

James Harvey 1816-1883

Let me begin by saying that the subject of this lunch time lecture is James Harvey, that is James Harvey 1816-1883 not James Hervey 1714-1758 the Calvinistic Methodist or any other James Harvey. No, this James Harvey was a Baptist and I want to begin by telling you how I came to know his name and be interested in him.

If you belong to a local church for any length of time you almost inevitably fall to wondering about the origins of the church. Some churches started relatively recently and you can actually meet people who were involved in its beginnings. Most churches are older than that and some are very old indeed.

In 1983 I became pastor of Childs Hill Baptist Church in north west London. I soon discovered that the church had begun in the 1860s and still occupies its original building erected in 1870. I discovered that C H Spurgeon (1834-1892) had once preached there and his son Charles too. It would have been nice to have discovered a stronger Spurgeon connection but I believe that all such churches are south of the River Thames or in East Anglia.

Rather, the church was founded by its first pastor an unsung hero from Devon called William Rickard (c 1837-1896). He had worked firstly with the church just over the hill from us at Childs Hill, Heath Street Baptist Church, Hampstead.

Until relatively recently that is more or less as far as I had pursued the story though I was aware of the name of James Harvey, who had a role in the church's beginnings, and about whom I had read this intriguing statement that while still relatively young he had *resolved not to spend more than one third of his income on himself and his family, not to save more than another third and to give another third of his income to religious and charitable purposes.*

The main source for knowledge about James Harvey is a little biography written by his son Alfred James Harvey (b 1855) entitled *From Suffolk Lad to London Merchant: a sketch of the life of James Harvey*. It is a small book and only 119 pages long. It originally sold for just 2/-. Its rarity today means that you might pay something like £40 for a copy, although it is fairly easily available to Londoners in the British Library.

Beneath the title of the little red book it says of James Harvey that he was *For nearly 50 years merchant of the City of London* and that the book is "A book for young men" by the Rev Alfred James Harvey MA *Vicar of Shirehampton* (Common council man, son of James Harvey). Shirehampton is in Bristol and it is Harvey junior's Bristol friend, a Baptist called Rev Richard Glover DD (1837-1919), who provides the book's introduction. The book was published in 1900, seven years after Harvey's death and was published by James W Arrowsmith, 11 Quay Street, Bristol, a leading publisher in the city.

Understandably, it is a loving memoir not a critical biography and can be slightly tedious in one or two places. It is of interest nevertheless, especially when speaking of Harvey's conversion. It is also, unlike the majority of biographies about Christians, dealing with the life not of a minister but of what Alfred, and perhaps James himself, would have called "a layman". It is my chief source for the story that I want to share with you today.

Suffolk lad

James Harvey was born in Badingham, Suffolk, near Framlingham, a village of about 1800 at the time but now to more like 500. He was the son of a farmer. He was born on May 16, 1816. Both his parents were good living people if nothing more. Harvey was the youngest of seven and the second son. He was known to the family as "Little Jems". He was educated first in the village "dame school", then in Heveningham and finally in Framlingham.

Though Harvey's family was no doubt a good influence, sadly, the parish rector at St John the Baptist, Clement Chevallier (1765-1830), was hopeless and had no interest in teaching the way of truth. A new and better man did come later but by then Harvey was ready to leave for London where he was to make his fortune. His one positive experience of something better came when he was around 10 or 12 and a woman Methodist preacher came and preached on the village green.

Off to work in London

On November 2, 1832, Harvey travelled to London on the Suffolk stagecoach. He came to work in a warehouse at the bottom of the old Holborn Hill (where the Holborn Viaduct is now situated). His employer was a High Calvinist called Henry Bardwell (d 1845). Bardwell dealt in woollen and cotton goods, what were then called Manchester goods, wholesale and retail. James started as a Junior assistant earning £12 per annum. That soon rose to £20 then £32 then £40. Back home his parents were in financial difficulties and he not only paid his outstanding school fees but continued to send them help in their various needs.

After five years in London James became a Junior partner and then, when Bardwell died in 1845, he became joint head of the company alongside his contemporary Joseph Bartrum. In this period James had saved up some £2,500 from his earnings. Bardwell also left him a thousand pounds in his will.

Harvey's son later commented that the secret of his father's success was twofold. First, James Harvey loved hard work. He had good health and did not take long holidays throughout his life. He was not obsessed with money. He was able to relax too. He liked to read "books of gristle" and liked foreign travel. He loved work for its own sake but was also driven by a strong sense of duty.

The other factor was the high principles of conduct that he espoused even before he was eventually converted. "Patient continuance in well doing" was his motto text, one he often quoted (Romans 2.7). Early on in a message entitled "What traits of character are most desirable in a business man?" he spoke about these important character traits:

1. A proper degree of self-respect. Business is not all about profit and loss. Even tradesmen are capable of higher feeling.
2. Honesty. This must hold an important place. The golden law must be recognised. Honesty the best policy.
3. Persevering industry. He drew an interesting analogy from God upholding the universe to the need for business men to persevere in their task.
4. Clearness of purpose. "Virtue and industry shall never go unrewarded" he said is one of God's laws.

Here was a very moral, church going man, seeking to do what was right. However, as we shall see, there was still more to learn and to experience.

James Wells

Because he was employed by Bardwell and had no fixed convictions of his own, when he came to London, Harvey attended with Bardwell what from 1838 was known as Borough Road Tabernacle and, after its first enlargement in 1850, The Surrey Tabernacle, Southwark. He thus sat under the ministry of the leading London Strict Baptist of his day, James Wells (1803-1872).

Hampshire born, Wells had grown up as a godless man but following an illness in his early twenties he came under deep conviction and was eventually converted through Hyper-Calvinist Christians. He himself was a gifted preacher and came to have a large and very loyal congregation, second only in size to that of his much younger neighbour C H Spurgeon - with whom Wells tangled under the name of Job in the pages of the *Earthen Vessel* magazine.

Spurgeon sometimes referred to Wells as "King James". The press called him "Wheelbarrow Wells" (no doubt calling to mind his humble roots). He was also dubbed the "Borough Gunner" because of the artillery shot from his pulpit in Borough Street.

Hyper-Calvinists can be thought of as those who

1. Deny that gospel invitations are to be delivered to all people without exception. Only the elect are to be addressed.
2. Declare that the warrant a sinner has to come to Jesus Christ is found in his own experience of conviction and assurance.
3. Declare that human inability means man cannot be urged to come at that moment to Christ.
4. Deny the universal love of God.

They usually do not like to be called hypers though Wells himself did not mind. Unlike others, he distanced himself from the views of Calvin himself.

He would always mention election and reprobation too and would often attack “duty faith” as they call it. Ian Shaw says of him (in *High Calvinists in action*, 248)

Wells contended that although it was the duty of man to believe the Bible, to repent of his sins, and appear before the bar of God to give an account of his sin, he “dare not say it is the duty of any man upon the surface of the globe to believe to the saving of his soul”. He declared, in 1859: “I will have no fellowship, no personal friendship, with any duty-faith minister; I have no personal antipathy towards him, but I will have no personal friendship with him, because it leads to truth's compromise.”

There was a strong experiential emphasis in Wells. “Religion without experience is no religion at all” he said. A born controversialist, he also weighed into controversies over Rahab's lie (justified he thought), whether a Christian can backslide (“no”) and against the eternal generation of the son. Harvey attended Surrey Tabernacle for some 15 years and became convinced of the doctrines of election and reprobation. He tried to convince others about these truths, says his son, but he himself did not think that he was elect. He was “unhappy and a stranger to the peace of God that passeth understanding”. Although many others appeared to do so, Harvey was clearly not finding Wells' ministry a blessing to his soul. Wells once wrote “I would rather keep a child of God out for seven years than let one hypocrite in, and so deceive the souls of men”. Perhaps that did not help. Talking of Harvey's piety Richard Glover calls it “meditative, intellectual, well-informed” and suggests that “perhaps he owed more than he knew to the exaggerated Calvinism of James Wells.” “The gentler gospel which he reached by fighting” says Glover “he held with fuller conviction and deeper sense of its meaning ... the Fear of God was there, and that high Fear ennobled, restrained and strengthened him.”

Bloomsbury Chapel

On December 5, 1848, “the first Baptist chapel to stand proudly on a London street, visibly an ‘ecclesiastical edifice’” and not hidden in some back alley, was built. This was Bloomsbury Chapel situated strategically between fashionable Bloomsbury Square and the slums of St Giles. It is still there, though the impressive spires of its twin towers it was built with were removed in 1951. The chapel was built by the man responsible five years before for Nelson's Column - the entrepreneur, engineer and Norwich MP Samuel Morton Peto (1809-1889). (The story goes that, when the Crown Commissioner was reluctant to lease the land to nonconformists with their dull, spire-less architecture, Peto exclaimed, “A spire, my Lord? We shall have two!”). Of Peto, who laid the foundation stone of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Spurgeon once said he “is a man who builds one chapel with the hope that it will be the seedling for another”.

The first pastor was William Brock (1807-1885). By July 1849 he had gathered a church of 62 members. The church was so constituted that though “recognising no other Baptism but the immersion of professed believers” it would nevertheless “welcome to its fellowship all followers of Christ”.

Faith Bowers (in a Baptist Quarterly article) wrote that “the term *Baptist* was deliberately avoided in the title. The Trust Deeds spoke of 'A Christian Church knowing only the Baptism of Believers'.” Brock could write in 1863, “No term of communion has been insisted on but personal religion ... Membership with Christ has been the only prerequisite for membership with our church”. Henry Elliot a Congregationalist was invited to take a youth Bible Class. He pointed out that he did not favour believer's baptism. Brock was unperturbed: “You teach them what you like, Mr Elliot, I'll put them right from the pulpit”.

Born in Devon, of good nonconformist stock, Brock was originally a watchmaker but trained for the Baptist ministry at Stepney College before spending 15 years pastoring in Norwich, where he succeeded the Strict Baptist Joseph Kinghorn (1766-1832). He controversially took the church in an open communion direction. E C Dargan (in his history of preaching) calls Brock “an admirable pastor and a strong though not brilliant preacher”. Bowers says he was “unconventional, unaffected

and warm-hearted, and ... always concerned to relate religion to everyday life". An author, he later wrote the biography of General Havelock. He was active in various public affairs. He had originally moved to London because of ill health but remained at Bloomsbury until 1872.

Harvey had heard Brock in Norwich in the late 1830s and not been impressed. However, he took the decision to attend the new church at Bloomsbury for six months, to "give the minister and the doctrines which should be preached a fair trial". "The first month had not passed away" he came to write "before I found what I had long been seeking in vain. I was able to rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." He began to keep a diary and one of the first entries in it, made at 7 am on Saturday, December 30th, 1848, related his conversion. He wrote:

This has been the most remarkable night of my existence, and the most precious. Not one wink of sleep have I had during the whole time, from eleven o'clock last night till seven this morning. Last night, as has been my custom recently, I noted down the most important circumstances which occupied my mind during the day; and having had many very important and apparently difficult matters to arrange when I arose in the morning, which during the day were arranged in a way and manner much more satisfactory than my partner and I had been able to conceive of, I felt impelled to record my gratitude to God for so marked (as it appeared to my mind to be) a manifestation of His over-ruling all things to accomplish in the end His own purposes.

On retiring to rest I committed myself to God in prayer, with more freedom of speech than usual; and in pleading for the pardon of sins, and realising the bare possibility of their being forgiven and blotted out for Christ's sake, I felt overwhelmed and could not say another word. In bed, I desired the Lord to have mercy upon me and accept of my imperfect gratitude for His abundant mercies and from that time till 4 am my mind was occupied on matters of business with which I had been concerned during the day, and as I appeared to be at an end of my musings, knowing that today is our stock-taking, and that I shall be engaged in the warehouse till twelve o'clock at night, I again tried to go to sleep, and breathed a desire (which, if it be the Lord's will, may He grant) that He might enable me to be a benefit amongst those under our own roof both for their temporal and spiritual welfare. When in a moment I was arrested by an idea, and these words were fixed in my mind "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." As a father! - 'as a father pitieth his children.' Never did I realise the pity and mercy of God in such a sweet and endearing light. I could but repeat, 'As a father pitieth'. Seest thou a father embracing his son? Seest thou a father whose son is in trouble, whose son is in danger? Seest thou a father bestowing his riches and honour on his son in all the love of his heart? So, even 'the Lord pitieth them that fear Him'. A man may pity a faithful dog, a favourite horse; but as a father pitieth his children.' While lost in admiration in the thought, came one more precious still. 'Because you are children, God hath sent His Spirit into your heart Crying, Abba, Father.' 'God my Father' in this sense, and with these endearing words, can it be to me? When, lo! 'If children, then heirs, heirs to God and joint heirs with Christ.' This was too much for my heart; my only language was, Oh, for faith to believe! - and I could not possibly restrain my tears. I could only cry, 'Lord, help! Can it be my portion?' And I continued with this threefold text in my mind adoring its beauty though its blessedness seemed far too great for me; when again: 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the fruit of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee.' I laid thus for some minutes, for my heart was full to overflowing, and enquired 'What does this mean?' Then came as an answer: 'The love of God shed abroad in the heart.' Then followed: 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' The words 'everlasting life' seemed fixed in my ears. There came as a climax: 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.' I could hardly repeat the words. Then came back the thought, 'As a father pitieth,' but I could not repeat the words; 'God, my father, who hast loved me with such a love,' I could not say them for several times trying. The thought returned: 'The love of God shed abroad in the heart,' and 'God manifesting Himself to me as He doth not unto the world.' I remembered that I had pleaded with Him for this, and it

appeared as an answer to prayer. I then enquired, and do so now I am writing, What is all this that is done ? Is it not to prepare one for some coming trial or difficulty? And my answer from my heart was Come sickness, poverty, peril or death, I can meet them all with the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost. I resolved to write it all down, if God enabled me, as soon as I arose ... If this which I am writing ever be read by any other being, I pray that he may experience the blessedness which I this morning, from the hours of four till seven o'clock, have been made to feel.

The fatherhood of God was one of the truths that he particularly warmed to and continued to emphasise throughout his life.

Employer of men

It is hard for us at this distance in time to imagine how it was for the average employee in 19th century London. As an employer, Harvey was keen to improve the lot of his workers. As soon as he became head of his own firm he invited his sister Rachel to come from Suffolk and help him, not only at home but in bringing in changes in the work place. She was responsible for things such as the introduction of table cloths, and with Harvey, a library of books and newspapers and similar amenities for his employees. He also encouraged monthly discussion classes.

From 1842 Harvey became involved in the early closing movement. The pattern when he first became head of the firm was for business to end at 9 pm (8.30 pm in winter). He got that down in his area first to 8 pm (7 pm in winter) then in 1855 a unilateral decision was made to move to a 7 pm close all year round, closing on Saturdays at 5 pm.

At this time Harvey made a number of speeches in favour of such moves. He was also involved in the work of the YMCA, which was begun in London by George Williams (1821-1905) in 1844.

On August 12, 1851, Harvey's diary reveals that he made a long considered resolve to make the point of speaking to young employees words of Christian caution and advice as appropriate.

The dread of wealth

In his biography Alfred Harvey has a chapter headed "The dread of wealth". There would appear to be no exaggeration in this phrase. Harvey was successful in business throughout his life (unlike Peto for example who eventually suffered bankruptcy). Nevertheless, his son comments "in spite of his success, there was never in the City of London, a man who set his mind on money making less than he." Proverbs 28:20 was one of his watchwords, "A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent". He hated all sharp practice in business.

In an address to the YMCA at Aldersgate Street on February 28, 1878, having spoken of getting on in business, he said "Be careful, however, for what purpose you wish to get on." Live according to your means. He quoted Proverbs 16:8 "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" and urged fair play.

It was not simply that Harvey feared money but, more positively, he also had a strong sense of stewardship. On May 26, 1853 he made the remarkable resolution about his finances that I alluded to earlier. He resolved not to spend more than one third of his income on himself and his family, not to save more than another third and to give another third of his income to religious and charitable purposes. He also resolved, perhaps unrealistically, never to be worth more than £20,000. He renewed these vows from time to time. Because of the continual growth of his business he found it impossible to keep to his resolution about not being worth more than £20,000. It caused him some consternation but he sought to keep to the resolution as best he could and even carried it over into the terms of his will. His son remarks that this lifestyle made people think that he was much richer than he actually was. In truth he was simply very generous.

Bowers also picks up on something interesting about the "self-made merchant of stern cast and great generosity" that is in the biography. "He maintained" she says "that much of his giving should be anonymous, but some public to show Christian duty and as a stimulus for others" (*Sense and Sensitivity of Dissent Baptist Quarterly*)

Deacon and husband

In 1850 Harvey became a member at the Bloomsbury church and was very soon made a church officer. He became one of five deacons alongside Peto and his future brother-in-law, James Benham. He was very involved in evangelism in the nearby slums of St Giles, an important part of the church's work at the time.

In 1852 we find him writing

I desire a wife, if it will help me to serve God better, to discharge my private and official duties more efficiently, and by these means to honour my Lord and Saviour; and not else. Do I believe that a Christian woman like-minded with myself would thus help me, and I help her? I do.

Ever a practical man, by November 1853 he was married – to a Miss Jane Benham, the youngest daughter of John Lee Benham, the head of a family business – *Ironmongers, bath makers, stove, grate and kitchen range manufacturers and hot water engineers* - in Wigmore Street. Jane, like Harvey, was the youngest of seven children. The Benhams were a prominent family in the Bloomsbury church. (See Bowers, *The Benhams of Bloomsbury*, Baptist Quarterly).

The son describes his mother as being a woman of judgement like Harvey himself. They were very practical about the arrangement though, the son insists, “Never did man and woman love one another in holier and more devoted love than they.”

Father and widower

They came to live in 22 Bloomsbury Square, though their time together was to be tragically brief. On August 17, 1855, Mrs Harvey gave birth to their only son, Alfred. By August 27 she was dead. Two years later we find Harvey writing of his continuing faith despite what was undoubtedly a severe blow. His sister Rachel had been helping an invalid since the marriage. With his death around the same time, she came to Bloomsbury Square to look after Harvey again and his infant son, becoming what the son touchingly calls his “almost mother”.

Civic life

The son also has a brief chapter on his father's civic life. In 1853 he became a Liveryman of the City Company of Lorimers (ie saddlemakers). He soon gained the freedom of the City and then became a Common Councilman. He retired from this in 1861 but not before he had made a resolute and successful attack, including the launch of legal proceedings, on abuses of poor law administration that were going on in his ward of Farrington Without.

He was Chairman of the Board of Guardians for many years. In this connection a dinner was given in his honour on August 6, 1859. In this capacity he was involved in the erection of a new West London workhouse, although he had retired by the time it was completed. This was necessitated by the building of the Holborn Viaduct (1865-69) sweeping business premises, including his own, from the area. He moved to Gresham Street in late 1865.

He was also active on jury service and even in the last 20 years of his life, which were spent in Hampstead, he was active in civic life. His love of strict justice and individual liberty was reflected in one particular way – in his efforts to get the law on oaths changed. The new law allowed witnesses to simply affirm rather than to go on oath, something that atheists preferred to do.

Apologist

Harvey, it would seem, always loved reading and was very interested in the subject of Christian evidences or Apologetics as we call it today. He regularly read *The Reasoner*, “a journal of free thought and positive philosophy” and often wrote letters to it as “Inquirer”.

On October 21, 1855 he went along to the *Scientific and Literary Institution* at 23 John Street, Fitzroy Square near Tottenham Court Road (John Street, interestingly enough, later became Whitfield Street for George Whitefield). This was a gathering place for so called free thinkers. There Harvey heard Robert Cooper (d 1868) “a distinguished advocate of secularism”, the author of

an 1852 booklet ridiculing death-bed repentances and the editor of the secularist *London Investigator*. Cooper spoke on the subject of *Miracles*. "The time is approaching, gradually indeed but surely," he claimed "when this delusion - this imposition upon the understanding of mankind - will be consigned, as it deserves, to public contempt". Harvey entered into debate with him and felt able to trouble him with at least one argument.

On March 30, 1856, Harvey had opportunity to reply to Cooper at the same venue. He begins by identifying with his audience, a first rule of rhetoric. He tells them that he too is a free thinker and one with a good working class background. He is not an enemy as he is seeking exactly what they seek – the truth and the good of the people. He goes on to speak of the reasonableness of the evidence for the truth of Christianity and what it is that mankind wants. He argues that miracles are possible and the apostles reliable, moving on to what is really wrong with this world and how it can be put right.

Having been able to say something worthwhile, he nevertheless resolved to give more time to reading and study in this area.

On January 11, 1857, he spoke at the John Street Institute again, this time replying to a lecture by freethinker, atheist and editor of *The Reasoner*, George Jacob Holyoake (1817-1906) against Christianity as a system of morality. Holyoake called Christianity indefinite, inadequate and inoperable. Harvey claimed it was definite, adequate and operative. Holyoake was allowed a rejoinder after Harvey's message.

In September, 1862 Harvey was asked to umpire a six day debate between a Rev W Barker (a Baptist minister in Blackfriars) and the notorious freethinker and radical, later an MP and President of the *National Secular Society*, Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891) who until 1868 billed himself as "Iconoclast". The first two evenings both sides had a chairman but Harvey's impartiality "gave so much satisfaction" according to a biographer of Bradlaugh, "that the last four meetings were left entirely under his charge". Attendance at the school room on City Road on some nights was so great that people were turned away and averaged 1200, around a thousand hearing all the debate. People came from far and near. A book of over two hundred pages was produced following the debates. Bradlaugh's biographer says it contained "much that is interesting and much that is dull, a little that is witty, and more that is weak". A Primitive Methodist of the time commented that "all who wish to know how a talented man can deal with these rampant atheists, may read this discussion to advantage".

These debates were popular at the time. A similar one between Bradlaugh and another minister looked at subjects such as God's nature and attributes, creation and science, the flood and how reliable the Bible is.

Catholic and evangelical

Richard Glover speaks of Harvey's "faithfulness to conscience, the Love of Christ, the scrupulous Honour, the carefulness to know the exact truth of God on all points of our Creed and Duty". At the end of his book on his father, however, the son speaks of his father's catholicity. Harvey was an evangelical first. "Baptist though I am," he wrote "yet I have ever objected to work especially as a Baptist; I prefer to do so on the much broader basis of a disciple and servant of Christ." Typical of him was the way once on holiday in Southwold in Suffolk he saw a need and immediately sent 10 guineas to the vicar to help.

He was happy to read the Anglican Thomas Griffith (1797-1883). When Griffith's work *Fundamentals or bases of belief concerning man, God and the correlation of God and men* came out in 1871 Harvey wrote offering to finance the wide distribution of the book. Griffith sadly was a universalist and this suggests that Harvey's broadness sometimes led him astray. This is probably what lays behind Spurgeon's later remark about him

He was a man of mark: independent, yet ready to learn; lenient towards doubt, but himself a firm believer. His views of truth were his own, and would not be parallel in all points with those of anybody else; but we always felt at one with him, and even where we judged him to

be mistaken we were glad to love him just as he was.

Hampstead

Harvey spent the latter years of his life in Hampstead. This came about because in 1855 his only son was sick and it was thought that better air would help. This led eventually to a permanent move to Hampstead in 1861. They began on Haverstock Hill, then, after moving up it once they took up residence in newly built Mount Grove on the then new Greenhill Estate in 1870.

The Baptist James Castleden (1778-1854) had laboured in Hampstead until his death but the only nonconformist chapel at that time appears to have been a high one in both senses - high in its Calvinism and high in its location - at the top of Holly Bush Hill. Harvey resolved, partly as thanks to God for his son's refound health, to build a new Baptist chapel but the people of the area were poor and there was no place for it anyway.

It was another four years before they obtained land - a former fruit and vegetable garden. A committee was formed to plan a building but it was too expensive and so the committee was dissolved. However, at long last, on June 4, 1860, Harvey signed a contract to build a chapel with other buildings at the cost of £4,800. It was not built at his sole cost, others did give, but he was a generous contributor. The Heath Street building opened July, 1861. The *Freeman* that month called it "a neat, light and elegant structure presenting the same architectural ensemble as Bloomsbury Chapel" with a school room below. Its frontage was, however, more ornamented than Bloomsbury's. Harvey became a member and deacon and was a generous provider for the work. They called William Brock Junior (1836-1919), the son of Dr Brock, to be their first pastor. Once again the intention was that the membership would be "open to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity" with true believers being baptised by immersion.

This is the trend that started with Bloomsbury and was continued in Hampstead and is seen in the way Childs Hill is simply said in its indenture to be Evangelical as opposed to Unitarian or Popish, with no more elaboration than that.

Services were held in Heath Street in 1864 to celebrate the clearing of the debt on it. The afternoon preacher was Methodist W M Punshon (1824-1881). In the evening Harvey presided over a meeting that revealed that the entire cost of the chapel and school-room (upwards of £6,300) had now been covered. Brock from Bloomsbury then spoke.

London Baptist Association

By that time there was also a Devon born assistant minister at Heath Street, William Rickard. He is the one who, as we have said, who was instrumental in starting the work in nearby Childs Hill. Constituted as a church in 1877, they were able to put up a building in 1870. The inscription has long since disappeared but it was Harvey who laid the foundation stone for it on July 28, 1870.

At the end of 1865 the London Baptist Association was formed. Unsurprisingly, Harvey was its first treasurer. He served for 16 years, until 1881. In 1870 he offered to help defray debts of many chapels. The idea was that if they paid one third by the end of 1871 he would give 10% of the remainder. He ended up parting with some £500 by this means.

His son Alfred

In 1871 Harvey's only son, Alfred, only 16, made known his desire to be a gospel minister. Harvey Senior wrote that though he had "hoped for it and prayed for it and have expected it" for so long yet it "... seems almost to take me by surprise ...". He had taken the policy, as many do, of never hinting "the matter to him". Harvey Junior went on to be an Anglican vicar in Shirehampton.

Noble actions

An example of another cause that Harvey helped was Shoreditch Tabernacle, where William Cuff (1841-1926) ministered, which was developed in the 1880s. The meeting on December 1, 1876 held in Harvey's Hampstead drawing room where it became clear that the new building could be financed was one of great joy to Cuff and the deacon who accompanied him.

Harvey felt a duty, as we have noted, to give an example but also tried to conceal much of his

giving. In 1867 his good friend Spurgeon wrote asking for a contribution to Stockwell Orphanage, a work then recently begun. Harvey gave £600 to pay for the second house, which was called The Merchant's House in his honour.

A letter of July 16, 1867, acknowledges the gift. "You find it more easy to perform noble actions than I do to thank you for them" wrote Spurgeon. A similar sum was given by Harvey for the girls' orphanage 13 years later.

Spurgeon himself wrote in a brief obituary in the *Sword and Trowel* for April 1883

He was for many years one of the most liberal helpers of the work which the Lord has entrusted to us: and we hear that he has left a legacy of £500 to the Orphanage. We may not mention many of the things which were done of him in secret; but we may say that he was the donor of the house on the boys' side of the Orphanage, which is known as "the Merchant's House". This he gave without a request or even a hint from us.

Another example of his kindness through Spurgeon was the way in the Summer of 1876 he sent him £100 to pass on anonymously to ministers in need of a summer holiday. Spurgeon wrote back, passing on the letters thanking Spurgeon himself and acknowledging where the thanks should have gone. In 1882 a gift for the Baptist work in East India Dock produced very thankful letter.

Harvey was also a great supporter of the *Baptist Missionary Society*. In 1881 he called on supporters of the mission to make 1882 a year of Jubilee. He urged each one to see himself as "the steward not the irresponsible owner of the manifold gifts of God".

Nothing by halves

It was only a short time into 1883 that, on February 9, after two days' illness he rather suddenly died at home, in his sixty-seventh year.

Using his favourite turn of phrase, Alfred wrote of his father "Never was there a man more naturally modest and unpretentious than he. His unassuming geniality and consideration for others was the same in whatever company he was".

He was a man of buoyant spirits. A writer in the *Freeman* of February 16, 1883, observed how Harvey "had a rare confidence in his own powers ..." taking up various pursuits, "singing ... preaching to the poor ..." and his apologetics work, and mastering them. He was a "keen sportsman" and "a jocund traveller". The writer in the *Freeman* commented "I cannot conceive of Mr Harvey doing anything by halves". He was paradoxically "devoid of personal ambition, and yet he was ambitious". He sought "no satisfaction save success" and never rested on his laurels.

In the introduction to Alfred's book Glover writes of Harvey's promptitude in discernment and resource, his kindness and "the influence of his Christian manhood." "He was above all things devout, and rich in the reserves of conviction and experience ... Mr Harvey exhibited the kind of piety of a former generation; that name namely built on the Fear of God."

We leave the last words on Harvey to Brock and to Spurgeon. Spurgeon commends the words of Brock, in what he calls an admirable sermon, when he says

While in good health he was exemplary for punctuality at the service of God; and on very rare occasions was he absent from his place. 'I am come,' he said to me, the very Thursday evening before his fatal illness, when I expressed surprise at seeing him, 'because I am able to go to business, and I do not think I ought to be absent from the church meeting.'

Spurgeon himself wrote

Our personal loss is very heavy, and, hence, we can the more tenderly sympathize with the esteemed mourners who have lost father and brother. We shall not soon look upon his like again. Are there not other merchants who love our Lord, and will be baptized for the dead, filling up the vacancies caused by these many deaths, and taking thought that the cause of

Christ shall know no lack?

Some Lessons

1. This brief life of Harvey surely teaches us the centrality of conversion. Doctrine in the head, however accurate or inaccurate it may be, cannot be enough.
2. An obvious lesson is the importance of generosity and the dread of wealth that marked James Harvey throughout.
3. We are also reminded of the importance of evangelism and of seeking to win people on their own territory.
4. Finally, there is the importance of a catholic spirit which is most commendable but that, if we are not very careful, can lead us, or others at least, astray.