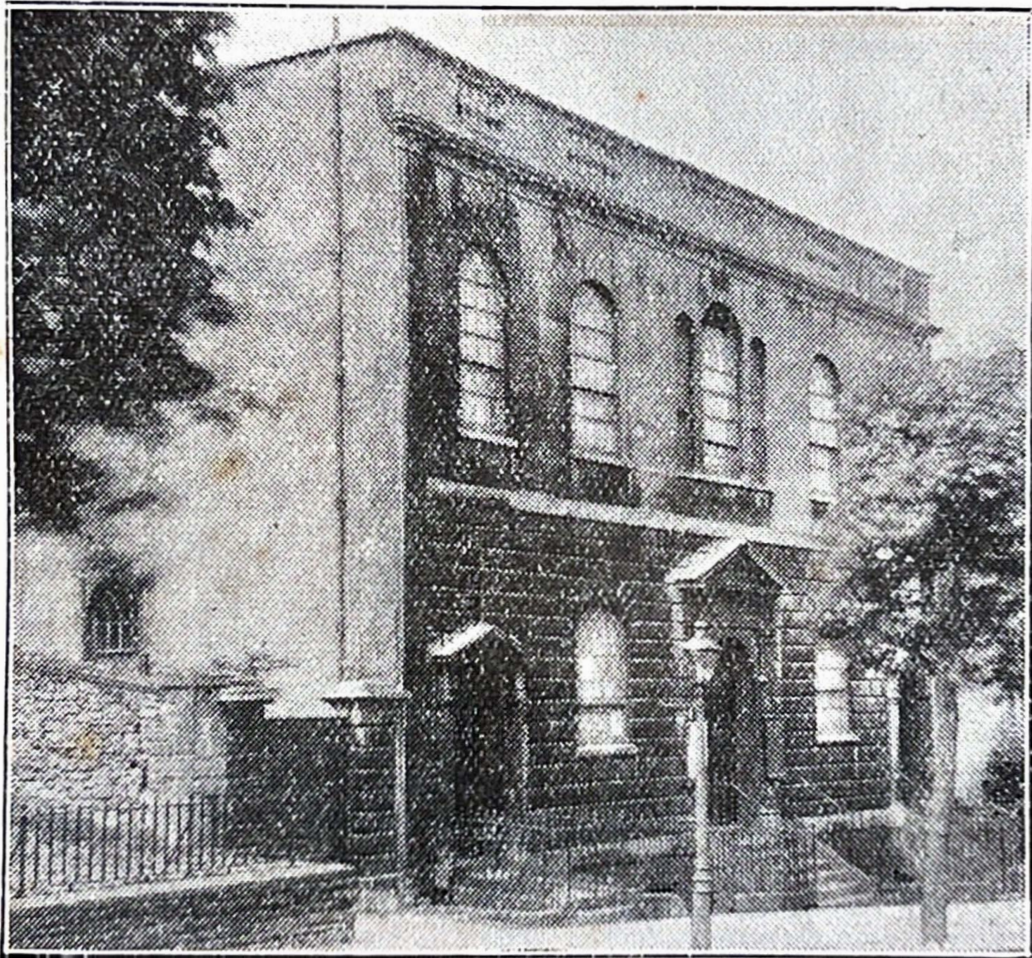


1832 - 1932

The Story of “Bristol Bethesda”



BETHESDA CHAPEL, GREAT GEORGE STREET,
PARK STREET, BRISTOL.

An address given on the CENTENARY DAY
at BETHESDA CHAPEL, JULY 6th. 1932,

BY

E. R. SHORT

BRISTOL BETHESDA

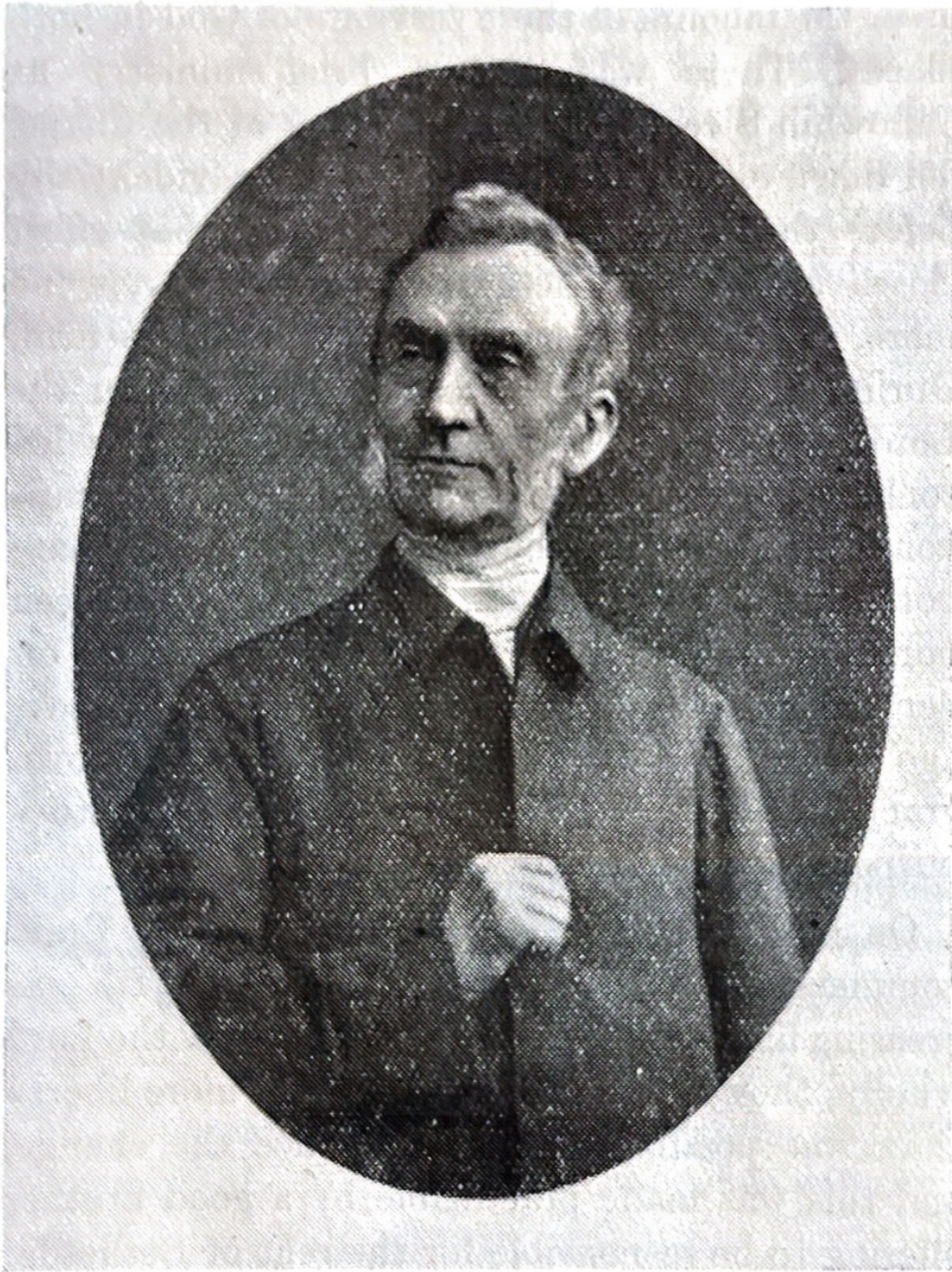
1832—1932

THE fine old spacious building standing on a corner of Brandon Hill, at the top of Great George Street, Park Street, Bristol, has been the home of the Bethesda Church for exactly 100 years to-day. This is therefore a day of glad and solemn memory, and it is well that we assemble in this historic house to praise our loving and faithful God and to give Him hearty thanks for the aboundings of His grace to those who have gathered to worship Him in this place during that long and eventful period, and for all that He has been pleased to do directly and indirectly for them and through them, in this and other lands, and especially in our beloved city, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit of God.

It is our joy to record with humility and thankfulness that "Bethesda" during its long history has always stood for the inspiration and authority of the God-breathed Holy Scriptures, soundness in the faith, loyalty to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, consistency of life and Missionary interest.

The ministry of Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik in Bristol, so long associated with "Bethesda," did not begin in that building. The circumstances of Mr. Craik's transfer to Bristol were interesting. A certain Mr. Chapman, of No. 8, Stokes Croft, was visiting Teignmouth, and being a sound Churchman he sought for a Church where he could find acceptable ministry, but, failing to do so, went one day to Mr. Craik's little Baptist Chapel at Shaldon and was so deeply impressed that, on returning to Bristol, he wrote to Mr. Craik, urging him to come to this city; and, after much waiting upon God, Mr. Craik decided to do so, finding an opening at Gideon Chapel, Newfoundland Road, where there was no settled Pastor. The work there so prospered that its claims became more than his strength, and he wrote beseeching his beloved friend, George Müller, then ministering at Teignmouth, whom he first met there in 1829, and whom later he baptized at Shaldon, and between whom and himself a life-long bond of sympathy and affection had already commenced, to join him in Bristol, and this, after deep spiritual exercise, he consented to do. The first sermon at Gideon was preached on April 22, 1832, and the last on April 19, 1840, a period of just eight years. Soon after the work at Gideon was begun the Pithay Chapel was also taken, and much blessing rested

1805—1898



*Yours affectionately,
George Müller*

upon the labours of these servants of God in both places. There was also a brief ministry at Callowhill Street, but as the ceiling of the Chapel fell down one Lord's Day morning (providentially before the worshippers had arrived), that effort closed abruptly. The Pithay Chapel is now no more, the site being occupied by a business firm. During the eight years' pastorate at Gideon the Lord's work prospered exceedingly, and crowded congregations listened intently to the earnest young Prussian and the gifted young Scotchman, both only 27 years of age, Mr. Craik having been born on August 8, 1805, and Mr. Müller on September 27 of the same year. Only a few weeks ago poor, old, empty Gideon, where my own grandfather used to worship, was sold for factory purposes.

On July 6, 1832, George Müller and Henry Craik commenced preaching at Bethesda. With increasing light and a simple desire to follow the Lord wholly, they felt that they must have more liberty than was possible at Gideon, hence the change, and this was made practicable by a good brother offering to be responsible for the rent of Bethesda, which was then unoccupied, for the first year. Here, therefore, the lamp was lighted which was to burn with double flame so long and so brightly. Forty-one years afterwards the building was

purchased by the Church meeting within its walls, for £1500, when the original tiny membership of seven had become more than a thousand. In some years the growth of the Church was phenomenal, and monthly Church meetings were kept gloriously busy enrolling new members. For instance, in 1888 the addition was 168, and in the following year 156. About a month after the opening services, viz., on August 13, 1832, the historic little Church of seven members was formed, composed of three brothers and four sisters.

I have quite failed to discover the names of all the seven, but one was a Mrs. Smith, whose descendants (one or more) to the fourth generation became full members of the Bethesda Church, and at least one of a fifth generation is a member of a sister assembly. There are also two families whose membership runs to the fourth generation without a break, so the entail of blessing continues to this day in family history.

Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik, always walking in love and always of one mind in the Lord, when entering upon the Bethesda ministry in the full liberty of the Spirit, determined to have no pew rents, no stated salary, not to go into debt, but to encourage all the Lord's people to contribute regularly and in proportion to their means to the Lord's work.

Souls were being saved continually, and applicants for fellowship were numerous. About a month after the services commenced brethren were dealing with enquirers on one evening from 6.0 till 10.30, the numbers were so great.

A lady's personal testimony eight years after services were commenced at Bethesda by Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik, might be interesting here.

“It was in 1840 that I first became acquainted with the ‘Brethren.’ I had come from a well filled, well upholstered London Chapel with grand organ, well played, and good singing, and where the élite attended. Our pastor was a gentleman of means and education and dressed as such, with knee breeches, silk stockings, buckled shoes and ample shirt front. In the pulpit he wore a large silk scarf on his shoulders. Imagine my surprise on the first Sunday morning when I entered Bethesda, a large, bare Chapel, half empty. A very few grave-looking men and women came in and knelt down for a few moments, then rising sat with closed eyes till the Service began. The sisters' dress was grotesquely ugly. A coarse brown woollen dress with a drab shawl, a straight speckled straw bonnet with drab or brown veil, servants and mistresses all alike. Soon a brother rose and prayed. Now we were at once in the

presence of God. It was Spirit-led prayer. I forgot the dress and all else, then a pause, then a hymn, sung like a funeral dirge with closed eyes and all sitting, and very badly sung too. Another prayer and then the bread and wine were passed round ; pause again, then Prayer. Now Mr. Craik stood up to speak. All had their Bibles and used them. His exposition of Scripture was quite a new feature of worship to me, and it was indeed marrow and fatness. The meaning of the passage read was brought out as I never heard it before, and I found myself feeding truly in green pastures. Dr. Maclaren of Manchester is the only man I know to compare with Mr. Craik. His knowledge of the original language was beyond that of most men of learning, and his insight into the meaning of Scripture also. It was a great privilege to hear such a man. 'I shall come again,' I said, and I did go again and again, and never went anywhere else while in Bristol. To me it was like a new conversion. Now I heard a clear gospel that I could understand. The Bible became a new book to me. The brotherly love shown was such as I had never seen before. The godly and simple lives of even wealthy people who had moved in the highest society was such as to carry one back to the days of the Apostles, and I felt that this was indeed Christianity of a high type."

Gideon having been left in 1840, and the work at the Pithay and Callowhill Street having closed, the two servants of God felt free to extend in another direction ; and Salem Chapel, near the Drawbridge, was taken and opened in October, 1842. Those who were in fellowship at Salem were always considered a part of the mother church of Bethesda, Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik usually preaching alternately in the two buildings on Lord's Day evenings. A work of God was carried on at Salem for some thirty-six years, and it was only closed about the time when Stokes Croft was acquired. The Bristol Gas Company's Offices now occupy the site. Salem was an insanitary and uncomfortable place. There were high raised seats each side of the pulpit, over which was a sounding board. These high seats were usually called by the frivolous "The Throne," and there were dark boxes under the gallery at the other end which were known as "The Manger," but the name of the Lord Jesus was honoured at both ends and in the middle with its closed pews with their narrow seats and upright backs with a beading which kept the sitter rather more than upright and just rubbed the shoulder bones ; but neither the discomfort of the sitting nor the unpleasant smells could keep the people away. Who will forget those Monday Night

Prayer Meetings, when men of the city would hurry in after business, happy if they could get no more than the last ten or fifteen minutes, which they would value as a help for all the week ; for they felt that the Spirit of God was in that place and prayers had a way of getting answered ! Then who can tell the far-flung blessing of old Salem Sunday School ! Many to-day thank God that they were scholars there.

When Salem closed down, the Monday Night Prayer Meeting was transferred to Bethesda, where it now continues with a lesser attendance on account of the many other Prayer Meetings in connection with other and newer Assemblies, but in the same spirit. The Missionary element has always been strong in this meeting. Visits from Missionaries are frequent and their work constantly remembered.

Now to get back to early days again and follow a rather different line.

My first impressions of Bethesda were formed when so young that my feet would not reach the floor when sitting. The Lord's Day Morning Meeting began at 10.30 and seemed terribly long, and I was glad enough to hear Mr. Müller give out the last verse of Hymn 74 (now 71), " We give Thee thanks unfeigned," as that always meant

the end of the meeting. I used to watch dear old Mr. Elijah Stanley (with his snow-white hair and kindly face and pink complexion), and others, go round with the bread and wine, and wondered why such a very old man as Mr. Hallett should be the one to mount the long spiral stone staircase to the gallery to carry the elements to the Orphan House teachers; and I looked with awesome respect upon two families who sat regularly in raised corner pews, one each side of the pulpit end of the Chapel. These family pews have long since disappeared. They were relics of a previous occupation. The Chapel was originally built in 1819 for a certain Mr. Cowan, an ex-clergyman of the Church of England.

The preaching of Mr. Müller and Mr. Craik, though dissimilar in many respects, was eminently alike in this, that it was expository and practical. Both were highly cultured men and profound students of the Word, walking humbly and carefully in the fear of God and in close communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, and they ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Mr. Müller was never exactly fluent and never quite lost a certain foreign pronunciation of some English words. In his Lord's Day evening addresses he would evidently feel at times so near

1805—1866



HENRY CRAIK

to the person of his Lord, whom he loved to speak of as "my adorable Lord Jesus Christ," while at the same time and as often referring to himself as a "hell-deserving sinner," that in the middle of a discourse he would close his eyes for a while and pour out his soul in earnest prayer, though in the simple language of a child, just as if he were alone, and then would hesitate a moment as if to say, "Where was I?" like a man waking from a sleep. Mr. Müller was essentially a man of prayer, and he used to lay down the following five points as necessary to the expectation of answers, viz. :—

1. Dependence on the merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Separation from all known sin.
3. Faith in God's Word.
4. Asking in accordance with the will of God.
5. Importunity.

These points are of primary importance; others might be added.

Mr. Craik was a most lovable man, a great student with extensive knowledge of the Scriptures in Hebrew and Greek, and his revised renderings were of great value; but he was so self-forgetful and absent-minded that he might be seen

in pouring rain with his umbrella under his arm, quite lost in deep thought. His chief fault perhaps was an excess of modesty. In 1849 his old University, St. Andrew's, Scotland, offered him the degree of D.D. or LL.D., whichever he preferred, but he graciously declined both, and suggested another on whom the honour might be conferred instead. This was just like him. His addresses were full of matter and would often occupy forty-five to sixty minutes without wearying his audience. He was the author of several valuable works. He fell asleep on January 22, 1866, and his loss to the Church was indeed a heavy one.

A stranger recently purchased a little book entitled, "Faith in God as to temporal things," from the 1d. stall outside a London bookseller's shop. It gave an outline of George Müller's work in Bristol and was inscribed as follows: "To my beloved Brother in Christ, C. H. Spurgeon, a little expression of affection and esteem from Henry Craik. My prayer for you is that, as God has signally gifted you for His service in the Gospel so you may be kept sound in the faith, humble in spirit, devoted to the study of the Word and given to secret prayer." The date of this was 1855. Mr. Spurgeon had a secret admiration for the early "Brethren," though he looked

upon them as visionaries because they made so much of the Lord's Second Coming, and he could not refrain from tilting at them. He used to say, "Ye men of Plymouth, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" And "The Brethren" had a great regard for Mr. Spurgeon, especially in reference to his noble stand for the faith when the Down Grade movement was threatening to wreck the Churches; and on October 25, 1887, they sent him a loving, brotherly letter to strengthen his hands in God. A memorable reply, dated October 29, was the response, an outburst from the breaking heart of a great man. Some sentences are too poignant to quote, but I may venture to extract a few: "Your letter has brought me heart cheer. Human sympathy is made the cup to hold Divine consolation. The Lord recompense your loving kindness into your own bosoms according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Very dear to my heart is Mr. Müller, and now I seem to see him multiplied and embodied in you all. It is just what he would have done. I am contending for no mere scruple, or minor point of truth, but for the essential verities. We, beloved brethren, know of a surety the things which both the Lord hath revealed in the Book and sealed upon our own experience. You have my sincere gratitude for your loving words and prayers. At the same time the Lord's

own approval is my soul's stay. It is woe to me to be a man of contention, for I am a lover of peace, but it is a greater woe if I am not faithful. I beg your continued prayers. My dear Mr. Wright assures me that I am constantly remembered by the friends, and this makes me feel repose of heart. The Lord of hosts is with us. It cannot be that His truth shall be overcome.

“ With all my heart, your grateful Brother,
“ (Signed) C. H. SPURGEON.”

The Bethesda Church Membership Register has been honoured by the inclusion of many notable names, and it should be remembered that Bethesda and Salem in time past always counted as one church, and, at the present time, Bethesda, Alma Road, Stokes Croft and Totterdown (a Hall and Assembly in which the late Mr. Hensley took a deep interest) maintain a similar unity, with but one register of membership. Amongst these notable names we might mention :—

HENRY GROVES, son of Anthony Norris Groves, pioneer Missionary to Baghdad and India, and nephew of George Müller, a man deeply read in the Scriptures, intensely earnest and solemn in delivery, first editor with others of the *Missionary Echo*, published in 1872 and afterwards known as *Echoes of Service*.

JAMES WRIGHT, son-in-law of George Müller, and Co-Director of the Ashley Down Orphan Houses for many years, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, whose discourses were powerful and fascinating. Who will forget his heavenly smile? A man of sound judgment and outstanding personality, a leader of men.

JOHN WITHY, brother-in-law of James Wright, silent and meditative, who has enriched the Church's hymnology with many beautiful hymns of Praise and Prayer and Worship and never more valued than to-day, so he, being dead, yet speaketh. The following opening lines will occur to many as recalling hymns often sung and greatly esteemed :

- 58 Jesus, Jehovah, Saviour,
The Lord our righteousness.
- 134 There is a place of blessing,
Where we can always meet.
- 140 Where shall the weary turn for rest,
The wounded heart for healing balm ?
- 186 Lord Jesus glorified,
At God the Father's side.
- 380 Lord, we would tread in holy fear,
The path of life as in Thy sight.
- 654 Death is but sleep in Jesus,
To those who live in Him.

JOHN STANCOMB, who seemed to know his Bible off by heart, whose discourses were full of Scripture quotations and spiritual poems, skilfully blended.

ELLIOTT ARMSTRONG, Sunday School Superintendent at Salem and Bethesda for many years.

EVAN T. DAVIES, who was a member for sixty-eight years and passed into the presence of his Lord at the great age of 94 after only a very brief illness. Like Timothy, he knew the Scriptures from his mother's knee. His devoted service on the Oversight and Diaconate, and sound and profitable ministry were much valued, as was his many years' interest in village work.

GEORGE FRED BERGIN, father of a godly family, true shepherd of the Lord's flock, able minister of the Word, a Bible Class leader and sick visitor, much used in personal work. Mr. Bergin devoted his whole time to spiritual ministry, and did much to fill the place of Mr. Craik.

And then, coming to a younger generation, who can think of Bethesda without instinctively calling to mind his son, Dr. William Bergin, and Mrs. Bergin, who were its life and soul? Dr. William was associated with, and succeeded, his father as Director of the Orphan Houses on Ashley Down

Dr. and Mrs. Bergin were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths were scarcely divided.

JAMES L. STANLEY in his early Christian life was manager of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution in Park Street, and after subsequently filling a Pastoral charge in London, returned to Bristol with a view to dedicating his life to the work of the ministry, and primarily in connection with the Bethesda Church. He was an able and gifted preacher of the Word of God, and of considerable literary ability. Mr. Bergin and Mr. Stanley in turn acted as Secretary to the United Bethesda Church.

DAVID D. CHRYSTAL, who only fell asleep ten years ago, whose sound judgment and administrative qualities were always at the service of the Church, and who was much looked up to as a man of spiritual weight and experience. The young men of his Bible Class were blessed indeed in their teacher.

FRED STANLEY ARNOT, Pioneer Missionary, who for the love of Christ gave himself to God for Central Africa as a herald of the Cross, follower of Livingstone, follower of Paul in journeyings and hardships, undeterred by weariness or loneliness, thirst or perils, described by a great traveller who met him

as "the most forlorn man on earth." He dropped a spark into the long grass of Central Africa which has blazed up, not to disaster but to a belt of glory across that darkest of continents.

And what shall we say about other godly men and earnest workers, and especially our sisters, mothers in Israel, Bible Class leaders, Sunday School teachers, sick visitors, workers for Missionaries, the "Phœbes" of the Church? Their record is on high. The first Mrs. Müller was a sweet and gentle spirit, one with her husband in all things, a veritable helpmeet; and the same words would apply to her daughter, Lydia, who became Mrs. James Wright. They truly fulfil Paul's description of "women professing godliness." Mary Fedden stands out as a unique character, full of vitality and good works, joint Superintendent with Elliott Armstrong of Salem and Bethesda Sunday Schools, whose membership extended over seventy-nine years, and who presided at her stall at the Croft Missionary Sale of Work until well over 90. The oldest member at present on the church register is our esteemed sister, Mrs. Pitt, now in her 96th year and still rejoicing in the Lord.

Great and notable men have occupied the Bethesda pulpit from time to time, for longer or

shorter periods, finding the spiritual atmosphere a congenial one; amongst others were Dr. Grattan Guinness, Robert Chapman, Denham Smith, Henry Varley, Arthur Rees of Sunderland, and Dr. Pierson of America.

From the mother church in due time there sprang daughter and even grand-daughter assemblies, and others that perhaps might more appropriately be described as nieces—a goodly family, and at the moment there are about twenty of such gatherings in Bristol and neighbourhood, all in happy fellowship.

In Unity Street, St. Philip's, Mr. Victor commenced a work in a small chapel, which was blessed of God until a larger building became needful. He was succeeded by a remarkable man of great originality, humour and kindness, Major Tireman by name, who won the hearts of the people of St. Philip's. He was a man of boundless energy; and largely through his efforts the fine spacious suite of buildings known as "Unity Chapel," St. Philip's, was erected in 1862. In ministry he was ably assisted and succeeded by W. J. Morgan. Mr. Victor afterwards ministered at Copse Road, Clevedon, where he was much used of God.

In 1872 "Clifton Bethesda," Alma Road, was built under remarkable circumstances, the land

having been conveyed some years earlier. For a long time a board stood erected on a large and valuable triangular piece of land in the very centre of Clifton, bearing the following notice :—

“ This piece of land may be had gratis for the purpose of erecting a place of worship, the ground area of which shall be devoted to free and unappropriated sittings.”

And yet nobody applied for that land. A tablet within the building reads as follows :—

“ The ground upon which this Chapel is erected was dedicated by the late John Evans Lunell, Esq., of Clifton, in his lifetime for the erection of a place of worship, in which all the seats on the ground floor should be free for ever ; and in conformity with the known intention of the above, £1500 were given by his widow for the erection of this building.”

It was in this place of worship that Mr. George Müller gave his last address on Lord's Day morning, March 6, 1898, on Isaiah vi., compared with John xii. 37-41, on the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he referred to in an oft-repeated phrase, “ our adorable Lord Jesus Christ,” and “ that lovely One.” On the following Thursday he fell asleep. After finishing his usual day's work at the Orphan Houses he just said, “ I am

tired," and the Lord put His weary child to sleep that night in his 93rd year.

Bedminster was a district laid on the heart of Mr. Welchman, and he commenced operations there. When a little company of believers was gathered, Henry J. Harris, of the Bethesda Oversight, felt led to devote himself to pastoral and gospel work amongst them, and eventually gave his whole time to this service. The gathering met in 1875 in the Conservative Hall, removing shortly afterwards to the Temperance Hall; and in 1889 a fine building was erected, known as "Merrywood Hall," where the Lord's blessing has been realised unto this day.

In 1874 Mr. J. A. Vicary, known then as the "Singing Evangelist," pitched his Tent in "Great Gardens," Newfoundland Street, and great interest was aroused and souls were blessed. Harrison Ord was one of the preachers. So manifest was the work of the Spirit and the call for advance that in the following year the lofty and commodious building known as the St. Nicholas Road Gospel Hall was erected, in which Mr. Vicary ministered for many years. I well remember Mr. Wright's prayer at the laying of the foundation stone. The first gift towards the cost was a sovereign found in an envelope addressed to Mr. Coultas

in a room in the Y.M.C.A., St. James Square, where a few men were met together in conference. The sovereign was laid on the floor and they all kneeled round it in prayer and faith.

A derelict skating rink was discovered in Stokes Croft in 1878 and was promptly leased in the name of the Lord. It was a flimsy building, but well situated and, as Salem was closed, it proved a convenient centre for many. After much renovation it was opened for the service of God, and here His work grew rapidly, extra premises soon becoming a necessity. The names of E. T. Davies and D. D. Chrystal will long be remembered as associated with this place. The lease was purchased in 1922 for £1650.

Soon after the Croft became well established a few brethren there began to "look on the fields," and especially on a particular field at Bishopston upon which the Gaol now stands, and one of Mr. Vicary's Tents was pitched there during a summer season, after a beginning had been made in the Temperance Hall where Children's Services and Gospel Meetings were held, and where a memorable effort was made to lay hold of the many soldiers who were quartered at the Barracks, Col. Molesworth and Capt. West helping. After the Tent a permanent home seemed essential,

hence the present Bishopston Gospel Hall, upon which the blessing of God has rested so manifestly.

Many other Assemblies have been established in like manner, and the work goes on.

Mr. Müller's wise and weighty counsel was frequently availed of by like-minded men of faith, such as Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission, John Wilkinson of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews, Edward Glenney of the North Africa Mission, and others who, trusting in God alone, sought to carry the Gospel Message far and wide, and whose labours were constantly remembered by him at the Throne of Grace.

From the United Bethesda church many brethren and sisters have gone forth to other lands in great simplicity to preach the Word, looking only to the Lord for support and guidance, and have found that it is no vain thing to wait upon Jehovah Jireh : the number so serving at the present time being about twenty-seven, labouring in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Roumania, India, China, Japan, Tunis, Algeria, Central Africa, Barbados, Essequibo, Demerara, and Buenos Aires ; and who can scan that living Roll of Honour that hangs once a year from the Bethesda Pulpit, that longer list of the Lord's missionary servants from all the Assemblies of

Bristol, without a glow of heart and a fervent psalm of thanksgiving, and who can tell the sum of blessing already granted and to follow ?

And now the fabric of the mother church, with all its hallowed associations, is showing signs of weakness. What will become of it ? The Lord, who has been so honoured under its roof, knows. The brethren and sisters who meet there would value your prayers. The ordinary meetings are still being sustained. The children love their school and evening service, and the women their special meeting, though most of them, as well as the young folks, have to mount the hill from a lower part of the city. On Lord's Day mornings a section of the orphan children from Ashley Down make the long trek of more than two miles each way ; and on Good Friday morning the whole of those able to walk attend a service there, when one of the Directors addresses them. The march through the city is very impressive, and many make a point of seeing it annually. In April of each year the united membership of Bethesda, Alma Road, Croft and Totterdown, meet together for a Fellowship Tea and helpful ministry ; and in May the annual Missionary Conference is held, in which all the Assemblies in Bristol and neighbourhood take an earnest interest, and at which there are great gatherings.

The word "Bethesda" is variously translated as "House of Mercy," or "House of Benevolence," or "House of Loving Kindness," but we usually think of it as the place of five porches where the impotent man was healed (John v. 1-9); and we pray that spiritual healing, even unto life everlasting, may continue to be manifested by our blessed Lord in the ministry of the beloved "Bethesda Church."

LINES WRITTEN IN 1835 BY HENRY CRAIK ON
JOHN 6. 53.

“ On the eve of a silent Lord’s Day ” when he was only 30 years of age, but very sick, with his preaching-voice quite gone, and with the fear that his public ministry might be closed.

“ Thy flesh is meat indeed, Incarnate God !
We praise Thee that Thy Spirit in our hearts
Hath legibly inscribed the eternal truth
Thy lips once uttered, and Thy Word records.
Blest nourishment divine ! O let us feed
More richly on Thy fulness ; let us know
More of Thy glory, (pilgrims though we be,
And in a weary land) here let us taste
Such draughts of living joy, as may remind
Our hearts of home, and antedate our bliss.
Learning is dull to us ; pleasure is vain ;
Ambition, honour, riches, fame, applause,
The gilded idols that enslave the world,
We would renounce for ever : grant us then
True pleasure, solid learning, heavenly wealth.
Not only for ourselves would we implore
The rich discovery of Thy face unveiled :
O let the dead be raised, the captives freed,
And let Thy Spirit with resistless might,
Go forth revealing to man’s blinded eye
Thine uncreated beauty, that the charms
Of earth’s vain toys may fade away for ever.

This voice could once proclaim Thy matchless
worth

To listening multitudes ; but silent now,
And, powerless to declare Thy praise abroad,
Would whisper forth to Thee the secret prayer.—
‘ Lord speed Thy messengers ; let thousand
hearts

Awake to listen to a Saviour’s call,
And find life, peace and glory in the sound.’ ”

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