

He visited a trusted friend, Mr. Woolf, at Balham, on Thursday, but on returning to his house at City Road, on Friday, the look on his face, the manner in which he crept with stumbling feet into the house, showed he was stricken. He struggled with difficulty upstairs into his room, and sat down in his chair. Eager Bessie Ritchie would run for refreshments; but Wesley sent every one out of the room, saying he was not to be interrupted for any one, for half-an-hour, "not even if Joseph Bradford came."

That half-hour of loneliness has a strange pathos about it. Wesley knew that earth was ending, that death was near; and the solitary spirit, standing on the edge of eternity, would brook, for the moment, no earthly companionship. He would talk with God alone, as much alone—and yet as little alone—as Moses on the hilltop in Moab.

Dr. Whitchoad, Wesley's trusted friend and physician, was sent for. "Doctor," said the dying man, with a pleasant smile, as the physician entered the room, "they are more afraid than hurt." The next day, however, Joseph Bradford sent a hurried note to each preacher in London. "Mr. Wesley is very ill," it ran, "pray, pray, pray." All Saturday Wesley slept, but on Sunday morning he rose, sat in his chair with a cheerful face, drank a cup of tea, and repeated to those about him, with smiling lips, his brother's verse:—

"Till glad I lay this body down,
Thy servant, Lord, attend;
And, oh, my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end."

Speech presently failed him. "Speak to me," he whispered to those about him. "I cannot speak." In a little while he gathered strength again. Eight years before, at Bristol, he was ill, and believed himself to be dying, and he then said to his attendant, Joseph Bradford:—

"I have been reflecting on my past life: I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring, in my poor way, to do a little good to my fellow-creatures; and, now it is probable that here are but a few steps between me and death,