbours have suggestively nicknamed in their own *patois* (jargon), has not in any wise been wronged or libeled. Here squalor and misery seem to reign unchecked, despite the unceasing efforts that are made to reclaim the natives. Children, ragged and unwashed, roam about looking as though they had never known either the inside of a school or a mother's care. To the unhappy people who herd in many of these rooms, *home* has no meaning as we understand it; and it is characteristic of many families that the chief part of what is available for their support is brought in by the women. Man at his lowest, in all parts of the world, seems to be a being who is content to be idle, and to have his means of self-indulgence supplied by those whom he ought to support. 'Rows' (fights) are not uncommon in such places, when an extra amount of drink has been consumed; and then the houses are quickly emptied of their tenants, who never fail to show more than a passing interest in such episodes.

But notwithstanding these drawbacks, it is still happily true that even Bow Common has of late years visibly improved; the drainage and sanitation are much better than they were; and streets which at one time might have been considered dangerous after nightfall, are so no longer. It is also a favourable symptom that houses whose condition is too unsanitary for their occupants to live in them safely, now become condemned by the local inspector. These things may seem to be only remotely connected with evangelistic work, but they are

considered to be distinct gains by the evangelist himself, who is encouraged by having the way prepared for better things.

Such is the scene of one of the districts of Mr. Brown's labours, and such are those whom he seeks to reclaim to something better than they have ever known. The poor of London have no better friend working among them; and although the pastor is still hardly more than a young man, his experience is that of a veteran of long service. The people themselves recognize him as such in a way that we have never seen equalled. If he stands but a few minutes in a street talking with a stray friend of the poorer sort, others will come pouring out of their houses, glad of an opportunity of telling their grievances, or of making known their wants. This phenomenon must be seen to be fully understood or credited.

In speaking with Mr. Brown on the condition of the East End, we were sorry to learn that the pressure of poverty is greater than it was, and that it is reaching a more respectable class. The causes of this distress are too intricate to be explained in a few words; but the disposition of the people to crowd into the town, and the keen competition in the overcrowded labour market, as well as early, improvident marriages, have had much to do in bringing about the present state of things. The work carried on is philanthropic in a temporal sense, but it is first of all evangelistic. Though he ardently desires to win the people for better things, he never hopes to be popular by seeking to create effect by monster halls and excitable meetings. His experience has not taught him that large numbers can be won at once; on the contrary, much gentle pressure or persuasion seems to be needed; for in the case of many converts, the battle has had to be fought out in their own rooms. Indeed, the earnest evangelist has to be satisfied if the prize desired, be won after two or three years — so much have the people to be saved from, even after they are convicted of sin. It is even thought that many who are saved are hardly fit to be invested with the privileges of church membership until they have passed a novitiate. This being the case, one of the greatest obstacles to progress is sensationalism; so that while the alarm goes forth, calling on the churches to come back to the old *doctrines*, it is still needful to make a stand on behalf of Scriptural *methods*.

In addition to volunteer agents, Mr. Brown employs nine paid missionaries; and it is customary for some of these to assemble for prayer at nine o'clock in the morning. These brethren the pastor seeks to inspire with enthusiasm similar to his own; and through the Lord's help, he seems to have succeeded. He values the privileges which have been conferred upon him as a preacher to the masses; but he teaches his helpers that the gift of being able effectively to speak to individuals may represent quite as high a calling, and one in which diligence and perseverance find plenty of scope. Apart from directly evangelistic effort, however, the daily round of work is very heavy. It is inevitable that much relief of the ordinary kind has to be dispensed: a distribution of clothing takes place every afternoon; and in addition to all, considerable attention has to be devoted to emigration, the expense of this department showing a heavy item. Great attention is given to details, all receipts being carefully entered, as well as the expenditure; so that everything is readily accounted for in the books.

Thus, without intermission, the work goes on from the beginning to the end of the year; and painfully monotonous as the outlook may appear to a casual observer, there is really fresh novelty every day for those who have eyes to see. In the course of a week, it is possible to meet with representatives of every class of society, the most striking characters being those who have drifted into the slums despite a classical education which enables them to write Greek and quote Latin. Drink, indolence, or both combined, will commonly account for these

singular falls; but in general, a great mass of misery is daily met with that has no connection with drink at all. Of course, impostors will now and then appear upon the scenes, to try their luck; but Mr. Brown and his men are such skilled detectors of false human metal, that even the most artful of the fraternity have little chance of success. If a lingering doubt should remain concerning any given subject, he needs but to be invited to have his portrait taken. If the case is genuine, the man goes straight to the photographer; if otherwise, he at once disappears in the crowd like a shooting-star, to be seen and heard of no more.

Mr. Brown resolved from the first that he would never incur debt, and that he would never ask for money for the Lord's service. He has all along worked on these conditions. In other chapters I will give particulars of many characters who have been helped to rise by the pastor's far-reaching efforts.

CHAPTER 4. THE PASTOR AND THE POOR.

Mr. Brown's Annual Statements — A working church — Tallymen and Pawnbrokers — Loan offices and their heartless managers — A distress inventory — Free Sunday evening services — A remarkable convert — Other cases — A young bride — Men 'down in luck' — Emigration cases — A Ratcliff girl in Canada — A remarkable experience — A mysterious disappearance — Girls reclaimed

FOR some years past, Mr. Brown has been in the habit of issuing an annual statement; and in one of these *brochures*, 'The Poor and What the Word says About Them,' he has collected a number of Scriptural allusions, which I am afraid are not so familiar to the majority, even of those who will read them, as they should be in this boastful and self-satisfied age. The pastor is a man of shrewd business tact and keen observation; and in days when chronic poverty is written and talked about by savants, quidnuncs (meddlers), amateur and veteran philanthropists to a degree never before equalled, it seems strange to hear a voice coming from the East-end to testify that 'amid all the authorities quoted, there has been *one* strangely ignored.' It is then further remarked, 'it might almost be thought that God had nothing to say upon the matter, and that his Book was out of court as a volume of reference.' It is not so with Mr. Brown, however; for beginning with Moses, and not stopping until he has quoted the apostle James, he gives a number of quotations, some of which will not unlikely come as a new revelation to such Christians as are not sure that they have ever read the Bible through. Though not new, here is, nevertheless, something fresh upon the subject — fresh because it has been too long neglected even by the main body of those who profess to work among and to sympathize with the poor.

Our Lord's contribution to this divine selection reminds us that the chief want of the poor, in our own and every age, is the Gospel; and then it seems to be both inspiring and stimulating to have what this divine speaker said about 'the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind,' who cannot recompense their benefactors in kind, but to give unto whom, is to lend unto the Lord. Associated with the East London Tabernacle there is now a working church of over two thousand five hundred members; but so vast are the needs of the East-end with its immense main arteries, and hundreds of miles of by-streets, that in comparison with the service which has to be done, it has to be confessed that the labourers are few. All who are interested in the subject, or who in any way help to contribute the sinews or war, are earnestly desired clearly to understand the character of the enterprise undertaken by the pastor and his people.

'First, and foremost, we seek to bring the Gospel to the people, and the people to Christ,' remarks Mr. Brown; and then it is added, 'much as we love the poor, we could not toil the hours we do had we no deeper inspiration than the alleviation of their earthly wretchedness.'

The work is thus above all things an evangelistic one, although as we have already shown, a great deal of relief is dispensed in clothing, food, and in other ways which commend themselves to the judgment of the pastor who, while resolutely setting his face against sensational methods and appeals, is quite as determined never to run into debt on his Master's account. 'Looking alone to God for supplies puts a wonderful sweetness into life, and makes every gift received a peculiar joy,' he says; then adding what may profitably be pondered by those who can be uncommonly fervent in the matter of praying about difficulties of their own making. 'God is well able to provide for his own work, and he loves to be trusted. We question, however, whether faith has any ground for trusting God to pay debts.'

Before proceeding to give some examples from life of good effected among the great East-end constituency, a word may be said about the snare which the habit of incurring debt may prove to the poor. If the rent remains unpaid, it may be owing to want of work through the general hardness of the times; but it is quite another matter when people are directly tempted to purchase goods at exorbitant prices, for which they will never be able to pay without involving themselves in partial ruin.

The Tallyman, or Cash Draper as he more euphoniously calls himself, is the arch-tempter of those poor and improvident classes who patronize Mr. Pawnbroker. 'I should say now, that in nine cases out of ten, those who get their best clothes on tally carry them to the pawnshop.' A tallyman who had seven hundred customers, once remarked to Mr. James Greenwood: 'It stands to sense that they should do so,' added the candid and communicative authority on this little-known subject.

'They're hand-to-mouth people every one of them. And after a week or two, they're sure to be hard up for the week's instalment. Then what's more proper than that the article that has got 'em into the fix should get 'em out of it?'

It seems to be actually true that many of the poor who yield to the seductions of the tallyman, pay more for their clothes in the first instance, than would be charged by a first-class tradesman; and then there has to be added the ample fees of Mr. Pawnbroker for taking charge of the garments week by week, from Monday morning till Saturday night. The tallyman fleeces the poor in many ways, and some of his practices — such as making out a bill of a smaller amount than the true one for the wife to show to her husband, and his accepting something 'for the trouble of calling,' when the weekly instalment cannot be paid — cannot be reckoned either honest or straight-forward.

Even a greater curse to those who are foolish enough to be entrapped by them, are the Loan Offices, the abuses of which have become so great that an Act for checking the havoc they occasion is urgently needed. Some time ago there was said to be a broker and auctioneer at the East-end who was kept employed in selling the effects of the dupes of three loan offices only. The heartless managers of many of these mantraps are among the chief impostors and scoundrels to be met with in London; and the traffic they carry on is shown by the large number of advertisements which appear in the daily papers.

Arrears of rent, of course, represent quite a different matter; but the infamous treatment which widows, poverty-stricken women, and others of the poor receive at the hands of 'sworn brokers,' is a standing disgrace to our social system. Mr. Brown has had something to do in getting those out of trouble who had lagged behind with their rent, and a few shillings expended in this way may occasionally represent the greatest boon that can be conferred.

By way of illustration of how rapidly expenses are run up, take the case of Mrs. M_____, who was distrained upon for 6s. 6d.² A copy of the broker's original legal instrument is given, and notice should be taken, not only of the way in which the debt at once becomes nearly doubled, but of the ample assortment of furniture which sworn brokers require in payment of their demands. The original document, which is something like a yard long, runs thus:

² *Distrain*: to legally take something in place of a debt payment.

INVENTORY.

To Mrs. M _____ (or whom else it may concern).

Take Notice — That I have this day Distraigned upon the undermentioned Goods and Chattels, on behalf of _____, your landlord, for and towards the sum of six shillings and sixpence, for arrear of Rent due on the 26th day of _____ last, for your Dwelling-house or Tenement, situate and being _____ in the Parish of All Saints, Poplar, in the County of Middlesex.

And further Take Notice, that unless the said sum of six shillings and sixpence, together with all expenses incurred, be paid, or the said Goods and Chattels replevied within five days from the date hereof, they will be appraised and sold according to law.

Dated _____

	£	s.	d.
Rented	0	6	6
Levy, Notice, Inventory, and Copy	0	3	0
Man in Possession, per day ...	0	2	6
	£	0	12 0

- 2 Deal tables.
- 4 Cane-seat chairs.
- 5 Windsor chairs.
- A kitchen fender.
- A small mantel clock and dress-stand.
- A deal box.
- A set of Venetian blinds.
- An iron French bedstead and small fender.
- 2 dozen pieces of crockery and glass.
- 6 pieces of tin and iron-ware.

In the name of sufficient Goods and Chattels in and upon the Premises, for and towards paying the Rent and expenses of the Distress, Take Notice, that I have impounded the above-mentioned Goods and Chattels at _____.

This precious inventory will tell its own story all the more forcibly if we abstain from further note or comment. It will also explain why sworn brokers have come to be as abhorrent to the poor of London, as publicans were to the Jews of old under the Roman rule.

In proceeding to give some illustrative cases of good received, I may first say that Mr. Brown draws his converts from all classes; and the work being of this truly cosmopolitan order, some of the most unlikely persons are among his converts, supplying the finest of all testimony to the all-conquering power of the Gospel. Thus one of the latest gains is one who made a profession of practising sleight-of-hand tricks in public-houses. Here is the story:

On one Sunday evening in February, the service in the East London Tabernacle was for men only. It is usual to distribute the tickets over such a wide area, that for this particular occasion 25,000 were given away, the result being that the chapel was closely packed with a congregation of 3,000; and a similar service had been conducted annually for twenty-two years. The subject of the sermon was 'Noah's Telescope,' and the text Hebrews 11.7: 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.' Towards the close of his discourse, the preacher said: 'My brethren, in all love I say that I should be less than a man, and utterly unworthy of a gathering like this, if I were not honest about this matter. Before God, I believe that there is a judgment coming upon

a guilty world. If I did not believe it, I would not preach it. I am as assured as if I had seen the heavens on a blaze, that it will come to pass—the day of the perdition of ungodly men; and it is because I believe it that, like Noah, I want to warn you. *Look through the telescope, man!* Do you not see the rocks rending and the heavens melting? Can you not see the judgment of God being poured out? Do you say, “What must I do to be saved?” I will tell you. There is one respect in which you are not to do what Noah did. Noah had to prepare an ark. You have not to do that. Thank God that is all done. The ark was prepared in the great navy-yard of God’s sovereign grace. It was prepared by a divine workman. He laid down the keel with many a sigh and many a groan, and he built up the ark of salvation at the cost of his own life. He never ceased until he was able to say, “It is finished.” He has left the door wide open, and God says to each of you dear fellows tonight, “Come thou into the ark.”

The Word reached the hearts of many of the hearers — instances more or less remarkable; but one only need be mentioned here. When the crowd was leaving, the pastor’s son noticed a middle-aged person of the ‘Man-about-town’ appearance, and on asking, ‘Would you like to see my father?’ the stranger answered, ‘Yes, I should.’ He went into the vestry, and was spoken with for some time; but the man was more perplexed than decided. Would he decide for Christ that night? No, he would not, for the easily-understood reason that if he did so, he would forego all his means of living, his profession being of a character that would not agree with religion at all. He was in the habit of going the round of the public-houses with a pack of cards for various tricks, and other things with which he practised feats of sleight-of-hand. The man left on the understanding that he would come again and give his decision. Accordingly, on Monday the 13th, he again appeared, and he had thoroughly decided that he would accept the Gospel offer; and to show that there was to be no attempt at compromise, he handed to the pastor the cards, and all the other things with which he practised his arts. The pastor received these curiosities with some surprise, his new friend meanwhile declaring that he had nothing left in the world. When questioned about his antecedents, he said that his mother died when he was young, but he had had a sister, who died some years ago, who had never ceased to pray for him. The answer to the devoted woman’s prayers had been deferred, but it had come at a time and in a manner to make it all the more striking.

Another recent case is that of M. H_____, a young girl whose parents are not Christian people. As a child, M. met with a dreadful accident — she fell out of a train on the Great Eastern Railway, when both legs were cut off. Some artificial ones were procured; but, having outgrown these when first seen by Mr. Brown, she was unable to walk, and was crawling about the floor of her home. Becoming interested in the case, the pastor employed an artificial limb-maker to supply what was wanted; and the girl was promised that when she could walk, she should be sent to the seaside Home at Herne Bay. The first use the sufferer made of her newly-acquired capacity to walk, however, was to attend a service at the East London Tabernacle; and it so happened that the Holy Spirit applied the Word to her heart, and she was converted. From that date, the afflicted girl became one of the most cheerful of Christians; and when, on the pastor’s application, she was received into the Cripples’ Home, M. H_____ became a very lightsome inmate of the Institution. She thus speaks for herself in a letter addressed to her pastor soon after admission:

‘Please excuse the liberty I have taken in writing to you, but I thought you would like to hear how very happy and comfortable I am in the Cripples’ Home. I have learned to make hats and bonnets since I have been here. We have lessons every day, and ladies come and give us nice Scripture lessons. Every Thursday evening we have a gentleman from Stafford Rooms to give us an address. — I think of all your meetings, and ask God to bless them. I am still trusting in

Jesus. He helps me in all I do. I want to be a bright witness for him before everyone. Dear sir, I thank you for all your kindness to me.'

There was another girl, who was found in such a terrible condition through her legs being bent, that she was literally walking on her ankles. With the mother's consent, Mr. Brown sent this child to a hospital, where the surgeons had to break both of her legs before they could be put right. She afterwards stayed for a year at the Seaside Home at Herne Bay; and the result of the treatment altogether is that the child could soon run about with others without crutches.

Another young woman convert was Miss C_____, who for nine years had been .accustomed to sing at the theatre and to dance as a ballet-girl. On a certain Saturday evening she took her part as usual at the playhouse; but on the next evening she attended a service at the East London Tabernacle at which Mr. Brown preached; and the Word reaching her heart through God's blessing, effected a transformation. She was expected back at the ballet on the next evening; but knowing what she now did of her condition as a sinner in the Lord's sight, she was afraid to go; and although the employment represented her livelihood she has never been since. She is now almost constantly employed in making garments for poor children, and is otherwise one of the most consistent and consecrated members in connection with the East London Tabernacle.

It must be understood that Mr. Brown photographs those who come under his notice, while he also registers their history, the result being that a mass of information has been accumulated that should be of the greatest service to such as are studying social questions. Let us select a few of those who have been rescued from the most unhappy surroundings to be started afresh in the world.

One is a photograph of a young woman who was said to be of a singular disposition, and subject to violent passions; but whether this be true or otherwise, her environment at Bow Common proved so repugnant that she tried, by hanging herself, to find a door of escape. She was taken in hand, was trained for something better than she had been accustomed to, and is now doing well in Canada.

Another, whose portrait is that of an extremely neat and good-looking servant-maid, was found wandering in the Bow Road; and having neither father or mother, she appears to have had no other friends. This subject, also, was taken in hand, and was sent to a respectable situation.

The portrait of another is that of a comely young bride, with her smiling and well-satisfied husband standing beside her, set off by some of the plants of a tropical clime. Who, in such a subject, could be expected to recognize a 'quondam (previously) poverty-stricken matchbox-maker' of Bow Common, who when first discovered, was enveloped in rags and dirt? A. W. boldly resolved to take advantage of the facility offered for emigration, and the result has proved the wisdom of her choice; for the portraits lying before us are apparently those of a young lady and gentleman who are occupying a lucrative and responsible position in South Africa. Such transformations, if invented by romanticists, would be thought extravagant; but they are among the commonplaces of the achievements of Christian faith.

The next two portraits are also a pair, and one likes to look at them because they are, according to the theory of Adam Smith. representative of England's best wealth, *i.e.*, her labour. Some little time ago, a gentleman engaged in business in London, was walking along a road near Barking, when he overtook two strong young peasants; and instead of passing on, he entered into conversation with them. It transpired that these honest-looking fellows

were 'down in luck,' things were so 'quiet;' otherwise they could get nothing to do although earnestly desirous of finding employment. Perceiving at once that they were what they professed to be, the friend became interested in their case; and told them that if they were in a mind to try their fortune in another country, he thought he could do them a good turn. The answer was that they did not care where the work was, if they could but find it to do. When the matter was brought before him, Mr. Brown at once undertook to send these subjects to Australia. And while the friend who had overtaken them on the road undertook to pay for the outfit of one, Lord Kinnaird, on hearing of the case, at once and unsolicited, volunteered to find what was needed for the other. They sailed for Australia immediately afterwards. And by this time, they have no doubt established themselves in that New World at the Antipodes, which is well-called *Greater Britain*, because it not only possesses in itself practically limitless resources, but opens a door of hope to increasing numbers of those who, consequent upon an overcrowded labour-market, find their way hedged up at home.

The portraits of two others, and this time a pair of girls, are also emigration subjects. One who is registered as 'a good girl' has gone to America; while the other, who has given more trouble, but is now repentant, is married, and is one of those who leave the country.

One remarkable case was that of a girl who was found in an underground room, and who was so begrimed with dirt that at first she was supposed to belong to a darker coloured race. After some hours spent in washing and general renovation, the child turned out to be far more hopeful and comely looking than had been supposed possible; and before long she presented the appearance shown in our engraving-where she is seen as a prosperous and happy Canadian servant-girl.

Writing to Mr. Brown soon afterwards she says: 'I am on a farm, and get plenty of work to do, and am kept very busy. I am very glad to tell you I like this country very much;' she adds, 'I have been in my place twelve months today, and like it much.' Then, after speaking of her inability ever to forget the kindness of the ladies of the East London Tabernacle, like a true Christian she shows solicitude for her relatives and parents. 'I am so sorry to think none of my brothers know the Lord; I cannot do anything but pray for them.' And then, while mentioning the Bible given to her before leaving home, and from which she has read every night, S_____ asks the pastor to pray for her father and mother. Such is the quality of the human material which, in the worst sense, is going to waste in the overcrowded portions of the East-end, if not reclaimed by such agents as our friends at the East London Tabernacle. What is mere encumbrance at home, with the labour-market in its present condition, becomes the very hope or wealth of the country when transferred to our vast and thinly-populated Dominion.

Many of those who attended the ministry of Mr. Brown can tell of remarkable experience under the hand of affliction. Thus, Mrs. K_____, who is a member of the church, was going to her husband at a dry dock on a foggy night, and missing her footing, fell down nearly thirty feet. The woman's cries sent the man into a fit, from which he never recovered. The result of the fall was a broken ankle; notwithstanding this, and while her husband lay dead in the house, the widow had to attend three children who were down with fever. Without some timely help, what could such a household do save despair and die?

One case, that may be called a remarkable providence, also illustrates the phenomena of mysterious disappearance which at times occasion such acute distress to persons in London. There was an old sailor, a widower, who being unable to follow his occupation, lived alone with his daughter who was employed at a neighbouring factory. The man left home to go, as he said, to Sidcup, but without giving any address. He did not return, and no clue to his

whereabouts could be discovered. Some days later a girl, who had brought her lunch wrapped up in newspaper, had her eye attracted by a certain paragraph, which prompted the remark, 'Some poor fellow has fallen down dead at London Bridge station,' and then the girl read aloud the account of an inquest on the remains of an elderly man who could not be identified. The daughter at once exclaimed, 'That must be my father!' and hastening to the terminus, she was only just in time to find that her fears were well-founded before the body was buried. If it had not been for the scrap of newspaper, which Mr. Brown retains among his curiosities, it is probable that the fate of the old sailor would never have been discovered; and the sudden and unaccountable disappearance of anyone from the scene of daily life is more distressing than death itself.

We ought not to omit to mention that an excellent work is also going on among that fallen sisterhood whose errors and sorrows represent one of the most affecting phases of London life. One Christmas Mr. Brown received a letter signed by all the girls in an Institution, thanking him for good words spoken, expressing appreciation of the prayer-meeting, and hopes for the future, when they make a fresh start in the world to lead honest, womanly lives. The card, accompanying the letter had the words of Luke 1.78, 79 on the back: 'The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace;' and nothing could be more appropriate or cheering as coming from such subjects. Thus the work goes on from the beginning to the end of the year, without ever stopping or even flagging. The work is that of a Christian church which, next to the Metropolitan Tabernacle, has a larger membership than any in London.

CHAPTER 5. YEARS OF AFFLICTION.

Death of Mr. Brown, senior — The funeral sermon — First anniversary of the East London Tabernacle — Invitation to New York — Preaching at the Metropolitan Tabernacle — Letters from Mr. Spurgeon — Death of Mrs. A. G. Brown — Account of her home-life and conversion — Letters of sympathy received in large numbers — The funeral sermon — The London Baptist Association — A postmen's festival — New chapel at Barking Road — The Christian blind — A blind tea-party — East London Fraternal — Letters from Mr. Spurgeon — Vice-President of the London Baptist Association — Speech at Exeter Hall on Tracts — Death of the second Mrs. A. G. Brown — Mr. Spurgeon's sympathy — Mr. Brown becomes President of the London Baptist Association — Thieves break into his house — Third marriage

THE erection of the East London Tabernacle was a crowning success of Mr. Brown's pastorate; but the years which immediately followed were times of severe affliction. Bible Brown, as the pastor's grand-father was called, had been a pillar in the cause at Old Maze Pond. His maternal grandfather, Job Heath, had lived long enough to show interest in the erection of the chapel at Bromley, and to contribute to the building fund. Mr. Brown, a deacon of the church at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and Archibald's father, did not long survive the completion of the great house of prayer in Burdett Road. It was one of the chief delights of Mr. Brown's life to know that his son could, by the simple but yet forcible preaching of the gospel, attract such a crowd — hundreds such as should be saved meanwhile being added to the Church. But when the chapel had been opened about six months, he passed away, to be with the Saviour he had long loved. On Sunday evening, August 25th, 1872, Pastor Archibald G. Brown preached a sermon in memory of his father, founded on Philippians 1.23: 'Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.' The preacher gave that text as the dying words of his father; and in the closing division of his discourse, spoke as follows:

'It was only on the first of last month, on the Monday, that he was in this tabernacle. He came just before the prayer-meeting, and saw me in the vestry. I never saw him in apparently better health, or in a happier frame of mind. With a smile on his face, he said, "I have been thinking, Archie, that I may as well pay you what I owe you towards your tabernacle. You had better take the cheque whilst you can get it; for one can never tell what may happen." How little did I imagine that that was the last conversation I should ever hold with him on earth! On the following Thursday he left home for business, seeming in better health than usual, and very cheerful. In fact, many had noticed how much more cheerful he had been for some few previous weeks. As he left home, he said, "I shall not be back till late this evening; so none of you need stop in." Doubtless, however, feeling ill, he returned home earlier than he intended. When they came home from the service, at about nine o'clock, they were amazed to find my father speechless. He had been suddenly struck with paralysis, and was utterly powerless to hold any converse. For six weeks he so continued; and sometimes it was more than the heart could bear to witness the efforts he made to convey his thoughts. God only knows how many prayers ascended during those six weeks, the burden of them being, "Lord, grant that before he dies he may recover speech." He never spoke to any one of us again; but our prayers were yet answered, and God gave us more than we asked. We asked that he might speak to us, but the Lord said, "No; he shall speak to me before you."

'It was on the Wednesday night, just as my beloved mother was rising from her knees, after praying by his bedside, that the tongue which had been dumb for six weeks began to speak as clearly as ever it had spoken through life. He said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus." Thinking it might be a dream more than anything else, she drew near the bedside; and then again she heard his voice, as clear as possible, saying, "Precious Jesus! Blessed Saviour! With thee soon,

so precious! With thee where thou art; Peace, peace, peace;" and then, "Rest, rest, rest." We tried to see if he was conscious of our presence. No; he was dead to the outside world. No pressure of the hand received any answer; no words brought any recognition. His spirit was already dwelling in another world. "Hear his praises, hear his praises," said the dying one. Then came the closing words, "With Christ! with Christ! with Christ!" "These were spoken very early on Thursday morning, and all Thursday he lay like a child asleep, gently breathing. We knew the end was near. It was just nigh the hour of midnight, on Thursday, when he gave one deep breath. All were listening for the next, when the nurse quietly said, "It's all over." And so my father fell asleep, "With Christ" the last words on his lips.

'It is not for a son to speak much of a father. I might say many things, but my heart is full. Suffice it to say that, as a family, we shall ever look more upon this tabernacle as his monument than any stone that may be erected in the cemetery. If ever my father had his heart in anything, it was in this place. As my friend, Mr. Spurgeon, told me the other day: "If ever I saw your father depressed, I had but to talk of the work in the East of London, and he was right directly." We bless God that he ever put it into his heart to do what he did; but above all, we prize that precious testimony that dropped from his lips in those dying hours. And I know not that, had I had the choice of the whole of inspired writ, I could have chosen a meeter portion to be the last on a dying father's lips than this: "With Christ."

The first anniversary of the opening of the East London Tabernacle, in February 1873, was celebrated in a remarkable manner. The pastor asked each of the people to bring a gift towards paying off the remaining debt on the building; the response being a total contribution of £500. An address was presented to Mr. William Higgs, for the services he had rendered in erecting the building. It was stated that about 3,000 persons crowded the chapel on each Sunday evening, hundreds being unable to obtain admission. During the first year 270 new members were received, the majority being gathered out of the world. The weekly offerings, contributed chiefly in pence, averaged between three and four hundred pounds a year. At one collection, 1400 separate pence were counted. Better than all, the conversions averaged one a day since the place had been opened.

Not long after this pleasant and encouraging anniversary, Mr. Brown received a letter from New York, proposing new openings for service, the writer wishing that the whole matter should have 'prayerful consideration.' Without giving the writer's name, or the names of his referees, one extract may prove interesting:

'On a Sabbath morning, in the month of September 1869, I heard you preach in the Stepney Tabernacle. I was so much impressed by what you said, and the manner in which it was presented, that a lasting impression was made. I have many times referred to that time. I have a number of Baptist friends, and at their request I write you. How are you situated? Can you get leave of absence for a few weeks? Would not a trip across the Atlantic be beneficial to your health? I know you would have a hearty welcome from your Baptist brethren. There is a great field in the city of Brooklyn for a faithful gospel preacher; and I feel confident, after you look over the ground, that you will feel disposed to labour there.'

However well disposed the pastor might be towards the United States, however, it was surely characteristic of an American of ardent temperament to expect that one would be prevailed upon to leave his chosen sphere of labour in East London, to settle in the great city of the Republic, just when he had opened a large building. Nothing came of this invitation.

Although Mr. Brown is ten years the junior of Mr. Spurgeon, the latter already depended on the services of the East-end pastor for special occasions. In what sense this was done, the following letter will show:

Metropolitan Tabernacle, Dec. 22, 1873.

Dear Brother in very deed, —

Oblige me by complying with my request—that you do speak here on the evening of January 13, Baptist Association. If ... you and I have each a good time, we will rouse the brethren. It is all left to me, and I am pressed with work. Say yes. I am giving up two days' holiday to be at this meeting, and pray the Lord it may be a success. — Yours lovingly,

C. H. SPURGEON.

Severe affliction had now entered Mr. Brown's happy home, however; and another message in the same hand explains itself:

Dear Brother, —

Pray do not take trouble about me. I am so grieved that your wife is ill, and sorry I have asked for more work when you are tied. The Lord bless you and her! — Yours ever lovingly, C. H. S.

In any case, the meetings of the 13th of January were a success. Mr. Spurgeon wrote:

'The London Baptist Association held its annual meetings at the Tabernacle, and grand meetings they were. The day was a Sabbath, a festival of brotherly love, and a feast of tabernacles. All the brethren are desiring a revival. We cannot be satisfied without it. May the Lord send it all over the world!'

After the gospel had been preached in the new building for a little over two years, the pastor, the church, it may even be said the neighbourhood generally, sustained a crushing loss. Mrs. Brown died early in May 1874, after years of sharpest suffering; and though everyone knew that she was beloved for her work's sake, none were prepared for the unparalleled popular demonstration which rendered memorable the day of her funeral.

'During nearly six hours of the busiest part of the day,' said one journal, 'the dense crowds that filled the capacious chapel, as well as Bow Cemetery, and overflowed into and completely blocked the leading thoroughfares, was such as might have befitted the obsequies (funeral) of a Livingstone.'

What she was, and what she was fitted to accomplish in the Master's service, I shall not attempt to describe; but this we know, that her memory is still fragrant among all classes in East London. The following is extracted from a memorial *brochure*, issued for private circulation at the time of Mrs. Brown's death;—

'Of a naturally quiet and retiring disposition, her childhood and girlhood abound with no strange or startling incidents. Home was her sphere. There she found her own happiness, and made the joy of others. If any were in trouble, it was to her they resorted; and her gentle spirit was often the solace of her beloved parents. Precious are the recollections — now treasured up by the home circle — of her kind words, loving looks, and unselfish actions. Though the chaste alabaster box of her person has been shivered to pieces by many a blow, the perfume of her character still fills all the house, and will linger there as long as brother or sister remains. It was at the age of fifteen that, drawn by the Spirit's cords, she went to Jesus, and found in him her Saviour. From that time to the last conscious moment on earth, it was his dear name that was most often in her thoughts, and most frequently on her lips. It appears in all her letters, and may be read in any part of the diaries she used to keep. Shortly after finding peace through believing, she made public profession of Christ by being baptized. This she did in company with her father and mother, who gratefully acknowledge the influence her words had in leading them to bear this testimony for a Saviour long before trusted and loved. The ordinance was administered by the Rev. William Howieson, pastor of the church worshipping in Walworth Road Chapel. Brought to Jesus herself, her one aim was to lead others to him also. Well is she

remembered as the devoted teacher of the Sunday-school in connection with Union Chapel, Brixton Hill.'

The letters of sympathy from friends far and near were so numerous that they could only be acknowledged in a general way in a note printed in the newspapers. On Sunday morning, May 17th, 1874, Mr. Brown preached a funeral sermon at the East London Tabernacle, and in the closing division gave some personal reminiscences. The text was Rev. 22.4 — 'And they shall see his face.'

'The one whom we mourn today was very early brought to a knowledge of the truth. I believe I am correct in saying that twenty years have passed by since she made public profession of her faith by obeying her Lord's command for baptism. About the age of fifteen she was brought to Jesus by the wife of one who is sitting in one of these galleries this morning. As a stricken, anxious inquirer, it was by a letter penned by an intimate friend, whose name I find often occurring in her diaries, that her heart was set at rest. No sooner had she found Jesus, than she did what every saved one ought to do — she went into the work at once. A more devoted Sabbath-school teacher I cannot imagine. Whoever else might be absent, she was always present. Well do I remember, when I was a fellow-teacher with her, how she had round about her, a class of boys that no one else could manage. There seemed to be such a magic influence — because a quiet one — about her, that even the most restless of the lads would sit still and listen to the gospel from her lips.

'It was in 1861 that I first knew what her Christianity was like. It was on the 12th of April (I remember it well) that, as a gay and thoughtless and giddy young man, I first met her at a company of friends; and she said to me, without knowing me at all, "Are you a Christian?" Though I hated the question, yet I could not help honouring in my heart the one that had the moral courage to put it. The next question was, "Will you go and hear Mr. Blackwood preach on Monday?" Before I knew exactly where I was, I found that I had passed my word. So, this morning, I do not only mourn a wife, I mourn one who was the means, under God, of bringing me to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we may, link by link, even trace this tabernacle and this morning's congregation right back to the few words that dropped from her loving lips.

'Time rolled on, and it was in this very month in 1862, that we plighted our love to each other. In October 1865, we were married. Only eight years and a half have passed by since then, and I thank God that I can bear testimony in his presence, that a happier life was never lived, and a happier home was never found in this East-end of London.

'Let me now say a word to the young sisters who are here this morning; and may it serve as an example to them. With feelings that God only knows, I took out a packet of old letters that I received from her before we were married; and as I read them through, hour after hour, I was amazed to find (and I press it upon young sisters present who may be engaged) that I had not one solitary letter that she ever wrote to me when we were engaged, without the word of Jesus appearing in it. No matter what she might commence the letter about, somehow or another it was always certain to work round to the dear name of him whose face she sees.

'As many of you know, for the last three years and a half she suffered with intermittent agony, which came on more constantly as time progressed, until at last there came three months of anguish almost without a pause. If ever one went a rough road to glory; if ever one passed through a burning furnace into heaven, she did. She had fellowship with the Master in one respect — she knew what tears and groans and piteous cries meant. But now she is at rest. As I marked the anguish that she suffered, I often felt, "Lord, though it will make an unutterable blank, and though it means the breaking-up of the happiest home that mortal man ever had, yet I could thank thee if thou wouldst take her into thine arms, and ease her of her frightful

agonies." She fell asleep in Jesus, as you know, at half-past four on Tuesday morning, the 5th of May. Well do I remember her last words to me, as, coming to consciousness at half-past ten on Monday night — after you had been praying for her — and taking me by the hand, she said, "Well, Archie, we have had a happy life, haven't we?" I said, "Yes, darling, that we have!" "Ah!" she said, "a few years at most, and you and I will see each other again. To me it will seem only like a minute or two, but I am dreadfully afraid it will seem a long time to you. Now I can sing a verse I could never sing before." I asked, "What is that?" She answered —

I have no cares, o blessed Lord,
For all my cares are thine.

'Oh, do you talk of triumphs? Where will you find a triumph equal to the triumph which Christ gave to one naturally the gentlest of all natures!'

Although afflictions came, however, the work was not allowed to flag. Mr. Brown was elected a member of the committee of the London Baptist Association in 1874; and while he now extended a helping hand to other pastors and their interests, the cause of the poor seemed to be carried on with increased activity. At the new East London Tabernacle, sympathy was shown for all classes, not only of the poor, but for all classes of workpeople. Thus, on March 26th, 1875, we find the pastor presiding at a great festival of postmen in his new chapel, and referring to the letter-carriers as men who had claims on the public of no mean order. He thought that among this class of the Queen's servants, people would find as much sterling honesty. Courtesy, and general good conduct as could be found among any other class. If anyone really deserved a Christmas-box it was certainly the postman. Postmen were subjected to no ordinary temptation; and it was pleasant to know that they did their duties as faithfully as they did.

Towards the close of the year 1875, Mr. Brown took part in the stone-laying ceremony of a new Baptist Chapel at Barking Road. In past years, this neighbourhood in and around Plaistow, had been a pleasant suburb, a favourite dwelling-place of Quakers; but as time went on, a change for the worse came over the scene. As one journal remarked, in contrasting the old times with the new,

'Docks, factories, and sewer outfall works, especially in their initiatory eruptive stages of digging, puddling, hastily-erected rows of wretched hovels, crowded bee-shops and drunken navvies, never have proved specially attractive to the well-to-do; and hence, the glory of the district waned; "Ichabod" was written on its older mansions, and speculative builders, dirt and dreariness claimed it for their own. The population of the poorer sort rapidly increased; the richer gradually emigrated to fresh fields and pastures new.'

Such was the district it was now sought to benefit; and in laying the stone and giving £50 to the building fund, Mr. Brown remarked:

'Some few years since, special evangelistic work was almost unknown; and the churches were content to jog on with little, if any, extraordinary effort to reach the outside masses. Free lances were few and little valued, and the world seldom saw spiritual Uhlans (armed scouts) pioneering the path of the main army. Now all was altered; and from being neglected, extraordinary agency was being extolled to the disparagement of regular service. The pastor, in the estimation of many, was at a discount, while "unattached" evangelists stood at a premium. That was a foolish and fatal error, as it militated against the very success of the movement. The power of the Uhlan lay in the fact that he was but the outrider of the army. Detached from the forces, he would lose his influence. The erection of a chapel was second to no evangelistic effort that could be put forth. While individuals died, churches lived; and when

a new sanctuary was erected, it might be legitimately expected that it would be a centre of Christian activity long after the generation that built it had passed away.'

Among other suffering classes to whom the pastor and members of the East London Tabernacle have held out a helping hand, have to be reckoned the indigent blind. Early in 1876 the Christian Blind Relief Society entertained some hundreds of its needy constituents in the schoolroom. The Society carried on its work without paid agents, and did an immense amount of good. Small pensions were granted to deserving subjects. It was stated that an average of one in a thousand of the population are blind, while only fifty out of each thousand are capable of getting their own livelihood; although another twenty per cent might be partially able to earn something. Thus, out of the estimated 30,000 blind persons in Great Britain, about three out of four are entirely dependent on others.

In describing the blind party at tea, a daily paper said:

'The feast provided was of the most bountiful order, and was done full justice to by the guests, many of whom had walked long distances in order to be present. It is on record in the archives of this great tea-party centre, that at a recent meeting, at which 1,175 persons sat down, there were eaten 10,000 pieces of bread-and-butter, in addition to something short of 2 cwt. of currant cake (225 pounds). The returns for the blind party at tea have not yet been made up, but it is probable, that in proportion, they will not fall far short of these figures.

'Tea over, the benches were turned round, and the company gave themselves up to the delights of a social evening. As far as sex went, they were pretty equally divided, and all being dressed in their best, looked comfortable, and for the nonce (time being) were supremely happy. There were six old women from a neighbouring work-house, who being blind, had been sought out and invited. They were dressed in neat brown capes, and wore large white straw bonnets of a shape resembling that which, in the revolving cycle of fashion, is once more beginning to show itself at the West-end. As long as the tea was about, these old women steadily devoted themselves to its consumption, wasting no time in vain words. When tea was gone, and even the tables that held it were removed, the white straw bonnets began to bob up and down, as the old women, animated by the unaccustomed strength of the tea, entered into confidential conversation with each other and their neighbours.'

The East London Fraternal Association was formed in Mr. Brown's house, and the first anniversary was celebrated early in 1876. The members were pastors of the neighbouring Baptist churches, and the object was to help and to stimulate each other in church work. Books were circulated among the members, and once a year all had an outing together. This is now often to Herne Bay, the rendezvous being at the Seaside Home which Mr. Brown has founded in that town for his poorer members.

The following relates to a gathering which came off about this time:

Nightingale Lane, Clapham, January 29th.

Three cheers for you, my true-hearted comrade! The story of your East London gathering of the clans fills me with delight. The Lord be with thee, thou mighty man of valour! Whether in striking the Spiritualists you are hitting the devil or a donkey, does not matter much, you have evidently hit hard, or they would not be so fierce. I am not able to take much credit for bringing you up, but I am about as proud of you as I dare be. I hope we shall have a good meeting on Friday week. It is oil to my bones to see you all.

Yours always lovingly,
C. H. SPURGEON.

As the spring advanced and the arrangements for the Pastors' College Conference had to be completed, Mr. Brown's services were still in request; —

Pastors' College, Temple St., Newington, S.E.

DEAR FRIEND BROWN,

We shall want you to warm the hearts of our subscribers on the supper night. If you were to give details of the whole Tabernacle business, what a stir it would make! I have asked brethren for the meeting at your place. — Yours lovingly,

C. H. SPURGEON.

Mr. Brown was vice-president of the London Baptist Association in 1876, and president in the following year. At the spring meeting in Camden Road Chapel in April, he propounded an aggressive scheme which found some favour. The building of a chapel a year, he did not think sufficient. There should be direct evangelistic effort by each church. The more prominent pastors might preach more for the poorer churches on week nights; and the president for the year might visit the churches.

'We have gifts differing,' he said, 'Why not employ those gifts more largely?' He then further asked; 'Could we not purchase and furnish four Bible-carriages, one to be used in each of the four quarters of London? Surely there is soul-winning power enough amongst us, if focused, to work a change in the aspect of London.'

Mr. Brown spoke at the annual meeting of the Religious Tract Society in May. According to *The Christian World*,

This address, which was 'in some respects the speech of the evening, dealt with the threefold subject of the character of the tracts, the nature of the distribution, and the qualifications of the distributors; and under each head he frankly advanced sentiments which were scarcely of the "regulation" pattern, but which we rejoice to say, seemed to commend themselves to the good sense of the assembly. Mr. Brown had no mercy for what he called the "lusciously sentimental" order of tract; and he denounced with great cordiality the unnatural stories of goody-goody children, the sensational narrative, and the milk-and-water species of religious literature.'

We place the year 1876 among years of affliction, because Mr. Brown's second wife passed away on the 20th of September. About a year previously he had been united in marriage to Miss Sarah D. Hargreaves; and now he was again a widower in a darkened home.

In *The Sword and the Trowel* for October, Mr. Spurgeon wrote:

'All our brethren will be grieved to hear that our beloved brother, Mr. Archibald Brown, of the East London Tabernacle, has been heavily bereaved. His second wife has been taken away, just when she seemed essential to his little ones, and to the church at Stepney. His anguish is most acute, and we invite all our brethren to pray that he may be sustained, and enabled to pursue that wonderful career of usefulness for which our Lord has raised him up.'

On the last Sunday in October Mr. Brown appeared in the morning, at the East London Tabernacle, for the first time since his wife's death. Suffering from weakness and prostration of the nervous system, he had for a time to avoid much work outside of his own immediate sphere. In the following year, however, he acted as president of the London Baptist Association, and the chapel built during that period under his auspices, was at Leytonstone in Essex.

The year 1877 seems to have been remarkable for robberies committed by burglars in pastors' houses, and among those who suffered was Mr. Brown. His bedroom was thoroughly ransacked, his most treasured valuables were carried off — things which were valued not so much on account of their actual worth, as because they had belonged to those who had gone before to the better world.

In due time, the pastor, who had twice been left a widower, just at the time when, from the human standpoint, he seemed most to need such help and sympathy as a good wife alone can afford, again found 'an help meet for him.' This time his choice fell on Miss Edith Constance Barrett, who during more than half the years of Mr. Brown's sojourn in East London, has been the companion of his life and the light of his home.

CHAPTER 6. THE ORPHANAGE AND HOMES.

The hard winter of 1879-80 — Relieving the poor — The outlook described — The first Orphan — Other children — Decides to found an orphanage — Friends supply money and goods — Progress to the present time — Photographs of the children — Girls' Home at Sheering — The Seaside Home at Heme Bay — The Christian Buildings

PREACHING to one of the largest congregations in East London, the situation of Mr. Brown is so far peculiar that he is brought into contact with a vast number of poor people who, in the time of distress, look to him for sympathy and assistance. Though what a pastor may be able to dispense of his own private means may go only a very little way, he is supposed to have access to other resources which are always available. The winter of 1879-80 was above the average, both in length and severity; and it was then, as he tells us, that the pastor was first led 'to think of commencing a work in which relief for temporal needs should be combined with evangelistic effort' It was not long before the two visitors employed were brought into contact with a thousand poor families in the district of Bow alone, who were thankful to receive gifts in kind to keep the wolf from the door. In two months, a sum of about £400 was received; and having secured access to so many poor houses, a desire arose to make the work permanent.

More money was given, and in a short time more than 8,000 visits were paid by three agents, while relief was given 1,700 times. As many as 1,800 visits were made to the sick and dying, and many of these are regarded as brands plucked from the burning.

'This work has been quite a revelation to us,' adds Mr. Brown. 'Being brought into almost daily contact with the poorest of neighbourhoods, we have become acquainted with a mass of misery, want, vice, and filth we had previously failed to comprehend. *None can conceive it until they try practically to deal with it.* The degrees of poverty and sorrow seem endless. When we have thought we have found the poorest and saddest possible, yet another has been discovered, revealing yet another deep. The abodes of hundreds — we dare not call them homes — are an abomination. Decency forbids a faithful description of their condition. This is true of many a house, which, by its outward appearance, would attract no attention, and give no hint as to its inward condition. Some of the worst neighbourhoods are comparatively new; the houses, therefore, present a tolerably good appearance outside, but are within full of all uncleanness. In most cases the shameful condition is the tenant's own fault. Drunkenness comes in, and all self-respect goes out. The condition in which many children have been found is simply loathsome, their bodies and rags being alive with vermin; the same also may be said of their parents, and the rooms they occupy. Sheer want has in many cases stripped the houses, as well as cleared out the little furniture once in them. Our missionaries have entered homes where the banister rails have been pulled down for firing, and then the iron stove sold for bread.'

This is a dark picture of the misery occasioned by sin; but do not let us commit the mistake of supposing that all suffering comes of drunkenness and improvidence. Mr. Brown has told us of that; but his now enlarged experience tells him there is also a vast amount of genuine, clean, and heart-touching poverty — men and women who have been worsted in the battle of life, and after every endeavour to retrieve the day, hopelessly cast to the ground; men who walk from morning to night 'seeking a job,' until, wet through, they return to a supperless room, sleep in their drenched garments, and then lie for weary weeks, racked with rheumatic pains; women who, with the husband in the infirmary, toil at the wash-tub, or ply the needle for a wretched pittance, from dawn to midnight; widows who wage heroic battle against overwhelming trouble, and pinch themselves to give their fatherless bread. Numbers of this

deserving class are relieved with temporary supplies, they are saved from being turned into the street by relentless landlords, or better still, their hearts are gladdened by work being found for them.

Thus far the adults are being looked after and relieved; but if possible, the children were found to be suffering more severely than their elders. A few examples from the visitors' diaries will best illustrate this part of the subject. The first relates to a backslider, who had also fallen from a good position in life. The wife says that,

'A short time before he died, I asked him if he had anything to say to me. He replied, "No." I then said, "Have you anything to say about our boy?" (referring to their son). His reply was "No." I then burst into tears and said, "I shall have nothing left when you are gone;" and he raised his hand, pointed to a Bible on the shelf by his bedside, and exclaimed, "You will have *that* — trust in God." He then crossed his arms over his breast and prayed: "Do, dear Lord Jesus, take me home" — and in a few moments he passed away.'

Concerning the H_____ family, we have this note:

'The father died a short time ago and left a widow and eight children. On going into the house today, the mother was lying in her coffin; she was buried this afternoon! A family of eight are thus left without father or mother. May the Lord give us grace to look after such!'

Still retaining some faith in the old proverb which speaks of cleanliness being next to godliness, the church at the East London Tabernacle removed the name of Mrs. S_____ from the roll, consequent on 'her being so dirty in her person and home.' How reasonable this discipline was, will appear from the subjoined description of the woman's lodging and the state of her helpless dependents: —

'There were three children in the room, all naked as they were born, and very dirty. The mother was out, but a neighbour came in, and we asked her if Mrs. S_____ had any other room beside this. She said "No." There was a lot of dirty straw in one corner of the room, and on this the three little fellows lay. Their heads were one mass of sores. In one corner there was a heap of filth, enough to poison them. The stove is entirely gone, not one particle of iron being left.'

In another street,

'Mrs. T_____ and her two daughters work at matchbox-making; furniture consists of one chair and small table, no bed, a bundle of rags to lie on. *The pay is 2 ¼ d. per 144 boxes, out of which they have to find string and paste.*'

A little further afield another young widow,

'Mrs. K_____ was found sitting in a cold room with her two little ones, without a bit of firing. She is a silk weaver, and she is paid 7 ½ d. per yard. At present she has not anything to do.'

When such things were continually being encountered. the cry of the children became too urgent to be longer disregarded; but nevertheless, a striking act of providence was the means of bringing the orphanage into existence in quite an unexpected way.

Just after the first hard winter's work was concluded, or in April 1880, Mr. Brown was asked to go and see a young widow on her death-bed, and who said she could not die until she had seen him. The pastor went as desired to find the dying woman with her son Willie, six years old, by her side, and haunted by the dread, which seemed to prevent her from passing quietly away, that Willie would have to go to the workhouse. Turning on her bed, the mother appealed to her visitor not to allow the boy to go to a place which she probably too well knew would be a school of sin. The appeal might be an inconvenient one; but under the

circumstances it could not be resisted: and Mr. Brown could only reply that the Lord helping him, Willie never should go to the workhouse.

For two months this child was placed at a neighbour's; and then the thought occurred that it would be as well to have a Home, the cost of half a dozen children's keep not being more difficult to provide than that of one. The next step was to find a suitable house, and this proved to be a feat not easily accomplished. At all events Mr. Brown walked the streets until he was weary and disheartened, without meeting with any success. The subject pressed heavily upon his mind; he even dreamt about it at night: in a dream imagining he met a friend who signified that if continued to Harley Street the search would be successful. The last building but one in that street ultimately became the Orphanage, and now the last building of all, a semi-detached house adjoining the one occupied, has been taken into use.

The problem of furnishing was much more quickly solved; for on the subject being mentioned to friends at the East London Tabernacle, the people were so ardently desirous of having fellowship in the work, that in ten days all the things necessary for the house were sent in. Friends sent articles representative of their several trades; and many things, we believe, came from persons whose names were never disclosed. The house was not only well provided, but furnished with the best, and no debt has at any time been incurred. Then since the opening, one friend has given all the bread consumed by the household; while another, on equally easy terms, has supplied all the coals. There are sixteen boys at present in the Home, besides seven others maintained in the country, and the average cost of each per annum is about £23. The aim is to educate each inmate well, so as to fit him for the best position in life he may be able to secure.

This is, in brief, the history of the rise and progress of a small institution, which in the future may grow into something more corresponding in size with the needs of the great poverty-stricken East-end of London. Speaking of the Orphanage as it is today, Mr. Brown says:

‘The happy work has gone on without any hitch, any serious illness, or any trouble worth troubling others about. Every year makes a difference in the constituent parts, but the *Home* remains the same. There are not any of the first lot of lads now left. In the course of years they have all been settled out. Some are in the building trade, and having served their time as apprentices, are first-class artisans. Two are in Canada as tillers of the ground: one is in Australia; others are employed by different firms; and just recently one has taken a position as page to a Christian lady of title. The reports that we receive of them are, on the whole, most satisfactory.

‘When a lad leaves the Home honourably, a cabinet-sized photograph is taken of him and hung up in the dining-hall. All round the room there are faces that give us joy to look at, and make us thank God we were ever led to this particular branch of service. Thus far, only one has died. He was the eldest of the originals. When away the lads seem still to count the place their home. All who can manage it, spend their Christmas Day in the old quarters.’

There is no voting, and extreme need is the best recommendation for admission. Several boys are also boarded out at Bishop's Stortford.

The Girls' Home at Sheering, in Essex, is thus referred to by Mr. Brown:

‘When visiting the Home, as we do every few weeks, we take the train to Sawbridgeworth. Walking from there, the road winds up until the church tower is beneath us. About two miles from the station we come out of the country lane into the main road. The village of Sheering stretches away on either side of the road for a good half-mile. The enterprising builder seems, thus far, to have failed in discovering the spot; and we sincerely hope it may be years before he

succeeds. Many, if not most of the cottages have thatch roofs. There is country quiet in perfection, and it is hard to realize that an hour before we were in noisy, chemical-milling Stratford.

‘Our Home consists of two adjoining cottages, garden in front. There are generally some on the look-out for us as we turn from the lane; and by the time we reach the cottages there is a group of happy-looking girls, cheerful in spirit as their pink pinafores are bright in colour. Their good mother was one of our missionaries in the Bromley district. Now that she has developed into the matron, she has not dropped the missionary, but is a happy combination .of the two. During the afternoon, when the girls are at the excellent village school, she visits the homes of the people. Standing in the grounds of the Home is a little iron mission-room. Here she conducts a good mothers’ meeting on the week-day, and helps to gather the audience that meets on a Sunday evening to hear the gospel from the lips of local preachers. Our Girls’ Home is therefore, a missionary agency in the district.’

The Seaside Home at Herne Bay is able to give a fortnight’s change and rest to about 300 persons during the season. Those who can afford it pay six shillings a week; but many pay nothing. The Home cannot, therefore, be self-supporting.

The Christian Buildings opened by Mr. Brown have twenty-four homes, each having three rooms and a wash-house, and the rent is two shillings a week. ‘There have been no defaulters in rent, and the place has just paid for itself,’ it is said. ‘This is suggestive, and deserves the serious consideration of those who are anxious to improve the condition of the poor.’ Homes of this class for aged people, widows, and the poorest class of wage-earners, represent one of the chief wants of London in these days.

CHAPTER 7. WORK AND PROGRESS.

Happier times for Pastor and people — Sunday-school Industrial Exhibition — Presentations to Mr. and Mrs. Brown — Celebration of the 500th anniversary of Wycliffe's rescue from peril — *Punch's* 'Note for Noodles' — Evangelistic work — Ancient Order of Foresters — 'Thanksgiving-day' and 'An East London Incumbent' — Letter from *The Times* — One of 'Toby's Topics' — A birthday party at Kessingland

EARLY in 1878 a meeting was held at the East London Tabernacle, which showed that happier times had at length come to both pastor and people. The Sunday School had an Industrial Exhibition, which created some interest in the neighbourhood, and a presentation was made to Mrs. Brown and her husband who had not long returned from their wedding tour. There was an address, and also a satin quilt, a cushion and a gold chain for Mr. Brown. The pastor suitably acknowledged these gifts, adding with regard to the chain, that it came most opportunely, because not long before, burglars had cleared his house of nearly all the jewellery it contained. Among other things taken was a gold chain which Mr. Brown, senior, had given to his son before he died.

'It was a bitter pill,' added Mr. Brown; 'but as I did not see the fun of spending a lot of money on another, I have contented myself with an iron one. I hope every link of the chain will be an additional link between you and me; and on behalf of my wife I ask all the gentleness and kindness I have received from you personally, and I shall not ask in vain.'

About this time a memorable meeting came off in the East London Tabernacle to celebrate the 500th anniversary of John Wycliffe's rescue from peril in 1378. The following 'Note for Noodles' appeared in *Punch*; —

'The Quincentenary of John Wycliffe's rescue from his persecutors at Lambeth Palace in the spring of 1378, was commemorated on Friday last week, by diverse services and assemblies held in sundry places throughout the day, and concluding with a gathering together, under the superintendence of Mr. Osborne Morgan, M.P., at the East London Tabernacle, Burdett Road, denominated a "Mass Meeting." Perhaps there are donkeys whom it may be necessary to inform that the East London Tabernacle is not a Ritualistic meeting-house, and that the Mass Meeting which took place in it was an affair not at all inappropriate to the memory of the "Morning Star of the Reformation."

In carrying out his part of the plan of evangelization he expounded to the Baptist Union, Mr. Brown gave a month to such labour in the counties of Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, in the autumn of 1878. His travels commenced at Luton, and ended at St. Albans. These meetings attracted the notice of the secular press. A London evening paper remarked that Mr. Brown appeared 'to be going it with what Byron would have called "a forty-parson power."' He was announced to preach twenty-nine times in twenty-four days; and it was added that 'even that hard-working prelate, the Bishop of Manchester, could hardly beat this.' Another paper even presumed to draw comparisons:

'What a contrast as compared with the attendance of a chaplain at a certain East-end work-house, whose visits, according to the porter's books, averaged thirty-four minutes' duty for the past three months.'

In 1878 Mr. Brown showed his sympathy with the working-classes by becoming a member of the Ancient Order of Foresters. The attempt to form a Lodge at the East London Tabernacle was not at first successful. As the journal of the clubs remarked:

'There existed a prejudice against forestry from a vague idea that it was a combination consisting mainly of brass bands and processions in hats and feathers and green velvet. As

soon, however, as we had shown that these things were not only *not forestry*, but not even recognized, we had not only the sanction, but also the hearty good wishes and practical help of the church officers and pastor, who was one of the first to become a financial member of the young Court.’

For some years past, Mr. Brown has been wont to observe one day in the year as Thanksgiving Day, and this was referred to in a letter to *The Times* of June 5th, 1879. A previous letter had appeared relating to the small attendance at the churches of East London; and the writer who followed — ‘An East London Incumbent’ — made some remarkable admissions:

‘The fact is,’ he said, ‘the spiritual provision for the East of London has, for a long time, been in the hands of the Nonconformists. Chapel after chapel was erected long before the Church awoke to the necessities of the situation, and now the Church is tardily endeavouring to cover the lost ground. But it is too late. The Nonconformists are masters of the field. Their chapels are well filled. There is a Baptist minister at the East of London who has a congregation of 2,000 persons to listen to him every Sunday morning. If he wishes to raise any money, he sits in his Tabernacle early in the morning to receive the offerings of his flock, and such is their enthusiasm that some of them are there with their contributions before his doors are open. He will collect in this way in one day £300. I might sit, sir, in my church until I grew into my seat, before my congregation would bring me even £30. In the meantime, the ministers of the Establishment, finding themselves in the minority, are driven to the most painful expedients to attract people to their empty churches. They try Ritualism, or evangelistic missions, or concerts, or lectures on Spinoza, or according to Mr. M’Gachen, the “loafing” system, but all in vain.’

The writer goes on to show how unequal the battle has become, and then adds:

‘There is only one remedy for all these inequalities, a remedy which will relieve us from many other disquietudes now existing in the Church — the remedy which must come sooner or later, and which many of us are hoping will not be much longer delayed — the remedy of Disestablishment.’

In the confined space of this little volume it is of course impossible to refer, one by one, to all of the events of Mr. Brown’s active life, especially as some things will have to be dealt with in separate chapters. There are some things, however, which as characteristic and representative, may have a little space devoted to them.

It is commonly certain evidence that a pastor is doing his work effectively when the secular or even the comic press shows signs of being struck by his earnestness. On January 15th, 1887, one of ‘Toby’s Topics’ explains how a certain testimonial came to be handed over to a fund for the benefit of poor widows for all time. As *Toby* said:

‘The Rev. Archibald Brown is an excellent fellow, and we candidly believe that his large congregation is kept together, not through sensational preaching, or through any great scholarly power he possesses; but through a downright earnestness which he makes permeate all classes of his large flock. The good his church alone is doing might fairly be placed in favourable contrast with all the Charity Organization agencies in London and the suburbs. During the past year, relief of some kind had been given to 10,000 cases. Sick cases to the number of 3,323; a large number of garments given away; £300 expended on emigration; 200 persons sent for a fortnight to their Home at Herne Bay; and not one farthing in debt to any of his agencies. £235 was subscribed by his congregation to defray the expenses of himself and his wife to the Holy Land. We had heard of this testimonial before, and we thought that, although he deserved it, it would be better for him not to receive it. We find that the rev.

gentleman has risen high above the heads of those who, after five or six years' service, for which they have been well paid, get a call and a better living elsewhere, and accordingly scuttle thitherwards. He determined to invest the amount in trustees, and devote the interest, about £1 a month, to some poor widow, to be selected annually by the church. Long life to you, Archibald!

This chapter may be closed with a description of 'A Big Birthday Party' at Kessingland, on the East coast, and which appeared in *The Lowestoft Free Press* of July 21st, 1888. The sketch shows in a pleasing way how Mr. Brown made the acquaintance of the East coast fishermen during his summer holiday in the year named:

'The phrase, "a Red-letter Day," so often seen in the newspapers, may mean a great deal or a very little. It meant a great deal at Kessingland on Wednesday, when the Rev. Archibald G. Brown of the East London Tabernacle celebrated his forty-fourth birthday by inviting all the fishermen of the village, with their wives and sweethearts, to a knife-and-fork tea. There never was such a big birthday party in Kessingland before. How did it all come about? The answer is simple. Some four or five weeks ago the rev. gentleman came down to Lowestoft to spend a day or two, with one of his deacons, and put up at the Royal Hotel. One fine morning they took a drive south, and coming to the well-known signpost in the Upper Street at Kessingland, which contains the inscription, "To the Sea," they thought they would like to turn down the lane, which certainly is very picturesque when dressed in summer beauty.

'Mr. Brown had never heard of Kessingland before; but when he got as far as the cliffs, and looked about, he at once made up his mind that that was the place in which to spend his summer holiday. He engaged apartments at that quiet little hostelry, the Sailors' Home Inn, and soon he and his family were fixed up in the Lower Village, as it is called. Mr. Brown has a great deal to do with seafaring men in his Tabernacle in the East-end, which is near the docks. A goodly proportion of his congregation, which often numbers three thousand on a Sunday, consists of those who are in some way or other connected with the sea. This at once established a link between Mr. Brown and the Kessingland men, some of whom had heard him preach in London. He went to the "look out," and shall I shock any of my readers if I say that Mr. Brown carried some very good tobacco in his pocket? Men of the sea like their pipe, and the Kessingland men appreciated the good stuff which Mr. Brown generously gave them to smoke. He chatted away with them on the beach and on the cliffs. Everywhere and anywhere it was "Hail fellow, well met!"

'Mr. Brown has an intense hatred of ministerial starchiness. "We shall never win the people by keeping aloof from them," said he to me the other day. "I would send dignity to the devil, where it came from." Here you have the secret of the power of the East-end Tabernacle pastor over the people. Would he speak in the Sailors' Bethel? Of course he would. The people flocked to hear him from all parts. His fame went abroad, and the Bethel was crowded. Empty seats were filled as if by magic, and last Sunday night all the fishermen in Upper Street and Lower Village, with perhaps a dozen exceptions, were present in the Bethel to hear him preach. It occurred to him that it would be a happy way of celebrating his birthday, to give a tea party on a large scale. Five hundred invitations were issued — the widows of the fishermen who had lost their lives on the great deep not being overlooked. The difficulty of seating such a large number was overcome by erecting a huge marquee at the back of the Bethel.

The coastguardsmen lent willing help, and twenty stalwart fishermen were engaged for two days in fixing masts as supports and covering them with mainsails. This temporary banqueting hall was not watertight, but the weather was kind, and the wind, as Mr. Brown humorously observed, had good manners. The catering was managed by Mrs. Brown, and right royally did she fulfil her duties. When I mention that 350 lbs. of beef was placed on the tables, and everything else was managed on the same liberal scale, my readers will have a little idea of how

the festal boards groaned under the weight of the good things provided. The day was gloriously fine. The village was gaily decorated in honour of the event.

'The Seasideers — that is the designation of the Kessingland people who live on the cliff, in contra-distinction to the Upper Streeters — were stirring betimes on Wednesday morning. They were resolved on giving their genial host a surprise; and in this they succeeded. When Mr. Brown made his first appearance, to his astonishment and gratification, he found that the good fishermen had erected a triumphal arch across the road in honour of his birthday. Depending from the arch was the inscription in red letters on a white ground, "Many happy returns of the day," and on the reverse side the words, "May he never fail in prayer." Festoons of flags contrasted with the evergreens and flowers, and made a very pretty spectacle. When Mr. Brown walked through the street, little children came out of the houses in all directions, carrying bunches of flowers which their parents offered as a birthday gift. These floral offerings were devoted to decorating the tables in the marquee, which for the time was like a garden of sweet-smelling flowers. Tea was served at five o'clock, each guest bringing his or her own knife and fork and plate. There were very few late comers on this occasion, and didn't the folks enjoy themselves! It was astonishing to note how rapidly the plates of beef disappeared. "Plenty more, my friends," said the host, and they took him at his word did these Kessingland fishermen.

After tea, at the call of good Doctor Bolden, three lusty cheers were given for Mr. Brown, and one cheer more for his estimable wife. A brief meeting was held afterwards, at which the Rev. J. M. Hamilton of Lowestoft, Mr. H. Cook, sailors' missionary, and Mr. Brown gave addresses. No one would have thought the host was a parson. There he stood on the platform in the most unclerical garb of flannel trousers and blue serge jacket, with cricket cap in his hand. He has a clear, resonant voice, which reached the furthest end of the tent, and it is no easy matter to speak under canvas. His manly address laid hold of the fishermen. The first thing he did as a Christian was to climb an oak tree to fetch his cap down, which he had thrown up in the delight of his new experience. This incident is a key to the preacher's character. He bubbles over with enthusiasm, and his earnestness has a magnetic power over his hearers. He talked of the manliness of Christianity, and in short simple sentences, couched in delightful Saxon, he appealed to those before him to lead better and nobler lives. He thanked the people for their great kindness to him during his visit, and said the month which he had spent at Kessingland would be a life-long remembrance to him. The proceedings finished at seven o'clock, and then came the hand-shaking.'

A holiday spent in this fashion could not fail to be profitable all round; and the impression for good would certainly be lasting.

CHAPTER 8. SOME TRAGIC CASES FROM REAL LIFE.

A winter morning walk — Characteristics of different streets — Visit to the widow of a mat-maker who drowned himself through want of work — The case described — Another case of suicide through distress — ‘Worse than a widow,’ another tragic story — New neighbourhoods sometimes the worst — ‘Want the short history of thousands’ — *Cruel cheapness*

IN giving particulars of one or two of the more tragic kinds of cases which from time to time come under the notice of those who carry on Christian work at the East-end, it may be remarked that such cases are constantly occurring, while in every individual instance the attendant circumstances are strikingly novel. One may meet with some who, but for the interposition of Providence, would have been murdered; there will be attempts at suicide; while a proportion of suicides will actually take place of those whose minds have been affected by the pressure of the times.

When, in company with Mr. Brown, I once more go forth for a winter morning walk on a cold morning in February, and the pastor remarks as we pass along the clean and well-kept streets, that casual visitors would not, from outward appearances, judge that there was anything to be found like the poverty and misery which are so prevalent. Many of the streets out of the Bow Road are by no means of the squalid type; and then they are so quiet and orderly that one might suppose that these abodes of the common people were blessed with plenty, and content having settled down upon them. In Halford Street, Mr. Brown points out the room in a house where, twenty-five years ago, with much fear and trembling but with firm reliance on the Lord, he accepted his present pastorate.

Presently we come to a street where the small houses, although monotonously alike, may have been intended for semi-genteel people; but being let out in rooms, a much poorer class is in possession. The house at which we halt has what were intended for half underground kitchens, and rather melancholy looking little parlours, with bedrooms to match. Our destination is downstairs, into one of the kitchens — poorly furnished, but tolerably clean — where in charge of a nurse, we find a young woman with an infant only two or three days old. There is one other child of tender years; so that four persons altogether live in the quondam (archaic) kitchen, although there does not appear to be sleeping accommodation for the nurse and elder child.

The young mother is the widow of a suicide — a young mat-maker, who was never addicted to drinking, who was intensely anxious to procure the work that he could not get, and who, driven to despair, had about a month before, drowned himself in the neighbouring canal. The sound of the pastor’s sympathetic words causes the mother to burst into tears; her young face is flushed with anguish; and she presses the hand that is not holding her babe to her throbbing brow, until it appears that the excitement of speaking of the past is too great for the strength of one in such a condition.

Tears seem to bring some relief, however, and she tells us about her late husband. When they were at their best, he was a mat-maker; but on account of health partially giving way, he could not retain his situation; and of course, poverty in its most terrible form began to invade the home. He made the best sort of mats, of a quality superior to those that are commonly carried about by hawkers; but these goods are now so extensively manufactured in prisons and philanthropic institutions, that the ordinary makers find it more difficult to obtain employment. At all events, what chance of competing with Prison Commissioners and committees with ample capital, had the man whose home was the one described, and

whose resources were insufficient to procure the common necessaries of life? He loved his wife and child; and his inability to provide bread for them added to his anguish, until the very brain must have seemed to be on fire. He brooded over his distress until the disease was aggravated. He would sometimes say he could not stand it any longer; and at such times he would show a most intense dread of having to enter the workhouse. With tears which strangely emphasize her words, the young widow declares that a more kind-hearted young fellow never lived; he never kept anything away from her: he never brought on trouble by drinking; his want was work, or the ability to do it.

Of course, a man in this condition, who was unable to look away from himself and the poverty-stricken home, would get still lower down in the depths of misery; and so it was in this instance. He would at times utter dark and strange words — forebodings of his coming fate; and the attempts of the heroic girl at his side to look on the brightest aspect of things, and so to cheer him up, were unavailing. On one occasion, he replied to her words of consolation by an outbreak of bitter irony —

‘Why, you’ve got *nothing*; you haven’t got a yard of calico for what’s a-coming.’

Still the young wife retained her self-possession; she did whatever was possible, while she spoke cheerfully. But one day the man seemed to be worse; his head troubled him more than usual, and he repeated that he could not stand it any longer! No! He could not endure it any longer!

‘Why, what’s the matter with you?’ replied his wife, still cheerily, ‘I’ve got threepence, I’ll get you a chop, and we’ll have a little tea, and I’ll have a potato.’

Brave words, and self-denying action! She wanted him to hold the child and make the kettle boil; but as she was going out he caught hold of her by the door, and seemed wilder than ever!

‘*You won’t let them take me away, will you?*’ he said with ominous emphasis, that could not be misunderstood.

The overwhelming horror of being taken forcibly into ‘the house’ had at last gained the mastery, and the poor mat-maker could hardly be accounted responsible for his actions! An enemy had hold of him that he could not shake off in his own strength.

‘Oh, don’t talk like that;’ cried the wife, getting alarmed. ‘Pull yourself together, have a wash, and do not take on so;’ but there was no hopeful response.

The humble meal which the distressed housewife proposed to provide with the last three coppers she possessed, to make the evening cheerful, was not set out. Her distracted husband left the house by the back way, and soon his lifeless remains were found floating in the canal! The verdict was, of course, in accordance with the evidence. It was clearly a case of ‘temporary insanity;’ but how few who read of a coroner’s summing-up, and a jury’s finding, have any idea of the anguish they represent!

‘And now you want Christ, and he wants you.’

The pastor had risen to take his leave; and those were his farewell words, supplemented by a substantial gift which he laid upon the table. The money was accompanied by the assurance that all things necessary should be provided during the time of lying-in; and after that, work would no doubt, be provided. To find them work seems to be the greatest boon that can be conferred upon the poor.

Having told this story as we found it, we will now let Mr. Brown tell one of a similar kind, and of much the same kind of tragic interest.

'Some years since, two devotedly attached young people were married. They had as happy a home as London holds. The husband was a skilled worker in a branch of industry requiring the greatest delicacy of touch and finish. There was plenty of work, and it was remunerative. Though a large family sprang up, there was no anxiety. Until of late, the wife was able to keep up not only a comfortable home, but employ aid in the housework. Both husband and wife were Christians, and the former was an active teacher in a Sunday-school. Family worship was never neglected, and Sankey's hymns used to ring through the house. A change, however, came over things. Competition grew keener. The same amount of labour produced nothing like the same profits, until at last, profits disappeared. Anxious to make some provision for wife and children, all he had, and some borrowed from a relative besides, were invested in a business represented as very promising. It was soon found that a fearful and final mistake had been made. A gloom came down on the otherwise happy Christian. The mind was not so strong as the heart. Still he taught in the school and prayed at home; but the wife marked with loving anxiety, a cloud gradually, but surely, settling down upon the once happy face. Absent in mind, he would speak aloud in disconnected sentences.

The theme was always the same — "Everything going!" No eye could fail to see that the inward anguish was breaking down the mental powers. One morning the wife wakes to find him absent. With strange forebodings, she calls downstairs. The answer comes, "With you directly, darling." He enters. The face tells the dread secret! With fearful haste she mixes mustard and water, and pours it down his throat. The doctor comes. He is hurried to the hospital. The corrosive used in his work has, however, done its deadly mission. The broken-hearted, brain-turned man, once the happy husband and the earnest teacher, lies still in death in the hospital ward. The coroner finds a verdict of "Died by ministering poison to himself while temporarily insane." The funeral follows; and a few days after, the wife gives birth to a little one. I sat with her in the room where the desperate act was done, and she nursed a child of two weeks old as she told this story as I cannot tell it. It would have to be punctuated with sobs. Do not hurl the epithet of "coward." He bore up till he could bear no more. The poor brain failed in the long fight.'

We have one call more to make, the circumstances of which are quite a contrast to the case of the suicide's widow, and they represent a still darker phase of East-end life with which the church, in its Home Missionary operations, has at times to deal. The house is of a similar kind to that which we have just left; and it is let out in rooms at a rate which proves that a peer in a West-end mansion is much more cheaply housed in-proportion to his accommodation, than the poor who pay three shillings or more a week for single apartments.

This time, however, the home consists of two rooms, one of which presents quite a parlour-like appearance, having pictures, ornaments, and furniture, which are relics of other and happier days. The occupants are a woman, aged thirty-three, who has not yet lost all her youthful good looks, her mother aged sixty-six, and five children. The latter range in age from about nine downwards, and thus require all one person's attention. Is the young woman a widow? No, her sorrow is darker than that of widowhood — a heavier trouble to bear, it would appear, than that of the heart-broken mother we have just left. The husband, who is a murderer at heart, has just commenced a term of twenty years' penal servitude for attempting to poison her!

This is another of those tragic cases, the details of which, if embodied in a work of fiction, would be thought wildly far-fetched or improbable.

‘Tell your story again, as you told it to me the other day, Mrs. R_____,’ says the pastor, taking a seat, and stroking the hair of the comely little girl he has promised to provide for.

Thus challenged, Mrs. R_____ becomes seated by the little fire opposite to her careworn old mother, who gives it as her private opinion that, in a case of this kind, the heaviest part of the punishment falls on the wife; but this can hardly be true, when, on the other side there is the tremendous infliction of twenty years’ penal servitude. Mrs. R_____ herself offers no opinion on this matter; and she is able to tell her story without any of that tearful excitement which nearly choked the utterances of the young widow of the suicide.

In its commencement, the narrative of Mrs. R_____ is one of those commonplace stories of love-making which illustrates the holiday manners and customs of the East-enders. When she was twenty-two, or on Whit-Monday, 1876, she accompanied her sister and a friend down to Southend where, for the first time, she met her future husband. In the little parlour, already mentioned, there are two expensively-got-up photographs, showing the pair as they were in those early days, before life was blighted; and with a little seeming pride, which we can well understand and excuse, one of these more particularly is reached down and dusted for closer inspection. The portrait is that of a girl, showily, rather than tastefully, dressed, but still with a face which seems to testify that she was fitted to be a prized possession to a man who knew her value. The features of the youth are far less taking. The figure is that of a sprucely-got-up young barman — not a promising profession to begin with; and then the *physique* in general — especially when scrutinized in the light of what has recently occurred — is not altogether pleasing. The face is long. With the exception of a moustache covering a large mouth, there are no whiskers; and there is a sly expression about the somewhat sleepy-looking eyes, which is anything but reassuring. At the same time, no one who looked upon that face when taken, would have judged it to have betrayed criminal instincts. The man himself, we think, would never have believed himself to be capable of a hideous crime. The undeveloped sin in any heart, if not checked by divine grace, in time may surprise even the sinner himself.

At last the couple were married with the usual *éclat* (ceremony) and congratulations, and in their way, the two anticipated a fair share of worldly prosperity and happiness. At all events, things went on in the ordinary manner for about eight years, when uncanny symptoms began to show themselves. For at times, Mrs. R_____ became subject to strange aches and pains, as well as sickness, that could not be accounted for. While he seemed to show a husband’s sympathy, the man was also ready to suggest likely remedies; and among other things, he suggested that a day at the seaside might be likely to have a beneficial effect. They went off to Southend where they had first met as lovers; and with a grim determination which it is not pleasant to contemplate, the barman seems to have settled in his own mind that on the very ground where he had opened the acquaintance with his wife, there he would make a final effort to make away with her. The ride down to the seaside had not as yet mended matters; the mysterious pains were, if anything, different, more alarming than ever; and as stout (ale) had rather increased than allayed them, R_____ recommended some oysters as likely to have a good effect. No suspicion seems to have been aroused in Mrs. R_____’s mind, even when the same repulsive taste was detected; and not even when, after eating the oysters, the pain was supplemented by a deadly sickness that was well-nigh overwhelming. She felt sick, and alarmingly ill, did she? Well, the best thing was to walk about; and acting upon this prescription, the man who had poisoned his wife till her life was hardly worth six hours’ purchase, actually took her for an airing on the pier, which is a mile and a quarter long. The day of agony, as the victim would testify, was not to be described; but worse things had to be endured during the journey home on the boat.

She was now recommended to go and get some brandy, and while away she had to undress and rub the breast over the heart. On reaching London the man professed to be greatly concerned at seeing his wife so ill; but on reaching home, what he wished to be accepted as a happy thought occurred to him — he knew at once what would do his beloved good; some spruce and peppermint would be the very thing. This compound was accordingly prepared, and it being heavily poisoned, it was intended to be the *finale* of the day's work. R_____’s place of business was at some little distance from the East-end, and as he was to sleep there that night, he made a show of wishing to leave his wife as comfortable as possible. Taking up the cup of poisoned peppermint, he smelt it, and advised her to drink it, as the mixture would do her good. He then went off and, still suspecting nothing, Mrs. R_____ took another terrible draught of the irritant poison, when all the old symptoms became more intense. It was then that suspicion began to dawn; and while violent sickness providentially saved her life, she felt a gritty substance at the bottom of the cup. On the following morning she received an affectionate letter from her husband, who expressed the hope that she was better, especially as he had been ill himself. These loving words did not prevent Mrs. R_____ from taking the cup to a chemist as soon as she was able to do so, however. The man looked very inquiringly at his visitor as he reached for the cup across the counter.

‘You are a lucky woman to be alive to tell the story of that cup,’ said the chemist. ‘We generally charge a guinea for analyzing,’ he added; ‘but we will do it for you for nothing.’

Mrs. R_____ went again in the afternoon when she learned that the substance in the cup was sulphurate of copper, a most deadly poison. Instead of giving back the cup as desired, the chemist communicated with the police, and the would-be murderer was arrested at his place of business two days after the day's outing at Southend.

‘How did he learn about the bluestone?’ asks Mr. Brown. ³

‘Well, sir, I'm sure I do not know,’ says the mother; ‘but he was a very shrewd young man.’

Such was the story, and the explanation was that this ‘very shrewd young man’ had simply got rather tired of his wife, and wished to marry another girl who had taken his fancy. Drink had nothing to do with the crime; and contrary to what is so often reiterated, Mr. Brown is able to testify that a large amount of the misery with which he has to deal is not caused by drink at all. Mrs. R_____ also tells us that her husband never drank to excess; he was always good and kind to her until he formed that fatal acquaintance. The girl herself was quite innocent of any complicity in wrong-doing, however, as she was courted, as she supposed, by a single man.

Here, then, we have a family whose trouble is of a very exceptionable kind, and whose sorrows add to the perplexities of a pastor in East London. If it had not been for Mr. Brown, they would not have been in their present home; and even now Mrs. R_____ will need to have assistance given to prevent her going hopelessly down. A sewing-machine for waistcoat work is what is wanted, but on account of the miserable prices paid, we can hardly see how a mother can keep herself and four children at such employment. As already said, the eldest girl making a fifth that Mr. Brown provided for; but the others, including the baby born since the father was sent away, might well tax any woman's strength to look after them without her having to earn their livelihood.

When we left this family, we had a discussion about the two cases. Which was the more pitiable plight, that of the suicide's widow, or that of the poisoner's wife? We concluded that

³ *Bluestone*: hydrated blue crystalline form of copper sulfate.

the last was the harder case; for the young widow had at least the consolation of knowing that she was beloved by her husband, the man's mind having given way because he was unable to provide for her.

The above two cases are somewhat exceptional in their tragic interest, and I have therefore described them at greater length. I may now give attention to some things which are more generally characteristic of the work in progress.

Speaking of his work some time ago, Mr. Brown remarked:

'Some of the worst neighbourhoods are comparatively new; the houses, therefore, present a tolerably good appearance outside, but are full of all uncleanliness within.' He added: 'Sheer want has, in many cases, stripped the houses as well as cleared out the little furniture once in them. Our missionaries have entered homes where the banister rails have been pulled down for firing, and then the iron stove sold for bread.'

Scenes like this are often associated with drink and wrong-doing — a contrast, in a way, to that 'vast amount of genuine, clean, and heart-touching poverty,' which is met with on all hands. The pastor tells of,

'men and women who have been worsted in the battle of life, after every endeavour to retrieve the day; men who walk from morning till night "seeking a job," until wet through, they return to a supperless room, sleep in their drenched garments, and then lie for weary weeks racked with rheumatic pains; women who, with the husband in the infirmary, toil at the wash-tub, or ply the needle for a wretched pittance, from dawn to midnight; widows who wage heroic battle against overwhelming trouble, and pinch themselves to give their fatherless bread. Such cases as these we know by hundreds.'

In one of his annual statements, Mr. Brown says:

'Want is the short history of thousands. Their life consists of "not having." The hands want work, the heart wants sympathy, the body wants bread, the mind wants light, the face wants a smile, the spirit wants hope, the nerves want rest, the conscience wants peace, the soul wants Christ.'

Then realizing, as he does, that our own virtues, or supposed virtues, are in such large measure the result of our environment, he wonders at the patience of the great body of the suffering poor, although he has always thought a catastrophe or a social crisis, such as may be little dreamt of by the easy-going classes, to be neither impossible nor improbable. The question is, how is the want to be *relieved*? How are the poor to be helped, by being taught self-help, without causing them to lose self-respect and become pauperized? 'It may be a mercy to fling a bone to a dog; but it is not mercy to fling relief at a man,' we are told; so that there must be both love and discrimination. The love of God in the heart of Christian people not only prompts them to do what is needed, but teaches them how to do it.

Members of the Cobden Club, or disciples of Adam Smith, would not consider Mr. Brown to be a sound political economist. If he is a politician at all, the pastor is certainly not a Radical; he likes to see the Government rule with a strong arm. He thinks that the fierce competition which is continually bringing prices down, is the direct and indirect cause of most of the sorrows of the poor. His tractate on *Cruel Cheapness* has not only been widely scattered about our own Islands, it has been translated into one or two of the European languages. The problems there handled will sooner or later have to be dealt with by the Legislature; and Mr. Brown believes that trade-education, and a well-directed system of State-directed emigration would do more than anything else to relieve the now congested labour-market. The continual falling of prices, the price of labour and of the goods produced by that labour,

is a natural outcome of the present condition of things. And it is made more acute by the sweaters or middlemen who now thrive, as it were, upon the people's sufferings. As the House of Lords has instituted an inquiry into the sweating system,⁴ however, the public are likely to know more about that matter than ever they knew before.

While numbers of even thrifty and Christian people come down from comparative affluence to poverty through altering conditions of trade and falling prices, the distress among the multitude who live by unskilled labour, tends rather to extend than diminish it. In the pastor himself, and in the agents he employs, these poor people find their best friends. And while the local mission extends its operations year by year, increasing numbers are being helped to fight the battle of life with greater hopefulness, many owing all they have in the world to what has been done for them in the name of Christ. Still, the main object is to spread abroad a knowledge of the gospel among those who are far gone in ignorance or indifference, but not too far gone to be won for better things than they have ever known. It is such people, in the transformations they undergo, who prove before our eyes that religion has the promise of the life that *now is*, as well as of that which is *to come*.

⁴ *Sweating system*: a method of exploiting labor by supplying materials to workers and paying by the piece for work done on those materials in the workers' homes (*cottage industry*), or in small workshops (*sweatshops*).

CHAPTER 9.
‘THAT LITTLE BIT.’ EAST-END CHANGES;
PASTORAL PERPLEXITIES.

Bill Sykes and his theology — The missionary’s diary — Conversion and happy death — Mr. Brown’s sermon — Pastoral perplexities — The best people moving away — Character of those who go, and of those who stop — Is London getting better? — Mr. Brown’s opinion

THERE was a certain coster ⁵ living at Bow Common, named William Sykes, who through entire surrender to and dependence on Christ during the last week of his life, found that perfect peace and joy which comes of sin being cancelled. As this poor fellow was always called Bill, he has probably been confounded or associated with Dickens’s character of the same name who made housebreaking his profession. Hence, when a certain *brochure* appeared on ‘Bill Sykes’s Theology,’ by a Unitarian relative of the East-end pastor, many may hardly have known what to make of it. I have not seen ‘Bill Sykes’s Theology,’ nor has Mr. Brown himself seen it; but I suppose it is an answer to the tract ‘That Little Bit,’ which is a record of the last days of the coster of Bow Common. So that no mistake may be made about the character of Bill Sykes’s theology, the following extract from the diary of the missionary who visited him may be given:

‘*April 24th.* — . . . Found him sitting up in bed. He was more anxious about his soul than at any time yet. I explained to him again how Christ took our place, bore our sins, and suffered our death. “I see it now,” said he; “He suffered for me, then.” I said “Yes.” From this moment I have no hesitation in saying that Bill Sykes entered into peace. The passage most blessed to him was Isa. 43.25: “I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” Christ taking Sykes’s sins, and Sykes receiving Christ’s righteousness, was all to him. I know not whose cup of joy is most full tonight — his or mine.

‘*April 25th.*—Found Sykes much worse in body, but exceedingly happy in soul. “I will not remember thy sins” were the first words on his lips. Called again in the afternoon and found a rather rough-looking customer in the room. I was led to speak to him, and Sykes kept chiming in, “You can have it for nothing, mate.”

‘*April 26th.*—We had a happy time together, reading the Word and praying.

‘*April 27th.*—Found him cheerful, but very low. His son was present, and I commenced speaking to him about spiritual matters. Bill Sykes, interrupting my conversation, said, “GIVE HIM THAT LITTLE BIT.” “What bit?” “THAT LITTLE BIT ABOUT CHRIST TAKING MY PLACE, AND HOW HE HAD MY PUNISHMENT FOR ME. *That’s the bit.*”

Mr. Brown himself referred to this incident, and a passage from what he said about it will not only show unmistakably what his sentiments regarding the gospel are, but will show how the incidents of the work always in progress, serve to supply the most telling illustrations of the truth for others.

‘Archbishops and Bishops, Pastors and Evangelists, never had a sounder piece of advice given them than our Missionary received from the dying coster. “Give him that little bit,” said Bill, as the Missionary was speaking to his son. “What bit?” “That little bit about Christ taking my place, and how He had my punishment for me. *That’s the bit.*”

‘Ah, Bill, you are right! Though a Christian of only three days’ standing, the Spirit has led you with unerring ... wisdom to the central truth, the core of the whole matter. Bill Sykes knew

⁵ *Coster*: A hawker of fruit and vegetables from a barrow.

nothing of theology. He had never read a line of religious controversy in all his life. No discussions about the Atonement had ever occupied his attention. He just spoke out of his heart. He knew what “that little bit” had done for him. He felt the peace it had brought into his poor sinful soul, and he was sure that if his son was ever saved it would be the “little bit” that would do it. His trust, his hope for himself and others, was all wrapped up in that little bit about Christ’s substitution. Of course, Bill did not use so long a word. He would not have known its meaning had he heard it. “Christ taking my sins and having my punishment,” was his way of putting it. He trusted the *fact*, if he did not know the term. Having proved the power of “that little bit,” he was in a hurry for the Missionary to come to it with his son.

‘It would be no evil thing, but a matter for thankfulness, if there were a widespread impatience of the same sort in all congregations — a refusal to sit quiet unless “that little bit” was given to the people. Everything lies in it. All truths spring out of it, or circle round it. It is the acorn that contains within itself every limb and twig of the forest king. It is the centre of the solar system of grace. All the doctrines march in their courses round the Cross. Whatever else the Christian worker may leave behind him, let him be sure he carries “that little bit.” Without it, he is more than useless, whatever else he may bring forth. With it, he enlists the power of God. More than dynamic force lies hidden in “that little bit,” It works what nothing else can or ever will. Would he gain *the attention* of his audience? Let him tell “that little bit,” There is a never-failing freshness about the theme. It caught the ear of poor Bill Sykes when all else failed. It does so still with thousands. There is a heavenly fascination about the theme. The best cure yet for empty sanctuaries is plenty of “that little bit.” Modern Thought may gather the few, the ancient fact still draws the multitudes,’

All pastors have their perplexities; an East-end pastor in a prominent position has perhaps a heavier cross to bear in this respect than any other. The neighbourhood becomes more and more crowded, but with a poorer class; in other words, lodgers take the place of householders, so that, while the work to be done becomes greater, the resources on the spot grow smaller. This is what Mr. Brown said on this pressing subject in 1889:

‘Every year the Church has more poor to care for, and fewer able to assist. The suburbs are gradually sapping our neighbourhood of all financial strength. Twenty-three years ago, when we came to East London, the district of Bow was quite suburban, and well-to-do families abounded. Now London stretches out for miles beyond. Even the tramways extend to Leytonstone. We are fast becoming a central district. Only pastors placed in similar circumstances — and there are many — know how cruelly painful is the experience. Scarcely a week passes but some one you have learned to love comes to say, “Good-bye, pastor, we are going a little further out.” A twenty-minutes’ ride by rail gives fresher air and lower rents. The temptation is too strong to be resisted; and thus the families go.

‘But you reply, “Others come, and there are as many people in the district as ever.” True, but that does not remove the difficulty. Those coming are not identical with those going. There is a wondrous difference between them. It is householders who are going, and room-holders who are coming. The difference does not lie only in financial position. There is a difference in manners, tastes, and social life. Let the condition of our streets bear witness. We remember the Bow Road when it was a treat to walk along it, and when of a night quiet reigned, and all was respectable. Now night is made hideous, and sleep often an impossibility, by the gangs of boys and girls that go shouting and roaring their music-hall songs. The right of respectable people to go to sleep is seemingly nothing compared with the right of drunken blackguards to keep them awake. No weariness, no sickness, no dying scene, is any protection. All is sacrificed to noisy public-house scum. This is English liberty — the liberty of the debauched to make life intolerable to the sober and quiet. All this serves to drive respectable families away, and with them goes the backbone of our churches. Those who go are the supporters of mission work;

those who come are in dire need of being missioned. On the one hand supply is being cut down, and on the other demand augmented. This constitutes a problem we have never yet seen solved.'

In regard to the question of the condition of London generally, it may be interesting to give the following by Mr. Brown; which appeared in the *British Weekly* early in 1889:

'The question, "Is London getting better?" is in my judgment a misleading one. It is too vague. Some limit needs to be fixed to the period of comparison. When asked, as I often am, Is London better than it was? I invariably reply, Than *when*? I generally find forty years the selected period. If you ask me whether London is better than it was nearly half a century ago, I should certainly say, Yes. If, however, you ask the question in reference to the last ten years, I should unhesitatingly say, No. In my opinion there has been a retrograde movement during the last few years, and this accounts for the different answers given to the question. We are not all dating back alike.

'I have observed, during the past ten years or so, a great increase in immorality, especially among the very young. Professional vice may not have greatly increased, but there is, I am persuaded, a lower tone of morality prevalent. It is decidedly a fleshy age.

'I have noticed also with alarm a most marked change for the worse in the relationship of children to their parents. Respect for father and mother seems dying out. The lawlessness of childhood is, in my judgment, a storm-cloud threatening the near future of the country.

'There is also less business honesty and truthfulness. This, doubtless, arises from fiercer competition.

'The religious indifference of the people has also greatly deepened. The rank sensationalism adopted to meet this indifference has vitiated the public taste. Plain, simple worship is at a discount. The exposition of the Word of God is voted dull. Beyond all question, in my mind, we are now suffering from a grievous reaction, brought on by religious stimulants.

'At the risk of being considered a pessimist, I cannot close without saying that I think the churches are more worldly, the masses more indifferent, the classes more sceptical, and life, generally, more frivolous and vicious than ten years ago. London's deepest need is a Holy Ghost revival. Oh, that our eyes might see one! In these few lines I have tried to give my honest answer to your question.'

CHAPTER 10. 'THE DEVIL'S MISSION OF AMUSEMENT.'

Record of work in 1888, entitled 'The Devil's Mission of Amusement' — Extra demand for the tract — What Mr. Brown's contentions really are — Misjudgment of critics — Opinion of the press — To what uses chapels are put — Various testimonies — Mr. Spurgeon's opinion — 'Is Amusement Devilish?' — Pure and rational amusement not denounced — Who are they who supplement the gospel by amusement? — Religion needs no 'amusement' to recommend it

WHEN he had to write the Record of his year's work for 1888, it occurred to Mr. Brown to unburden his soul by exposing the modern tendency in the church to make mere amusement or recreation its mission to the people. The account of that year's service was therefore entitled, 'The Devil's Mission of Amusement.' An extra demand for the Record was the result; and this continued until it was thought advisable to reprint separately that part which referred to the custom in which the public showed so lively an interest. This tract has had a very extensive circulation in various parts of the world.

Of the tract itself it will not be necessary to give anything like a complete summary; all likely to read this book will have seen it. The contention is that the church, unwarranted by Scripture, has left her proper vocation to provide amusement; and the suggestion to do so is of the devil.

'The human nature that lies in every heart has risen to the bait. Here, now, is an opportunity of gratifying the flesh, and yet retaining a comfortable conscience. We can now please ourselves in order to do good to others. The rough old cross can be exchanged for a costume, and the exchange can be made with the benevolent purpose of elevating the people.'

Mr. Brown's contentions are that Scripture nowhere warrants the Christian Church in providing amusement; and further, that making such a provision is in direct antagonism to the teaching of Christ and his apostles.

The large sale of the tract had effects more or less curious and unexpected. Letters with no other address than 'Devil's Mission of Amusement' were duly delivered at the pastor's house; and one firm which telegraphed for a supply of 'Brown's Devils,' gave the *brochure* a title it has ever since retained in the trade.

Then came shoals of letters, showing, as Mr. Brown remarks, 'a most extraordinary divergence of opinion.' He then goes on to say:

'The greater part consisted of warm-hearted thanks for a needed protest, while the other condemned me for publishing a book antagonistic to the progress of the pure religion of Jesus Christ. Some endorsed the book, but expressed themselves shocked at the title, and others could accept it all except the word "Devil" — this was rude; it should have been "Satan."

'I soon had a choice collection of titles to add to my humble name. I learned that I was "a morbid pietist," "a sour bigot," "a victim of religious melancholia," "a kill-joy," and "one whose mental condition must cause deep anxiety to his relatives"; while a writer in *Fair Play*, taking a medical view of the subject said, "The sooner this gloomy wearer of a white choker goes in for a good spell of rollicking fun, the better for his liver, which is clearly in a wretchedly bad way at present." My faith in this diagnosis of my complaint is, however, considerably shaken by the "white choker," as twenty-two years have passed since I wore one. Perhaps the dyspeptic gloom is equally correct. I think it is. The article, so far as I can remember, was written with a perfectly happy heart and healthy liver. The real fact of the case is, I never dealt at all with amusement *in itself*, but amusement *as a mission*. This has been conveniently ignored. A

pamphlet was published, professing to be an answer to the Protest, but its title was sufficient to make any reply unnecessary. "Is Amusement Devilish?" is a question I have never asked. The writer asks it, and says "no," and I quite agree with him. It has, however, no more bearing on my Protest than the question of the duration of our coal supply. When I do ask such a question, there will be some little ground for the anxiety on the part of my relatives already referred to.

'No, I have never said anything against amusement in itself so long as it is pure, rational, and sinless; nor have I any intention now of fulfilling the prophecy of the *Daily Telegraph*, which says, "The public will await with interest the next volume from the pen of this very original author. The title, we believe, has not yet been selected, but the choice lies between 'Is Seven Hours Sleep Satanic?' 'The Sinfulness of a Country Walk,' and 'Lawn Tennis a Short Cut to Perdition.'"

'The difference between Amusement, and the *Mission* of Amusement, is immense and vital. Eyes that cannot see it are blinded.

'My contention is that amusement pressed into the service of the churches, and adopted as a religious agency, or a means of raising church finance, is a delusion of the devil. To this I stand. That which is tolerable and allowable under some circumstances, is an abomination under others.

'Christ did not go up and down the streets scourging money changers, overturning their tables, and rebuking the sellers of doves. He did, however, when they invaded the temple. The temple of today is the Church of the Living God.'

In dealing with this subject, perhaps it will be more convenient for the reader, if first I give some examples of those who agree with Mr. Brown, and then of those who differ from him.

To begin with, I may give a paragraph reprinted in *The Times* of October 14th, 1891, from the Radical paper, *The Banner and Times of Wales*, and not written in connection with this controversy at all:

'One particular point in which the Established Church far surpasses the chapels is the sacredness in which she holds her buildings for religious purposes. The place of worship to her is simply and solemnly the "House of God," and nothing but worshipping the Most High is tolerated within the walls. There is no buying and selling and making it a "den of thieves" in their places of worship. ... We Nonconformists do not care a straw what takes place in our chapels. Many of our chapels are no better than theatres, where all kinds of dramas are performed, and where lectures are delivered on all subjects, and many of these of very doubtful character, and wholly unworthy of a consecrated building. Literary meetings are held in them oftentimes, many of a most debased, immoral, and corrupt nature. In the majority of cases the minister is the chairman (or "conductor"), becoming the vehicle of all kinds of tales and gossip, so that he may bring the audience to a merry mood, and the more laughter and lightness he can bring to them the better. Nothing but tales and improper narrations come from the pulpit. If we go to the same chapel on the Sunday morning following, the same man will be in the pulpit, appearing as religious and sanctimonious as if he had been fasting for forty days, and had never done anything to cause a smile. But in this, the Church is a pattern to us, and is far ahead of us in moral actions.'

A certain gentleman living at Limpley Stoke, near Bath, writes to the *Baptist* of January 18th, 1889:

'My experience is mainly in Bristol. The churches there, and organizations connected with them, are catering for the entertainment of the people increasingly year by year, and spending time and money lavishly for the purpose. The *profit* is very small, the *loss* very, very great —

incalculably great. I would rather listen to a clown on the devil's own ground, than to the songs and recitations, etc., that are now often given alongside of so-called "sacred" pieces, with a minister or deacon in the chair.'

Mr. T. W. Medhurst, now a pastor at Cardiff, wrote to the same paper:

'The sooner the church is aroused to the deadly mischief this kind of thing, is doing to our young people the better. The mission of the church is not to amuse, but to convert; not to keep people out of the public-house, but to bring sinners to Jesus; not to attract by singing, but to draw souls to the Saviour by the preaching of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. If sinners are not converted to God, [then] to gather them off the streets for an hour's amusement on the Lord's-day is a miserable substitute. And even this subterfuge fails in its professed aim. Instead of non-church-goers being attracted by these "Pleasant Sunday" gatherings, these religious "At Homes," these "bright" and "enjoyable" services — what is the fact? These sensational movements are drawing numbers of persons away from the stated services of the Lord's house, and are preparing them for Sunday bands in the park, or on the pier, and for the theatre in the week-day.'

The *Watchword*, for February 1889, said that Mr. Brown's tract was 'just the shot that was needed. The devil is never so dangerous as when he is amusing. There is a colour of tragedy in his face when he masks his grinning features with the church of Christ.'

Writing from Upper Norwood in February 1889, Mr. J. W. Harrald says:

'Here are a few specimens of what is being done on behalf of "The Devil's Mission" in this neighbourhood. The notice board of a Congregational chapel recently informed the pleasure-loving public that the "Woolly Warblers" from B _____ would give one of their "amusing comic entertainments" in an adjoining hall. A new church is supposed to be needed not far from here, so a regular "Opera Company has been engaged to give a performance in aid of the building fund," while "Cinderella dances" are being held in aid of the same object.'

The Sword and the Trowel, for March, 1889, in noticing Mr. Brown's tract, said:

'This earnest warning ought to be poured like grapeshot upon the enemy, till the devil is driven to abandon the entrenchments of religious amusement. At present, in many cases, the prince of darkness feels himself as much at home in the church as in the world, and it is time that something was done to disturb his repose.'

Of course, the mistake was made of representing Mr. Brown to say what had never been in his mind. Thus the title of Mr. Frank Ballard's *brochure*, 'Is Amusement Devilish?' merely showed that the author had set up a man of straw in order to knock it down. As the *British Weekly* said:

'Mr. Ballard's reply seems one-sided. It does not fully take hold of the point raised by Mr. Brown. We never understood Mr. Brown to say that amusement was devilish. We understood Mr. Brown to protest against the providing of amusements being assumed as one of the functions of the church of Christ. So far we think he was right, and from evidence laid before us subsequent to the publication of his pamphlet, we are greatly confirmed in this opinion. We notice that a Baptist congregation in Wolverhampton have determined on a new departure in church work by building a suite of rooms at the back of their chapel at which meetings for amusement and recreation, open to all classes, will be held. A smoking and billiard-room will be provided, and a bar for the sale of non-intoxicants will be established. The whole arrangements will be in the hands of the minister and deacons of the church. We do not hesitate to say that it would be a calamity if this course were generally initiated, and we shall be indeed astonished if it turns out for the spiritual welfare of the church.'

No good purpose would be answered by giving any extended review of Mr. Ballard's reply to his own question. To begin with, the title is altogether as misleading as the teaching itself. As one reviewer aptly remarked, Mr. Ballard 'appears to be one of those who would seek for something better to preach than that men are lost and will be damned unless and until saved by the Redeemer.' Mr. Brown never said amusement was devilish; to rational amusement of the proper kind, and indulged in at the right time, he has never harboured any objection; and those who have been entertained at his own house, or who have accompanied the pastor on a day's outing, would never dream for a moment that he has, or ever had, aught of the gloomy professor about him. As a preacher of the gospel he simply keeps to his own business, and protests with the fervour of a man who is in earnest against any miserable compromise between the church and the world being attempted. Those who would make such a compact, attempt the impossible feat of serving, at the same time, God and Mammon. Their arguments are the old worn-out platitudes about what the theatre is capable of becoming, about the dramatic faculty being implanted in human nature, and so on. But it becomes clearer and clearer as we go on, that it is the Old Gospel, and not so much human opponents, they are quarrelling with. Hence, from their standpoint, something better must be substituted in its place. 'Is Amusement Devilish?' I answer, No; Mr. Brown says No, as well.

'I need hardly say to you that I have never written a word against rational amusement in itself,' remarked Mr. Brown in a letter to the Finsbury Park Y. M. C. A. Magazine: "Is Amusement Devilish?" is not a question I have ever asked, though it has been put in my mouth. My contention has been, and is, that it is not one of the functions of the church of Christ to provide amusement for the people, and that amusement as a church agency is a Satanic invention. To that I stand. I do not put the Y. M. C. A. on precisely the same footing as the churches; but there is need for great caution, lest in the effort to provide recreation, spiritual force be injured or lessened among the members.'

A very representative example of those who oppose Mr. Brown's views on this subject had a letter in the *Christian World* of June 27th, 1889. This writer says:

'The question I want your readers to ask themselves, and especially those who take Mr. Brown's view of it is — Whence arises this felt necessity for "attracting" people to our churches by means which, to say the least of it, would not have been used, say, five-and-twenty years ago? Is not the mere fact that such methods are now constantly resorted to, a tacit admission that what is called "the gospel" has lost its hold, not alone upon the outside "masses," but upon the younger generation of "worshippers?" And if so, have earnest Christian workers, such as Mr. Brown, ever seriously asked themselves whether the responsibility for this deplorable fact may not largely rest upon *themselves*? If men do not "relish" their "gospel," is it all the fault of the hearer who, having tried it, turns wearily away?'

Anxiously desirous as such a writer is to correct what he thinks to be wrong, can we imagine a more deplorable going aside from the real truth? Are those who preach the gospel as Mr. Brown preaches it, only to find it to fail, the [same] people who are setting up 'Amusement' as an additional attraction? I have been under the impression that these were the people who protested against any such innovation, on the plea that the gospel in its fulness and simplicity is still as powerful to attract as ever. That this is really the truth, I have no shadow of a doubt. The people who are trying the experiment of 'amusement' are certainly not the preachers of Mr. Brown's school at all; they are rather the very people whom the last quoted writer seems to favour. These latter are the preachers of a gospel that too often fails either to touch or to arouse the 'masses,' as the writer not very elegantly calls the great English-speaking public. And it is to keep hold of the people who turn wearily away from a version of the gospel which is powerless to touch the heart, that acting, comic songs, and recitations

are tried. Is not Mr. Brown's own crowded East London Tabernacle in itself a sufficient answer to such a representation of the case? In the case of purely evangelistic meetings, there can be no doubt that the silver cornet and the effective singing of solos and hymns, are the master attraction to gather the crowd who may know little or nothing about the preacher. But this is not the case with pastors who gather large congregations in the same building week after week, while giving forth a gospel identical with that preached by Mr. Brown.

I could go on giving quotations from letters and articles sufficient to fill a volume in themselves, but no good purpose would be answered. The gospel needs no 'amusement' to recommend it, or even to supplement its divine mission. Those who think otherwise, and as they suppose, in the interests of religion begin to provide amusement for the people, hardly know at the outset where they will ultimately stop. Not only does one step quickly follow another, especially when we are going downhill, [but] one thing leads to the suggestion of another in a way that at first one might hardly think possible. Thus, when one who poses as a Christian counsellor of young men, thinks that the church should 'run a music-hall without beer and vulgarity,' he has only arrived where others will follow if they travel on the same incline. Be assured of one thing, however; once set up your music-hall, and the beer, the vulgarity, and a good deal besides. will in due time follow as a natural consequence.

CHAPTER 11. LATER YEARS. PERSONAL SACRIFICE.

Why Mr. Brown resigned his connection with the London Baptist Association and the Baptist Union — Opinion of *The Christian* — Defining ‘Evangelicalism’ — Speech by Mr. Brown — Opinion of *The Methodist Recorder* — Letters from Dr. Angus — The church at the East London Tabernacle in sympathy with the Pastor — Mr. Spurgeon’s opinion — Letter from Mr. Spurgeon — Mr. Brown invited to succeed Dr. Stanford — The Dock Strike of 1889 — The Christian Buildings — Mr. Brown and *All the Year Round* — What *The Echo* thinks about the subject — *The Daily Telegraph* — Missions to China — Miss Nellie Brown a volunteer — Great meeting at the East London Tabernacle — Conclusion

WHY did Mr. Brown resign his connection with the London Baptist Association and the Baptist Union? From the standpoint of many Christian people, such a step no doubt appeared to be very narrow-minded or uncharitable; but when the case comes to be understood in all of its bearings, it is difficult to see how a man of Mr. Brown’s uncompromising views could have acted otherwise. He believes in the full, plenary inspiration of Scripture, and to talk to him about ‘the moral view of the Atonement,’⁶ is to suggest a one-sided view of the Atonement altogether. The following extract from *The Christian* of October 5th, 1888, explains the situation at that time:

‘We await with considerable interest the result of the deliberations of the five or six leading ministers who have been appointed by the London Baptist Association, to define the meaning of the word *Evangelical*. We are quite disposed to agree with those who think that the phrase is becoming a little too elastic. For illustration of our meaning, we need not go beyond the very meeting to which we allude. One of the speakers announced himself as “one of the most evangelical brethren in the London Baptist Association,” and proceeded to advocate the moral theory of the Atonement, and the larger hope.⁷ Certainly neither of these would have been accepted twenty years ago as being within a hundred miles of evangelicalism. And in our judgment, they are not admissible for a moment in any right definition of this venerable term which has played so important a part in the history of religious discussion and controversy.’

‘Evangelicalism’ was defined, but when a declaration was drawn up merely for people’s information, and not to be binding on anyone who disbelieved it, and yet wished to join the Association, what good was likely to arise from defining it? A newspaper report of the last meeting of the Association attended by Mr. Brown, says that ‘The declaration was pretty generally approved in its doctrinal details, but a preamble stating that it should not be regarded as a *credal basis* was the subject of a very animated controversy.’ Mr. Brown then said:

‘Though I am in sympathy with those who desire doctrinal basis for the Association, and who have opposed the insertion of the words in the resolution which would destroy the practical value of the declaration as a basis of the Association, I feel we have had a fair battle. There has been a fair trial of strength on both sides. We have been beaten. Let us accept the result like men, and not keep on trying to get by other means what we could not get by fair battle. I accept the verdict of the Association. I can say it is with real, genuine love, that as a member of the Association, I now bid you farewell. I accept the verdict. I leave the Association; but what I would impress upon the brethren is that there is a duty owing to the Association. After what, all must admit, has been a fair trial of strength, do not keep raising the question which has

⁶ This theory taught that Jesus Christ came and died in order to bring about a positive change to humanity by his personal example and teachings, as opposed to substitutionary atonement (which is a *forensic* theory). — WHG

⁷ “The larger hope” refers to universal atonement, rejecting both total depravity and irresistible grace. — WHG

been settled by a majority of the Association. Whether you remain, or whether you come out, there is a duty to the Association. Personally I come out, and the Church at the East London Tabernacle comes out with me; but there will never be any feeling of bitterness towards you. The vote was fair, and we accept it, and with genuine love, say farewell.’

Mr. Brown had previously followed the example of Mr. Spurgeon in leaving the Baptist Union in consequence of the Down-grade tendencies of some of its members.⁸

‘In some respects, this cleavage is to be regretted,’ remarked *The Christian*, ‘but if there cannot be honest agreement in doctrinal views, it is surely better that all should be free to do their work untrammelled by hampering associations.’

The Methodist Recorder also said,

‘No one who knows the East London Tabernacle and the gracious work it is doing, can fail to regret deeply that this step should have become inevitable. It is a time of sorrow, alike for the Association and for Mr. Brown. ... For conscience sake he has elected to withdraw. His people are with him. And we, as Methodists, cannot but approve his action, sorrowfully as we may deplore its necessity.’

It was thought by some that an attempt might be made ‘to establish a denomination on the doctrine of verbal inspiration.’

Two letters from Dr. Angus written at this time, October 19th and 20th, 1888, show how Mr. Brown’s action was regretted by the much-respected Principal of Regent’s Park College:

‘May I say how grieved and surprised I am at your intention to withdraw from the Association? I gathered from our meeting that you were satisfied with the changes, and would remain if we accepted them.’

‘The preamble about no credal basis, I thought unnecessary, because the Association had decided that question; but as some wished and you (as I understood) raised no objection, I let it pass.’

‘One reason for doing nothing more than *declare* what “Evangelical sentiments” mean is that, in fact, the Association has no power to do it. We have no right to tell the churches what they are to believe: and if the resolution had been carried to make a credal basis, you would have found that that can be done only by asking every church to set forth its belief, or to accept a belief we had prepared. Endless disputings would have been the result; disputings not so much about the truths as about the human summary. Nothing more disastrous for our body has happened in my time — disastrous alike for those who go, and for those who remain. I would implore you to reconsider your decision. I grieve over tendencies as much as you; but separation will not correct them, but faithfulness and love, if anything can. May the loving Lord guide us all!’

Mr. Brown replied to this as one who respected the writer, but who, nevertheless, could not conscientiously yield to his arguments. The Doctor then replied:

‘Many thanks for your note. It confirms my impression that there is somewhere a great mistake. The words “in no sense” were not adopted: “not” was adopted instead. So that the preamble is simply a restatement of what the Association decided. It *certainly does not set*

⁸ The *Down-grade* controversy: Spurgeon left the *Baptist Union*, because it was “denying the proper deity of the Son of God, and renouncing faith in his atoning death.” They were, he said, on a slippery slope, or “Down Grade,” away from essential evangelical doctrines. “Our warfare is with men who are giving up the atoning sacrifice, denying the inspiration of Holy Scripture, and casting slurs upon justification by faith.” – WHG

aside or modify in any way the first rule of the Association — any more than the recent resolutions of the Association did. “Holding evangelical sentiments” still stands in all its force. The reaffirming of “not a credal basis” was specially intended to apply to the enumeration in *human* words of what those sentiments are; and the use of such words is reasonable enough (though I thought they were not *necessary*). We hold the common evangelical doctrine of justification by faith; but I don’t like our addition of “*alone*.” In the sense of “only” it is right; but in a common sense of “alone,” it contradicts James, who tells us that “faith alone” is dead. Nor is the phrase very satisfactory on other grounds. Faith is the *instrumental* cause; and “faith only” is a good protest against Popery. But it is the “blood of Christ,” or “his obedience even unto death,” that is the ground of my justification. And in these times, and with our tendencies, this statement is at least as important as the other. And so it comes to pass that in a credal basis I have to look quite as much at the things *not* said; and it becomes extremely difficult to meet the convictions of hearts equally evangelical in their faith.⁹

‘Similarly we believe in the divine authority of the Bible, and most of us, of all the Bible. But we are stating what is commonly held by people holding evangelical sentiments. Luther thought James “strawy,” and therefore non-inspired; Pye-Smith thought Solomon’s Song uninspired; and I cannot say that “evangelical sentiments” were given up by either of them. I think, with you, that “evangelical sentiments” is a brief statement of *beliefs*; but if you want a declaration in *human form* of what the beliefs are, you must not bind us to the form which is sure to be inadequate and very likely to be, in some of the words, erroneous; and even when exact, may be signed (and in a sense believed, too) by people *not* Christians. Anyhow, I am sure the words “not a credal basis” do not set aside “holding evangelical sentiments,” but apply only to the *human* summary we give, and to the *human* part of it.

‘See if this is not so, and kindly show this note to Mr. Gracey, and any others, or confer with them. The mischief done by separation will affect the churches that go quite as much as the churches that remain, and will be incalculable. And if it is to be the result of a *verbal mistake* it will be a scandal and disgrace to all concerned. Forgive me in reiterating strongly my convictions.’

The Church at the East London Tabernacle fully sympathized with the pastor’s action, and passed a resolution to that effect. The members all viewed the matter in the light that it was viewed by their pastor and Mr. Spurgeon. The latter had remarked in writing to his East London comrade:

‘The declaration is all very well, but ask if it means anything. Would it prevent anyone from coming in and abiding in?’

Meanwhile, Mr. Brown’s services were always much appreciated at the Metropolitan Tabernacle; for we find Mr. Spurgeon writing to his friend:

‘Would you preach for me on Sunday morning, December 16th? I really feel ashamed to ask now that I know you walk. If you feel it would be too much, please say No. But it would be a great treat to my people, and a relief to me. December 23rd, equally good.’

Early in 1889, Mr. Brown was invited to accept the pastorate of Denmark Place Chapel, Camberwell, as a successor to the late Dr. Stanford. This was respectfully declined; and it is

⁹ In other words, the *Baptist Union* hoped to embrace Arminian Methodists and Calvinist Baptists, under the uniting term “Evangelical.” Their doctrinal differences were too great for that to succeed. Over time, “evangelical” came to mean Wesleyan *Arminianism*, in contradistinction to *reformed*. As its umbrella continued to grow, embracing many contradictory and questionable doctrines, *evangelical* lost its value as a distinguishing term. — WHG

not at all likely, if a move is ever made from the East London Tabernacle on the part of the pastor, it will ever be to another sphere in London.

The great dock strike of 1889 was a great trial; for in a small area visited by them, Mr. Brown's missionaries found 600 families with 1,500 children all in need through the dispute. Mr. Brown had great sympathy for the men; but finding that 'all the floating rascality of a great city' sought to profit by the occasion, great care had to be taken in regard to the distribution of relief.

It was about the same time that the Hawthorn Model Dwellings, Devon's-road, Bow Common, were opened. Mr. T. A. Denny bought the lease, and handed the block over to Mr. Brown to be put in trust on November 7th, 1889, and henceforth this will be known as *Christian Buildings*. Christian people have the preference; and for two shillings a week a set of rooms is allowed-less than was previously paid for one poor room!

The ordinary services at the Tabernacle and the general work of the church have attracted the notice of the outside world in no ordinary degree. Special correspondents have again and again been conducted over the district, and their impressions have been given to the world. One characteristic piece appeared in *All the Year Round*, from which an extract may be given:

'The clock points to five minutes to eleven, and it is time to be moving. It does not do for a casual visitor to be too early at the Tabernacle, for till five minutes to the hour, only seat-holders are admitted. Thus, at the doors is a little crowd of people waiting to be admitted, while others more privileged file through and pass in. It is really an enormous building, oblong, with a square tower at each angle of brownish yellow brick, not beautiful, nor pretending to be, but solid and to the purpose. A hospitable Tabernacle also, for when the time of privilege is expired, the whole area of unoccupied seats is open to all comers. And all comers flock in, not with a rush, but in a full stream; and the Tabernacle, three parts full already, becomes now almost crowded. A large hall, light and cheerful, with galleries all round, light and strong in twisted ironwork, supported by light iron columns, all bright with gilding and colour. At the further end is the tribune, or pulpit, a semicircular platform projecting from the gallery, supported by its own iron columns, the space below railed off as a dais with seats, as if for a choir. Clusters of gas jets twinkle everywhere, adding to the cheerfulness of the general surroundings. Altogether, there is a kind of oriental lightness and grace. The seats too, are comfortable, and the same for everybody, excepting indeed a raised seat in the gallery, behind the tribune, probably intended for the deacons or elders, veritable overseers in this manner.

'At eleven o'clock to the minute there is a slight stir overhead, the deacon's bench is occupied, and the preacher has taken his seat in the middle of the tribune. At the same time, the dais below has been filled by a procession of little boys. Are they choristers? Well they are nice little fellows, anyhow, comfortably rigged out, everyone with a neat little tweed great-coat, and a warm red and black comforter. In front of the boys, their conductor — the precentor, no doubt — seats himself at a table fronting the congregation. There are no ecclesiastical habits, not the Puritan band, nor even the universal white tie. The preacher, in a long great coat, looks rather like a clever surgeon, worried with too large a practice.

'The Tabernacle could not have been quite full to start with, for after the first prayer a considerable multitude file in and find places without difficulty. But it is a grand congregation too, although one feels a pang of personal disappointment at finding the very poor to be virtually absent. There are no shabby waterproofs or battered bonnets; not a black eye visible on all these intelligent faces. Boss Joe would sneak out of this very quickly. But on the other hand, it is encouraging to know that there is such a nucleus of good, honest, respectable English middle-class life in the midst of all this wilderness of seething poverty. They do not

live here for their own pleasure, these worthy people who throng the Tabernacle; they are all connected, no doubt, with the industries of the district. Traders, managers, foremen, overlookers, and skilled mechanics, the very bone and sinew of the land.

‘There is no harm, perhaps, in saying that the whole service is bright and energetic, that the preacher does not spare himself in voice and action; and that the psalmody is good. I don’t think the little choir boys in their snug coats and red comforters do very much to help it — they do their best, perhaps, but they don’t seem to have been chosen for their voices — but everybody sings. There is no organ, but the precentor leads with eyes and arms, and voice, evidently too, with his whole heart. No slurring notes, no lingering cadences; the precentor picks us up and drives us on with irresistible “go.” And what a grand thing is a hymn after all — even the words of Augustus Toplady — welling out from a thousand throats; how it stirs the heart with a wave of long-forgotten feelings and associations! Something of the great universal voice seems to move in the thunderous notes, all humanity seems to join the pathetic appeal to the Unseen.

‘The preacher is of the school of Spurgeon, evidently. Hardy in metaphor, familiar in gesture and action, with not a scrap of notes to aid his memory; but he never fails nor falters for an instant. Even the spacious platform seems narrow for his energetic movements. It is the old familiar drama of the tempter and the soul of man, with a background of the Assyrians laying waste the fenced Cities of Israel. Something of the gloom and doubt which encompass a nation and a faith at a perilous and crucial crisis of existence, give a present interest to the theme; but gloom and doubt give way at last before the sanguine energy of the preacher — the tempter is foiled, the Assyrians are finally routed, and with the Israelites’ song of triumph the sermon comes to an end.’

On March 25th, 1891, *The Echo* also gave what was supposed to be a pen and ink portrait of Mr. Brown, which must be amusing to those who know him best, if not very informing, *e.g.*:

‘Outside the purely spiritual lines of operation more or less common to all chapels and churches, Mr. Brown and his many helpers carry on a social work quite wonderful in its character and success. To the poor, a gospel of help is indeed preached by the Baptists of Burdett Road. There is quite a small army of visitors, officered by “missionaries.” The visitation of the “church members” is constant, of the congregation most watchful, and of the great outside, poverty-stricken people, large and sympathetic. In the “Christian Buildings” more than a score of families find a home at the low rent of two shillings per week for “three rooms and a washhouse.” There is also a Girls’ Home, a Convalescent Home at Herne Bay, and an Orphan Home. Help is needed for all these good works, and both from the congregation and from friends afar large help is given.

‘Mr. Brown, with the noble army of men and women who work with him, is forever seeking out the poor, the outcast, and the homeless. Food, shelter, boots and shoes, garments, tools, and all sorts of useful things, are distributed to those who are in need, by the hard-working pastor and people of the East London Tabernacle. More than two thousand five hundred pounds were sent in last year for this sort of work. Once in the year Mr. Brown sits at the Tabernacle to receive the “Thank-offerings” of his people. Last year the amount offered — in small sums and in large — came to the noble total of four hundred and seventy-three pounds. This large amount was distributed in good work, far and near, a neighbouring Congregational minister getting twenty pounds for his poor fund, and two other pastors ten pounds each! The whole work is done with rigid system, combined with the most gentle sympathy. Of course, with a man of Mr. Brown’s intense religiousness, the “cup of cold water” is always made an introduction to some “spiritual work;” and many are the quaint and touching tales told of men reformed, made better, and “saved” by the agency of the relief work. It is a great and a good work; and the strangeness of it is that it is all associated with the “narrowest theology,” with a

“Calvinistic creed,” and with a certain phase of what looks like “Baptist bigotry;” for Mr. Brown spares no man who differs from him. For the “amusement-mongering parsons” he has no mercy, and calls all their ways of entertainment the “devil’s amusement.”

For the Ritualist, Romanist, and such-like he has just as little mercy. He goes in strongly against the Church; but he has just as little patience and just as much petulance with some of his “broad” Dissenting brethren., As a preacher, on his own lines, Mr. Brown has few equals. He is clear in thought and in expression, powerful in sarcasm, and pathetic in appeal. He acts well, although he is no actor. Heaven and Hell are awful realities to him, and he preaches like a man who would rescue men from the one and lead them to the other. Apart from his noble social work, he is the East-end apostle of the most dismal gospel. If he preaches an eternal hope for a few, he preaches an everlasting despair for the many who live and die in this the shadow of his chapel. The old Calvinism of Elisha Coles — the favourite author of Spurgeon — still masters the mind, if not heart, of this able and loving East-end preacher. That he should set up Distress Funds, Homes for the Poor, Orphanages, Convalescent Homes, etc., is the beautiful contradiction in a good life to a sour creed. But so it is. Well, we can bear the creed, and rejoice in the diviner charity. Life is full of contradictions, and in a small way, the pastor of the East London Tabernacle is one of the quaintest contradictions we have met with for some time. Preaching an obsolete creed, ignoring the researches of science, regardless of Biblical criticism, and expounding the Bible by the fading light of a dying theology; yet Mr. A. G. Brown is, in a sense, a man of the times. He cares for the poor, and exhausts the thought of a keen mind and the love of a large heart in trying to do good amongst the tens of thousands who crowd the narrow streets and the dark alleys and courts down by way of Stepney, Mile-end, and Bow.’

In one of the series of articles, ‘Why should London Wait?’ The *Daily Telegraph* gave some lengthened account of the work, and this sketch of Mr. Brown himself:

‘His dress showed no sign whatever of his calling; it was thoroughly laic (non-clergy), and of a rather jaunty cut. He might have been a banker, or a hard-working solicitor who had been an athlete in his day; but my friend was in reality one of the most popular Nonconformist ministers at the East-end of London, a man of immense nervous energy and vast administrative power, who has a larger practical acquaintance with the homes, the misery, the overcrowding, and the social horrors of the foulest corners of the East of London than anyone who could well be cited. This thorough-going and whole-hearted pastor does not believe in doing things by halves. For years past, he has determined to ferret out all the misery in his enormous district, and to make himself personally acquainted with the privations of the poor. When he cannot go himself, he sends others; he has enlisted a staff of able missionaries who work under his immediate orders, and every week, in the very study where I sat, every missionary is separately interviewed, and each case they bring forward separately discussed.’

On the occasion of the 24th anniversary of the church, early in 1891, Mr. Brown in the course of his address said that,

‘he thanked God that the union between himself and the congregation, which had lasted up to the present time, had ever been brought about. Unless he misread their presence there that evening, they had managed to put up with him, and bear with him with tolerable ease. He wished simply to give them one or two facts to let them know their position as a church. Their present *bona fide* membership was 2100. The membership when he came was 250, and the numbers had been consecutively carried on ever since. The last number on the card was 4800, so that during the twenty-four years, 4550 had been received into membership. The congregation had been maintained in spite of the exodus which had been taking place. He did not rejoice in the congregation itself, but he did rejoice in it as a testimony that the simple preaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, the atoning sacrifice of the Saviour, was sufficient to hold

thousands together year in, year out. He did not think anyone could say the congregation had been gathered or kept up by any suppression of the truth, or speaking smooth things. It was only the Bible that had done it.'

While all this was being done, both pastor and people were learning lessons of self-sacrifice; and while work was being done at home the heathen abroad were not forgotten. Hence, on Monday evening, October 12th, 1891, the East London Tabernacle was densely crowded, the meeting being one to take farewell of four young people who were to leave England on the following Thursday as agents of the China Inland Mission. One of these, Miss Nellie Brown, was a daughter of the pastor, and a favourite with all. Though only in her twenty-third year, this volunteer for the mission field had already been a member of the church for ten years. 'Her childhood was marked by much gentleness and sweetness of disposition,' one well remarks. 'She strikingly resembled her mother who, five years after her birth, passed into glory.'

All clapping or applause being prohibited, the meeting was a quiet, solemn one; those who were so enthusiastic that they wanted to clap were recommended to go to China themselves. Mr. Hart, who took leave of his friends in the same building seven years ago, and has since been in China, offered prayer. Mr. Brown reminded the audience that that day was the Jews' *Black Fast* — the great day of atonement. It was not a fast with them, however, but a bridal festival; for, as he added at another part of the meeting, it was just twenty-six years on that very day since he had married his first wife, who was now in glory, and who was the mother of his daughter now going out to China. He felt that there was a blessedness in being able to give anything to Christ. He would not say that the tear would never be in the eye, but they would nevertheless still be joyful. Mr. Broomhall, secretary of the China Inland Mission, said it was no common thing to see four members of the same church going out at the same time, and he congratulated both the people and the pastor. He had himself parted with four sons and daughters; he had felt it was no small thing to be able to do it. Those who brought sunshine to others would not keep it off themselves. The Mission would now have 500 missionaries in the country, and in ten years they had received a quarter of a million sterling for mission purposes. The departing missionaries, Mr. Bobby, Mr. G. Howel, Miss Eva Palmer, and Miss Nellie Brown, each said a few words. Miss Palmer has been trained at the Victoria Park Hospital.

Miss Brown has been attending a home at Liverpool for a similar purpose. Her father declared that she had been the joy of his home and hearth for years. Miss Brown explained that the first thoughts of going to China occurred about two years ago when she happened to attend a missionary meeting at Sandown. A clergyman then asked her if she had ever thought of going to China, and she answered, 'Yes; but I'm not going.' She thought she was not called, and had a horror of entering the field in such a case. She did not want to go, but she read on the subject; and then a missionary asked what was meant by being *called*; she might wait till she was old, and never hear a voice — 'Nellie, go to China.' She prayed about it; her father preached on loving father or mother more than Christ; but he was utterly amazed when she told him her decision, and advised her to let God decide. A year ago she saw Mr. Hudson Taylor; and her experience had been that if one said one big Yes to Christ, the little Yesses would follow. A lady in the audience sent up word that she would be responsible for Miss Brown's expenses; but Mr. A. G. Brown asked that that offer might apply to someone else, so that he might be allowed to provide all supplies for his daughter.

The account of this meeting, which is that which I supplied to *The Christian World*, shows that Mr. Brown's daughters have been taught to take right views of life. The pastor's eldest

daughter has found her sphere at the London Hospital as a lady nurse; while a third gives her cheerful Christian service at Harley House, Bow Road, under Dr. and Mrs. H. Grattan Guinness.

In referring to Miss Nellie Brown, *The Baptist Almanack*, from which I have already quoted, says:

‘Her address on Christ being Master will be long remembered. God owned it to the quickening of many. She is now in China, but “Nellie Brown” lives in a thousand hearts in East London. God keep and bless her, and raise up many like her.’¹⁰

It is something to have survived twenty-five years of service in such a sphere as this East-end pastorate. Who can say what will come to pass in the future? There remains much more land to be possessed in East London; but who can wonder if the chief worker, after having so long borne the burden and heat of the day, somewhat longingly turns his face in a direction where the service demanded would be no less effective, while it would be less exhaustive or wearing? Should it turn out that Mr. Brown does not finish his life-work in East London, he has already done enough to be reckoned among its benefactors; and taking into account the opportunities he has had, his service has shown self-sacrifice of no ordinary kind. He is still comparatively a young man; but we take account of the work he has done rather than of the number of years he has lived.

¹⁰ The quotations are from *The Baptist Almanack for 1892*, from which the admirable portrait of Miss Nellie Brown is also borrowed. This popular Annual is full of information, which is indispensable to members of the Baptist denomination. The work is published by Messrs. Robert Banks & Son, Racquet Court, Fleet Street, E.C.