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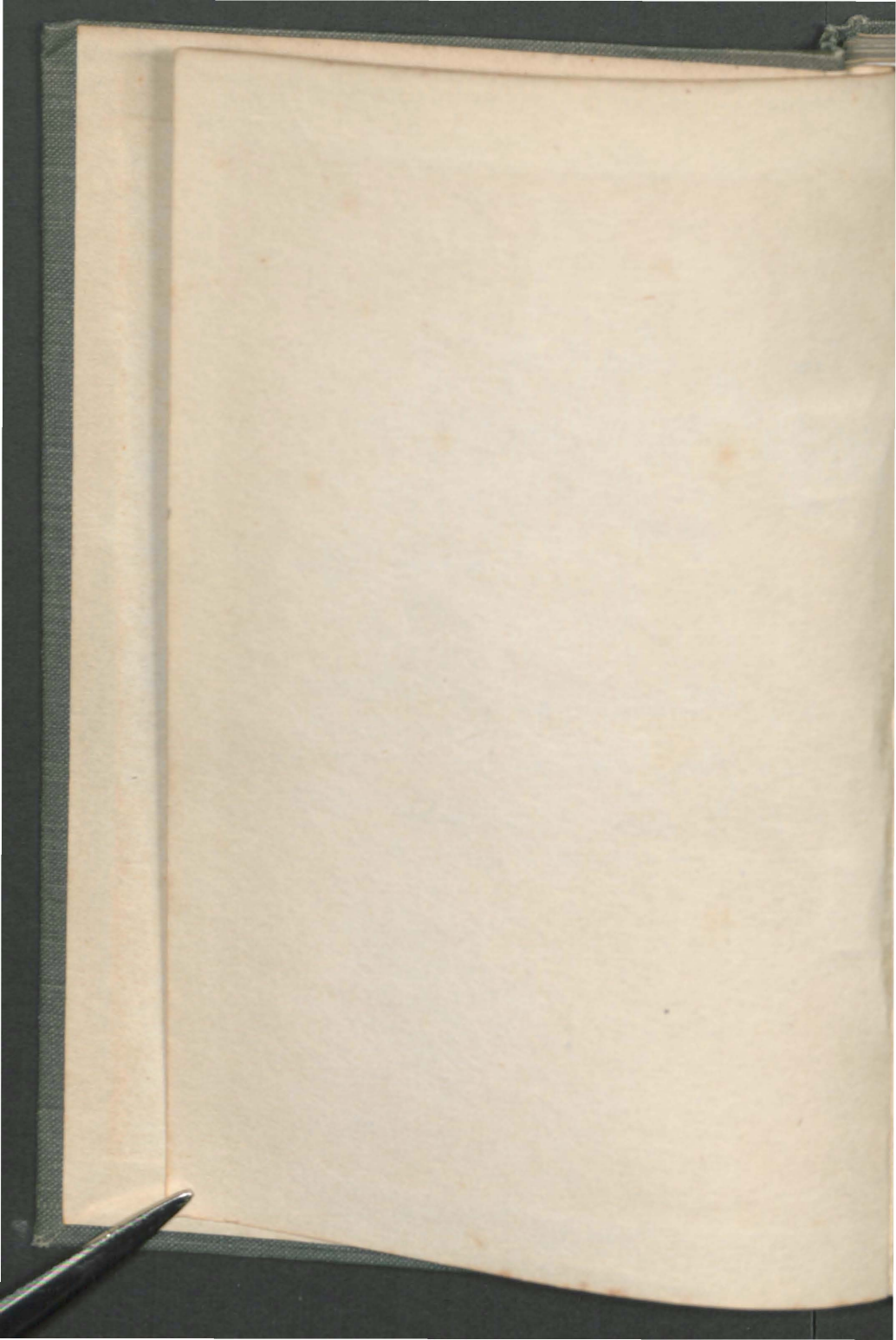
To Rev. of Curtis

With all good wishes

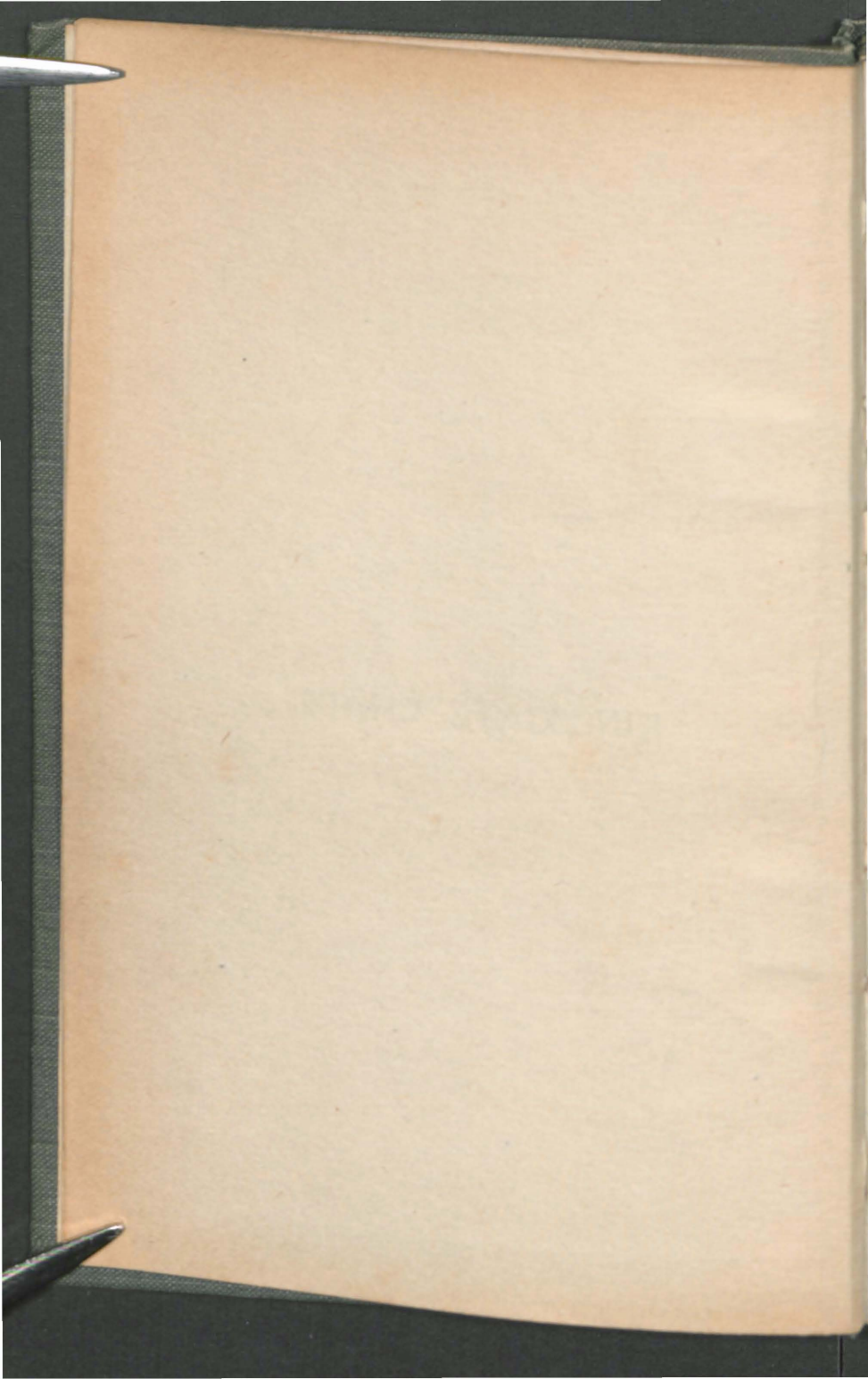
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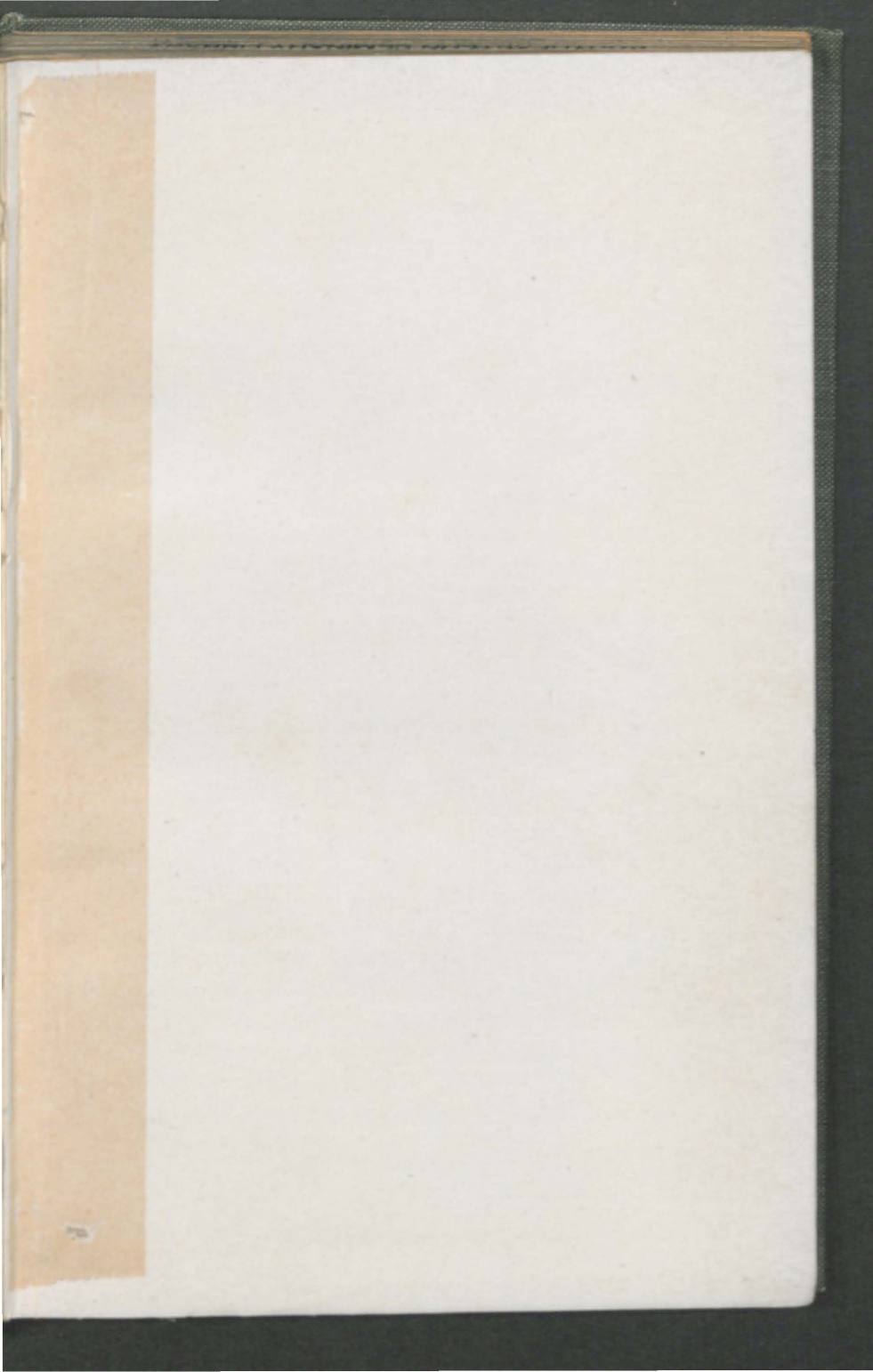
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Happy Remembrances of Pillsbury  
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KINGSGATE CHAPEL.





KINGSGATE BAPTIST CHURCH,  
HOLBORN.





# KINGSGATE CHAPEL.

"FOR CHRIST AND LIBERTY."

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A portrayal of a phase of the Religious,  
Social, and Literary Work attempted by  
the Pioneers of the Eagle Street Meeting  
House; with special reference to the  
Rev. Andrew Gifford, D.D., and the  
: : : Rev. Joseph Ivimey. : : :

BY

REV. A. T. WARD,

Pastor of Kingsgate Baptist Church, London,  
1904-1910.

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LONDON:

KINGSGATE BAPTIST CHURCH

(Adjoining Baptist Church House), Southampton Row, W.C.

Messrs. ALBERT FRY & Co.,

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## PREFACE.

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THE writing of this book was undertaken during my ministry at Kingsgate Baptist Church, Holborn, at the suggestion of Mr. William Levitt, who was at that time Treasurer of the Church. I found it impossible to use the account Mr. Levitt had compiled, but in response to the desire of the deacons I gladly undertook to write the story myself. This involved me through the greater part of two years in considerable labour, relieved by the growing knowledge of the probable value of such a record, and the worthy services the Church had rendered to the Baptist Denomination as a whole.

A careful study was made of the old Church minute books, all of which are happily preserved. I have consulted Cramp's "History of the Baptists," Pritchard's "Life of Joseph Ivimey," and many other books bearing on the period dealt with.

After the manuscript was written the printing of the book was deferred owing to the Church not being in a position to undertake the financial responsibility of publishing.

The issue of the book now is entirely owing to the enterprise of the Rev. W. E. West, the present successful minister of Kingsgate Chapel, who is maintaining so finely and bravely the best traditions of the historic cause. I am deeply indebted to Mr. West for the kindly interest he has taken in my effort and the labour he has undertaken in typing

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my manuscript and securing its publication. In addition to this he has assisted me in reading the proof sheets and has made many valuable suggestions. The sub-title on the title-page is Mr. West's own wording.

It has been a real pleasure to be associated with him in this labour of love for a Church and people we have both a warm affection for, and to have revived by this service happy memories of several years spent together in Bristol Baptist College.

I desire to express my heartiest thanks also to the Rev. W. T. Whitley, M.A., LL.D., of Preston, the Secretary of the Baptist Historical Society, for the assistance he has rendered in reading the proof sheets of the first three chapters, and for the valuable Foreword he has written.

We are also indebted to him for helpful suggestions and the matter contained in pp. 19 and 20.

Amongst others we should like to gratefully acknowledge again the services rendered by Mr. William Levitt for the original suggestion, and to Messrs. Albert Fry & Co., of Eagle Street, Holborn, for recent services.

Whatever profits may accrue from the sale of the book are to be devoted to the Church at Kingsgate, and for this reason the writer hopes that in spite of the many imperfections of his effort, and its much abbreviated form, the sale will be large.

A. T. WARD.

BROADSTAIRS,  
December 28, 1912.

## FOREWORD

BY

REV. W. T. WHITLEY, M.A.,  
LL.M., LL.D., F.R.H.S.

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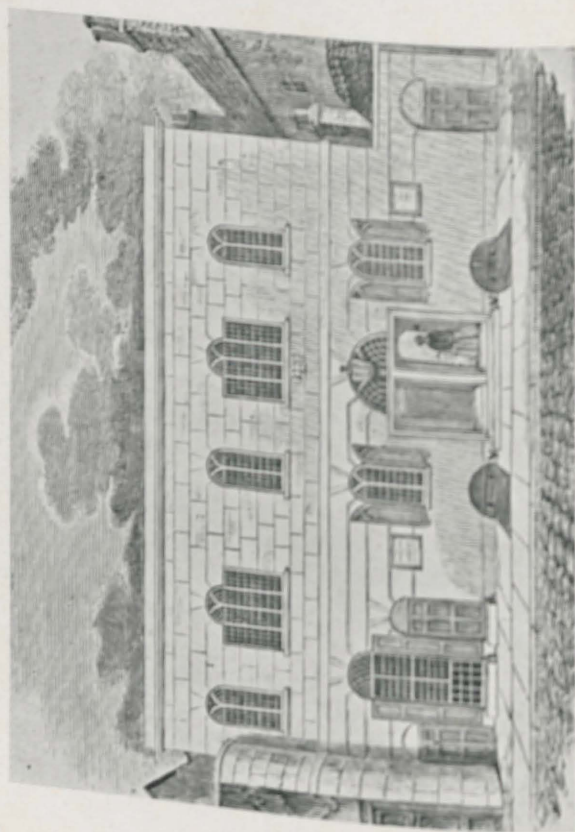
FOR many years after the Church at Eagle Street was founded, it was completely ignored by the London Baptist ministers. Noble has been its revenge, in heaping coals of fire. From the outset, Gifford kept before London society the fact that Baptists were not all narrow and ill-educated; and his bequests to Bristol College will retain his name in grateful memory. Ivimey took his share in aiding missions to Bengal, Ireland and Jamaica; while his pen both called attention to heroes of the past, then gathered the story of many a Church throughout the land. The emancipation of the slaves in all our Colonies is linked with the name of Knibb, and a set of fetters forms a worthy trophy on the walls. With the altering needs of Central London, and the focussing of our institutional work at Bloomsbury, it was a problem how best to use the old site. Splendidly has the problem been solved by placing it at the disposal of the whole denomination. Yet alongside the Baptist Church House, the ancient community now worshipping in the Kingsgate building has its opportunity to renew its strength like the eagle.

W. T. WHITLEY.

ERRATUM.

p. 15 — "Waterloo" should read "war."





THE FIRST EAGLE STREET MEETING HOUSE.





# KINGSGATE CHAPEL.

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## CHAPTER I.

KINGSGATE CHAPEL, the meeting place of the Kingsgate Baptist Church, occupies the same site in Eagle Street to-day as that occupied by the first building in 1736. There for nearly two hundred years faithful men and women have met to worship God.

To tell the history, however briefly, of this part of Christ's Church, requires a setting in the history of the country, with regard especially to Nonconformity and its relation to the State.

If the days of open persecution were over in 1735, the days of open contempt were by no means past. With William and Mary on the throne relief had been granted to Nonconformists, only to be withdrawn again under Queen Anne. At the close of the latter's reign the Schism Act was passed. By this measure no one could be a tutor or

schoolmaster unless he were a member of the Church of England. The death of the Queen and the failure of her party prevented the application of this piece of intolerance. None the less does it reveal the hatred of dissent at the time. The penalty for teaching as a Nonconformist was imprisonment without bail. Indeed, most of the old persecuting laws against Nonconformity remained on the Statute Book for nearly one hundred years after the formation of the Eagle Street Church.

The Schism Act with the Occasional Conformity Act were soon formally repealed, but the Conventicle and Five Mile Acts were not repealed until 1812. The Test and Corporation Acts disgraced the Statute Book until 1828. Under the Toleration Act, however, Nonconformity was permitted to live: live, we must add, as something allowed but not approved, tolerated but not to be encouraged.

The days were evil. Religion in England in 1735 was by no means vigorous. It appears to have shared in a general depression and degeneration of all that was best in the nation's life. The time from Queen Anne's death, in 1714, to 1750, a period of material prosperity, was a season of spiritual decline. Infidelity was widespread, and scornful in

attitude. There was but a faint line separating the Church from the world. In Nonconformity as in the Established Church the best men bemoaned the condition of things.

In the mercy of God men were sent in answer to the need of the age in Whitefield and the Wesleys. When they commenced preaching, mobs treated them with brutal violence : mobs not infrequently encouraged and instigated by local magistrates. An incident in Cornwall in 1745 is typical of nearly the whole of England at the time.

“ Edward Greenfield, of St. Just, a tanner, a man with a wife and seven children, was arrested under a warrant signed by a Dr. Borlase. Wesley asked what objection there was to this peaceable and inoffensive man. The answer was : ‘The man is well enough in other things, but the gentlemen cannot bear his impudence. Why, sir, he says *he knows his sins are forgiven.*’ ”

In such times as these the Church at Eagle Street was established. During its life the members have worshipped in three buildings. The first meeting-house, built in 1736, faced Eagle Street, near the corner of Kingsgate Street. The second building had its front in Kingsgate Street (immortalised by Dickens, and redolent with memories of Sarah Gamp

and the nebulous Mrs. Harris). The third (and present) structure occupies practically the same plot of ground as the first and second and has its front in Eagle Street, being attached to the Baptist Church House in Southampton Row.

The original name by which the chapel was known, and under which it played an important part in the history of English and especially of London Baptists, was that of the Eagle Street Meeting House. After the erection of the second building facing Kingsgate Street (now "improved" out of existence) it took the name of Kingsgate Street Chapel, but, the street having been demolished, the building is now known as Kingsgate Chapel.

The Church was originally the major part of the Church in Little Wild Street, Drury Lane. After the separation they first met in Red Cross Street, and then in Bear Yard while the meeting-house was being built. This, the first, chapel was opened on February 16th, 1736, at which time the Church consisted of about one hundred members, Dr. Andrew Gifford being pastor. The building was enlarged twice: once in 1760 under Dr. Gifford, and again in 1820 under Rev. Joseph Ivimey.

The following extracts from the first pages of the oldest minute book of the Church, dated 1737, throw some light on the origin of the division at Little Wild Street, and the beginning of the work at Eagle Street :—

“Whereas in the years 1735-1737 there arose an unhappy difference in the Protestant Dissenting Congregation of Baptists that then met in Little Wylde Street, we whose names are hereunto subscribed (being the majority of the members of the said congregation) do, in the Fear and Presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, agree to continue as a Church of Jesus Christ, baptised upon profession of faith, to worship Him through the influence and assistance of the Holy Spirit according to the direction given in His Word.”

This was signed by Dr. Gifford and by over one hundred members of the new Church.

The entry regarding the communion cups is as follows :—

“Whereas I, Jno. Payne, did in Oct. 1734, give to ye congregation of Baptists that then met in Little Wylde Street, twelve silver cupps for ye use of ye Lord's Table, and there happened

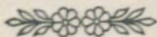
a difference in ye said congregation in April 1735, which was agreed to be left to ye arbitration of several gentlemen, who awarded me back ye said twelve silver cupps as my own property. Now, I do hereby make a free gift of ye twelve silver cupps to Mr. Andrew Gifford, Pastor, Mr. Jno. Egby, Mr. Richard Slade, Mr. Jno. Brailsford, and Mr. Hugh Amory, deacons, of ye Protestant Dissenting Congregation of Baptists under ye care of ye said Mr. Andrew Gifford, now meeting in Eagle Street in ye parish of St. George, Bloomsbury, in trust to them and their successors for ye use of ye said congregation at ye Lord's Table. And my intention, will, and desire is, that ye said twelve silver cupps shall be and remain to them and their successors, or ye majority of ye members, being communicants, of ye said congregation in Eagle Street, both men and women, for ye said use of ye Lord's Table for ever. As witness my hand,

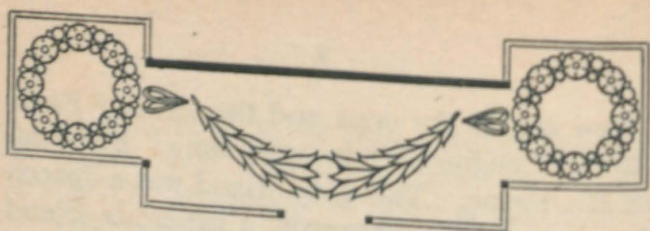
JNO. PAYNE.

April ye 3rd, 1737."

There is a further note, evidence of the fact being seen in the same cups to-day, that the words "Little Wylde Street" were

taken out of the cups and the words "Eagle Street" engraved "In ye roome" by order of Mr. Payne. This good friend was a deacon for many years afterwards, a generous friend and a faithful member of the Church. At his death the cause received from him the greater part of its endowment. Thus it may be said that the Church is a lasting memorial to that Christian benefactor.





## CHAPTER II.

### DR. ANDREW GIFFORD AND THE FIRST SEVENTY YEARS.

THE story of the Gifford family forms a famous chapter in the history of Nonconformity. Dr. Andrew Gifford's father and grandfather had been pastors of the Baptist Church meeting in the Pithay, Bristol. There was also a John Gifford, whom Bunyan portrayed as Evangelist, since he led Bunyan to Christ.

Mr. Gifford, the grandfather of Dr. Andrew Gifford, experienced the hardness of the times towards dissenters. "Preachers of his time," says Dr. Cramp in his Baptist History, "were often obliged to disguise themselves that they might not be recognised by informers. Mr. Gifford is reported to have been very efficient at this: at one time he appeared as an officer, at another as a labourer while at Bristol."





The Rev. ANDREW GIFFORD, M.A., D.D.  
*First Minister, 1735-1784.*



"Did you meet me last night," he said one day to a friend, "going through Lawford's Gate? Why did you not speak to me?"

"I did not see you, sir," was the reply.

"Did you not meet a tinker?"

"Yes, sir."

"That was me," said Mr. Gifford.

Dr. Gifford's mother was probably the last to be imprisoned for the simple reason that she was a Baptist. The following entry is therefore of special interest:—

"Feb. 24, 1738. This day Sister Elinor Gifford exchanged this life for a better, and a place in ye Church Militant below for one in ye Church Triumphant above. She was for many years an honourable member in ye Church in ye Pithay, Bristol, and was ye last survivor of that Church who was honoured with imprisonment in Newgate there, for adhering to ye despised and persecuted cause of Jesus, in ye latter end of King Charles ye 2nd's reign. She died in a good old age about 75. Her constant motto was, "Happy is ye people whose God is ye Lord."

Is not the word "Honoured" in the above extract a light on the stuff of which our Churches were made? It is as an opened

window giving us a glimpse into a fair and beautiful chamber. This vivid sense of God's presence and favour made light of suffering that a better day might dawn, and that conscience might be free to guide and actuate all worship.

Dr. Andrew Gifford presided over the Church in Eagle Street for nearly fifty years. His ministry was remarkably successful. He was a thoroughly learned man, a Doctor of Divinity, and a University Graduate. Possessing an excellent taste and wide knowledge as an antiquarian, especially in regard to coins and manuscripts, he was in 1757 appointed assistant librarian to the British Museum: a position he held until his death.

The following anecdote is told of him. Some gentlemen were inspecting the museum under the Doctor's guidance, amongst whom was a profane youth, who scarcely uttered a sentence without an oath. The Doctor, who had kept an eye on him, was at length asked by this youth whether they had not a very ancient manuscript of the Bible there. On coming to it Dr. Gifford asked the youth if he could read it. Upon his answering "Yes, of course," he was asked to read a paragraph which the Doctor pointed out. It was: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." The irreverent youth read

and blushed. The countenances of his companions seemed to acknowledge the justness of the reproof and the polite and Christian manner in which it was administered.

The ancient records of the Church contain much information of the peculiar difficulties under which, during the first fifty years, the Church laboured. During his pastorate Dr. Gifford himself wrote the minutes of the Church meeting, adding in the minute book comments upon the proceedings and also his impressions of the members and of the work being done. These notes of his reveal a quaint humour as well as a steady faithfulness to Nonconformist principles. He constantly revealed an anxiety for the growth of spiritual life, and shews himself a man of God angry with sin, patient with the sinner. Dwelling himself in the "deep things" of God, he is impatient with trivialities, yet wondrously tender in dealing with every erring member of the flock committed to his charge.

The Doctor on the death of a member usually recorded the fact with an expression of Christian sorrow and hope. But occasionally he reveals another side of his character. The following are interesting examples of this, not without their lesson for us to-day :—

" June 12, 1748. About this time Sister Esther Thomas departed this life, and

*we hope* is no more uneasy or discontent with her lot."

"1754. About this time, Sister Elizabeth Smith departed this life, whereby the days of her mourning *and murmuring* are ended."

Dr. Gifford has heavily underlined the "and murmuring" himself.

"1755. Sometime this summer Brother Abel departed this life after a series of worries and troubles, *many of them of his own making.*"

Again, an entry in 1755, says:—

"Nov. 6. About this time Brother Ebenezer Browne departed this life and *left all his peevish tempers behind him.*"

Dr. Gifford's fame was by no means local, and such a man could not but succeed in winning many to an acceptance of the principles of Nonconformity. Such success attended his efforts that the chapel had to be enlarged in 1760. The old and unenlarged building had been crowded with members and hearers for some years at each service. We append the entry in the Church book of the time:—

"Church Meeting, 24th August, 1760:—

"Whereas for a considerable time there has been a great increase of the auditory

so that many could not get in, the Church took it into consideration and set apart sometime for solemnly seeking the Lord's mind and will. And this day the Church, on consulting concerning it, agreed unanimously that our Meeting House be enlarged, provided a sufficient sum can be raised to defray the expenses of it, and that therefore a book be opened for subscribing towards it."

A. GIFFORD.

Two years after the movement was commenced to enlarge the chapel, Dr. Gifford lost his wife Grace, as the next extract will shew :—

"Nov. 28, 1760. My dear Helpmeet, Grace Gifford, after a tedious illness of 14 weeks, during which she kept her bed with great patience and submission, went smiling in death to Glory. Her funeral sermon was preached by B. Britain from Solomon's Song, chapter 2, verse 4, which was ye word that first led her to choose the better part. She was buried ye same day at sun-rising December 5, in Bunhill Fields, when a hymn was sung according to her request, and a young woman was, it is to be hoped, converted by the way Bro. Britain spoke on ye occasion."

During the first twelve years the Church baptised candidates for Church membership at Horseley Down, in Southwark, until Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>, 1748, when a baptistry was opened and first used in the chapel at Eagle Street. The Church meetings shew a steady flow of members into the Church, a large proportion of these being by baptism on confession of faith, the work of conversion being manifested most during the middle period of the Pastor's ministry. Dr. Gifford in admitting members at Communion into the Church did so by the laying on of his hands in the Apostolic manner and by prayer, whilst a public confession of faith was always expected and given by the candidates at the previous Church meeting.

Church discipline was rigidly maintained. A volume might be filled with examples of this which would be instructive to us in these more tolerant days.

"1748. Bro. De La Rose having long lived in a practice of taking up goods and pawning them and running into debt, agreed that he be withdrawn from."

"1754. Whereas ye Sister Windsor has been by many witnesses proved guilty of lying detraction and a *busy-body in other men's matters*, agreed



she be withdrawn entirely and no longer esteemed a member with us."

Corrections of conduct both in business life and in the home were brought forward, provinces of action that would seem to be closed to-day. Not only questions of conduct, but of creed as well, occupy minute after minute of the Church Record.

Religion in England wore a prosaic aspect during most of the 18th century. It was the period of the Socinian controversy and religious decline. Even in the Establishment Arianism and Unitarianism were widespread. Bishop Butler in his preface to the famous "Analogy," said: "It had come to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much a subject of enquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious." A fair picture of the morals and manners of the time may be seen in the works of Hogarth, who was a close observer of different phases of social life. The growth of large towns by the progress of commerce, in a period of peace after ~~Waterloo~~ <sup>WAR</sup>, had not been accompanied by provision for the adequate religious teaching of the people. But the Puritan spirit had not died out in Dissent. In Doddridge and Watts, Whitefield and Wesley, and here with Dr. Gifford there was preserved enthusiasm for the gospel

by which the light of religion was kept aflame.

Nor must we omit to mention a sainted clergyman of the Anglican Church, Fletcher of Madeley, who, by a close daily walk with God, was a living rebuke to the corrupt Establishment.

Dr. Gifford seems to have had a righteous zeal for purity of doctrine, and many exclusions from Church membership are recorded for laxness of view in regard to the Deity of Christ and the Trinity. Nor was there wanting in him a simple faith in God's personal presence with His people. Perhaps the most interesting entry of all in the earliest Church Book is the following, made in Dr. Gifford's hand as usual :—

"June 19, 1748. A wonderful appearance of Providence at Baptism. Mrs. Dechamps had been long disabled from walking alone by a rheumatic gout, but sometime after ye Lord was pleased to call her by His grace, she told the writer this : She was convinced that baptism by immersion was both her duty and privilege. He endeavoured to evade it and dissuade her from it as not absolutely necessary to salvation, but, not been satisfied with his arguments she, after some time,

solemnly demanded it of him as a minister of Jesus. Upon this ye Church was consulted, and after solemn searching ye Lord it was agreed that if she persisted in ye demand, it should be complied with. To this ye pastor, A.G., was forced to comply—with great reluctance, fear and trembling, lest it should be attended with any ill consequence. To this she said: "Don't you be afraid, I am persuaded God will prevent any scandal or reflection." Accordingly ye ordinance was administered. Unable to walk, she was carried down into the water. She went out of ye water well and rejoicing and triumphing in ye Lord Jesus. Blessed be His Name."

Dr. Gifford adds again for emphasis: "Sister Dechamps was so lame as to be carried down into ye water. She went up out of it without the least help, rejoicing—"

Some years before he died, in 1771, assistance had to be sought for the Pastor, and this was given by a Mr. Smith, who left in 1782.

"May 31, 1771. A much beloved member of the Church who had become the pastor of a Church at

Saffron Walden, was invited to be the co-pastor and assistant at Eagle Street, Brother Joseph Gwennap. This invitation was declined. An invitation sent to Mr. Ebenezer Smith to the same office was accepted, and this minister continued to assist Dr. Gifford until June, 1782, when owing to a change of view he withdrew."

In failing health, and with greatly enfeebled frame, Dr. Gifford continued almost to the end to preach and conduct the meetings.

Dr. Gifford makes his last entry in the minute book in the April of 1784. He died at the ripe old age of 84, on July 19, of that year, and was buried in Bunhill Fields, the famous resting place of Nonconformist heroes and martyrs. The interment was made at an early hour in the morning in compliance with his own wish: "To testify of his faith in the resurrection of Christ, who rose early on the first day of the week, and likewise of his hope of the resurrection morning at the last day." His funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Rippon. "He being dead yet speaketh," for "His works do follow him."

Dr. Gifford bequeathed by his will his valuable collection of coins, curios, and manuscripts to the library of Bristol Baptist College. In this institution, the first Non-

conformist College in England and probably in the world, he had felt a deep interest, not only for its aims and objects, but through his own family connection with the city of Bristol.

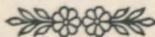
Andrew Gifford was a great exception to the ordinary run of Baptist ministers of that century. Soon after his baptism in 1715, he had been sent by the Bristol Church to study at Tewkesbury under Samuel Jones, a Congregational minister; then to London, attending Gresham College, and joining the Church under Thomas Richardson which met at Pinners' Hall in the afternoon. Few Baptist ministers in that day started with such an education. It is to be feared that from the settlement at Little Wild Street, Gifford was not on good terms with the ordinary Particular Baptist ministers. There were two Fraternal meetings at the British Coffee-House and at Blackwell's; the latter was more popular with the Calvinists, Gifford joined the former, which consisted chiefly of General Baptist ministers moving towards Arianism, though it vainly invited men like Brine, Rudd, and Dew. When the trouble occurred in 1735, all the Blackwell's ministers sided with Wild Street, and the alienation continued long. Monthly meetings were organised in 1748, but he and Eagle Street were ignored; John Ryland of War-

wick, when describing the Particular Baptist Churches in London, took no notice of Gifford and his flock in 1753. And in the many mentions of ordinations and funerals, his name seems never to occur.

Thus cut off from his brethren, he pursued a course of his own. As early as 1731 he met Sir Richard Ellys, M.P., and soon became his family chaplain at a salary of forty guineas. His acquaintance with peers and other members of society was wide, and when we see several Scotch titles on the list, it is easier to understand why he was made a Freeman of Edinburgh, and a D.D. of Aberdeen in 1754. He had great antiquarian tastes, and once disposed of a collection of coins to the king, then proceeded to gather another, with many other curiosities and books. His opportunities for collecting were enhanced in 1757 by his appointment as assistant librarian at the British Museum.

Isolated from his Baptist neighbours, he found friends among the Independents, among the group clustering round Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon, and among the few educated Baptists in the country, such as Robinson of Cambridge. He was a benefactor of the Baptist Fund, and in his old age was fortunate in finding other

Baptists to appreciate his aims, at combining culture with evangelical preaching. When the Terrill bequest at Bristol was re-organised, and a Baptist Academy was contemplated, he desired to obtain a charter for it; and it is much to be regretted that the local tutors were too conscious of their own unfitness, to further his efforts. He did, however, bequeath all his collections to enrich the institution; and at his burial it is pleasant to note that the presence of Ryland and Rippon betokens the estrangements of the past to have ended.





### CHAPTER III.

At the Church meeting on June 3rd, 1784, Rev. Mr. Hopkins, of Devizes, who had at times supplied at Bradford in Wiltshire, was invited to preach for three months with a view to settlement amongst them. At the end of this time he was invited to remain for a further period of three months. On March 21st, 1785, Mr. Hopkins received the call of the Church to the pastorate. This call he accepted in June, and on July 3rd his ministry commenced.

The following entry pertains to this:—  
“July 13th, 1785. On this day our brother Thomas Hopkins was publicly ordained Pastor of this Church by the Imposition of Hands and Prayer. Our Hon'd and respected Brethren who assisted the solemnity of the day were Messrs. Dore, Martin, Booth, McGregor, Geard, Rippon and Reynolds.”



The ministry thus commenced was destined to be only of brief duration. On October 4, 1787, Mr. Hopkins presided at the Church meeting, and on the 26th of the next month was called Home. The entry is as follows :—

“On 26th November, 1787, our honoured and much esteemed Pastor, Mr. Thomas Hopkins, departed this life, in the twenty-ninth year of his age, after having laboured among us two years and four months with great usefulness and many seals to his ministry.”

In succession to Mr. Hopkins the Rev. William Smith was called to the pastorate of the Church from Salop, as the following excerpt from a Church Minute Book will shew, on 19th February, 1789 :—

“The Lord in His wise and gracious providence having taken to himself our late dear and valuable pastor Mr. Thomas Hopkins, in the prime of his life and the midst of his usefulness, it became necessary for us to look out for another of His servants to preach the Word and to administer the ordinances of His Gospel amongst us. And having sent several of His servants to preach unto us from time to time, and amongst the rest Rev. William Smith, of Shrewsbury,

who, we had been previously informed, was so situated with the Church he was then Pastor of that without some very extraordinary and unexpected alterations he was likely to be under the necessity of leaving them—

This being the case, the Church in Eagle Street could not help having their eyes on him, especially as he appeared to be a suitable person for their ultimate choice—

Mr. Smith on the 21st of September, 1788, having seen it his duty to give up the charge of the Church at Salop, the Church in Eagle Street gave him an unanimous invitation to come and preach amongst them, and his ministry being generally satisfactory they (after repeated application to the Divine Throne for direction) almost unanimously chose him their Pastor. And on the 19th February, 1789, Mr. Smith signified his acceptance of their call, and was on the 27th May following solemnly set apart to the pastoral office here."

The ministry, thus commencing, continued for the space of twelve years. During the last year of Mr. Smith's ministry some difficulties appear to have arisen, but through

the greater part of the time he spent amongst the people here much blessing was experienced from God. The Church passed through the usual experiences of ebb and flow, never losing consciousness, however, that they were in the full tide of God's ocean of truth, and remaining faithful to their heritage of liberty.

It would be of interest here, before we proceed to give the account of the work and life of Rev. Joseph Ivimey, to record the legacies received and the properties acquired by the Church.

Mention has been made, in the first chapter, of the origin of the Church and the gift of communion cupps by Mr. John Payne. This faithful member of the Church in 1741 further generously assisted the work, as the following account shews :—

“ At a meeting of ye trustees and brethren of ye Church, December 25, 1741, Bro. John Payne considering the present incumbrances that lie on ye Church, having made a proposal for relief to reduce the debt and mortgage on ye meeting house to ye sum of £200, provided we pay the interest of ye said £200 and assign over ye writings to him so that he may at his own option upon payment of ye remaining £200

have ye sole property and disposal of ye same and especially in case of any difference that may hereinafter arise—We whose names are hereunto subscribed do hereby agree to ye said proposal of ye said honoured and beloved Bro. John Payne, or any other proposal for such said purpose that he may make for that end."

A. GIFFORD, etc.

Thus the debt on the first building was reduced to £200 through the generosity of this valued member of the Church.

The following entry records his death and a further service he rendered :—

"Sept. 6, 1757. Our dear and honoured Brother John Payne departed this life."

"Among several other legacies he gave £50 to ye poor of ye Church, and £200 to our pastor, and also the reversion of ye residue of Mr. Fly's Estate."

A memorandum and copy appears of the codicil to his will and were as follows, entered by Dr. Gifford, 1757 :—

"Mr. Timothy Fly left the residue of his estate to his nephew, Mr. Edward Jarvis, after his widow Mrs. Fly's decease."

Mr. Jarvis by his will left ye reversion

of ye said residue to Mr. Caleb Coleman and Mr. John Payne and died in 1756.

Mr. Caleb Coleman by his will left his moiety to Mr. John Payne and died April, 1757.

Mr. John Payne died Sept. 6, 1757, and left the whole of the said reversion as appears from ye codicil to his will as copied exactly by A. Gifford as follows: 'I John Payne the testator named in ye will within mentioned do make this codicil to be endorsed on my will, and desire ye same may be taken as part thereof (that is to say) Whereas in and by my said will within mentioned I have given and bequeathed to Caleb Coleman of Hounsditch, Currier, all my share and moiety of ye residue of ye estate and effects of Timothy Fly wherein I am entitled after ye decease of Ann Fly, And whereas ye said Caleb Coleman since the making of my said will is dead and therefore do revoke that part of my said will and by this codicil I do hereby devise and bequeath unto my executors Henry Hurt and Richard Payne and their heirs all my share and moiety of and in ye residue of the personal estate and effects of ye said Timothy Fly after ye decease of ye said Ann Fly.

In trust to and for ye use intent and purpose hereinafter mentioned, that is to say, to pay into ye hands of William Tongue, gentleman, Miles Dent, taylor, John Brailsford, cutler, Thomas Bowes, shoemaker, and Joel Northam, haymaker, elders of the within mentioned congregation for the time being of the within mentioned meeting being Baptist or their successors all the annual interest and produce of ye said personal estate and effects arising from ye will of ye said Timothy Fly after ye decease of Ann Fly. In Trust to dispose apply and receive (after payment of such annuities charged thereon by the will of Edmund Jarvis) half the annual produce and interest thereof for the use and benefit of the present minister or Baptist preacher of and belonging to the Baptist meeting in Eagle Street, Holbourn, if living at my decease and to his successors thereof being Baptist preachers and ye other half of ye annual interest and produce thereof for ye benefit of ye poor, ye payment of ye rent, necessary repairs and other charges of ye said Baptist Meeting. . . . In testimony whereof I have signed sealed published and declared this codicil and republished my

said will this 24th day of May in ye year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty-seven.

JOHN PAYNE.' "

By this noble bequest the building and some property were secured to a number of Trustees, also a quantity of Government Stock producing a considerable yearly interest. Thus Mr. Payne has benefited, not only this Church through all its long period of life, but also the whole Baptist Denomination of to-day, for through possessing this property, Eagle Street Church was able to convey to the Denomination the valuable ground upon which the Church House now stands.

Mr. William Tongue, for many years after a deacon of the Church, presented the Church with the large silver tankard on becoming a member, on June 6, 1756.

Sister Priscilla Edwards at the same time gave two silver dishes for the Lord's Table. Two other silver plates were presented to the Church many years later, in February, 1823, by a friend who wished to remain anonymous.

The whole list of legacies received from members of the Church was drawn up and entered into the Church minute book by Rev. Joseph Ivimey, in 1812, in addition to these

gifts of Communion Cupps and Plate before-mentioned, and is as follows :—

“The following is a correct statement of the property of the Church :

- (1) “Three thousand eight hundred and forty-one pounds eighteen shillings and eight-pence, in three per cents annuities, left by Mr. John Payne.—The dividend to be appropriated one moiety to the minister for the time being, the other moiety for the support of the place and the poor of the Church.
- (2) “One hundred pounds, in three per cents, left by Mrs. Priscilla Edwards for the use of the ministry in Eagle Street.
- (3) “Four hundred pounds, three per cents, left by the will of our late Pastor, Rev. Andrew Gifford, D.D.—The dividend to be applied one moiety for the minister for the time being and the other moiety for the poor of the Church.
- (4) “One hundred and twenty-five pounds, in four per cents, left by Mrs. Thomas for the use of the poor of the Church.
- (5) “Eight hundred pounds, Old South Sea Annuities, left by the will of the late Mrs. Lascelles.—The dividend to be applied to the use of the Church.
- (6) “Three hundred and fifty pounds, Old South Sea Annuities, left by the will of



the late Mrs. Tozer to the pastor or minister for the time being, to be by him applied to and for the benefit of the said meeting as he shall think most proper.

"After paying the legacy duties and expenses £325 remained.

"£225 were sold Jan. 31, 1812, for the purpose of purchasing a piece of ground adjoining the Meeting House, in the names of the Trustees of the said Meeting House."

Rev. Joseph Ivimey at a later date (1822) made the following entry :—

"Dr. Gifford's will mentions a legacy of £200 in the 3% left to him by Mrs. Priscilla Edwards of Greenwich in 1751. One hundred pounds of this was expended when the Meeting House was enlarged in 1763, and the other hundred was directed by him to be added to the £400 3% left by himself to the Church—one moiety of the interest to the minister and the other moiety to the poor."

There is no mention of this above, but a later note adds :

"I now find from the will of Mrs. Priscilla Edwards that this above-mentioned £100 is left for the support of the ministry

at Eagle Street for ever. It has now been brought into the funds.

“JOSEPH IVIMEY.”

A minute of 27th February, 1812, records the building of a schoolroom. The Sunday School was formed, as will appear later, in 1808.

“Resolved that the ground adjoining the Meeting be appropriated to the building of a schoolroom for the Eagle Street Sunday School and a Committee be formed for carrying this into effect.”

£400 of the three per cent. stock was sold in 1813 to pay for the building of this schoolroom, Mr. Ivimey undertaking with the Trustees to replace it in the Trust funds of the Church as originally created on or before the year 1831.

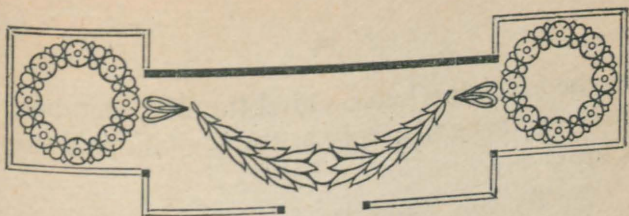
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A newer and fuller entry of the monies held by the Trustees of the Church is to be found on reference to the Church Book of May 29, 1823. There is here, also, an enquiry of a reversionary interest in the residue of the property of Mrs. Priscilla Edwards. This latter was discovered to be finally settled on her descendants.



Rev. JOSEPH IVIMEY.  
*Minister, 1804-1834.*





#### CHAPTER IV.

THE name of the Rev. Joseph Ivimey, of Wallingford, in Berkshire, was introduced to the Church, and he was induced to visit the Church for three Sundays in April, 1804. Very soon after his return home he was invited to enter upon a preliminary period of service with a view to final settlement as Pastor. Mr. Ivimey accepted this in May of that year. In July he left Wallingford, after a pastorate there of twelve months (his first Church), and removed with his family to London. This period of probation being entirely satisfactory to the Church and to Mr. Ivimey, the final invitation to the pastorate of Eagle Street was extended to him. In the autumn, after much deliberation and prayer, and after consulting some of his senior ministerial brethren, he became satisfied that it was his duty to accept the call.

In the following letter, dated the 21st October, 1804, we have his reply to the invitation of the Church :—

“To the Church of Christ meeting in Eagle Street.

Christian Brethren and Sisters,

Having received your very interesting letter, by the hands of your worthy deacons, Messrs. Bagster and Pritt, containing your request that I would undertake the office of Pastor amongst you, I have endeavoured seriously to lay this very weighty matter before the Lord in prayer for direction, and from a review of the leadings of Providence which first brought me amongst you, and have since attended me, I am constrained to believe that your request contains the will of God concerning me.

I do, therefore, in His fear, and hoping for His continued assistance, accept your invitation, and cheerfully devote all my powers to your service for Jesus' sake, and I earnestly pray that my feeble efforts may be owned by Him, for the purpose of building up His people in their most holy faith.

Feeling my great inability to fill with propriety such a very important station,

permit me earnestly to implore an interest in your prayers that I may be enabled to go in and out before you, feeding you with knowledge and understanding.

That this event may eminently appear to be according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, and that your peace and prosperity may be the happy consequence is, and I hope ever will be, the prayer of, dear brothers and sisters, your willing servant in the gospel of Christ,

J. IVIMEY."

The recognition services in connection with Mr. Ivimey's settlement were held on the 16th January, 1805, on which occasion the Revs. Shenston, Upton, Miall, Martin and others were present and took part in the proceedings. Mr. Ivimey himself says of this occasion: "Never have I witnessed a more interesting day. Through divine goodness my mind, though much exercised with the importance of my engagement, has yet been kept tranquil: I hope from a steady trust and confidence in Him who said, 'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.' It is my ardent wish to spend and be spent in His service."

Mr. Ivimey was not in the habit of keeping a diary, nor did he leave behind him any

regular account of his ministry, but from the Church minute books and other records we get a good account of both his personal experiences and public work. In concluding the first year of his ministry at Eagle Street he says :—

“As a Church we must surely say, ‘The Lord hath done great things for us.’ In the past year we have received fifty members, thirty-seven of whom I have baptised. . . . We are now at peace amongst ourselves, a spirit of prayer is evidently manifested. The face of things is quite changed. I feel increasing love to the work of the ministry and to the people of my charge. I hope nothing will ever render me incapable of preaching the gospel, and, if the will of God, I hope till my last breath to preach it at Eagle Street.”

Thus the first year of his residence in London appears to have been distinguished by an unusual measure of success and enjoyment. It is deserving of note that the hope he here expresses that he may be sustained and conclude his life at Eagle Street was graciously fulfilled.

During the following years good progress was made by the Church. Many were led



to confess Jesus Christ as their Saviour, the services were well attended, and people in general were edified. Some prejudice that had been entertained at first by a number of the people appeared to be wearing away.

In the year 1807 Mr. Ivimey suffered a severe blow, from which he only slowly recovered to the extent of doing his ordinary work well, in the loss of the first Mrs. Ivimey. He writes at this time: "Oh, how my heart has been lacerated with anguish! I have lost in her my counsellor—my friend—my portion."

For the sake of his young children he thought it wise to look for an associate in whom his heart might trust, and who being like-minded with himself would care for the state of the Church. Ultimately he was married again, to Mrs. Price, a widow lady who was member of the Church at Portsea, on January 7th, 1808.

Meanwhile, in 1808, it was agreed to begin a Sunday School, of which a little later Mr. Ivimey himself said: "The Sunday School has succeeded beyond our expectations, upwards of seventy children attend it."

There was also inaugurated in connection with the Church a Dorcas Society for the relief of poor women, and also a Juvenile Society for the aid of missions. Mrs. Ivimey

has the honour of being the first proposer of the Dorcas Society, and subsequently led its efforts with much usefulness. These institutions speedily accumulated strength, and were productive, in various directions, of much good fruit.

The Church itself was foremost at this time of the London Baptist Churches in every good work and in public usefulness.

The efforts of Mr. Ivimey as an author commenced about this period, in which character he subsequently appeared before the public with a frequency perhaps unanticipated by himself. We cannot attempt to give a complete list in this brief sketch of all his publications, but the extent of his activity may be presumed by the mention of his principal productions. His earliest appears to have been "The History of Hannah" intended to benefit benevolent female societies. This tract was commended highly in the Eclectic Review for January, 1809, and appears to have encouraged its author to further literary effort. He formed an early and strong attachment to the character and writings of John Bunyan. This predilection induced him to prepare and publish his "Life of John Bunyan." So favourably was this received that a second edition was shortly afterwards demanded. In this year also, 1809,

he meditated the plan of his largest publication, "The History of the English Baptists," extending ultimately to four considerable octavo volumes, a work that even to-day is well known by students of Baptist and Nonconformist history. Mr. Ivimey was amongst the most early and constant contributors to the "Baptist Magazine," a monthly periodical published until 1809 in the West of England, but in that year removed to London.

The preface to Mr. Ivimey's first volume of his "History of the English Baptists," bears the date January 1st, 1811, in which he says: "The subsequent history is an attempt to prove that the English Baptists held the genuine principles of the Reformation and pursued them to their legitimate consequences, believing that the Bible alone contains the religion of Protestants, they rejected everything in the worship of God which was not found in the sacred Oracles." His object in undertaking the work he clearly states to be that of stimulating the denomination to which he belonged to a zealous imitation of the virtues of their predecessors, and that these may be held in "everlasting remembrance." This first volume, consisting of 572 closely printed octavo pages, brings down the history

of the English Baptists from the first to the seventeenth century, and is the result of great labour and research. Evidently Mr. Ivimey believed in *our* Apostolic Succession.

Mr. Ivimey was an ardent and zealous advocate of missionary enterprise. In 1812 he was made a member of the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society. From this time to the close of his life he gave much assistance in the management of the Society. He was a warm and personal friend of the then secretary, Rev. Andrew Fuller, a man, like himself, loved and respected by the whole denomination.

In the month of June, 1812, his step-daughter, Miss Ann Price, was removed by death. She had been in communion with the Church at Eagle Street for about three years, and during this time, by her spiritual mindedness, had attracted very general attention and regard. Mr. Ivimey published a memoir, and in the chapel a tablet was erected bearing the following inscription:—

Sacred to the Memory of  
MISS ANN PRICE,  
Who died June 16th, 1812,  
In her 21st year.

---

She trod religion's path while here below,  
 And loved to find and cheer the abode of love.  
 She made the sorrows of the poor her own,  
 And heaved the sigh at misery's plaintive moan.

But she is fled to brighter worlds above,  
 Where Jesus reigns, diffusing heavenly love,  
 And where, without a billow to annoy,  
 Flows the pure current of eternal joy.

---

"The Sunday School in this place having originated in her exertions, this tablet was erected by the friends of that institution, Anno Domini, 1821."

This tablet now occupies a place in the Schoolroom under the new chapel and has thus commemorated the founder and the founding of the Sunday School for more than one hundred years.

Mr. Ivimey was a warm friend of liberty, religious and civic, and few ministers have ever paid more attention than he did to its service. He attended the meetings of the "General Body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers" in London. This society usually met up to 1814 at Dr. Williams' Library in Red Cross Street, and was of considerable importance. In its affairs Mr. Ivimey took an active part. He published in 1813 a pamphlet entitled, "Neutrality the Proper Ground for Protestant Dissenters respecting Roman Catholic Claims."

In 1812 the Baptist Missionary Society had appointed one of their number to visit

Ireland. This tour was accomplished in July and August, 1813, by Rev. Mr. Saffery, of Salisbury. In the "Baptist Magazine" for September 6, 1813, appeared a letter from this gentleman giving a graphic and stirring account of his journey, and suggesting the formation of a Society for Propagating the Gospel in Ireland. Mr. Ivimey and other London ministers were deeply moved by the need disclosed through the real lack of the Gospel there, and at the ministers' weekly fraternal meeting, then held at the Jamaica Coffee House, St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill, the letter produced a powerful impression. A meeting was arranged to discuss the question in Eagle Street Chapel, on December 9th, 1813, and thus was formed the Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel in Ireland. Mr. Ivimey both convened this meeting, and, being the moving spirit, was appointed its honorary secretary.

Thus began his long and honourable connection with a great and good work, the fruits of which are seen to-day. The Baptist Irish Society, as it was called, thus originated, employed itinerant preachers, established schools, and distributed Bibles and Tracts. Its operations from its commencement derived, under God, no inconsiderable share of their usefulness from the energy and perseverance of its

secretary. All the leisure that he could abstract from paramount duties was cheerfully devoted to its interests, and for many years, comparatively unaided, he gratuitously laboured in its service, directing its movements and conducting its correspondence.

Andrew Fuller wrote, at the beginning of his work for the society, giving him much sound advice and encouragement. He visited Ireland himself in May, 1814, with the Rev. Christopher Anderson, of Edinburgh. This visit was ever a stimulant to him in his efforts and prayers for the success of the society.

The formation of the Baptist Irish Society, however, absorbing as it might have been, did not so entrench on Mr. Ivimey's energies as to prevent his prosecuting other important objects in which he was engaged. It is indeed remarkable that the preface to his second volume of the "History of the English Baptists," bears the same date as the formation of the Society—the 19th April, 1814.

Mr. Ivimey with three or four other ministers formed a society for extending Baptist work in and around London in 1815. This did splendid work, and was finally merged into the Baptist Home Missionary Society in 1818. Among other Churches aided and strengthened through Mr. Ivimey's exertions, the Highgate Baptist cause and the Church at Harrow-on-

the-Hill were the first, but many others also received invaluable assistance.

His sermons on national events, such as the death of the Duke of Kent in 1820, or on the death of a prominent minister, e.g., that of Andrew Fuller in 1815, usually were of great strength and interest, and were published with success and benefit to the community at large. Meanwhile the Church with its various institutions continued to prosper, and, if the numerical growth was not always rapid, there was a steady growth of fervour in the Lord's work and of loyalty to Mr. Ivimey himself. In 1817 he visited Jersey and Guernsey, and assisted in forming Churches there. Whatever he regarded as affecting the interests of truth in connection with Nonconformity, and more especially with his own denomination, invariably produced a powerful impression on his mind. In the year 1818 he published a reply to Rev. F. A. Cox, M.A., on the open communion question, and clearly stated with force and dignity his own position as a close communionist.

In the year 1819, Mr. Ivimey wrote in the Church book, "Fifteen years have elapsed from the time of my ordination over the Church in Eagle Street. "I will sing of mercy and judgment, unto Thee, O Lord, will I sing." . . . I have just been looking over the names of the members, and am deeply



affected to find that out of about 175 who composed the Church in 1805, only about 70 remain at present. Nearly 400 have been added to the Church through the blessing of God upon my feeble labours. Eleven of these have been sent into the holy work of the Christian ministry. About 380 now belong to the Church. Is there anything too hard for the Lord to do? When the hand which writes this is mouldered to dust, let all who read the memorandum upon this page learn from it that *I Cor. i. 26-28*, is still acted upon by the Great Head of the Church. J. Ivimey."

In 1822 he published "Pastoral Counsels," containing advice to Church Members. In this year he narrowly escaped death by poison taken in mistake. Medical aid was, however, speedily obtained, and he was happily restored. The following letter is of considerable interest as revealing something of his deep spiritual nature.

20, Harpur Street, Jan. 3rd, 1822.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

I had anticipated much pleasure in meeting you at the annual Church meeting this evening, but am prevented by a very uncommon circumstance. At six o'clock this morning, I took, by mistake, nearly an ounce of laudanum. The danger was very great, I knew, but I knew also whom I had believed, and therefore com-

mitted myself to God, and His word helped me. . . . The day which I thought might have been the day of my death, has furnished another stone of help on which I inscribe Ebenezer. . . . It gave me comfort, in prospect of death, that I had compiled and printed a small tract for your use, entitled, "Pastoral Counsels." . . . I request brother N, who, as senior deacon, should preside this evening, to read this short letter and to assure you that whether in life or in death I have you in my heart. May God, even our own God, bless you and preserve you. So prays your affectionate pastor.

JOSEPH IVIMEY.

Not only was his work prospering at Eagle Street, but his influence was becoming wider in the denomination. He was frequently consulted by his brother ministers, and his advice sought for by pastors desirous of effecting a change. Baptists in Germany were encouraged by his sympathy, whilst in his own country the prophet was not without honour, increasing as the years advanced.

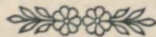
The third volume of his "History of the Baptists" appeared in December, 1822, and, like the two former ones, obtained a warm welcome and ready sale. On the death of the Rev. William Ward, one of the three distinguished missionaries at Serampore, in

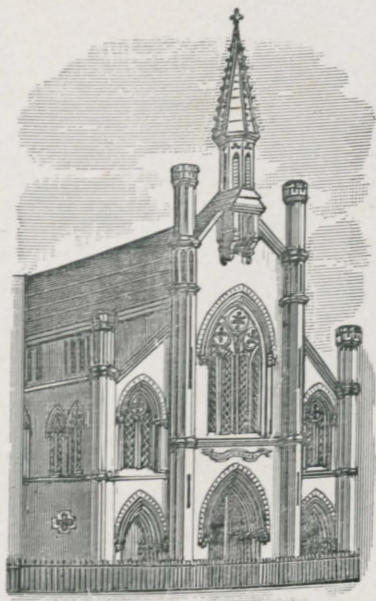
March, 1823, Mr. Ivimey was requested to preach at the public memorial service held at Maze Pond, Southwark. This sermon he published under the title, "The heroism of the Faithful Minister of Christ displayed in reference both to Life and Death."

His health troubling him, he sought aid in connection with the secretarial duties of the Baptist Irish Society, and in 1823 the Rev. George Pritchard was appointed joint secretary. Mr. Pritchard after his death became his biographer. The society, under the fostering care of Mr. Ivimey, had by this time made considerable advance, and had largely extended its influence.

The following resolution of the Church of July 29, 1824, is of interest as revealing the widening influences of Mr. Ivimey's ministry. "It being considered desirable that the Church and congregation should be brought into connection with the Particular Baptist Fund, it was unanimously agreed that a letter be sent to the secretary for that purpose, and that £100, or if possible £150, be procured according to the regulations of that society, that this congregation be represented at that Board." In the December of 1824, the Church was admitted to the Fund. From that time to the present the Church has been represented in this work of caring for poor Churches and Ministers.

The meeting house was lighted by means of candles until 1825, when it was decided to light the building with gas, and a committee was appointed to effect the change.





THE SECOND BUILDING,  
Fronting Old Kingsgate Street.  
*Erected 1856.*





## CHAPTER V.

### MR. IVIMEY AS AN AUTHOR.

MR. IVIMEY'S literary activity continued, and during the following few years he published many tracts bearing on subjects of interest at the time and of importance to the Church as a whole. In 1824 he replied again to Dr. Cox on the communion question, and a little later to the famous Robert Hall, of Broadmead, Bristol. His "Address to Young Ministers" became very useful to many, and was marked by clear insight into truth, and by dignity of language. A warm supporter of the "British and Foreign Bible Society," he wrote in connection with its work towards the close of 1825, "A Plea for the Protestant Canon of Scripture in opposition to the Romish Canon." This bore very largely on the value of the Apocrypha, and, of course, argued against its inclusion in the Canon.

He designed and published a continuation of the immortal allegory of John Bunyan,

entitled, "A Continuation of the Pilgrim's Progress, upon the plan projected by Mr. Bunyan." The pamphlet published under the title "The Divinely Appointed Means for Preserving a Prosperous or Restoring a Declining Church," was of sevice at that time, and certainly would be of no less help and service to-day. The methods he suggests for preserving or restoring a Church are as follows: "United Prayer, a steady adherence to the faith of the gospel, mutual affection, and constant attendance upon the means of grace."

During the sitting of Parliament in 1828, those obnoxious penal enactments, the Corporation and Test Laws, which had for so lengthened a period disgraced the Statute Book of English legislature were repealed. Nonconformists until this time had been under a legal ban and liberty had been denied them: even the right to meet for worship as conscience dictated had been only tolerated. Mr. Ivimey's excitement on this occasion was very great, and, he being a true friend of liberty, his joy knew no bounds.

Shortly afterwards it pleased Providence to bring him into the deepest affliction by the death of his beloved wife, in the 61st year of her age, with whom he had lived with great happiness for more than twenty years. Writing to the Rev. John West, of Dublin, in a letter



dated London, March 4th, 1829, he says : " My soul is full of trouble. Lord help me. I am as a man who hath no strength. My loss is very great and my wound very grievous. My feelings are very painful and render me almost incapable of engaging in public services. But I have many kind friends and the Church is perfectly united. I have many causes of thankfulness to the Father of all mercies." He spent the greater part of the year in retirement and could not engage in his regular pursuits. Gradually, however, he recovered from the severe shock he had been called to sustain.

His fourth and last volume of the " History of the English Baptists," was issued in 1830, and is written, it is said, with considerable force and ability. The whole work was in hand for over twenty years, and is a monument to his learning and industry.

Mr. Ivimey's father was already dead. In this year (1830) his mother also died. His father just before his death, and his mother for many years, were earnest and faithful followers of the Lord Jesus, being in membership with the Church at Portsea. Mr. Ivimey, in September, 1830, married again. His third wife, who had been Mrs. Gratwick, survived him, and during his few remaining years proved a true helpmeet in all his labours.

When the disturbances occurred in the

island of Jamaica, which led to the destruction of chapels, the dispersion and imprisonment of the missionaries, so intensely did Mr. Ivimey feel that he unhesitatingly volunteered his personal services to proceed to the island to encourage the Churches there. Though the B.M.S. did not accept his services, they quite appreciated his ready sympathy and love for the Master's work. He made a tour in Wales during 1832, however, on behalf of the Society, and spent much time preaching and lecturing.

During this year and the one following, he wrote and published biographies of that eminent Baptist, William Kiffin, and of that other more eminent, the poet, John Milton. The latter book especially was a great success, and before the close of 1833 it was republished in America.

In the early part of this year also (1833), Mr. Ivimey became painfully conscious that "his natural force" was rapidly abating. Many circumstances had united to draw extensively upon his physical energies, among which the excitement experienced by him upon the question of slavery in our colonies, which was shortly to be abolished; and in the abolition of it he played a considerable part. Perceiving as he did that the losses occasioned by death and other causes in the Church and congregation were not speedily replaced, and finding

his own health declining, he prudently consulted with the deacons and Church as to the appointing of an assistant minister, and generously agreed to surrender a portion of his income to secure this. They were led to ask the Rev. R. W. Overbury to preach for a season. This engagement led to the permanent settlement of Mr. Overbury in 1833 as assistant minister.

Mr. Ivimey now resigned his position as secretary to the Irish Society on account of failing health, to the great regret of all concerned in its affairs. In connection with this the following resolution was unanimously adopted by the Committee:—"That the Committee, deeply sensible of the important, efficient and long-continued gratuitous services of their revered secretary, the Rev. Joseph Ivimey, most deeply regret that the present declining state of his health should render it imperative on him to resign an office which, from the commencement of the Society he has sustained with a zeal and an ardour characteristic of the energy of his mind and the benevolence of his heart. . . . The Committee would express its unfeigned thankfulness that his valuable life has been continued so long, and they fervently pray that, if it please the Father of Mercies, it may yet be protracted to devote the evening of his days to the beneficent

objects in which for so lengthened a period they have been employed."

His health, instead of improving, gradually became worse, until on December 22nd, 1833, he took to his bed with an impression that he should never go downstairs again. He remained perfectly calm and trustful in his Saviour, and, though he seemed to improve at times, yet all who loved him soon became aware of their approaching loss. On Jan. 3rd, he said "I am very low, but then the end is the best part of the journey." Resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ he said, "I am looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. I trust in the divine faithfulness, and say, with Job, "though He slay me yet will I trust Him." He appeared to be much in prayer, and frequently uttered ejaculatory sentences, such as "Lord, help me." "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." "Keep me to the end, O keep me to the end." The same day, after suffering much pain he said, "Did Christ my Lord suffer and shall I repine?" Later he made this remark, "My struggles will soon be at an end. Dr. Ryland said, O, for the last groan, O for my last groan."

At last, after severe pain, he said, "It's all over." These were his last words, and thus on the 8th of February, 1834, not having quite completed the 61st year of his age, the Rev.

Joseph Ivimey departed this life, sincerely and greatly lamented. He was buried in Bunhill Fields, and, acting on the command in his will, there was placed on the headstone of the grave after his name and age only these words:—

“Grace reigns.”

Revs. Dr. Cox and Dr. Newman conducted the funeral service. The Irish Society, the Baptist Missionary Society, “The Baptist Magazine,” and, indeed, the whole denomination conspired on this occasion to do honour to his memory. The following tablet was erected to his memory by the Church, in the Alms Houses and Schoolroom, and is now placed in the new schoolroom under the chapel:—

This Tablet

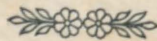
is erected to perpetuate the memory of  
the Rev. JOSEPH IVIMEY,  
who was ordained Pastor of the Baptist Church  
in Eagle Street,  
16 January, 1805, and died 8 February, 1834,  
aged 60 years.

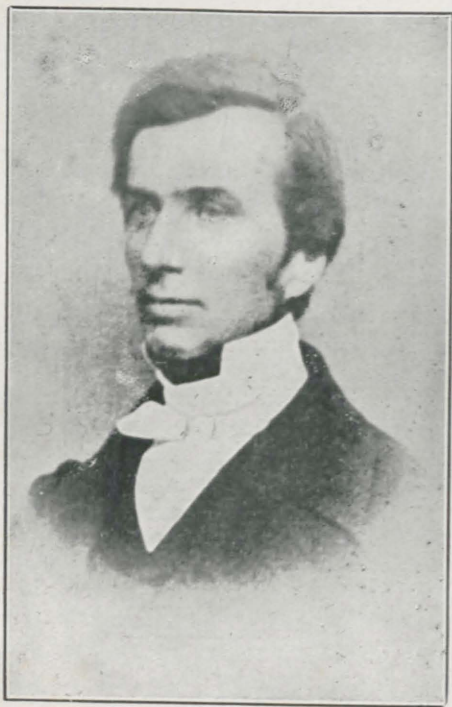
The intellectual power, moral courage,  
and physical and mental energy  
of the man,  
and the deep piety,  
disinterested benevolence  
and ardent zeal  
of the Christian  
rendered him eminent  
as a preacher, an author and a philanthropist.  
The last public act of his life was the  
founding of this edifice,\*

\* The Alms Houses and Schoolroom in which the Tablet was first placed.

intending alike to promote the interests of  
 the Eagle Street Sunday School  
 (which commenced under his auspices in 1808),  
 to contribute to the comfort of the aged poor  
 and to celebrate  
 the Abolition of Colonial Slavery.  
 (He was buried in Bunhill Fields, 15 February, 1834).

From the records of the Church we learn that during his pastorate more than eight hundred persons were added to the fellowship of the Church, twenty young men were encouraged to give themselves to the Christian ministry, four of whom received missionary appointments, and two of whom laboured in Ireland under the Irish Society. As a writer, a pastor, and a Christian man he possessed eminent virtues, while no better testimony could be left of any preacher than is recorded of him. "The burden of all his preaching was Jesus Christ and Him crucified."





Rev. R. W. OVERBURY.

*Pastor, 1834-1853.*







#### CHAPTER VI.

### KINGSGATE AND THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

AMONG the numerous advocates for the entire extinction of colonial slavery, there could not have been one more uncompromising nor unflinching than Mr. Ivimey, the minister of the Baptist Church in Eagle Street, London. Often was his honest indignation aroused by details of cruelty inflicted upon the injured African, and often was his powerful voice raised in favour of total abolition. He was for some time a member of the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society, and also one of the Sub-Committee of Agency. In the latter capacity, in 1832, he delivered an exceedingly animated lecture at Chelmsford, in the Friends' Meeting House. This lecture, enlarged, and

dedicated to William Wilberforce, the famous emancipator, was published under the title of "The Utter Extinction of Slavery an Object of Scriptural Prophecy." It comprised a rapid but impressive sketch of the awful history of this degrading and inhuman system which existed in our colonies and especially in the East Indies, until the passing of the Abolition Act in 1833. The following passage is noteworthy as showing the point of view of its author. "From all the considerations," he says, "which I have mentioned I feel myself warranted in adopting our Lord's language to His disciples, in application to the groaning and weeping descendants of the kidnapped, robbed, spoiled and murdered sons and daughters of Africa, that this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." As if addressing the slaves he says, "Hear, then, for your comfort, ye sable brethren of the human race—ye most oppressed of the family of man—hear the Saviour of the World saying unto you, He that hath 'All power, both in heaven and in earth'—'Lift up your heads for your redemption draweth nigh.'"

When in the following year slavery in the British Colonies was to cease to exist (the 1st of August, 1834), his joy was unqualified, and the ransom price (£20,000,000), in his estimation, sank into insignificance when

compared with the immense value of the object attained.

Those of us who have read the book "Uncle Tom's Cabin" will already have some idea of what slavery meant in America. The same condition of things existed in our own Colonies until 1834.

The following evidence given at the House of Commons enquiry, by one of the few kind and generous holders of slaves in Jamaica at the time, will further explain the need for reform. Mr. Wildman, the owner referred to, owned 640 slaves.

Q. "What do you consider was the limitation of your power in Jamaica as to the punishment of the slave?"

A. "If I had stuck to the law I might have given 39 lashes with the whip. I punished him with a small cat made of string with six tails to it."

Q. "Might you have given 39 lashes altogether, if anything displeased you, or must it have been for some legal offence?"

A. "Just as I liked, even for looking at me. I was the sole judge when a man should be punished and to what extent, provided it was not beyond the 39 lashes the law specified. But persons do go far beyond the law constantly. The general system of flogging is to give them a certain number of

stripes with a long whip which inflicts a dreadful laceration, or dreadful contusion, and then they follow up that by a severe flogging with ebony switches: the ebony being a very strong wiry plant with a small leaf, and under every leaf a sharp tough thorn. They give a few lashes with one of these and then take another. After all this they rub the slave with brine. The mode of flogging was to put a rope around each wrist and ankle: these ropes were what sailors term "bowsed-out" with a tackle and pullies. I made complaint to the Custos and to the parish generally against this. The result was that the system of the block and tackle was defended as being a humane practice."

Mr. Taylor, who was manager of Mr. Wildman's estate, gave evidence that will show his estimate of slavery in its *best* form as compared with freedom. Some negroes had sufficient food and in certain situations opportunity of purchasing some of the luxuries and comforts of life.

Q. "Do you believe that slavery is for the slave a better thing than freedom?"

Mr. Taylor replied: "I certainly think freedom would be preferable, and I firmly believe that in the vast majority of cases the slaves think so too. Whatever advantages the slave may have there are so many accompany-

ing evils that no man would remain in that state who could get rid of it. I will take a negro," said Mr. Taylor, "of our own estate, Vere, whom I believe to be the most comfortable negro in the island, and I would even double the amount of comfort that he has, and yet I would not be in his position, nor do I think he would be himself if he could get rid of it without being turned adrift. The evils even in his case far counterbalance the comforts. I would rather be the poorest labourer in England than the richest slave in Jamaica, taking that slave even in the most favourable circumstances. With the best master he cannot call Sunday his own in the religious sense. He may see his wife or his adult daughter indecently stripped and flogged, and there is nothing to prevent it being done."

After reading this evidence the reader must be moved as our forefathers were moved, and we cannot wonder they insisted on bringing about a better state of things, especially in face of the well known fact that every year many slaves were flogged for trifling offences until they died. "The first Christian body as such who delivered a protest against it were the Quakers."

To Sir John Hawkins belongs the unenviable distinction of having been the first Englishman engaged in the African trade of

slave carrying. He commenced this nefarious traffic in 1562, and for over 200 years it was carried on even in British Colonies. Hawkins deceived his Royal Mistress (Queen Elizabeth) by representing the Africans as voluntary labourers. The Queen is stated to have expressed a concern lest any of the negroes should be forced from their country, declaring it would be detestable if attempted. Despite her wishes a large number of vessels sailed annually from this country taking with them firearms, intoxicating liquors and other articles of trifling value which they exchanged for slaves. In the early part of the 18th century the planters and merchants were accustomed to bring slaves openly as servants. The crews of the vessels engaged in this trade were fully armed. The negroes were seized in Africa and forced to go on board their ships, where they were most cruelly imprisoned and treated. At length, after many years, facts began to leak out and created great public indignation. During the latter part of the eighteenth century Christian abhorrence was greatly strengthened by a circumstance which occurred. A Captain Collingwood and his officers of a ship named the "Zong" were proved to have thrown overboard 132 slaves alive into the sea in order to defraud the underwriters by claiming the value of the

slaves as if they had been lost in a natural way. About fifty of these slaves were sickly at the time and were first driven to death. The others were forced overboard either that day or the three following days. Some of these, with noble resolution, seeing death was inevitable, would not suffer the brutal sailors and officers to touch them, but themselves leaped overboard. This atrocious case was not denied, and the facts came out in a public court of justice. Nothing, however, was done by those in power at the time. But a full account of the affair was published, and this made such an impression upon others that new advocates sprung up everywhere for the oppressed negroes.

Brace, in "*Gesta Christi*," says :

"Out of three and a quarter millions  
 "of negroes, according to an impartial  
 "historian, imported to various Colonies  
 "in a century by Great Britain, 250,000  
 "were thrown into the sea on the passage.  
 "One may well feel (on reading this fact)  
 "that this is the great crime of history,  
 "the one before which all others pale in  
 "enormity and wickedness."

The Kingsgate Church in Eagle Street nobly threw itself as a body in the movement for emancipation, led by its faithful pastor, Mr. Ivimey. So great were their efforts and so

splendid was their monument, erected to commemorate the Abolition Act, that we have felt this record should be written.

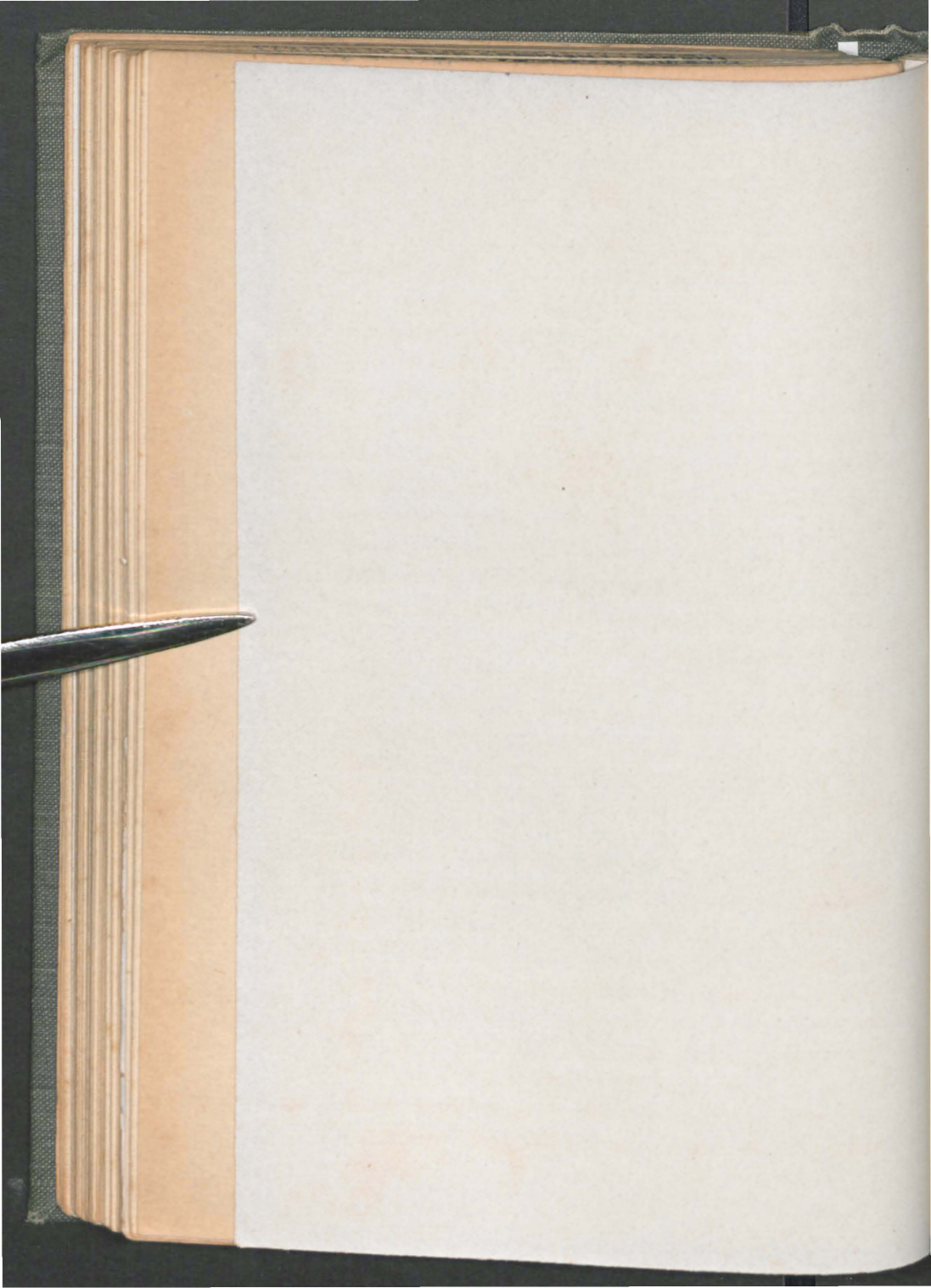
All the noblest Englishmen were arrayed on the side of the slaves. They being dead yet speak to us. Their names are fragrant with what is best in the English character. William Wilberforce, Granville Sharpe, Clarkson, Buxton, and others fought both in Parliament and out for a better and more Christian state of things. These men, aided by all the friends of freedom, fought for 30 years the battle for the oppressed and to obtain liberty for the captives. This England of ours is the home of liberty, we breathe air unburdened by the groan of slavery; but why is it so? Our freedom has been dearly purchased and our land was for long free but in name. Liberty of speech, of worship, of conscience, have come to us at length through the labour and imprisonment and the sacrifices of others, and we should deserve to be counted unworthy if ever we forgot them.

It may be well to repeat a paragraph from His Majesty's speech at the beginning of the year in which abolition was secured. William IV. said in reference to this Act of 1833: "It will be observed that the measure is based upon the eternal principle of justice,





FREEING THE SLAVE.  
(From Panel in Baptist Church House.)



involving the rights of humanity. Thus the right of the long and cruelly oppressed negro to freedom is fully recognised and his unjust miseries compassionated and relieved. The state of slavery in my colonial possessions has necessarily occupied a portion of your time and your attention commensurate with the magnitude and the difficulty of the subject, whilst your deliberations have been guided by the paramount considerations of justice and humanity. The Act provides for the entire extinction of slavery in my British Colonies on the 1st August, 1834."

Thus at last the goal was won, and for the negroes the prize was attained. The price paid in compensation to slave owners, £20,000,000, was considered satisfactory. Who does not see in this event, which many thought at the time to surpass in importance any former legislative measure, another instance of divine answer to the prayers of God's people? Certainly we should say all honour to the Christian Churches such as Kingsgate at the time that were led to take a part in this great deliverance. We should indeed be proud of being in such a glorious succession.

When William Knibb, the Jamaica missionary, had been some time amongst the

slaves and had seen the degraded condition in which they were kept by their masters, he went to the masters and earnestly entreated them to ameliorate the condition of the poor creatures. Instead of having a good effect his pleadings were met with anger on the part of the slave owners, who accused him of making the slaves dissatisfied and rebellious, and the masters hardened their hearts against the victims, and made their lot more uncomfortable than before. The effect of this upon the slaves was that they turned upon Mr. Knibb and accused him of setting their masters more against them while professing to take their part.

Mr. Knibb's position became, therefore, very difficult and he determined to return to England to see if the English people could be prevailed upon to help the slaves. When he was leaving the island the slave owners sneeringly said to him, "You will never come back to preach to our slaves again." How many a truth is spoken in jest. When Knibb arrived in England he found, alas! that the general feeling of the people there was in favour of slavery and not against it, and that even some of those who were most eminent as Christians were actually proprietors of slaves abroad. Such an one was the famous

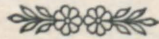
Countess of Huntingdon, who saw no harm in holding slaves.

Mr. Knibb tramped the whole country preaching and speaking against the horrors of slavery, and demanding a law abolishing it wherever the British flag waved. He said, "As long as I live I will stump this country crying for the abolition of slavery, and if I die without accomplishing my object, if prayer is permitted in Heaven, I will never cease petitioning the Throne of Grace till the slaves are set free."

When the Act was passed freeing slaves in British Colonies, William Knibb went back to Jamaica. Upon the arrival of the ship the masters stood aloof and looked upon him with anger, but the slaves so thronged the quay that some were actually pushed into the water. The slaves begged him to preach, and Knibb said, "Never to slaves again"—they were to be free in a few hours.

A few minutes to the stroke of midnight, they kept perfect silence, but as a town clock sounded the last stroke of the hour they sprang to their feet, crying, "We're free, we're free: emancipation day has come." And in a scene of wild exultation, men women and children laughed and cried with joy, shouting praises and fervent prayers

to God with songs of deliverance. When the tumult had subsided, then, and not till then, did Knibb speak to those whose slavery was for ever past.





## CHAPTER VII.

### SOME FURTHER ACCOUNT OF THE STRUGGLE.

Before the public were fully aware of the state of the negroes many noble men were engaged in relieving their lot. The brutal force used recoiled on the users, as brutal force always will, and gradually but surely Christian feeling was aroused. The brother of Granville Sharpe was a surgeon in Jamaica, and took an active part in befriending the slaves. He appeared as the friend of the African in the case of Jonathan Strong. This slave, having been barbarously treated by his master, became so emaciated as to be utterly useless, and was consequently permitted to go where he pleased in order that the expense of his maintenance might be avoided. In this miserable condition he went to Mr. Sharp for advice, and under his benevolent care he was restored to health.

Mr. Granville Sharpe, hearing of the case from his brother, supported him with money, and afterwards procured him a situation. His old master, a man named John Kerr, happened to see him and determined on repossessing him. The poor fellow was seized by some of the city officers, at the instance of this man Kerr, who conveyed him without warrant to the place where they were usually sold, and where he was repurchased by Kerr himself. In several other cases Mr. Sharpe took a prominent part, and did much to mitigate the sufferings of the slaves.

The case of James Somerset is historic in English law. This man was a slave, and the question arose whether by coming to England as his master's servant and setting his foot on English soil he was not free. The result of the trial, to the everlasting honour of England, was an answer in the affirmative, and it was clearly stated that the moment any slave set his foot on English territory he became by that act a free man. From this period public attention was increasingly drawn to the question of slavery.

At a Meeting of the London Missionary Society at this time the chairman's voice was lost in a sudden acclamation of joy at the unexpected arrival of William Wilberforce. This event



was typical of the affection in which Wilberforce was held at the time. T. P. Buxton, who was the chairman, said of him: "His wit and eloquence were remarkable, but they were but the adjuncts to a heart abounding in love to man." "I had not," he said, "the opportunity of seeing him on my last short visit to London, for he was not able to bear the strain of a conversation that would surely turn on the all important and absorbing question of negro emancipation, but I am told that as he was almost approaching the agonies of death he lifted up his emaciated hands and said, 'O that I should have lived to see the day in which the country will give £20,000,000 of money for the emancipation of the slaves.' It was a singular fact, showing the hand of Providence, that on the very night on which they were engaged in the House of Commons in adding the words to the Emancipation Act, 'Be it enacted, that all and every, the persons who on the said 1st day of August, 1834, shall be holden in slavery within any such British Colony . . . shall upon and after the 1st day of August, 1834, become and be to all intents and purposes free . . .'. Wilberforce sank into his eternal rest."

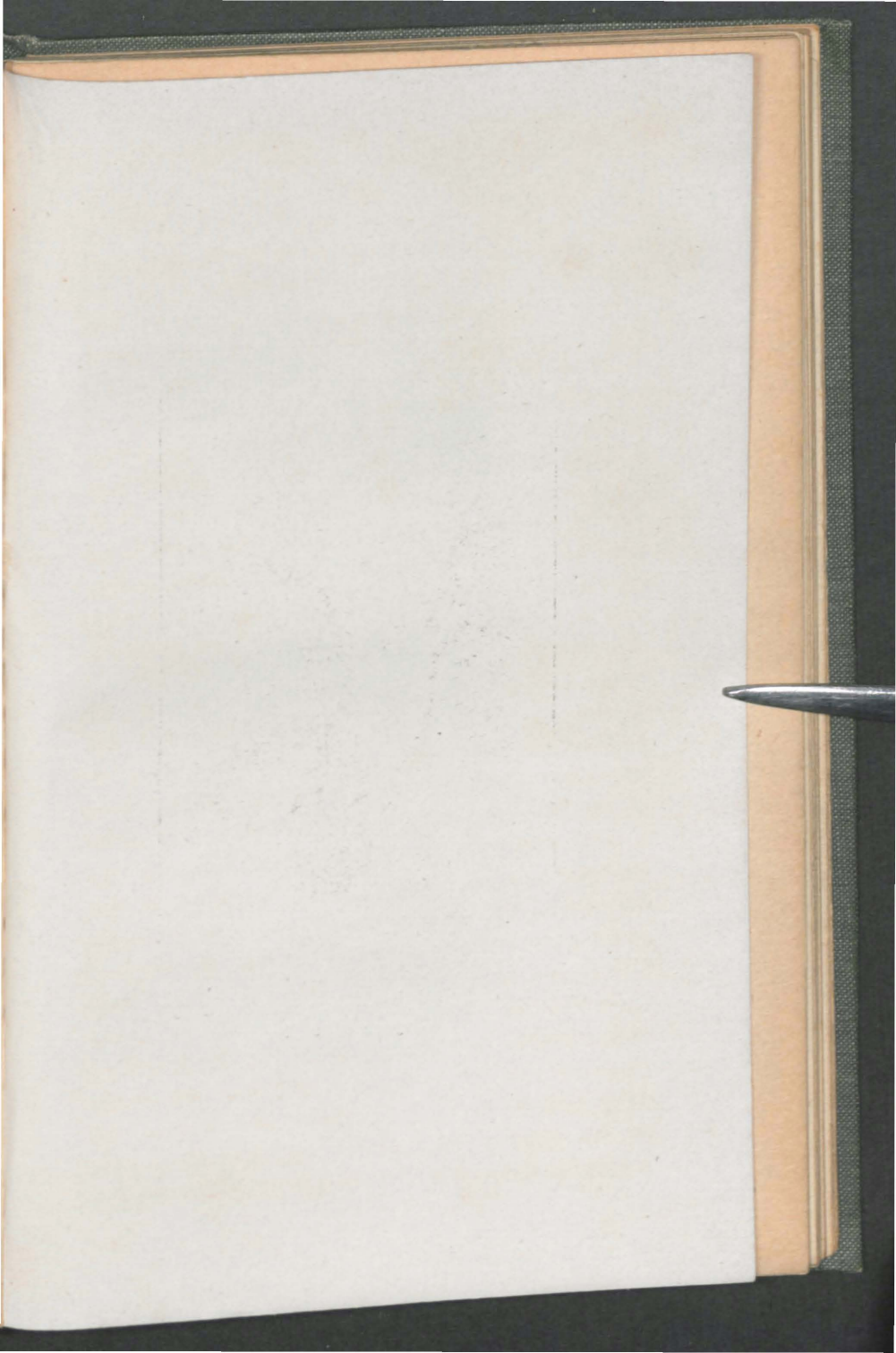
The worker under God had finished the work and the rest was well earned.

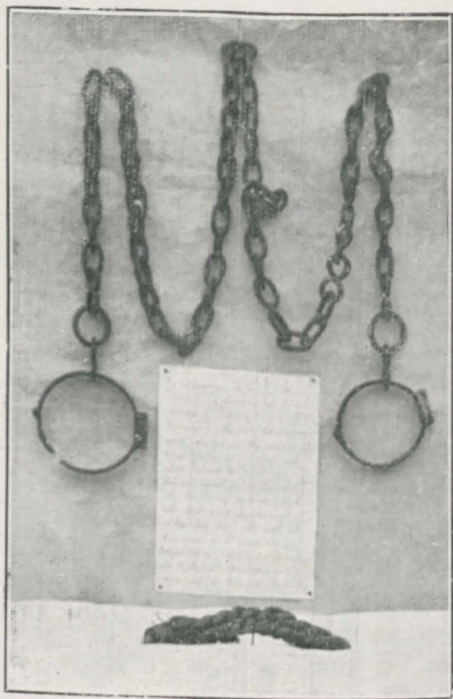
The Bill would not have passed Parliament

at all had not the Government rightly gauged public feeling and pressed it through.

Mr. Ivimey's feelings on the subject were most intense. It absorbed all his energies and became the one paramount object of solicitude. "Nothing would have been done," he said, in writing to a friend, "even by our reformed House of Commons had the measure not Government support. Dr. Lushington said that there were not sixty members to be depended on. Well it is a much better measure than I ever expected. The chain is broken, and even twenty millions would not mend it again."

On the safe passing of the Act, the 4th of September, 1833, was set apart by the Church at Eagle Street as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God for the successful termination of the labours of the friends of freedom, justice and humanity. At the meeting held in the evening of that day, on the proposal of Mr. Ivimey, it was unanimously resolved to commemorate the great event by the erection of Sunday School rooms in Fisher Street, Red Lion Square, large enough for 300 children and suitable for the purpose of a Lancastrian Day School, to which it was subsequently determined to add twelve alms rooms for twelve poor women, and thus to consecrate a building extending its benevolent protection





SLAVE CHAINS AND WHIP,  
brought to England by William Knibb, and now in  
Kingsgate Chapel.

to young and old. It was to be a monument of gratitude to God, of respect to His Majesty and his ministers for the deliverance of the nation from the curse of colonial slavery. Thus was commenced a memorable movement in the Church at Eagle Street that up to the present time has continued to benefit many.

A subscription list was in consequence at once opened. This succeeded so well that plans were drawn out and the work put in hand. On Tuesday, November 12th, 1833, the Committee were able to lay the first stone of the building. This was done in a manner worthy of the sacred cause in which it had its origin and of the Christian feeling by which its supporters were so honourably distinguished.

The subscribers and friends assembled in Eagle Street Chapel, where the Rev. T. Price, of Devonshire Square, opened the service by reading the 126th Psalm and by engaging in solemn prayer. The famous Jamaica missionary, Rev. William Knibb, who had stirred the Churches of England to a sense of duty towards the slaves, and who had recently returned from the island, addressed the assembly on the horrors of slave life and the greatness of the deliverance purchased for its victims. At the conclusion of the service the subscribers and congregation proceeded in regular pro-

cession to the enclosed ground in Fisher Street almost adjoining the chapel, where the building was to be erected. In the procession were two negroes, lately slaves in Jamaica, one bearing a chain which was to be broken, the other a whip which was to be cut, and both chain and whip were to be buried under the foundation stone of the building. The chain had been worn in slavery and the whip used to lash slaves. Mr. Ivimey addressed the meeting, stating the object for which they were assembled. In the course of his remarks he said they had determined on this form of thanksgiving to God. In this matter, he said, they could contemplate with pure delight and in humble confidence invoke the blessing of heaven. He "blushed for America, that boasted land of freedom, while they kept their fellow men in the chains of slavery. If the Americans cannot blush for themselves, we will continue to blush for them till at length they shall learn to be ashamed of their injustice and inhumanity. It might be said, 'O Africa, what hast thou done? Thy children have increased, but not augmented thy joy.'" In reading these words, it must be remembered that at the time Mr. Ivimey spoke (1833) America had not yet passed through the crisis that came when she too finally became

in deed as well as in word "a land of freedom."

The chief speaker appeared to be a Mr. Pownall, a magistrate at the time, and a friend of the negro. He said, among other things, "Who can look at the momentous interest involved in this great question without feeling the liveliest emotion of thankfulness to God for having brought the movement to a successful issue. Some object to the price paid, but when the liberty of 800,000 of our fellow subjects is to be secured I heed not the amount. I would use the language of one who was always the friend of the negro, and say, 'Shame that any should think lightly of liberty, whose worth is so testified, whose benefits are so numerous and rich. Moralists have praised it; poets have sung it; the gospel has taught it and breathed it; while patriarchs and martyrs have died for it; as a temporal blessing it is beyond all comparison and above all price. Without it what are honours and riches? Why, slavery is the very Upas tree of the moral world, beneath whose shades all intellect languishes and dies. Disguise slavery how you will, put into the cup all the pleasing and palatable ingredients which you can discover in the wide range of nature and art, still it is a bitter draught. The cup

of oppression must be dashed to pieces. . . .  
I trust the widows will find this asylum a  
Bethel, and that all the children educated  
in these schools will be taught of the Lord."

We may here say again that this work for  
the poor has gone on for nearly 80 years,  
and although we have now no alms houses,  
yet the poor are provided for elsewhere and  
relieved from want. The present members  
of the Church would fail grievously in a good  
work, thus nobly begun, were they to neglect  
this branch of their activities.

Mr. Pownall having concluded his remarks,  
the chain was broken by the repeated blows  
of a sledge hammer upon an anvil. The  
man so recently the wearer of the chain then  
held up a part in each hand, exclaiming  
with joy, "The chain is broken and Africa  
is free." The company loudly testified how  
fully they shared in the free man's exultation,  
and joined in singing:

Sable Afric aid the strain,  
Triumph o'er thy broken chain;  
Bid thy wildest music raise  
All its fervour in this praise.

The Rev. William Knibb then took up the  
chain and said he had seen a woman of his  
congregation working in a heavier chain than  
that, to which she was condemned for praying  
to her God. Taking up the whip he said he



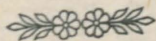
had seen a deacon of his own Church flogged with a whip even worse than that one for having dared to pray in his (Mr. Knibb's) house while he, Mr. Knibb, was dangerously ill, that he might recover. The time for such abominations had now, he blessed God, passed away for ever. After William Williams, the other freed slave, had cut the cart whip with a hatchet, both chain and whip, with a glass bottle containing an account of the undertaking, were flung into the hollow over which the stone was to lie. The stone was then laid, and with singing and prayer the proceedings terminated. Mr. Pownall declared it had been "The happiest day's work he had ever performed in his life."

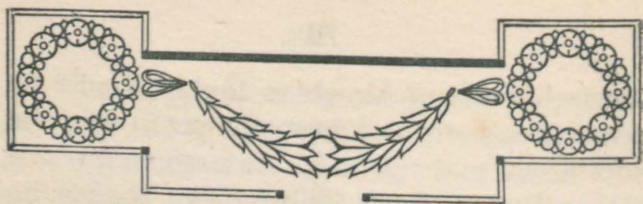
Mr. Ivimey was at this time very seriously ill, yet so intense (writes Mr. Overbury, his successor at Eagle Street) was his desire for the erection of these buildings before he left the world, that, collecting himself for a final effort of benevolent zeal, he secured the site, the drafting of the scheme, and then the architectural plans, and finally, though more fit to be in bed, he was present at this foundation stone laying. Mr. Overbury says further: "Perhaps it would be difficult to find an individual who in his circumstances would have ventured out at such a time of year in such a state of health. His absence

might readily have been excused, but his mental fortitude rendered him superior to his physical debility, and he even made a stirring and affectionate speech. After this service he returned home in a state of entire exhaustion, to die. Thus he was present at the commencement of the building, yet before it was publicly opened his happy spirit had taken its much deserved flight to the celestial world." He was indeed a true "Minister of Jesus Christ."

At his death the Church numbered about 470 members, and was prominent in London as one of the principal strongholds of Non-conformity. The London Baptist Association was first formed in 1833, and largely through his instrumentality, Eagle Street became the centre of the first district. The names of Mr. Ivimey and the Church were identified with all the great institutions connected with the denomination, and his name and memory still hold a distinguished place. So great was his energy in helping needy causes that it is said that during a period of distress in Ireland he obtained the extra means required and sent over shiploads of necessary food to keep the poor Irish alive from famine. He said himself at the close of his life, "I never saved £5." Certainly it is known he never received anything like compensation for his books.

Though some of his views to-day would be counted narrow and dogmatic, yet in spirit he was broad and tolerant. As a member of the Committee of the Religious Tract Society he mingled freely with Churchmen, Dissenters and Methodists of every shade of opinion. Some of his closest friends of other denominations were : Dr. Winter, Dr. Adam Clarke and Rev. Caleb Morris. His political creed, he said, was built upon the revolution of 1688 and the Act of Settlement, but no man was more ardently loyal to his sovereign than he. Revs. Saffery, Dr. Steadman, Andrew Fuller, Hinton and Kinghorn, all famous for their life and work, were his companions and co-workers, and in this circle he moved, honoured and loved for his unquenchable zeal for the glory of God and the interests of mankind, and for the noble disinterestedness he evinced on all occasions.





#### CHAPTER VIII.

WE of a later day envy those early Pastors and members of Eagle Street Baptist Church their residential population. From 1737 to about 1850, that is, under the first five Pastors, one thousand nine hundred and thirty members were joined to the Church.

Our review of the history of the work there must, as we draw nearer to more modern times, be necessarily more brief; yet we believe that in loyalty to the Baptist cause the latter days of the Church have been as conspicuous as the first.

Steps had been taken at the Church meeting on August 2nd, 1821, to open a fund for purchasing the freehold of the ground on which the chapel stood. This was shortly after the enlargement of the chapel in 1820. The following memorandum

gives the circumstances of the 1820 enlargement and also a glimpse of the surroundings of the Church :—

“A piece of ground was purchased adjoining the chapel in 1812 for erecting upon it the schoolroom. This was part of the premises of the Vim Tavern, a notorious brothel which was a nuisance to the whole neighbourhood, and had been for half a century. Some time after this an application was made to the magistrates to withhold the licence from the landlord, which was done, and in consequence of this the Tavern was given up. The owner of the ground had already promised that the meeting house Trustees should be considered in any new arrangement and accommodated if possible.”

Unable to agree as to the terms, however, the Church had to finally enlarge on the old lease. This was accomplished, says Mr. Ivimey, almost unanimously, the people liberally contributing. The whole expense of this enlargement amounted to £650.

As stated above, the first step taken to create a fund for the purchase of the freehold was in the year following, 1821. This fund met with some success at first, and £100 was placed in the 3%'s. But many years passed before anything definite could be done. Finally,

in 1846, the Church sold the whole of its funded property to purchase the freehold at a cost of more than £3,000. This step was forced upon the Church in consequence of the death of the freeholder. The property was put up for auction, and thus there was a danger of losing the site altogether. On December 31st, 1846, Brother Penny, the senior deacon, and treasurer of the Church, reported to the Church meeting as follows:—

“On behalf of the Trustees of the property of the Church held in the funds; that they had attended the sale and effected the purchase of the freehold of the meeting house for the sum of 1440 guineas, also the freehold of the five tenement houses in Kingsgate Street for the sum of 1,500 guineas in accordance with the instructions given them by the Church.”

Thus the greater part of the money in the funds belonging to the Church was used up in securing these freeholds.

We have already recorded that Mr. Ivimey and the Church has been led in 1833 to the choice of an assistant minister--Rev. R. W. Overbury. At a special Church meeting held on April 3rd, 1834, Mr. Overbury, after having been assistant minister for nine months, received an unanimous invitation to succeed Mr. Ivimey in the ministry at Eagle Street. This invitation

Mr. Overbury accepted in the following month, and his ordination as Pastor of the Church took place on Wednesday, 25th June. At this service of recognition Rev. Charles Stovell, Rev. George Pritchard and Rev. Mr. Murch took part in what was a crowded and successful service. Mr. Overbury carried on very happily the work Mr. Ivimey had so long sustained.

The London Baptist Association had been formed in 1834, and from 1836 an annual letter was sent from Eagle Street to that Association. The first letter was mislaid and lost, the second letter in 1836 (here quoted as giving an insight into the state of the Church at that time) was as follows:—

“The Church of Christ meeting at Eagle Street to the other Churches of Christ composing the London Baptist Association.

Grace be with you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Dear Brethren,

In assembling with you at the second annual meeting of the Association we desire to return thanks to Almighty God, who in the exercise of His providence and grace ‘hath kept our souls from death and our feet from falling.’ Intercourse with our Christian brethren is at all times agreeable, but it is

particularly gratifying when on an occasion like the present we meet to recount the dealings of Divine Love. . . The progress of the Redeemer's cause amongst us, though not sufficient to lead us to repeat the exclamation of the Psalmist, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes,' affords, notwithstanding, cause for gratitude and joy. During the year 1835, 24 have been added to the Church by baptism, one has been restored, and three persons have been dismissed to us from other Churches. This numerical increase has been reduced by the loss of 11 by discipline, four by death and one by exclusion, leaving a clear increase of 12, and a total of 330 members."

Then going on to speak of many whose names were on the Church roll, but who unless they attended would soon have to be removed, and thus there was a threatened loss of many whose cases they were enquiring into, the letter continues hopefully:—

"In all other respects the state of things amongst us is satisfactory and encouraging. Those who have lately put on Christ are walking worthily. The Dove of Heavenly Peace still hovers over us, shedding the sweet



uniting influences of His grace. The minister is encouraged to hear from every side, not the voice of adulation, but reiterated and thankful acknowledgment of the profitableness of his ministry to the people of God and to see many evident signs of growth in grace."

The letter goes on to appeal for united prayer by all the Churches.

Thus in the early years of Mr. Overbury's work in Eagle Street, as we find on reference to the records also in the later years, success and prosperity rested with the Church.

The centenary of the Chapel was celebrated on 17th February, 1837, by devoting the morning and afternoon to prayer and praise. This was followed by a tea, and this again by a reunion of past and present members and friends and a meeting. This celebration was continued on the Monday following by a fully-attended Church meeting, when the following interesting resolution was carried:—

"On the centenary of the opening of this place of worship we review the history of the Church of Christ which has so long assembled within its walls. In doing so we have to acknowledge abundant cause for gratitude and praise to God the Father Son and Holy Ghost, for the gathering a people here to

magnify the riches of Divine Grace, for the proofs of the power and presence of God with His people in the conversion of many sinners, in bestowing gifts on so many of the members, thus rendering them eminent for their services both at home and abroad, for the large measure of holy fellowship and joy we believe and know to have been experienced here, for the wisdom which has been imparted in the choice of suitable Pastors and Deacons, and for the happy circumstances with which we are at present surrounded. That everything that we have heard to-night of the goodness of God to our fathers, everything which we have ourselves enjoyed in mutual fellowship—the Divine Blessing which has accompanied the ministry of the Word amongst us under our much esteemed late Pastor and our present beloved friend and Pastor, the success which has attended our humble attempts for the general good and also for our own immediate neighbourhood—justify the pleasing hope that God has still a favour towards us and will afford us strength to the cultivation of personal piety and useful exertion for the Divine Glory.”

At the same time the Church resolved to ascertain if the Meeting House required "repair or whether any improvements were practicable" and to get an estimate for the same.

Mr. Overbury was requested to print his sermon of the preceding morning at the expense of the Church and to add to it an account of the history of the Church.

The chapel in this year was first registered for marriages according to the Act of Parliament then become law in the reign of King William IV.

On January 31, 1839, the following account was entered as being held by the Trustees on behalf of the Church, and the apportioning of the income from it is shown :—

"£4,355 reduced annuities and £500 Old South Sea Annuities, together producing annually £154 13s., such income being appropriated by the deacons to the several purposes desired by the respective donors as follows :—

|                    |        |         |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| To the Minister... | ...    | £63 7s. |
| Rent               | ... .. | £63 6s. |
| Poor               | ... .. | £ 4     |
| Incidentals        | ... .. | £24     |

Making a total of ... £154 13s.

The alms rooms were now inhabited by twelve aged and poor women.

In the report of 1838 to the London Baptist Association we learn that the Day School adjoining the Alms Rooms was flourishing under an able master and was known as one of the best conducted of its class in the Metropolis.

Visitors were at this time appointed by the Church for Christian instruction in the homes of the people. These visitors held a monthly meeting for prayer and consultation. The Church's contribution to the cause of Foreign Missions was nearly double the sum ever sent before. An agent of the Home Missionary Society was attached to the Church, of the cost of whose support the Church raised half. In every way, therefore, we find at this time signs of a large and increasing prosperity.

So far we have said little about the creed of the Church particularly, though we have by this time made clear the general Scriptural position of the beliefs of the members. Let it now be added that the Church held the position of the Particular Baptist Churches in general and was therefore in regard to the Lord's Supper a "close" Church. The following letter indicates this and gives the Scriptural

position of such belief and practice. It is dated December 31, 1841 :—

“The baptised Church of Christ meeting in Eagle Street. To the Christian Church meeting in Devonshire Square under the pastoral care of the Rev. J. H. Hinton :—

Dear Brethren,

If your request were simply for a testimonial to the Christian character of our sister Hannah Gamble, we should accord it without hesitation. But we must entreat the exercise of candour on your part while we state our conscientious objections to granting her a regular dismission.

We cheerfully allow to every community of Christians the right which we claim for ourselves—of conducting their affairs in accordance with their own view of the will of Christ. But we also think that a regular dismission to any such community involves on the part of those who grant it an approbation of their constitution and discipline as being agreeable in all essential points to the will of the Great Head of the Church.

In our view, therefore, the admission

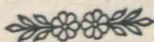
of unbaptised persons, though sincere believers in Christ, to the Lord's Table and other Church privileges is a serious and, as it regards the right constitution of a New Testament Church, a fundamental departure from the Law of Christ and the practice of the Apostolic Churches.

But we are credibly informed that such is your practice. Should we, therefore, dismiss our sister Hannah Gamble to you we should sanction her joining a community which involves, in its very constitution, a violation of the express law of Christ concerning baptism and we should participate with her in the unscriptural practice of holding Church fellowship with the unbaptised.

Brethren, we feel that in thus stating our case we shall need your Christian forbearance. At the same time we deem it more becoming to give this brief exposition of our views than to assign no reason for our conduct.

Permit us, dear brethren, to remind you that we now occupy the very same ground as our revered forefathers on this subject. There was not a firmer or more uncompromising opponent of open communion than the first pastor of

Devonshire Square : we mean that  
eminent servant of God, William Kiffin.  
We are, dear brethren, etc."





#### CHAPTER IX.

IN 1854, 118 years after the opening of the first chapel, repairs to this old building being of no permanent value, it became necessary to rebuild. The old Meeting House was therefore pulled down and a new Chapel erected. The front entrance of this second structure was placed in Kingsgate Street, though the new building occupied the same ground as the old. Thus we get the use of the two names to describe the Church—"Eagle Street" and "Kingsgate Street." Kingsgate Street being now swept away by the L.C.C. improvement of Southampton Row, the word "street" in the name is therefore dropped, and the new name of the old Church becomes Kingsgate Chapel.

The corner stone of the new and second building was laid by Sir Samuel Morton Peto, Bart., and the chapel was opened for divine worship on Thursday, 17th April, 1856.



The following is a complete list of the ministers of the Eagle Street and Kingsgate Baptist Church, with their years of service:—

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Rev. Dr. Andrew Gifford | 1735-1784. |
| Rev. Thomas Hopkins     | 1785-1787. |
| Rev. William Smith      | 1788-1801. |
| Rev. Joseph Ivimey      | 1804-1833. |
| Rev. R. W. Overbury     | 1833-1853. |
| Rev. Francis Wills      | 1853-1865. |
| Rev. W. H. Burton       | 1865-1878. |
| Rev. R. Foster Jeffery  | 1878-1880. |
| Rev. Thomas Henson      | 1881-1886. |
| Rev. Frank James        | 1887-1892. |
| Rev. Herbert Thomas     | 1893-1900. |
| Rev. A. Thomas Ward     | 1904-1910. |
| Rev. W. E. West         | 1911-      |

It will be seen that Rev. Francis Wills succeeded Mr. Overbury. Following Mr. Wills, the Rev. W. H. Burton did a magnificent work for God. The Church grew very largely, and greater prosperity attended this ministry than that of any of the ministers except, perhaps, Mr. Ivimey.

Mr. Burton removed to the pastorate of the Church at Dalston Junction in 1878. At Eagle Street he had been assisted by a large residential population. In his time the drift outwards became rapid, and the ministers following him found the cause

becoming more and more a backwater as the years went by. In the place of better class people, tradesmen, and artisans, the very poor came. Respectable streets assumed more and more the aspects of slumdom, while large warehouses, hotels and offices occupied the site of the homes of the people.

The Church, nevertheless, continued to hold the fort bravely and to keep the flag flying. The debt on the second building was cleared off entirely. The whole cost, including lighting, furnishing, legal expenses, schoolroom, vestries, was nearly £4,000.

Under Rev. R. Foster Jeffery, Rev. Thomas Henson, Rev. Frank James and Rev. Herbert Thomas faithful and courageous work was done. The last meeting was held in this second building on 19th December, 1900—a meeting long to be remembered by many of the present members of the Church.

In the growth of the work of the Baptist Union there had been felt the need of a Church House. Dr. Samuel Booth, the highly esteemed secretary of the Union, and his Council had for some years been enquiring for a favourable site. The difficulty was that of the great cost of ground in Central London. At this juncture, in 1897, the Kingsgate Street people, through their minister, Rev. Herbert Thomas, by an offer

of their property to the Union, made a scheme possible.

The London County Council had designed improvements to the Holborn end of Southampton Row, such as would give the Church a magnificent frontage in the new road. The freehold now, of course, became immensely valuable: this did not hinder the members from going forward with their suggestion. The overtures were renewed, and a scheme drawn up by Dr. Booth, and after his death, by Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, M.A., the new secretary. Finally, the chapel and property were handed over to the Baptist Union in accordance with an agreement made.

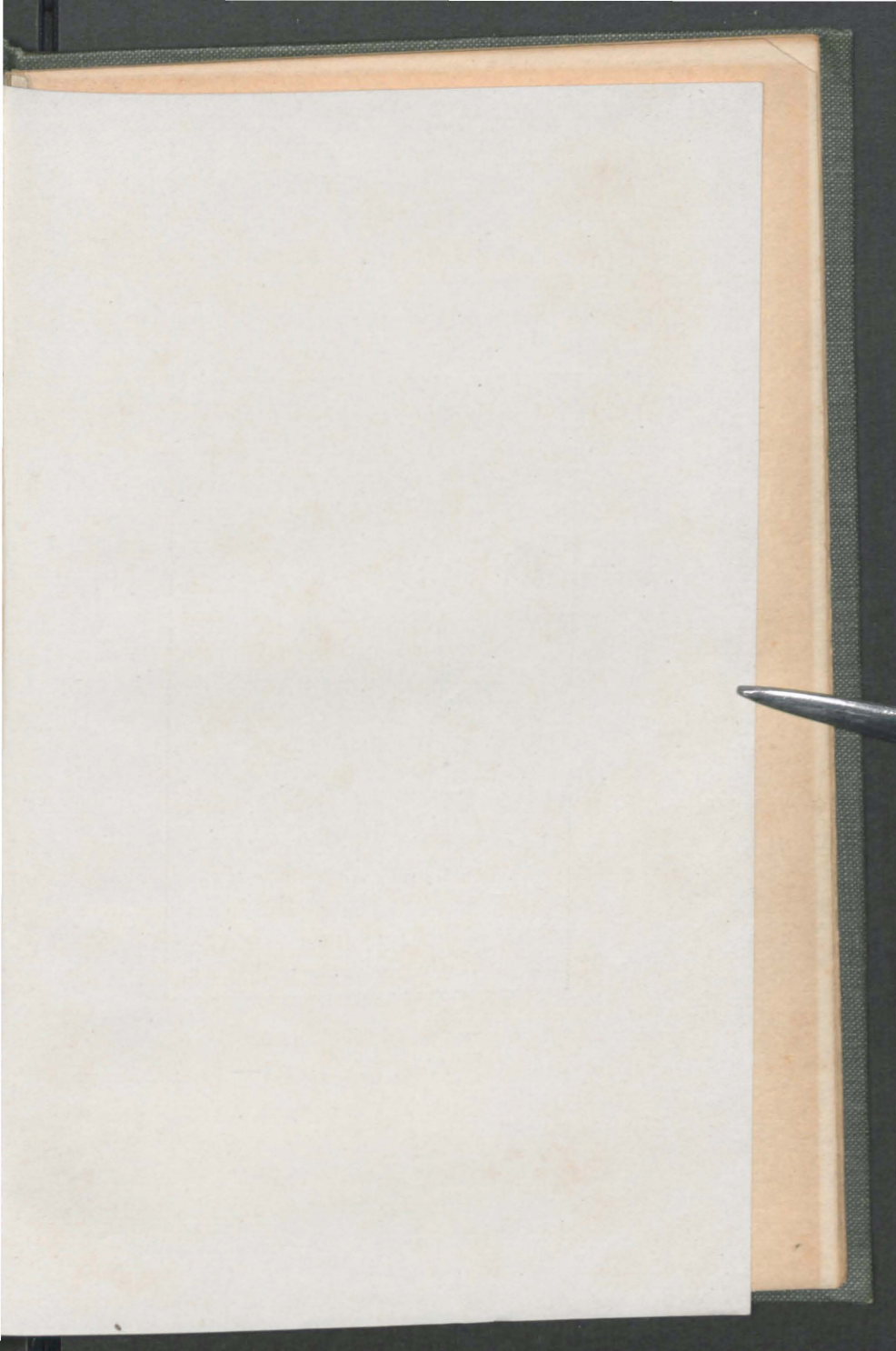
Thus the Eagle Street Church, so long honoured of God, having rendered noble Christian service to Holborn, now in its latter day rendered magnificent service to the whole Baptist Denomination. It had been agreed to by Dr. Booth that the Church should have an entrance at least in Southampton Row. When the scheme was nearly completed and the agreements about ready to sign, the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare suddenly found this would frustrate the designs of the Council of the Union. In this way the third building in which the Church has met, has its front in Eagle Street and occupies the same spot

of ground as the first building. It must be confessed that the hidden front of the Church does not help in what must, in any case, be the difficult work the present members have to do.

During the pulling down of the Alms Rooms, nearly 70 years after the abolition of slavery in our Colonies, and chiefly through the interest shown by Mr. William Levitt, the treasurer of the Church, and through the kindness of Mr. Green, the contractor, the slave chains and lash which were buried so long ago under the foundation stones were recovered. They now occupy a prominent place on the walls of the Church.

The memorial stone of the new Kingsgate Chapel was laid on Tuesday, the 29th April, 1902, by the Rev. J. R. Wood, President of the Baptist Union. A few months previous to this, Lady Peto kindly handed back to the Church, as a memento of the past, the trowel used by Sir Morton Peto in 1855. This trowel was used in the laying of the new foundation stone by Mr. Wood. An additional inscription had been engraved on its face describing the occasion and use to which it was being put, and with the names of the deacons and officers of the Church and School.

We have now finished our task. No one

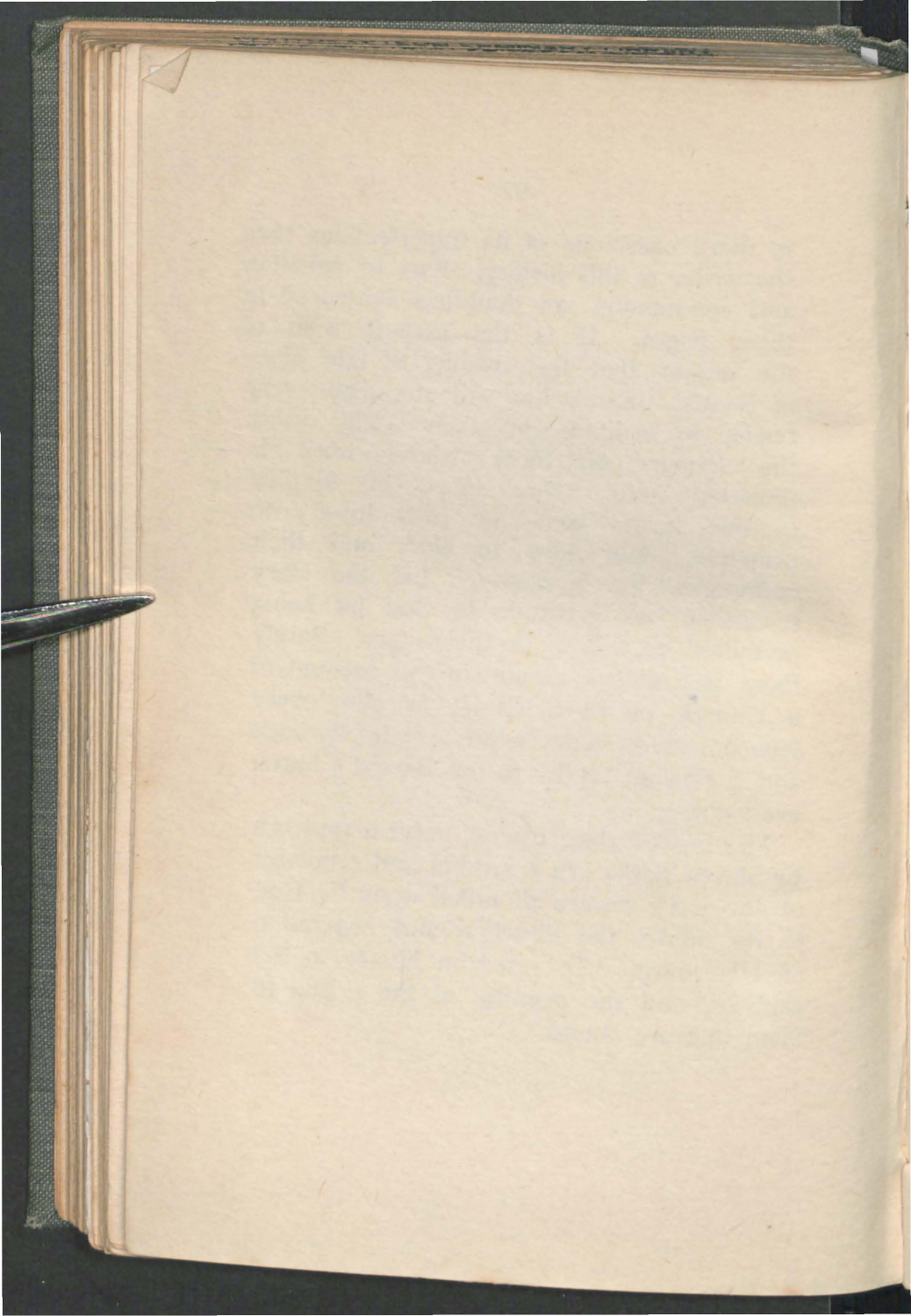




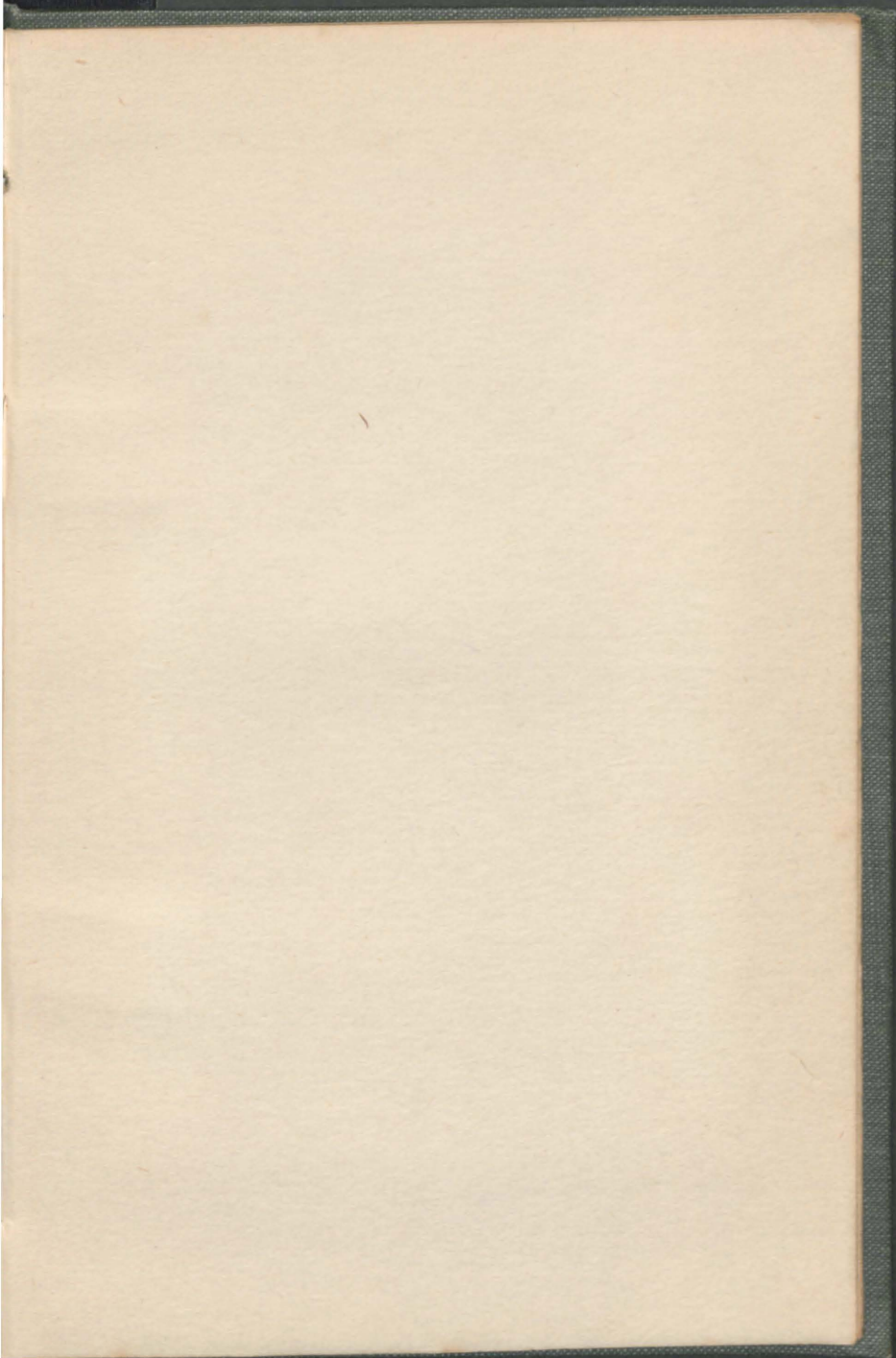
Rev. FRANCIS WILLS,  
*Pastor, 1853-1865.*

is more conscious of its imperfections than the writer of this history. Sins of omission and commission are doubtless evidenced in these pages. It is the earnest wish of the author that the reading of this story of Baptist Church life will stimulate every reader to estimate at their right value the labours of those whose work is recorded here. May there be kindled in our hearts some of their loyalty to principle, their love to God, and their enthusiasm for humanity. Let the story re-awaken our gratitude to God for being permitted to follow in their steps. Surely there is sufficient ground in this account of a Church of Jesus Christ to give every Nonconformist to-day a pride in his heritage and a glowing loyalty to the Baptist Church everywhere.

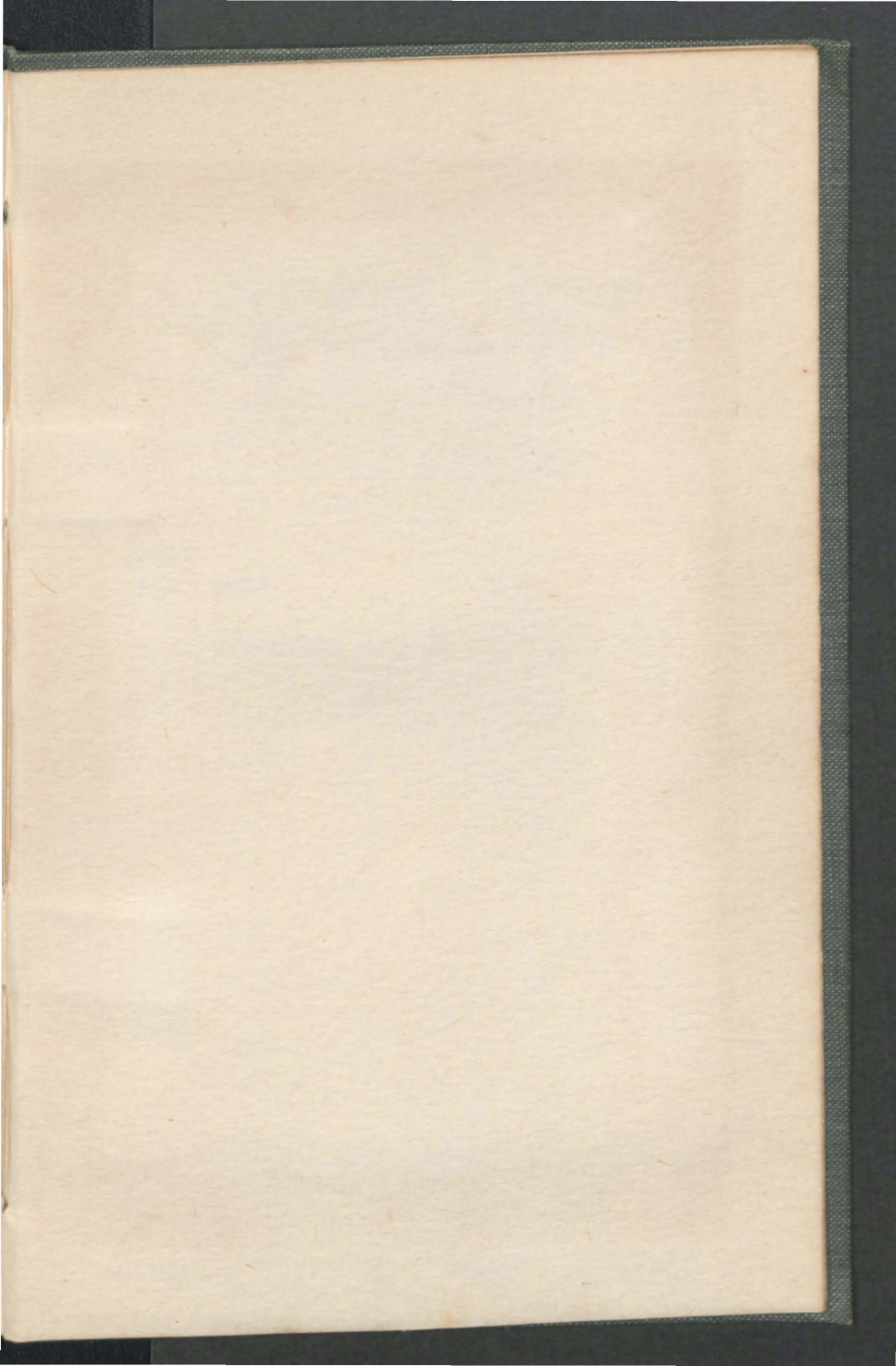
The broken slave chains, never to be worn by slaves again, are a symbol and reminder of the work we are all called upon by God to do, under the direction and inspiration of His Spirit, "To proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."













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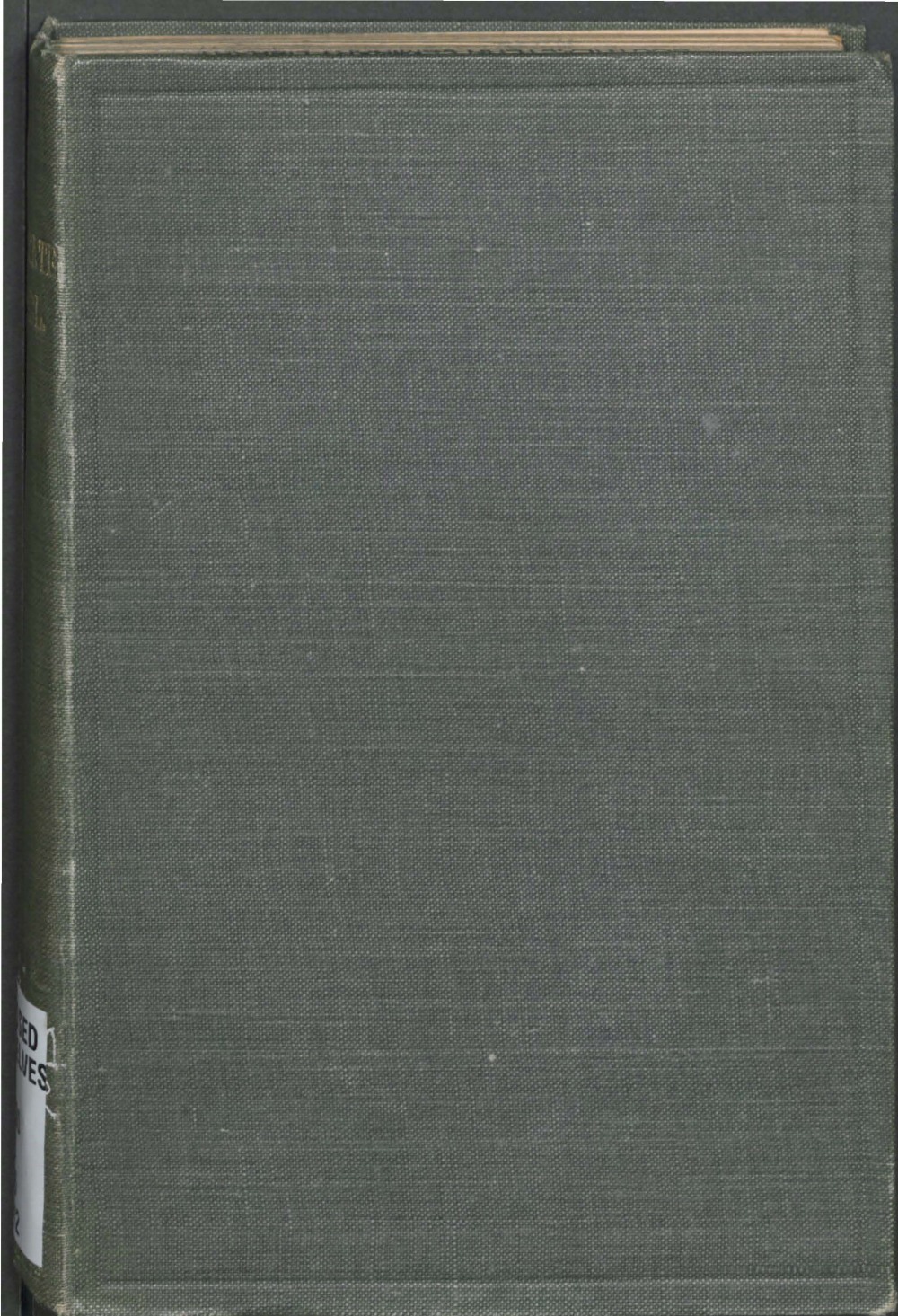
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