

THE WRITINGS
OF
THOMAS RUSSELL
PRIMITIVE METHODIST MINISTER

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(A MEMOIR OF MESSERS. H. & J. BOURNE)

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RECORD OF EVENTS
IN
PRIMITIVE METHODISM.

BY THOMAS RUSSELL,
PRIMITIVE METHODIST MINISTER

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May Be Had Of Any Primitive Methodist Minister

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INTRODUCTION

FOR many years I felt it a great pleasure when I went home to Middlewich, in Cheshire, to visit my mother, to spare a day to walk fifteen miles further to Bemersley, in Staffordshire, to see and converse with our fathers in the gospel, as I always found this to be beneficial to me.

The last time I went during Mr. Hugh Bourne's life, he was very ill, suffering severely from inflammation in his foot; he asked me to examine it, which I did, and I was sorely grieved to see him in such anguish, but all was done that could be done for his comfort by his brother and the family.

After staying several hours, we engaged in prayer, and a very solemn time it was; we then sat down in silence for some minutes. It was our last interview. My venerable father in the gospel lifted his drooping head as well as he could, and looking affectionately on me, said, "Brother Russell, mind, I wish you to commit to the press a history of your life, that the next generation may have something to look at when you are gone." And again, as if he wished to make the impression deeper, he looked at me intently, and said, "Mind, I REQUEST that you will print the whole of your labours, and see to it yourself." We felt much at parting. Mr. Bourne could no longer take his usual little walk (accompanying me a short distance) as he had been accustomed to do on occasion of the visits of any of our preachers; but this act of kindness his brother supplied.

And now, though sixteen years have passed away, Mr. Bourne's injunction is still fresh in my memory, and I venture to write down as much as seems to me of utility. And I trust thus will reach the eye of some pious, enterprising, vigorous youth, who may be made a blessing by his labours, and may more efficiently carry out the great work, and do more good than ever I have seen. As time advances, and facilities are greater now than they were in my early days, there is a probability of this being the case.

Dr. Clarke said, "the reading the life of David Brainerd made me a missionary;" and, I may remark, the reading of our Magazines and Lorenzo Dow's Journals had the like effect on me. I trust that these pages may have a similar influence, then all the cost and labour will be amply repaid.

**RECORD
OF
EVENTS IN PRIMITIVE METHODISM**

PART I.

I WAS born in the Barony of Kinderton, near Middlewich, in Cheshire, Dec. 21st, 1806. Of my ancestors I have learned but little. I never knew anything bad of any of them; and in this I have found some degree of comfort. I ever esteemed them very much, and I felt solemn when my father was carried to the grave; I was then almost four years old. The same solemnity came over me several years after when I attended my father's grandfather's funeral. The drinking customs of those days were ruinous. My mother had some knowledge of religion in her early days; so had her mother; but there had been a drawing back, and there was little done in these matters.

However, about 1817, the Primitive Methodist Connexion by mission labours made a great move in religion, and was the means of stirring up other churches to greater diligence; and these churches having places of worship and societies formed, got a good increase from the camp-meetings and street-preachings of the Primitive Methodists. About that time my mother, having been married again, sought and found religion; and she became anxious for the salvation of her family. When about twelve years of age, I accompanied my mother to the first Primitive Methodist prayer-meeting in Middlewich. The Rev. Thomas Jackson had preached in the open air amidst persecution; but this opposition did not deter him from continuing his labours; and the cause in that town has held on ever since. My mother's house in time became a free home for the preachers, and there the meetings were frequently held. After a time, a beautiful chapel, thirty feet square, was built, and a Mr. Naylor several years sent a sovereign a year to the chapel anniversary. Having omitted this one year he learnt that the friends had some difficulty in making up their interest. Hence he sent for the minister and steward to make inquiry. Bros. Graham and Barnett went, and gave him satisfaction; and this kind gentleman cancelled the whole debt, and made the house of the Lord free.

My first impressions of good began from reading the old Small Hymn Book. I came into possession of this excellent production by means of my brother Elijah, who was an apprentice at Sandbach, in Cheshire, when Mr. Jackson missioned that town. Mr. Jackson sold the books, and my brother obtained one, and he thought this would be serviceable to me, so he kindly gave it me. These hymns I read with great delight, and often very eagerly, and I was soon designated a Methodist; I also sung the hymns with pleasure. Two of my youthful companions having been converted, caused my attention to be more closely drawn to these things: their names were James Dale and Joseph Lea, and towards them a strong affection has continued in my heart above forty years. I had a long struggle for salvation; and being out of the reach of christian friends, years passed away before I got fully settled. Often did I wish to become acquainted with the author of "The Book of Hymns and Spiritual Songs, to be used in Camp-meetings and Revivals." At length, for the first time, I heard Mr. Bourne preach at Congleton, on the nature and necessity of the new birth, and was very much benefited. The first clear sense I had of pardon was at a class-meeting, when, on stating that during the week while praying alone I felt blessed and comforted, the leader said, "Thank God, brother Russell, for so clear an account of your conversion to God." This cheered me, and at once Rom. v. 1, rushed into my mind,—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Hence I took courage, and felt delighted in the work of the Lord.

Soon after obtaining salvation I felt a strong desire for the good of others, and our friends urged me to strive to be useful; and when eighteen years old, I made my first attempt at preaching, and though I had but a heavy time, yet I had hope, and endeavoured to go forward. Going to reside near Congleton, in 1826, the friends there kindly encouraged me, and I was glad to help all I could; and I often walked thirty or forty miles on a Sabbath day to take my appointment in some house, and preach the word of life. In Congleton chapel I preached my trial sermon, and was at once put on the plan; and in many instances I with others saw precious souls saved: these things were cheering.

I had long had a desire to be more fully acquainted with our fathers in the Lord; so at Christmas, 1827, I went to live at Bemersley. Here I had rest, and greatly delighted in the conversation and prayers of those blessed