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**A MEMOIR OF  
JOHN BROWNELL**

By

*Thomas Jackson*

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

**Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World**

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(Early Methodist Missionary to the West Indies)

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Compiled  
By  
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**A MEMOIR OF JOHN BROWNELL**  
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By  
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**PART 1**  
(From the January, 1823 Edition of the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine)

This very excellent man, and useful minister of Jesus Christ, was born at Altringham, a small market-town in Cheshire, on the 22nd day of January, 1771. From his childhood, he was of a light and trifling disposition; and this continued to be his besetting sin, till divine grace wrought an effectual change in his spirit and temper.

When he was about eight or nine years of age, he was severely afflicted with the small pox. After lingering a considerable time with that dreadful distemper, he recovered his health, but was utterly deprived of sight. He continued upwards of three years in a state of total blindness, when one night his father dreamed, that if he would take his son to a certain well in the neighborhood, and wash his eyes in the water, his sight would be restored. In the morning he arose took his child by the hand, and proceeded with him to the well; and after repeatedly washing his eyes, and filling some bottles with the water, returned home. A second visit was paid to the well, for the same purpose, after which the youth was able to distinguish the light of some red coals on the hearth.

This encouraged him and his anxious parents to persevere, and in a little while his sight was perfectly recovered. Whether this salutary effect was produced by any mineral qualities in the water, I know not; but in the means by which the father was led to adopt this mode of cure, there seems to have been a striking display of that kind providence which watches over men in general, and especially over those who are, or will be, the heirs of salvation, and are designed for extensive usefulness in the Church of God.

At an early period of life, Mr. Brownell was the subject of religious impressions; and at length his conviction of sin became so deep as to occasion many sleepless nights, and often to extort from him the penitential prayer, "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake thou for me." In this situation he was noticed by a religious friend in Manchester, who kindly invited him to a class-meeting among the Methodists. He continued his attendance for some time, seeking the pardoning mercy of God with a broken and contrite heart, and with daily prayers and tears, till one evening, while uniting with the other members of his class in singing these impressive lines,

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want;  
More than all in Thee I find;  
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,  
Heal the sick, and lead the blind; —

he was enabled to believe on the Object of his worship, was immediately justified from the guilt of all his past sins, and found peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God was shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him; the power of sin was broken; that

fear which hath torment was banished from his mind; the world lost all its charms in his estimation; and, in a word, old things passed away, and all things became new. From that time he cordially joined himself to the Methodist society, and became a steady and exemplary Christian.

Early in the year 1794, under the constraining influence of zeal for his Savior's glory, and compassion for the perishing souls of his fellow-men, Mr. Brownell entered upon his career of evangelical labor as a Local Preacher in the Stockport Circuit, where he was generally acceptable and useful. Having employed his Sabbaths for several successive months in preaching the gospel of salvation to the poor, in the more neglected villages of his own neighborhood, he received what he considered to be a providential call to carry the same glad tidings of peace to those outcasts of men, the Negroes in the West India Islands. Accordingly, he bade adieu to his Christian friends in Cheshire, voluntarily sacrificed the endearments of kindred and home, and left Stockport for London, in November, 1794. He now began to keep a regular journal of his religious experience and observations. The following pious ejaculations form the introduction to this document:

"O Lord, I am launching forth into a world with which I have little acquaintance. Be thou my Protector and Guide. Enable me to make such remarks upon the things which may present themselves to my view, as will be conducive to the welfare of my soul. Let me see much of thy goodness; acknowledge thy preserving care; always enjoy a sense of thy love; be useful to mankind in life; happy in death; and crowned with glory everlasting."

Mr. Brownell arrived in London on the 4th of November, and on the following day went to examine his birth on board the *Antigua*, then lying at Deptford, by which it was intended that he should sail to the place of his destination. On the 12th of the same month he writes,

"I have spent my time in this great city, with as much quiet and retirement early, as if I had been in a desert. I am lost in the multitude of people by whom I am surrounded, and admire the greatness of that God, who can take care of all these creatures, and supply their wants."

Two days afterwards, he and Mr. Dumbleton, another Missionary, were ordained, which he describes as a season of great solemnity; — on the 15th of November they arrived at Portsmouth; — and on the 17th, sailed from Portsmouth-Point to Mother-Bank, where, he says, "we got on board our ship, bound for *Antigua*, joined our fellow-passengers, and wished each other a prosperous voyage. After being detained by contrary winds for several tedious weeks, not far from the British shore, they encountered a dreadful gale from the east, on which occasion Mr. Brownell writes as follows:

"It lasted three days, and reduced almost every ship to a wreck. Two or three were entirely lost, and nearly the whole of them parted with their cables. We lost two anchors, and the violence of the waves broke our tiller four times. The ship sprung a leak, and our Captain, with despair in his looks, informed us, that he expected we should run ashore. I do not imagine, that any thinking man could be in such a situation without fear. To me it was exceedingly awful. The sea roared, and dashed over the ship's bow; the wind whistled through the shrouds; the ships belonging to the fleet were tossed about like corks on the surface of the water; the surge lashed the rocky shore, and returned white like cream; the men labored incessantly at the pump; the ship cracked as if she would fall in pieces; guns

were fired as signals of distress in all directions, from the ships belonging to the fleet; and all this was heightened by the extreme darkness of the night. I was unwilling to die; having set my heart upon preaching the gospel to the Negroes in the West Indies, my bosom swelled with hope, and the prospect of contributing to the happiness of my fellow-creatures rejoiced my soul; and with these feelings the fear of death was associated. I trembled and prayed until my spirit failed within me, and then went into the great cabin, and desired my fellow-passengers to unite with me in supplication to God. They were almost dead with fear, and readily consented. We all kneeled down, and pleaded with God for deliverance like men under sentence of death; and then parted to our respective cabins, scarcely expecting to see each other's faces again till the last trump shall sound. I soon felt a strong confidence in that God whom the winds and seas obey, that he would deliver us. About ten o'clock on that evening the wind changed, and I praised God most of the night. Glory be to God for all his mercies. May my life be wholly devoted to him!"

After these disasters the ship in which Mr. Brownell sailed weighed anchor, and stood for Plymouth, where they arrived in safety; their last cable being nearly cut in two. At Plymouth Mr. Brownell and his companion found in the Rev. William Palmer, who was then stationed at that place, an affectionate and sympathizing friend. Having also experienced much kindness from several members of the society during their stay, our Missionaries again embarked. Of their voyage, their arrival in the West Indies, and the commencement of Mr. Brownell's missionary labors there, some interesting particulars will be found in the following extracts from his Journal.

"We left Plymouth," says Mr. Brownell, "on the 16th of February, 1795, with a fair wind, after a delay of seven weeks, mostly spent in great anxiety and trouble. The painful circumstances in which I have been placed, have nevertheless been to me a school of great instruction. I have acquired a greater knowledge of human nature, and especially of my own heart. I feel myself to be comparatively destitute of the requisite qualifications for a missionary life. My knowledge is very scanty; and my mind ever ready to start aside from suffering. Alas! how small is the portion of grace that I possess! O my God, I am ignorant and vile; be thou my teacher, and wash me thoroughly from my sin.

The last place of British ground my eyes beheld, was Deadman's Point. The grand fleet, consisting of thirty-six line-of-battle ships and ten frigates, with about four hundred sail of merchantmen, and their respective convoys, present a truly magnificent appearance upon the surface of the water. For the first four days we had a fair wind, but in crossing the Bay of Biscay I was deadly sick. Never did I experience anything equal to this. A brisk gale, and a heavy head sea, almost took away the little life that remained. I lay in my cabin while the sea washed in upon me, and was unable to rise for several hours. Yet, amidst the roaring of the wind, the tossing of the ship, and the dashing of the waves, I have had some delightful prospects and anticipations of the great work which the Lord will carry on in the West Indies by the instrumentality of the Methodist Missionaries. My soul seems so deeply interested in that work, and so intent upon its advancement, that I think I can consent to live and die among that people, whom I have never yet seen. O blessed Jesus, may my zeal for thy glory be tempered by knowledge, and equal in its intensity to that of the first propagators of Christianity.

"March 2d. — We have a delightful day. The wind and weather are fine, and we are recovering our health and spirits. How exquisite is the enjoyment of a calm after a storm. We forget past dangers

in present comforts; our disagreeable sensations vanish with the events that caused them, and hope prompts us to believe that our severest troubles are past. On the 5th, we had a clear view of the Island of Palma. It appeared at first like a black cloud in the horizon; but when we came nearer, we found that its top was higher than the clouds. The sea was smooth, the sky clear, a gentle breeze wafted us toward our destined port, and all were happy.

"March 30th. — We anchored in Carlisle Bay, in the Island of Barbados, after a passage of six weeks and one day. I felt strong sensations of joy as we drew near the shore. When we landed at Bridgetown, I was ready to wish myself at home again. The oppressive heat of the burning sun, the total absence of cleanliness from the half-naked Negroes, the offensive effluvia that issued from them, and the death-like appearance of many of the white people, all concurred to inspire me with feelings of discouragement. We soon found the Methodist Chapel, where Mr. D. received us kindly. We stayed all night, and addressed an exhortation to the people who were assembled together.

"March 31st. — We went aboard our ship again, and saw a large shark, and two whales, play in the water very near to us. The shark raised his head to seize some offal which we threw to him, and presented a terrific appearance. These formidable animals spouted up the water into the air, which, at a distance, appeared like smoke.

We left Barbados on the first of April, and on the third, arrived at Martinique, which has lately come into the possession of the English. This day being Easter Sunday, we went on shore at Port Royal, and visited the Popish Church. Here a new scene was presented to our view. The holy water at the entrance; the ringing of bells during service: the chanting of the prayers; lighting candles in the day time; praying in the Latin tongue; elevating the host; and several quick marches, which were played by the English band, all seemed strange things to me. We preached both on Sunday night and Monday morning, in a large building occupied by invalids and soldiers' wives. The men formed part of a regiment of free Blacks, who had been enlisted in America; and several of them are members of our society. These poor creatures did truly feed upon the word. They wept aloud for joy. They had left their native land at the conclusion of the war, and had been wandering from island to island ever since. Several of their comrades had been killed in different engagements.

"On the sixth we arrived at St. Pierre's. This is reputed the finest town in all the Caribbean Islands: streams of water run murmuring down the streets; the shops display great brilliancy and taste; and every object reminds one of wealth and affluence. One circumstance occurred in this place, which we shall not soon forget. There was a heavy swell of the sea beating against the shore. We had a large boat, and only two ignorant boys to manage it: and as soon as we approached the beach, we were dashed against it by the surf, and our boat broken. We escaped with a wetting, by which our clothes were spoiled. But our Admiral appearing, and a gun being fired as the signal for our departure, the ships began to get under weigh. Having had the misfortune to lose our companions, we could not make the people understand what we wanted. We searched all around for a boat with the greatest anxiety; but every one was deaf to our entreaties, till a Negro who spoke the English language offered us a little coble. It was too small to allow me and my companion to sit down. In this I seated myself, apprehending no danger. My friend also stepped in; the Negro then put it down into the water, when it instantly filled, and we had a very narrow escape. We leaped into the water, and scampered up the beach; and afterwards got off in the boat belonging to our ship.

"On the 7th, we left St. Pierre's for Antigua, passed by Guadeloupe, and arrived at the place of our destination late at night. Mrs. Baxter, the excellent wife of the missionary there, received us with great kindness. On the 11th, Mr. Baxter came from the country, and received us as an honest Englishman receives his friend. He gave us a hearty welcome, introduced us to many persons who were friendly to the mission, took us into the country, and showed us the kindest attention.

"May the 2d, 1795, I arrived at the island of Nevis, and was affectionately received by the society, who are a few poor and persecuted people. The Planters would not permit any Class-meetings to be held on their estates; those only, therefore, who met in town could be considered as in society: the number of such persons was less than one hundred. The regular contributions amounted to about two dollars per week, out of which I was to keep my horse. The quarterly collection was about four pounds ten shillings; nor was there much prospect of its augmentation. A small apartment, about ten feet square, served as a parlor, a chamber, a storeroom, a study, &c. I felt my need of courage, of fortitude, and of patience; but my God supplied them all.

"March 3d. — I preached to a small congregation and began my mission by preaching rest to the soul, from Heb. iv. 9. In the afternoon I endeavored to number the benefits which the Lord hath bestowed upon us. — O Lord God, I perceive that this is a land of wickedness. Sin stalks abroad like Goliath, rears its head, and sets even thee at defiance. Give me wisdom to speak in thy name, and accompany the word with convincing and saving power.

"June 12th. — I have time to breathe, and to examine the state of the people by whom I am surrounded. If St. Paul had lived seven years in this place, he could not have given a more exact description of the character of many of the inhabitants than he has done in the following words: 'For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.' (2 Tim. iii. 2-4.) Ignorance, stupidity, and wickedness, compose the character of the uninstructed Negro.

"Sept. — I have now been engaged in the duties of my mission for the space of four months, and find that my labors are severe, especially in a climate like this. I preach, or deliver exhortations, twenty-one times in every fortnight; besides riding several miles in the burning sun, and often during the heavy dews of the night. I see that every principle of nature must be laid on the cross, and that contempt from superiors, and insults from others, must be patiently borne.

"Sept. 24th. — I am now afflicted with an intermitting fever, which has almost taken away my remaining strength. My inability to travel from home has given me an opportunity of observing the conduct of the members of our society, and of forming a more correct estimate of the good which has hitherto been done in this place by missionary exertions. The best of our members cannot, as yet, be considered established Christians.\* Their religion seems to consist in the observance of the Sabbath, attendance upon the public worship of Almighty God, a conviction of right and wrong, and some experience of the drawings of the Holy Spirit. These points, however, are great when we reflect upon the degraded state of these people before they heard the truth, the small number of Missionaries that have been employed in this extensive work, and the numerous difficulties they have had to

encounter. Alas, how often do worldly customs, and maxims, and persecution for Christ's sake, like a rapid current, carry away much of the good which has been done, and lead the people back again to their former practices and habits!

"Dec. 19th. — We had this day a smart shock of an earthquake, which lasted nearly a minute. It seemed to threaten us with destruction: but by the tender mercies of God we are spared a little longer. The inhabitants were much terrified; but the impression soon wore off. The President proclaimed a day of public thanksgiving, and led the people to the Church to acknowledge the divine goodness in our preservation." (To be continued.)

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\*The reader will recollect that this was written 27 years ago, and at a very early period of the Mission. [Editor.]

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**A MEMOIR OF JOHN BROWNELL**  
(Early Methodist Missionary to the West Indies)

By  
**Thomas Jackson**

**PART 2**  
(From the February, 1823 Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine)

During the earlier years of Mr. Brownell's ministry in the West Indies, the Wesleyan mission in those islands was but in its infancy; and many persons, actuated by merely secular principles and motives, regarded the instruction of the Negroes in the truths of Christianity as a hazardous experiment and viewed the men who were employed in this laudable undertaking with the greatest suspicion and alarm. In various places, therefore, the missionaries had to contend with the most determined opposition. The field which they were called to cultivate was very extensive. On every hand they saw multitudes of immortal beings perishing in ignorance and sin; and, in a climate unfriendly to European constitutions, they were often impelled, by zeal for the glory of God, and compassion for the souls of men, to exertions which nature was unable to sustain. Their wants, in many instances, were very imperfectly supplied; and, when laid upon the bed of sickness, they had few friends to alleviate their sorrows by sympathy and kind attention. The following paragraphs, extracted from Mr. Brownell's journal, and descriptive of his labors and sufferings, will be read with lively emotion by every pious and benevolent mind:

"Feb. 1796. — I am now severely afflicted with the fever and ague, and for six or eight weeks have been so ill, as to be seldom able to go out of doors. During this time I have indeed had fellowship with Christ in his sufferings. My afflictions have been very great. I was far from home, a stranger in a wicked country, had few friends, and scarcely any money to procure the necessaries of life. Having no house, I frequently lay all night in the chapel, groaning under the pressure of pain and sickness, without a single attendant, or any kind of nourishment except cold water. However, the Father of Mercies has not forsaken me, but has comforted me in my distress, and at length raised up friends who minister to my necessities. O Lord, remember them for good! — The society falling off, for want of the means of grace, I have been repeatedly compelled to preach before I was half recovered; nay, sometimes with the fever so strong upon me, that it was with difficulty I could stand in the pulpit."

These attempts to preach in the time of sickness, to which Mr. Brownell was prompted by the intense interest taken by him in the prosperity of God's cause, occasioned several relapses; so that, for the space of six months, he was unable to proceed with regularity in the labors of his mission. Supported, however, by the consolations of that religion, which he was so anxious to propagate among the sable objects of his charge, he says,

"I know not that during this time I was ever disposed to murmur, or once thought of quitting my station. As my days, so was my strength. The Lord gave me fortitude in the time of trial, and often caused me to rejoice in his love. May my lengthened life be devoted to his glory!"

In a letter addressed to Dr. Coke, dated Nevis, April 1, 1796, Mr. Brownell further says,

"Had it not been for the kindness of Mr. Frith, and of Mr. Washington's family, (who took me into the country, and paid me every degree of attention for six weeks), I had possibly been in my grave long ago. But I am far from repining at those afflictions. I have been educated nearly all my life in the school of adversity, and therefore her rugged face has become familiar to me. I bless God that I ever was sent to this place, to approve myself a Minister of Christ in hunger and thirst, in sickness and health, in perils and dangers from various quarters. I am determined to spend and be spent in time Lord's service. Our society is, at present, in a flourishing condition."

Whether those persons, by whose instrumentality Mr. Brownell's life was prolonged, are themselves now living, I am unable to ascertain; but their affectionate attention to this afflicted and destitute Minister of the Lord Jesus shall not be forgotten by Him who hath said, "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." (Mark 9:41.) Christian missionaries are not always able to recompense their friends and benefactors: but those generous persons shall receive their reward at the resurrection of the just.

During his residence in the West Indies, Mr. Brownell experienced many signal interferences of divine providence. One of these, which occurred in the month of May, 1796, he thus describes:

"Yesterday, being at the estate of John Taylor, Esq., there fell in the afternoon a heavy shower of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning. The Negroes took shelter in a wind-mill, the top of which was struck at the time by a large ball of fire. The destructive fluid shivered the neckbeam, descended among the terrified Negroes, killed two of them on the spot, and burnt, scorched, or wounded thirty more. It also penetrated into the dungeon, where was a small cask of gunpowder, and involved Mr. Taylor, his lady, and me, in the sulfurous flame. Had the gunpowder taken fire, we should in all probability, have lost our lives. The cries of the Negroes were dreadful beyond description; and it would have pierced the hardest heart to have seen many of them, to all appearance, dead with fear, and others who had been deprived of the use of their limbs. One of them was so severely burnt, that she afterwards died. The day after this melancholy occurrence, I buried the two men who were instantaneously killed, and then preached on the following impressive text of Scripture: 'At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of this place. Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound that goeth out of his mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth; he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. God thundereth marvelously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend!' (Job xxxvii. 1-5.)

Three months after this remarkable preservation, Mr. Brownell writes:

"I am just recovered from a severe attack of fever. The pain in my head was almost insupportable. I felt resignation to the divine will, and was kept in peace. Many of those attacks are occasioned by riding on wet or damp evenings; by sleeping in the houses of the Negroes, sometimes without a bed; and by want of proper nourishment."

While Mr. Brownell was ready to faint under the burden of sickness and hard labor, he had not infrequently to contend with riotous mobs, strongly resembling those by which Mr. Wesley and his

courageous co-adjutors were assailed in this country in the earlier periods of Methodism. On the 20th of November, he says,

"The rioters, headed by ——, are become very troublesome. They interrupted me in preaching on the 17th of September; and threatened and swore in so shocking a manner, that we were obliged to discontinue that meeting. Not content with this outrage, they were resolved to proceed to other acts of violence. Accordingly, on the 12th instant, four of them came to the chapel in the evening, with a large quantity of squibs, to fire among the congregation. One of these was thrown into the chapel, and caused such confusion among the people assembled, and such horrible swearing among the rioters, as I had never witnessed before. On the next morning, while I was going to a magistrate to apply for protection, I was way-laid, grossly insulted, and severely beaten. The magistrate 'cared for none of these things;' and though I had sworn the peace against Mr. ——, he would not so much as require him to enter into any recognizances, till he was forced to it by the President. We afterwards addressed the Honorable Council, who heard us with patience, and redressed our grievances. Thus we obtained peace, and the designs of our enemies were frustrated. They threatened us with extermination; but this has been overruled to the further establishment of the mission.

The opposition which Mr. Brownell met with from "unreasonable and wicked men," neither led him to relax in his real and diligence, nor diverted his attention from the all-important subject of personal godliness. The pious and truly Christian feelings with which he contemplated the work in which he was engaged, and the success with which it pleased God to crown his zealous and faithful labors, are strikingly depicted in the following extract from his private journal:

"Jan. 27th, 1707. — I have just passed my twenty-sixth year. Here I stand as on an eminence, and review my past life. What a scene presents itself to my mind! What mercies and blessings from God; what mistakes and defects in my own conduct; what temptations to evil from my own heart, from ether people, and from the Devil! What joys have I experienced, arising from the hope of future things; what mortification and despair, arising from disappointment! I have had many hair's-breadth escapes from the jaws of death; and many happy moments of delightful fellowship with my Saviour. Here, then, I will raise my Ebenezer: for hitherto the Lord hath helped me. O my God, still be my Guardian: preserve me from temptation: raise my drooping spirit: banish sorrow and dejection from my mind, and cheer me by the light of thy countenance!

"May, 1797. — We have enlarged our chapel, by adding to it another wing. From this time the society began to flourish.

"July 23d, 1798. — I was married to Miss Jane Cooper, of the Island of St. Kitt's. We afterwards went to Nevis, where the little society did everything in their power to render us happy.

"1799. — This year we had a blessed revival of religion. The seed which had been sown in the name of the Lord, and watered with many prayers and tears, sprang up, and yielded a glorious harvest. Many joined our society, and, I trust, were added to the Lord.

"1800. — The work of God continues to prosper. We have now a large and flourishing society, capable of supporting a missionary and his wife. All glory be to God! Many blessings and trials have I experienced in this island; but now I must leave this loving and affectionate people.

"On the 1st of May, 1800, I entered upon my labors in the Island of St. Kitt's, with somewhat gloomy prospects. The chapel at Basseterre is in a very ruinous condition. The people are discontented; the society is in debt to the amount of £175; and there is no one to assist me in this extensive field of missionary exertion. My hands hang down, and my heart is ready to faint. But God hath promised to be my almighty helper.

"Feb. 5th, 1801. — I am more than ever convinced, that a Minister ought to be fully devoted to God, and dead to human praise and censure, in order to his usefulness, and to his personal comfort. Today he is applauded, and elevated to the very skies; and tomorrow he is censured, insulted, and reckoned the worst of men. Help me, Lord, to cease from man, and faithfully to declare the whole truth as it is in Jesus."

The following extract from Mr. Brownell's journal contains a caution of the utmost importance to Christians in general, and especially to Christian Ministers. Even the best of men, in the confidence of private friendship, and of social intercourse, are in danger of animadverting upon the conduct of absent individuals, in a manner which they would find it difficult to reconcile either with the spirit of Christianity, or with those passages in the New Testament Scriptures which describe and inculcate our duty towards our neighbor. Happy are those who, like Mr. Brownell, seriously survey the conversations in which they have participated, and learn to be more watchful and circumspect, from the conscientious upbraidings of their own minds, before a habit of evil speaking be formed. But happier still are they who, from the commencement to the termination of their Christian course, by the grace of God, keep themselves so as to "offend not in tongue."

"Feb. 6. — I rode to Old Road, and met with Brother John Taylor, from Nevis. We had a happy meeting at the chapel. After spending much time in conversation, I felt my mind somewhat uneasy. We ought to be cautious of speaking even the truth concerning the conduct of wicked men. It is best to leave them to God. No one was ever improved in his temper and conduct by railing against his neighbor. It is right to bear a public and decided testimony against sin, in all its forms; but not to name the offenders."

Mr. Brownell's prudence and discretion, as well as his Christian firmness, appear to great advantage in the following adventure, which is thus described by himself:

"March 10th. — In the forenoon of this day, I received a letter from the late commander-in-chief, requesting me to attend him immediately at time council-room. On my appearance before him, an address was presented to me, purporting to be written by the General Conference in America, to the body of people called Methodists, requesting them to petition the Legislature for the abolition of the slave-trade. This address was signed by Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and several others, inserted in the newspapers, and published in the form of hand-bills. The Council imagined that it had originated with the English conference, and by them had been transmitted to the conference in America; and desired to know whether I had received any orders to carry it into effect? I informed the council, that

the English conference had no authority over the Methodist societies in the United States of America; and distinctly asserted, that I had received no instructions respecting the matter, and that the English conference had no desire or intention that their missionaries should interfere with the political affairs of the islands, our only design being to bring the people to the knowledge of God. On the following day there appeared in one of the public papers, a vile letter, accusing the missionaries of seditious designs.

"Tuesday the 14th, I waited upon the late commander-in-chief in company with Mr. Shepley. We laid before him a considerable number of facts and arguments, to prove that we had not the slightest intention to interfere with the civil condition of the slaves. We were ready to attest upon oath, that we had never inculcated any doctrine tending to sedition; but uniformly exhorted "as many servants as are under the yoke to count their masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." That no principles contrary to these had been taught by us in any of the society-meetings, we stated to be manifest from this consideration; — that great numbers of whites, or free people of color, who held slaves, were in religious connection with us, and attended those meetings, as well as the slaves; and yet such people, who would of course be tenacious of their own interests, so far from making any complaint against us, were anxious to prevail upon us to admit their slaves into society. We also pledged ourselves, that we would rather quit the colonies than disturb the public peace; and farther urged, that if these reasons were not satisfactory to the local government, the affair might be referred to the Duke of Portland, and an explanation required of the English conference. This proposal was acceded to, and here the business ended. I afterwards drew up a reply to the infamous letter which had been published against us. But the man who had given publicity to the unprincipled defamations of an adversary, had not the honor to print the vindication of the accused."

The following is an affecting record of human depravity, and of the power of divine grace. It is calculated to encourage the prayers and efforts of religious parents on behalf of their unconverted children: for the individual to whom it relates was the son of a pious mother.

"Nov. 1st. — About a fortnight ago I called at a house in Old Road, to settle some business, and was informed that Mr. ———, the son of a member of our society, lay there very sick. He was brought up an overseer, lived in gross sin, and was extremely wicked. He was so much under the influence of passion, as sometimes to abstain from food for several days together. On such occasions he spent his time in smoking cigars, in drinking rum, in tormenting all around him, and in being tormented himself. God at length laid his hand upon him, and it was evident that he was hastening to the house appointed for all living. This, however, did not appear to give him any concern: and as his flesh and strength wasted away, he retained all his wonted aversion to religion. Thus we found him; while his pious mother lamented that she had brought forth such an enemy to God and goodness. After some conversation, in which he expressed his hope of recovery, we told him, that if he had no objection we would unite in prayer to God for him. He replied, apparently with deep contempt, that he had no objection to the prayers of any persons, whether they were whites, blacks, or yellows. We sung a hymn, and then prayed that God would not suffer him to die in his sins, but convince him of his sinful and dangerous condition, and incline him to come to Jesus Christ, who was ready to receive and pardon him. In a few days I received a note, informing me, that a great change has taken place in him, and that he earnestly requested me to visit him again. Accordingly

the next morning I set off from Basseterre, and met a gentleman on the road, who hastened me forward, saying, that Mr. —— was dying, and calling for me. I found him indeed extremely weak, conversed with him a long time, set forth Jesus Christ as the only refuge from the wrath to come, and prayed earnestly to God for his salvation. He appeared to be deeply sensible of his sinful state, and that death was at hand; and therefore earnestly desired us to pray that God would pardon all his sins, and prepare him for his removal to another world. In the afternoon I again commended his soul to the mercy of God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, beseeching the divine Spirit to complete the work which he had begun."

When Mr. Brownell labored in the West Indies, the missionaries of different denominations used to meet together at stated times, that they might strengthen one another's hands in their arduous toil, by united councils and prayer. Of one of these social meetings he has given the following account. It is an encouraging circumstance, that the same spirit of unity and love, which actuated the minds of those excellent missionaries, upwards of twenty years ago, is exemplified by their successors of the present age, in every part of the world.

"On the 20th of November, the monthly meeting of the missionaries on this island, for increasing brotherly love, and forwarding the object of their mission, was hold at Palmetto-Point. There were present Mr. John Taylor, Mr. Robert Shepley, Mr. Nanksval, the Bishop of London's missionary to the Negroes of this island, and myself. Our first inquiry was, what is the real state of our own souls, with regard to vital religion? In answer to this question, every one spoke with freedom and simplicity. Notwithstanding the severe temptations by which we had all been exercised, yet each declared that he had faith in Jesus Christ, had been preserved in the way of holiness by the grace of God, and was determined to spend and be spent in his service. The next inquiry was, What are the principal doctrines upon which we have expiated in the regular course of our ministry, since our last meeting? The answers were, The fall of man, repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and holiness both of heart and life. The third question was, what can be further done to increase genuine religion in our societies? In reference to this we all resolved, to be more fully devoted to God ourselves; to preach the great truths of the gospel in the plainest manner; to meet as many of the classes as we can ourselves; and to continue our present plan of itinerancy."

Describing the labors of his mission, Mr. Brownell proceeds:—

"May 10th, 1802. — I went on board a schooner for Nevis, and arrived safe after a short and pleasant passage. I afterwards agreed with a carpenter to build a new Chapel; and in the evening attended a Prayer-meeting, at which were present about forty whites, and many colored people. Their singing was very delightful. I also delivered an exhortation. It was a season of great spiritual profit.

"May 16th. — I rode to Hog-Valley, and conducted the public worship at ten o'clock. I met the little society, and endeavored to form them into regular classes. The tears ran plentifully down their cheeks; and the heart of one poor aged Negro was so full, that she could scarcely speak. She seized hold of my hand, and continued for a long time to kiss it, till it was with difficulty that I could get it away. Her cry was, 'Glad for see massa again.' Great good will certainly be done in this part of the country I returned home about three o'clock, almost melted by the heat, and preached to a large congregation. The chapel being low, and scarcely any air in motion, I had like to have fainted during

the service. After the preaching I met the society, and read to them part of a letter I had just received from Dr. Coke. It animated them exceedingly; and many a prayer did they offer up to God, for the prosperity of his work."

The following account of the conversion, the holy life, and the peaceful death of a Negro, will be read with lively interest by the friends of Christian missions. The elevation of this poor African from the guilt and misery of heathenism to the purity and comfort of true religion, and his triumphant entrance into the paradise of God, are worth all the mercy and toil which have been expended upon the West India mission, from its commencement to the present day.

"Having omitted at the proper time to insert in my journal an account of Cato Madan, I think it right in this place to relate some particulars concerning that remarkable Negro. Cato was one of those who received the Gospel soon after it was first preached at Cayon, but it was not till after the chapel was built at that place, that he manifested any particular work of grace upon his heart. He then became very attentive to the preachers, and as they generally lodged in the chapel, he would stay with them after the preaching till eleven or twelve o'clock, asking them questions, and conversing on the subject of religion. He now appeared to be convinced of sin; clear views of divine truth opened upon his mind; he was enabled to believe in Jesus Christ, to love him in sincerity, and to walk in his commandments with holy joy and delight. He began to assist in meeting the classes, learned to read and to write, watched over the people, took care of the children, and was acceptable to all. It pleased God, however, to cut him off in the prime of life, and the beginning of his usefulness. His manager, Dr. D., was at a loss to find out his disorder, and labored much to save so useful a slave; but Cato said, 'The physic will do me no good: I am going home.' One of the class-leaders visiting him, found him so happy, that he stood amazed, having never conceived that God imparted such a degree of love, and peace, and joy, on this side of death; and he returned greatly instructed and refreshed. He was very anxious that all should come to the knowledge of God; and calling for one whom he had often exhorted in vain, he said, 'I have often warned you to forsake sin, and you would not: kneel down, and say after me, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."' The overseer of the estate to which Cato belonged, came in, and asked him if he knew him; Cato replied, 'Yes, you are my master. God bless you!' The overseer desired to know whether he had any request to make before he died; he replied, 'Only one: and that is, that I may be buried at the chapel.' Having obtained this request, he blessed them and died.

"I was administering the Lord's Supper at Old Road when I received a note, informing me of his death. I immediately rode to Basseterre, and from thence to Cayon; where I found a vast concourse of people assembled to attend the funeral. We proceeded in regular order near a mile to the chapel, two white overseers attending. We interred the corpse with great solemnity, and a deep and lasting impression was made on the minds of most of those who were present. Soon after, I preached a sermon on the occasion, and such was the effect of his sayings and death, that many turned to the Lord, and a revival of the work of God began, which continues to this day. I could not but reflect upon the difference between this poor Negro, who received a few pints of corn as a reward for his weekly toil, and his master in England. By means of the truly Christian experience and triumphant death of the Negro, many were turned to righteousness; and by the writings of his master, in defense of polygamy, many hundreds, if not thousands, in this part of this world, have been hardened in their

unhallowed practices. To which of these two men, in the great day of final account, will God, the righteous Judge of all, say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant?'"

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**A MEMOIR OF JOHN BROWNELL**  
(Early Methodist Missionary to the West Indies)

By  
**Thomas Jackson**

**PART 3**  
(From the March, 1823 Edition of the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine)

It is an important part of a Christian Minister's duty to watch progress of the work of God among the people who are committed to his care: and while he lives in the spirit of his office, nothing will afford him greater pleasure, his own experience of the grace of God excepted, than to witness the conversion of sinners from the error of their way, and the edification of believers on their most holy faith. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth; and in that joy every genuine minister of Jesus Christ largely participates. These remarks are strikingly exemplified in the case of Mr. Brownell. He loved the souls of men with an ardent affection, and was instant in season and out of season, to promote their welfare.

Among other descriptions of sinners, in whose restoration to holiness and peace, his pious and benevolent mind took a lively interest, was that of backsliders; a class of men who, perhaps above all others, are entitled to the tenderest commiseration. On the 6th of June, 1802, he writes:—

"This morning an old backslider returned to the society, who had formerly been a local preacher, and whom Dr. Coke used to call his son. After being very useful for some time; he departed from God; and remained in the practice of sin till about twelve months ago, when the correcting rod of affliction was laid upon him. He appeared to be in the last stage of a consumption, was alarmed at the prospect of death, and called upon the Lord for mercy. Feeling a peculiar affection for those old backsliders, many of whom, by the blessing of God, were brought again to the fold, I went to see him immediately after my arrival at the place where he was. Here I found a man reduced in a few days, from a state of perfect health and vigor, to a mere skeleton; without hope of life, and suffering all the agonies of a wounded conscience. He was deeply convinced of his folly and sin, stated to me his former conversion and Christian experience, and acknowledged the terrible remorse which he had felt under various sermons. I encouraged him to hope for mercy, and prayed that God would heal his backslidings. At another visit, when Mr. Boocock and I were kneeling by his side, and praying for him, he again received a manifestation of the pardoning mercy of God. I visited him frequently afterwards, and always found him fully resolved to follow on to know the Lord. He began to recover from his illness, went to the continent of America for the benefit of his health, returned safe, and this morning attended the class meeting, and was restored to the society. How wonderful are the ways of God! Mr. Boocock, who was then the very picture of health, is now dead; and this man, who had not to all appearance a week to live, has recovered his former strength! Another person also joined the society this day, and the presence of God was powerfully felt at the Lord's Table."

The violent opposition which, at one period, was raised against the mission to the Negroes; and the trying circumstances in which the missionaries were in consequence often placed, are strikingly depicted in various passages of Mr. Brownell's private Journal. Happily the favorable influence of Christianity upon the minds of the Negroes is, at present, more generally acknowledged in the West

Indies; so that by the proprietors and managers of estates; in many of the islands, at least, the Christian instruction of the Negroes is now rather solicited than opposed. One affecting specimen of the persecutions which were formerly experienced will be found in the following Extract:—

"June 12th. — I visited the sick; and in the evening met classes. The members of one class, which has been lately formed, spoke in a very pleasing manner. One of them in particular informed me, that he was working in the boiling-house, when he felt such joy in God, that he could not forbear to sing aloud. His master instantly seized him, and exercised his horse-whip upon him till he was tired; and then ordered him to be taken out and cart-whipped. But still, said the Negro, 'de rejoicing was in my heart.' This manager had imbibed the strongest aversion to Methodism; and one evening, when Mr. Shepley had gone into the house of one of the Negroes to instruct and pray with them, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ came to them in a state of intoxication, attempted to set the house on fire, and threatened the people with the cart-whip. Mr. Shepley endeavored to restrain and pacify him: he at length departed, after dispersing the people with many oaths and threats. The Negroes then held their religious meetings in the night, among the bushes, and in a deep gutter. For the honor of St. Kitt's, I would, however, observe, that there are not many persons who are like-minded with this man; and their number is on the decrease."

Proceeding in the duties of his mission, Mr. Brownell writes:—

"June 15th. — I went to the Salt-Ponds in about, and sung and prayed with the people in that place. I examined many; gave tickets; and, between the hours of twelve and one o'clock, retired into a sort of pantry, among water-pails, and lay down in my clothes, weary, faint, and hungry. But what is this, if any good may only be done to the souls of these poor neglected people? A few of them are in earnest for their salvation; three or four appear to be believers in the Lord Jesus; but many of them are, as yet, extremely ignorant, though they would suffer any punishment rather than be excluded from the society.

"June 23d. — I went to visit the sick on \_\_\_\_\_'s estate. In the sick-house I found several Negroes, and a diseased mule. The stench was intolerable. One paralytic told me, that at the beginning of her affliction, she prayed that God would have mercy upon her, and take her away, for it was better for her to die than live in that state. She was immediately impressed with a conviction that she was not fit to die; and called an aged Negro to pray with her. I prayed with her, and directed her to Jesus Christ.

Another aged Negro, who could not make herself understood by words, made many signs, and laughed heartily, to show me, that her soul was happy in God. At the Point in the evening, I met the class, and renewed the society-tickets. We must be more diligent in catechizing; for many of our people are extremely ignorant, especially in these country places. Preaching does not communicate divine knowledge to them so effectually as might be expected, for want of the requisite elementary instruction. After regular preaching in this place for twelve years, three-fourths of this society are very inadequately acquainted with the doctrines of Christianity. My soul is distressed to find out some more efficient method of conveying the knowledge of evangelical truth to these untutored minds. Can these dry bones live? Lord, thou knowest! The work is thine. Exert thy gracious power!

"Sunday, June 27th. — We had a love-feast at Basseterre, at the beginning of which I read from the Magazine an account of a religious experience and happy death. The power of God rested upon the people in a surprising manner. The congregation consisted of about four or five hundred persons, two-thirds of whom were Negroes. They spoke in a clear, rational, and scriptural manner of their conversion to God, to the utter astonishment of some white people present, who were constrained to acknowledge that God had granted to these Gentiles also repentance unto life. Many of them described the saving change which divine grace had wrought in their minds with a degree of accuracy which would shame several Europeans; while the rest, by silent adorations, many tears, and heavenly ejaculations, testified how much they felt.

"August 5th. — I went on board a small vessel with my family; the good hand of God was upon us, and we arrived safe at St. Kitt's. Truly we ought to be more than thankful to God; to sow the seed of his word in hope; and patiently to wait for the joyful harvest. Seven years ago, there were scarcely one hundred persons in this place, (q. Nevis?) who met in class, and could properly be called members of society; and now there are upwards of one thousand! During this time, five class leaders have died happy in God, besides a large number of private members, whose names I trust are in the Book of Life. The outward situation of the missionaries, at the commencement of this period, was much inferior to that of many of the Negroes. A room, of about ten feet square, was their only place of residence, and they could scarcely appear out of doors without being exposed to public insult and contempt. But now they have a commodious house, a large chapel, a respectable congregation, and a delightful prospect of still greater usefulness. One thing, relating to this place, is worthy of special attention. This, society, nineteen out of twenty of whom are slaves, requested to have a second preacher, and encouraged their ministers to purchase and build to the amount of sixteen or seventeen hundred pounds; and God, in his good providence, has so honored their faith, that they are reducing the debt on the chapel premises at the rate of about three hundred pounds per annum. Farewell, little flock, once more! Peace be within your hearts, and prosperity within your little huts!

"Nov. 27th. — I was informed by note, that Mr. Debell had been knocked down on the Bay by Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, who, having been reprov'd by Mr. Debell for behaving ill at chapel, struck him several times, and left marks of violence upon him. The blood was drawn in three places, by a whip, supposed to have been made of twisted cow-skin. I returned immediately to Basseterre, and found that Mr. Debell had taken out a warrant against this persecutor, who was bound to appear at the Court of Sessions.

"The Rev. Mr. Davies called at our house on the 1st of December, and informed Mrs. Brownell, that several gentlemen had interested themselves warmly in this affair, and were determined that pecuniary assistance should not be wanting in bringing this young man to justice.

"Jan. 18th, 1803. — We attended the Court of Grand Sessions. The grand jury found the bill against Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, who had disturbed the congregation, and assaulted my colleague. After much debating, the cause was referred to the Court of King's Bench."

Scarcely anything can put the faith of a missionary to a severer test, than the removal of his brethren by death, in the midst of their labors and usefulness. Sojourning in a strange land, hated and persecuted by wicked men, and sustaining an office which involves the most awful responsibility;

a colleague engaged in the same work, and actuated by kindred feelings, must be dear to him as his own soul. In the death of such a friend and brother, therefore, an irreparable loss is sustained, and a wound inflicted which must be indescribably painful. The vacancy occasioned by the decease of a missionary cannot often be readily supplied; the congregations mourn when no voice of mercy and salvation is heard from the pulpit; and the work of God languishes for want of the regular discharger of pastoral duties.

Early in the year 1803, Mr. Brownell was thus afflicted by the premature death of the Rev. Philip Debell; who is generally allowed, by those who were personally acquainted with him, to have been one of the most pious and holy of that host of excellent men who have gone as missionaries to the West Indies. The following account of his death and interment, copied from Mr. Brownell's journal, is, the more readily inserted in this place, because justice has never yet been done to his memory in any of the publications of that body of which he was such a distinguished ornament. The name and character of such an extraordinary youth should be generally known, and transmitted to posterity, to the honor of divine grace, and as an example to the Church of God.

"Jan. 22d. — This is my birthday. I have now reached my thirty-first year. It has been a painful day to me, as I received two notes, informing me that my brethren Bradnack and Debell were both dangerously ill. I left Old Road for Basseterre in the evening, amidst the wind and rain, and found Mr. B. a little better, and Mr. Debell extremely ill. O God of heaven, preserve their valuable lives!

"Jan. 25th. — Every symptom of approaching dissolution appears in our excellent Brother Debell. I conversed with him, and commended his departing soul to God in prayer. 'I am passing,' said he, 'through deep waters, but the Lord is on my right hand.' He repeated the following line of a favorite hymn,

'Farewell, vain world, I'm going home;'

when a strong convulsion rendered him insensible, and in about ten minutes put an end to all his sorrow and pain. Thus died Philip Debell, after a residence of near ten months in the island of St. Christopher's. He was a man of few words in conversation, grave in his deportment, and fearless in the cause of his Divine Master. As a Christian, he was deeply devoted to God; and as a preacher, he was eminently active and zealous.

These were the peculiar features of his character; and if any of them seemed to predominate, it was fervency in devotion, and in the exercise of his ministry. The intensity of his zeal often led him to preach too loud, and to exert himself beyond what the nature of the West Indian climate will allow, especially to European constitutions. 'Living he taught us how to live, and dying confirmed the truth he delivered. His death is rather to be envied than lamented.'

"On the 26th we committed his remains to the grave. It was indeed a day of sorrow. The Rev. George Nanksval, the bishop of London's missionary, read the funeral service: Mr. Pryor, an old member of society, the Rev. Messrs. Schneller and Horman, the Moravian missionaries, our own Brethren Pattison and Bradnack, and myself; were the bearers. The Rev. Robert Pemberton, rector of the parish, and the Rev. William Davies, rector of St. Peter's, attended; together with a large

number of ladies and gentlemen. The members of society from Old Road, Palmetto Point, Cayon, and town, made the concourse of people too many for the chapel. The white leaders of classes were ranged on one side of the corpse, the black and colored leaders on the other. The scene was extremely affecting, and more than my mind could sustain. We endeavored to moderate the grief of the people by consoling exhortations. The following hymns were sung, as appropriate to the solemn occasion:

'And let this feeble body fail,  
And let it faint and die:' &c.  
'Hark a voice divides the sky,  
Happy are the faithful dead:' &c.

"At the grave:

""Tis finish'd, 'tis done, the spirit is fled,' &c.

"At parting:

'Farewell, dear friend, a long farewell,  
For we shall meet no more,  
Till we are rais'd with thee to dwell  
On Zion's happier shore.'"

After the death of this excellent man, Mr. Bradnack's illness assumed an alarming aspect, so that he was obliged to leave the West Indies, for the preservation of his life. When thus deprived of help, Mr. Brownell's labors became excessive; but were nevertheless signally owned of God. A revival of religion took place at Sandy-Point, and at Old Road; so that, at the former place, the society and friends resolved to enlarge their chapel; and at the latter, to build a house for the accommodation of the missionaries. Speaking of Good Friday this year, Mr. Brownell says,

"This has been a day of great weariness. The congregations have been large, and I trust that good has been done. But I am become so weak with excessive labor, and riding in the sun, that I am afraid my time in the West Indies will be short, unless I obtain assistance by the speedy arrival of missionaries from England.

"April 10th, Easter Sunday — Last night I came to Old Road, and found a class meeting in the chapel. I slept in the pulpit; and on raising my head, between three and four o'clock in the morning, I found the people assembled for public worship. We continued singing, praying, and preaching, till day-light. We had a delightful love-feast at Palmetto-Point; and at four o'clock I preached at Basseterre. The chapel, which is now greatly enlarged, was excessively crowded; and numbers, who could not obtain admission, stood on the outside. How inadequate are my abilities for the instruction of even this vast congregation! Send help, O Lord, send help, that these souls may not perish for lack of knowledge!"

It would be highly interesting and instructive, to follow Mr. Brownell through his various scenes of labor in the West Indies, and to produce extracts from his journal illustrative of the feelings of his mind, of his exertions to promote the interests of Christianity in his different stations, of his attempts to introduce the gospel into the more neglected islands, and of the privations and persecutions by which he was exercised; but the limits prescribed to this memoir will not admit of such lengthened details. I am, therefore, reluctantly compelled to pass over many striking incidents connected with his personal history, and to bring the account of his missionary life to a close.

In the year 1803, he was appointed to labor in Tortola, Spanish Town, and the other Virgin Islands; where he was exposed to the most cruel treatment, while pursuing the duties of his mission with his wonted diligence and fidelity. On the 31st of December, 1805, as he was walking through one of the public streets, he was sternly accosted by a gentleman, who requested him to read a paper, which he then put into his hand. The gentleman instantly seized him by the arm, dragged him into the middle of the street, and put himself into an attitude to strike him. This behavior was occasioned by a letter which had been just transmitted to the island, containing an extract from a communication inserted in the Methodist Magazine for July, 1805, in which Mr. Brownell had said, "I find religion has made great alteration for the better among the blacks; but among the whites, fornication, adultery, and neglect of all religion, are reigning sins." This letter, the gentleman said, was a libel on the public, and that he would hunt the writer out of the community. Having bestowed upon him the epithets of rascal and scoundrel with no common liberality, he proceeded to strike Mr. Brownell in the face, first with a stick, and then with his fist, to kick him, and to pull him by the nose. He was instantly joined by another, equally furious, who, after pouring forth more abusive language, struck him a violent blow on the breast. Scarcely had Mr. Brownell time to turn himself round, when a third struck him with the butt-end of a loaded horsewhip, which cut his head most severely. "His hand was lifted up," says Mr. Brownell, "to give a second blow; but providentially he did not strike, or it is highly probable that I should have been murdered in the open street, and in the face of day." One of these assailants was a clergyman's son, and another a magistrate. On witnessing this uproar, a crowd soon assembled; and while they were inquiring into the occasion of the tumult, Mr. Brownell retired into an adjoining house, and was thus preserved from future harm. His adversaries no sooner found that he was gone, than they began to pursue him, urging each other to persevere till they had "finished the business;" and he only escaped the second tempest of their vengeance, by prostrating himself on the floor, while they passed by the window. He was afterwards conducted home by two friendly gentlemen, who became his guard; and was confined to his house for some time, through the wound on his head, and the bruises he had received, attended by two physicians. For several weeks afterwards, Mr. Brownell states, he carried his life in his hands. On the 3d of March, 1806, Mr. Brownell brought the affair before the grand jury of the Virgin Islands, with a number of competent witnesses to attest the truth of his allegations; but the grand jury, instead of finding the bill against the rioters, obliged Mr. Brownell to pay half the costs, for bringing a matter frivolous and vexatious before the court! They immediately asked and obtained leave to present the plaintiff. An indictment was accordingly drawn up; and though they had no other evidence than the extract of a written letter, a bill was soon found, and Mr. Brownell was put to the bar, and tried for writing a libel on the community. Not being prepared for the trial, they endeavored to postpone it till the next sessions, and in the mean time to throw him into prison, imagining that no person would give bail for his appearance. In this, however, they were mistaken. A gentleman who happened to be present, offered to give the requisite security. After considerable debate, five out of seven of the justices were

of opinion that the trial ought not to be deferred; and Mr. Brownell's accusers feeling themselves unable to substantiate the charge, the indictment was quashed, to the great mortification of those who sought revenge. The magistrate who assaulted Ms. Brownell in the street, sat on the bench as one of his judges.

The principal inhabitants of Tortola were as far from approving of these outrageous proceedings, as they were from being implicated in the vices which were said to prevail. The chief magistrate observed, that "as the grand jury did not think proper to find a bill for Mr. Brownell, they ought, in common justice, not to have found one against him." There is also reason to believe, that the persons who were the most active in promoting this prosecution, afterwards reflected upon what they had done, rather with shame than with exultation.

Notwithstanding these discouragements, the mission in Tortola continued to flourish. The white part of the congregation visibly increased; for it often happens, by the grace and overruling providence of God, that the opposition which is raised against the cause of Christianity tends to its prosperity and advancement. Mr. Brownell's sufferings, however, were great. His wife was so affected, when she found that an attempt had been made upon the life of her husband, that she never recovered, and he had reason to believe that this was ultimately the cause of her death. The wound in his head rendered him unable to bear the heat of the sun in the West Indies; and his general health being much impaired by frequent attacks of sickness, by hard labor, and by great privations, he could not proceed in the duties of his mission, and therefore returned to the more congenial climate of his native country, and to the society of British Christians. (To be concluded in our next.)

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**A MEMOIR OF JOHN BROWNELL**  
(Early Methodist Missionary to the West Indies)

By  
**Thomas Jackson**

**PART 4**  
(From the April, 1823 Edition of the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine)

On his return to England, in the year 1806, Mr. Brownell was appointed to the Lynn circuit, where he discharged the duties of his ministry, as his health permitted him, with fidelity and zeal. After spending two years in that place, he removed to Yarmouth. On the first of September, 1809, he says,

"I have now spent three years in England, since my return from the West Indies. They have been eminently years of mercy, and of severe trials. Little did I imagine, when I returned to my native country, that I should have met with so many of the latter. But thanks be to God, he has been my almighty Helper. I left Lynn considerably improved. By the good hand of God upon us, we succeeded in rebuilding and furnishing the dwelling-house; began the erection of Methwoud Chapel; and added one hundred and fifty members to the Society. During the last year, I and my colleagues have labored in Yarmouth with tolerable success. One hundred and ten persons, under religious impressions, have joined our societies in the circuit, for the advantage of Christian communion."

On the termination of his labors in the Yarmouth circuit, in the year 1810, Mr. Brownell says,

"I took leave of my kind friends, whose conduct towards me, at parting, was exceedingly generous. Many are the mercies I have experienced in this circuit. Our labors in the word and doctrine have been blessed by the Lord. We found six hundred and fifty members in society, and leave, to the care of our successors, eight hundred and thirty. The Lord gave me the hearts of the people to the last. Blessed be his name for all his mercies!"

The next scene of Mr. Brownell's labors was the Bedford circuit; where he spent two years with acceptance and usefulness. His mind was often painfully depressed, because the work of God under his superintendence did not make a more rapid progress. On resigning his charge, however, he found, that, after supplying the vacancies in the society occasioned by death and other causes, there was an increase of nearly two hundred members. From Bedford he removed, in the year 1812, to Bolton in Lancashire, where fresh comforts and trials awaited him. His active zeal and pure conduct commanded the general esteem of the society and congregations in that circuit.

During the second year of his residence in Bolton, his amiable wife, who had been the affectionate partner of his joys and sorrows for many years, both at home and abroad, sunk under the power of disease, and was separated by death from him and from her children. The shock which she experienced, when an attempt was made upon the life of her husband in the West Indies, was so great, that she never recovered her former health and spirits. She lingered from that time in a state of debility, till it pleased God to receive her to that world where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. In any circumstances, the loss of such a wife would be severely felt; but to Mr. Brownell the bereavement was exceedingly calamitous. Engaged in the duties of an itinerant

ministry, by which he was frequently called from home, he was left with the care of a large number of children, many of whom were in a state of comparative infancy. His sorrow on this occasion was in part alleviated by the affectionate sympathy of the society in Bolton, who formed a correct estimate of his numerous personal excellencies, and of his ministerial abilities and fidelity. They esteemed him highly in love, for his work's sake; and their truly Christian kindness, from the commencement to the termination of his labors among them, made an impression upon his heart, which nothing but death could ever efface. Now that he is gone to his eternal home, and they will see him no more till the last trumpet shall sound, and the earth and sea resign their dead, it must afford them the liveliest pleasure to recollect, that they so cordially co-operated with him for the furtherance of the work of God, while they ministered to the personal comfort of a man who had suffered more than ordinary privations and persecutions in the cause of Christianity.

After the death of his wife, Mr. Brownell was afflicted with a nervous fever, by which he was thrown into a state of great mental dejection and bodily weakness, which continued for many tedious months. In this condition he removed from the Bolton circuit to Holmfirth in the summer of 1814; and not long after his arrival at that place, he went to Scarborough, for the benefit of sea-bathing. At this time he had passed the meridian of life; his constitution was greatly impaired, and appeared to be rapidly hastening to decay; so that while exploring the romantic scenery of Scarborough and its neighborhood, to him the following impressive lines were strikingly applicable:—

"Health on these open hills I seek,  
By these delicious springs in vain;  
The rose on this deserted cheek  
Shall never bloom again  
For youth is fled; — and, less by time  
Than sorrow torn away,  
The pride, the strength of manhood's prime  
Falls to decay."

At Scarborough Mr. Brownell was greatly encouraged by the Christian sympathy and attention of the Rev. Daniel Isaac, who was then stationed in that town, and whose kindness Mr. Brownell mentions in his journal with grateful emotion. It was not till the spring of the following year that his mind and body acquired their former tone. During this painful season he preached the gospel of his God and Saviour, and attempted to comfort others when his own heart was sad and, in this state of mental anguish, it is a pleasing and an instructive fact, that, in Holmfirth and its vicinity, several people were awakened and converted by the instrumentality of his faithful labors. On the recovery of his former health and cheerfulness, he devoted himself afresh to the service of God and of his Church, and was rendered very useful in his public ministry, as well as in the discharge of those pastoral duties which are of a more private nature.

In the year 1816, Mr. Brownell was appointed to the Sheffield circuit, where the writer of this memoir became acquainted with him, and had frequent opportunities, for the space of two years, of observing his spirit and conduct, and of attending his edifying ministry. During the second year of his residence in Sheffield, Mr. Brownell entered again into the marriage-state, having been a

widower nearly four years. In taking this important step, he sought in earnest prayer the providential guidance of almighty God, and was not disappointed.

Mr. Brownell left Sheffield for Nottingham in 1818, where he spent two years with considerable success, though in the midst of great discouragements. The Newark circuit was the last appointment he received from the Methodist Conference: here he was called to lay down his commission at his Master's feet. Having labored one year in this place with his wonted zeal and activity, he went to the Conference at Manchester in 1821, but was so indisposed at the time as seldom to be able to attend the preaching. On his way home, he had some conversation with a medical friend in Huddersfield, when he was given to understand that danger was to be apprehended, his symptoms indicating an ossification of the heart. His indisposition continued rapidly to increase, so that it was with difficulty that he went through the regular labors of his circuit. To his friends he repeatedly expressed his persuasion that his race was nearly run, and his full determination to employ the remainder of his strength in the work of his great Master.

On the morning of Sunday, September 16th, he arose from his bed, designing to attend a prayer-meeting; but while putting on his clothes, he was obliged to desist no less than three times. After breakfast, however, feeling himself to be somewhat better, he went to the chapel, and preached from, "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." When the preaching was over, the pain in his breast returned, so that he was scarcely able to speak to one or two classes who met him for the renewal of their quarterly tickets.

During the succeeding night, he was very ill, but obtained partial relief in the morning by having several ounces of blood taken from his arm. He was confined to his room, and partly to his bed, till the following Sunday, when he appeared to be much better, and requested that the friends might be allowed to see him.

Through the whole of his affliction, his mind was kept in perfect peace, but on this day he was remarkably happy in God. After his death, was found on a slip of paper the following memorandum, which was written on this day, apparently in the absence of his family, and while they were engaged in public worship:

"On Sunday, September 16th, I was taken very ill, and had much pain in the night. I enjoyed great peace of mind, being entirely free from fear and anxious care, and patiently resigned to the will of God. Sunday the 23d, I had a gracious visit from the Lord. My mind is thankfully looking up to him. O how happy my soul is, this afternoon! Glory Glory! Glory be to God!

"Let it not my Lord displease,  
That I would die to be his guest!"

On the following day his complaint assumed a more alarming aspect; yet upon his countenance a heavenly placidity rested, expressive of that peace of God which passeth all understanding. he was much fatigued in the evening, and, on retiring to bed, soon began to be much worse. His family and medical attendants speedily assembled, but all their efforts to relieve him were unavailing. His colleague, the Rev. William Dalby, prayed with him, and Mr. Brownell, who was in full possession

of his mental faculties, uttered many fervent responses to the petitions which were presented to the Father of Mercies. The difficulty of his breathing rendered him unable to engage in conversation; but he often prayed, "Lord, save me! The struggle was severe, but it was soon over. Addressing his disconsolate wife, he said, "All is peace, though not joy;" and then gently breathed his soul into the hands of his infinitely compassionate Redeemer.

Thus died the Rev. John Brownell, on the 24th of September, 1821, in the fifty-first year of his age, and the twenty-eighth of his itinerant ministry. His remains were afterwards interred in the burying-ground connected with the Methodist chapel at Newark-upon-Trent, where they wait till the Lord shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God.

Mr. Brownell became a happy subject of true religion in his youth, and in the subsequent periods of his life never wickedly departed from his God. When it is said that he was a Christian, it is intended to use that word in its scriptural and only legitimate sense. He placed his reliance upon the merit of Christ for acceptance with God and being justified by faith from the guilt of sin, he enjoyed peace of conscience as the fruit of pardon.

He received also by faith the gift of the Holy Ghost, by whose powerful agency he was not only filled with unutterable peace and joy, but was effectually renewed in the spirit of his mind. Hence arose his victory over sin both of heart and life, his fervent love to God, and intense zeal for the divine glory; and hence arose his melting compassion for the perishing souls of unconverted men, and his conscientious observance of every Christian precept.

His character was formed on the model of the New Testament. The accomplishment of its promises in his own salvation, he sought in the constant exercise of devout and ardent prayer; and the exemplification of its principles in his temper and conduct he made the business of his life.

He was very regular in the discharge of relative duties. In a letter to the writer of this memoir, his widow says:

"Long as memory holds her seat, I shall esteem my union with Mr. Brownell the greatest honor the Lord ever conferred upon me, and for its blessings I believe that I shall praise him in eternity. From my first intimate acquaintance with him, I found him to be a sensible and judicious man; and all my expectations of happiness, in being the wife of a minister of Jesus Christ, have been more than realized. His consistent, uniform, and exemplary conduct, in domestic life, rendered our short union a more than usually happy one."

Mr. Brownell watched over his children with most affectionate solicitude. He regarded them as fallen creatures, but redeemed by Jesus Christ; and his earnest desire was, to correct the evils of their nature, and lead them to enjoy the salvation of the gospel. In his conduct towards them, he carefully avoided improper harshness and severity on the one hand, and criminal indulgence on the other; and, by the blessing of God upon his prudent management, he succeeded in gaining both their respectful reverence, and their ardent affection.

Mr. Brownell was a truly loyal man. He was zealously attached to the British Constitution, was the friend of social order, and opposed to insubordination and anarchy in all their destructive forms. Not long before his lamented death, finding that the apostles of infidelity were actively employed in disseminating the principles of sedition among the common people in the town and neighborhood of Newark, he made arrangements for the delivery of a course of sermons on relative duties, in which the scriptural doctrine of obedience to civil governors was to have formed a prominent part.

Nor was it merely in the latter years of his life, when he enjoyed, in his native country, all the advantages of its paternal government, and when disloyalty became so generally identified with blasphemy, that he practiced and inculcated the duties of submission. He did the same in the West Indies, even when the civil authorities refused, in some instances, to protect him from open violence, and when he saw men subjected to the most cruel punishment for presuming to worship the God that made them. The following testimony from the late Dr. Coke will throw some light on this subject. It was addressed to the governor-general of the Bahama Islands, and bears the date of October 6th, 1798:

"Permit me to recommend to your Excellency, the Rev. John Brownell. He has been employed by our society as a missionary for the conversion of the blacks for several years in the Windward Islands, &c., with the most unblemished reputation, and with great success. Mr. Brownell is a thorough friend to our gracious sovereign, and to our most excellent constitution; otherwise he should receive no support from us. I only wish that his labors and continuance in the island may depend upon the uprightness of his conduct, and his subordination to the government."

The Wesleyan mission in the West Indies is one of the most successful of those truly benevolent enterprises which have been undertaken in modern times by the zeal of British Christians. Before the Negroes in those islands were brought under the ameliorating influence of Christianity, their situation was truly pitiable. Their outward bondage afforded but an imperfect representation of the ignorance, the superstition, the wickedness, and the misery, by which their minds were bound.

It has been attested by eyewitnesses, that, generally speaking, they were destitute of all knowledge of God, his attributes, or his worship, and of the duties which men owe to him, to each other, and to themselves; and that a superstition by which they imagined themselves to have intercourse with diabolical agency, subjected them to the severest mental horrors. They were addicted to lying, theft, drunkenness, and impurity; and their quantum of daily labor was extorted from them by the terrible lacerations of the whip, and other modes of punishment equally revolting to humanity.

Diligence had no stimulant but the fear and presence of the driver; and fidelity was neither practiced by the slave, nor expected by the master. To these degraded people the doctrines of Christianity have been preached with simplicity and affection, and the result has been glorious. There are this day upwards of twenty thousand persons in those islands, under the pastoral care of the Wesleyan missionaries, as regular members of society, the greater part of whom are Negroes, who have been elevated from the lowest abyss of ignorance, and vice, and misery, to enjoy not only the blessings of civilized life, but also of true religion.

The converted Negroes build themselves good huts in which they reside, obtain decent furniture, and many of them live as comfortably as the generality of poor families do in England. Having acquired habits of industry through the influence of religion, their punishment is lessened, and in many instances entirely done sway; and some have by diligence and frugality saved a sufficiency of money to purchase their freedom. Christianity administers to their minds the richest consolations amidst the toils of life; renders them content with the appointments of Providence; inspires them with cheerfulness and holy triumph in death; and prepares them, on their removal from the land of their captivity, for the blissful presence of God.

This is a subject of delightful contemplation; and the Wesleyan mission to the Negroes in the West Indies will long be regarded by those who believe the Bible, as an extensive work of God, and one of the noblest enterprises of Christian benevolence.

In the accomplishment of this work, Mr. Brownell was one of the most laborious and useful instruments. The spirit by which he was actuated was of a truly missionary character. His heart was intent upon the salvation of those poor outcasts of men to whom he was sent. For this he meekly submitted to endure hunger, reproach, public insults, sickness, personal injury, and perils both by sea and land; but none of these things moved him, nor did he count even his life dear, if the souls of men might only be converted and saved.

With the prospect of death before him, and while his colleagues were sick and dying on every side, he put forth all his strength in the labors of his mission. He was no reed shaken with the wind, but was instant in season, and out of season, preaching the word, visiting the sick, meeting the classes, and catechizing the Negroes in private, that they might be better prepared for the public ministry of the gospel. While he was thus employed, he was often found lamenting his want of zeal before God, and imploring mercy as an unprofitable servant.

A humble missionary, who exposes his life in inhospitable climes, and submits to privations, labors, and persecutions such as Mr. Brownell endured, though often overlooked and despised by worldly men, is a philanthropist of the highest class, and is entitled to universal esteem. His deeds may not appear splendid and dazzling to secular minds, but their substantial value will be manifested and rewarded at the resurrection of the just, when the exploits of the mere warrior and statesman will be forgotten.

There were persons, even in his own country, who were capable of treating Mr. Brownell with disrespect, but he might have addressed them in the language of a Christian apostle, "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus;" the scars of those wounds which I received in his service.

What Mr. Brownell was as a colleague in the ministry, may be correctly ascertained from the following extract of a letter from the Rev. William Hinson. It was addressed to the editor of this magazine when Mr. Brownell's death was first announced:

"I was stationed at Lynn the first year of my itinerancy, where I had Mr. Brownell as my superintendent. This I esteem a gracious providence; for I was treated by him as a brother: indeed

I may say that he watched over me with a fatherly care. He was truly concerned for my comfort, and was especially desirous of promoting my usefulness. We prayed together, and often conversed on the subject of the great work in which we were engaged. He gave me excellent instruction relative to preaching; endeavored to impress my mind with the necessity of keeping alive the fire of divine love in my heart, in order to my happiness and usefulness; and urged me, in all my ministrations, to aim at the profit of my bearers. 'Whatever subject you take up,' he would say, 'take care to have some specific end in view; let the profit of your hearers, in one way or another be the object you seek to accomplish; and prosecute every subject with a view to this end.'

"After a separation of twelve months, he was once more appointed to be my superintendent. We again took sweet counsel together, and he renewed his fatherly care for my welfare. My heart glows with gratitude while I write, at the remembrance of his kindness. If I was unwell, as I sometimes was, he discovered all the tenderness of a parent. If I was oppressed with a sense of the importance of the work to which I was called, he would comfort and encourage me. He sometimes heard me preach, and would afterwards converse with me concerning my preaching, with faithfulness and affection. If at any time he saw me improperly elated, he would press upon my attention the indispensable necessity of lowliness of mind, in order that I might preserve a sense of the favor of God, and secure a continuance of his blessing upon my labors.

"I well remember to have met with him at the London conference in 1810, when I was about to be publicly received into full connection. I had a long conversation with him on the subject of devoting my whole life to the duties of the Christian ministry. He saw my distress of mind, which indeed was great, originating partly in a sense of the greatness of the work, and partly in a consciousness of my comparative unfitness for the full discharge of its momentous duties. Such were my feelings, that I had begun to think of giving up the work, and of returning home.

"My dear Brother, perceiving my inward conflict, requested me to walk with him into the burying-ground belonging to the chapel in City-Road, where I freely unbosomed my mind to him. He felt much for me, and endeavored to comfort me. After using a variety of arguments to prevail upon me to give myself wholly to God and his work, he led me to Mr. Wesley's tomb, and directed my attention to the unwearied and gloriously successful labors of that great man. He then spoke of his blessed end, and of his great reward; and thus labored to encourage me by his example. This interview was truly profitable. By it I was strengthened, and led to resolve, that I would go forward in the path which I believed God had marked out for me."

As a preacher, Mr. Brownell's talents were very respectable. His education was indeed unavoidably defective, in consequence of the blindness with which he was afflicted in his youth; and the best period of his life was spent among a people just emerging from a state of barbarism, and who were rather to be considered as catechumens, than as persons prepared for a regular ministry, and for the delivery of systematic discourses. But with him the improvement of his mind, by the acquisition of useful knowledge, was a matter both of duty and delight. He read the best English authors, both in prose and verse; and in conversation, as well as in the pulpit, would often introduce passages from our most eminent poets with considerable elegance and effect.

He obtained some knowledge of the Hebrew language; and when he was in the Holmfirth circuit, he went regularly through the greater part of the Greek Testament with his excellent colleague, who had received a classical education.

In the pulpit he always showed his good sense, by avoiding that affectation of learning, into which men of superficial attainments are apt to fall; but it was often manifest to competent judges, that he had a just view, not only of the general meaning of his text, but of the exact import of the original terms used by the inspired writer. He not only possessed a correct judgment, but often displayed considerable strength and elegance of imagination, by the introduction of appropriate figures, which enlivened his sermons, while they illustrated the subjects which he was pressing upon the attention of his hearers.

The matter of his discourses was always carefully arranged, so that his preaching was never incoherent and rhapsodical. In the pulpit self appeared to be utterly forgotten, and his only object was to promote the glory of God in the salvation of the people by whom he was surrounded. There was an earnestness, and a seriousness, in his manner, which excited a general interest in his favor, and prepared his hearers to listen with attention to his message. Preaching was his delight so that he never had any inclination to plead a slight indisposition, or the inclemency of the weather, as excuses for neglecting his appointments.

Unless unavoidably prevented, he was always at his post, and whatsoever his hand found to do, he did it with his might. As he aimed at the benefit of his hearers in all his ministrations, he was never satisfied with the bare delivery of his sermons, but was always looking for fruit. He was continually inquiring after persons whose minds were under religious impressions, that he might cherish in them every good desire, lead them to the Saviour, and induce them to avail themselves of the advantages of Christian fellowship.

He took a most lively interest in the prosperity of the work of God, and watched over the societies committed to his care in the spirit of a man who saw and felt the value of immortal souls. His death is a loss to the Methodist connection, and to the world, as well as to his family and friends, but he has finished his course, and awaits the decision of his Almighty Judge.

The following epitaph is inscribed upon his tombstone:

Sacred  
To the Memory  
Of the Rev. John Brownell;  
Who having discharged the duties  
Of the Christian ministry  
With unwearied diligence and extensive success,  
For the space of twenty-seven years,  
(Eleven of which he spent as a Missionary  
In the West India Islands,)  
Finished his course in this Town,  
In the calm triumph of Christian Faith.  
He was eminently distinguished by  
The sincerity of his piety,  
The firmness of his principles,  
The purity of his manners,  
And the fervency of his zeal.  
He was born January 22d, 1771,  
And fell asleep in Jesus, Sept. 24th, 1821.  
"The memory of the just is blessed." Prov. x. 7.

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