PATHFINDERS OF THE GREAT SOUTH LAND

By WILLIAM GEORGE TAYLOR
Author of 'TAYLOR OF DOWN UNDER'

LONDON: THE EPWORTH PRESS (J. ALFRED SHARP)
... was one of our Pathfinders in the extension of the Kingdom of God. He had the faith, passion, and heroism of an Apostle-Evangelist. He lived in the track of Revival. Humanly speaking, he blazed the way for Pentecost.
DEDICATION

The Rev. Samuel Chadwick,
Cliff College,
near Sheffield.

My dear friend and brother,

You are, in large measure, responsible for this book.

I was sitting one day on my verandah, chatting with a friend—a Congregational minister from London. He had read *Taylor of Down Under*, and was pleased to ply me with many queries suggested by that reading. Suddenly he turned and shot at me a question as disconcerting as it was direct. ‘Why do you not write more?’ I parried the stroke, and said—all sorts of things.

But the question stuck. And then something you were pleased to write in the ‘Appreciation’ you were good enough to append to my earlier book got to work in my brain. From it there was no escaping. For weeks your words rung in my ears, and this book is largely the result.

For better, for worse I am impelled to send it forth. I am conscious of its numerous defects. Its writing simply had to be. It may not be literature, but in it my soul speaks. May it be a case of heart speaking to heart!

You may not know it, but for long years you have bulked largely in my vision. We met in Yorkshire in your bachelor days, and you were pleased to preside at a lecture I gave in Harrogate, nearly thirty years ago. Your books, your speeches, have moved not only me, but also many another in these far-away lands of the South. And, as dear Thomas Champness was pleased to say to me in a heart-to-heart talk we had in my Sydney study, it is to men of your order that we must look to carve out a pathway that will ultimately lead the Church we love so much on to lines of faith and service that shall influence the world Christwards.
In this book I have written much of the ‘Young Minister,’ because I have felt that in the whirl of Church life he is largely forgotten. All the sympathy in my nature goes out to him, as I know it does in the soul of the Master of Cliff College. The young minister of Australia holds in his hand the Church of the future. He must be led on to right tracks, as he has it within his power either to make or to mar Methodism. Hence I have written what I have written.

How the Church of God needs once again to be switched on to old tracks, as an Evangelical and Evangelizing Force! Our Theological standards and our present-day methods need harmonizing. Which shall be changed? What, as it seems to me, above all else we need to do is to saturate our methods with the old-time spirit, the old-time fire, the old-time faith.

Tell me, am I wrong when I say that the Methodism of the world needs a big shaking up? And it will get it! It has meant too much already in the work of the world’s evangelizing to be allowed to slide off into respectable mediocrity. Her prayer-meeting, her penitent-form, her street-corner appeals, her spirit of spiritual expectancy, all need a reviving. And this time, I feel convinced, is coming, for which men like you have preached and written, and toiled, and prayed. The whitening of the harvest fields is apparent. Already can be heard ‘the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees,’ and happy will that Church be that bestirs itself for the glorious world-conquest that is in the womb of the approaching morning. I want my Church to be in it, right up to the hilt.

Hence this book, which, in grateful appreciation of your life and work, I venture to dedicate to you.

WM. G. TAYLOR.

Knavton, Lindfield, Sydney, N.S.W.
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I

PRELUDE

I HAVE written this book under an impulse from which escape has not been possible. It simply had to be. I love my Church with a tender love that may never be put into words. I yearn for its spiritual regeneration. For years I have prayed, and am still praying, for the coming of another Day of Pentecost—the one thing that beyond all else the world needs to-day.

I confess that I write with an ache at my heart. It is well known that I am an evangelist—an evangelist first and last—aye, and through and through as well. My early heroes were soul-saving preachers. I was born and brought up in the atmosphere of conversions. From my first sermon I have been out seeking a verdict for my Lord, in the open and immediate surrender to Him of those to whom I have delivered my message. My earliest library consisted of such books as the lives of William Bramwell, David Stoner, John Smith, and Thomas Collins. During those early days I sat at the feet of some of England’s greatest soul-winners; men who literally and fully ‘believed and preached our doctrines’; men who could not be switched off the track that spelt to them ruin by the fall, restoration by the blood of Jesus, and personal regeneration through an active and living faith in the atoning sacrifice, by any such abstruse and metaphysical reasonings as seem to-day able to sweep so many of our men off their feet.

During all these years I have not, I humbly believe, laboured in vain. But, after all, am I right? If a great
deal that one hears from our pulpits to-day is the gospel, then I am out of it. I have wasted my life. I have proclaimed a mistaken gospel. Sirs, I want some one to tell me, am I wrong? Has mine been a mistaken career? I want no beating about the bush. Narrowed down to its last analysis, one of two things only is true—either the evangelism that shook England to its centre a hundred and fifty years ago, that my forefathers gloried in, and to proclaim which I have devoted over half a century of my life, is a mistake; or else the new atmosphere that has come to us, the passing away of the old emphasis, the whittling down of such doctrines as that of the absolute necessity for the new birth, or that of the personal and direct Witness of the Spirit, is wrong all the time, and utterly wrong. I can take no middle position. I am not prepared to accept a compromise. The two things cannot be the expression of the Divine mind, and I am deeply solicitous to find out where the truth lies.

It will easily be seen that I am writing with a perturbed mind. The fact is, the Church is not putting the same emphasis upon the doctrines that revolutionized England in Wesley’s days as it used to do. Conversions! How rarely are they seen outside a mere handful of our circuits! And, also, how little is done in many of our churches to secure them! Latterly I have had the opportunity of preaching in some of our suburban churches. With a very full heart I have laid myself out to win people for my Lord. I have called an after-meeting, and what have I found? Quite a number of the leading officials have left the church—the very kind of men who in the olden days were the most eager for spiritual results in actual conversions; and when I have made my appeal to those who have remained, it has fallen on ears that would not hear. No response, no apparent concern, no eager feeling after God.

How do we—can we—explain it? For myself I can
find no explanation that is conclusive apart from the fact of an altered emphasis. We are making conversion an intellectual process. We are putting too much emphasis on baptism, the signing of a promise, joining the Church, and too little on the great doctrine of instantaneous conversion from sin through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

And so our congregations seem able to turn off the point of the most earnest appeal for decision—' We are Christians; we are members of the Church; we have been brought up in the Church,' &c. Only the other Sunday a remarkable thing took place in one of our local churches. Eight or ten persons, mostly young men, came out at a Sunday night service to find Christ. The minister said to the preacher: 'Why, these are all Christian young people. They are members of the Church.' And yet, these young men confessed they had never experienced the regenerating grace of God.

This kind of thing, added to the intellectual and spiritual uncertainties of some of our preachers themselves, furnishes the explanation of that long list of annual decreases in our English members' roll, and accounts for the great difficulty nowadays in Australia of influencing the people to decision by the old evangel.

Of course—and let me repeat it again—if those of us are wrong who have stood long and faithfully for the old emphasis, who have preached repentance as a real thing, and the new birth a real new creation, and not something to be attained by a process of intellectual culture, a salvation from actual sin, a radical change of nature; and, further, to touch another modern school, if sin be a weakness, a tendency rather than a direct violation of the divine law, if all that has been signified by that unfortunate but expressive term 'the blood theology' is a perversion of a very ancient but mistaken conception; if, in a word, the atonement is not the atonement, then the sooner some
of us change our tactics and seek to readjust our beliefs the better. But, if that is really so, then I for one am a broken-hearted man; my life has been a failure; my work is done.

But—and I put every emphasis upon the words—I am not wrong! The depression from which I suffered as I sat down to write was not my natural atmosphere. In spite of all I see and hear around me that in all conscience is disconcerting enough, I stand this day more firmly than ever on the tremendous truths that were the glory of early Methodism, and which, wherever faithfully, persistently and earnestly proclaimed to-day, are bound to secure the same results.

And, oh, how I long to see our ministry, aye, and our people also, everywhere getting on to old lines and catching the old fire! Let us go less to the new German school of theology, less to the present popular naturalistic psychology, less to the emasculated interpretations of Holy Scripture which claim to make human reason largely the standard of belief, and let us go more to the Acts of the Apostles, let us bathe our souls in the spirit of Paul's Epistles; and whilst others are debating as to the exact meaning of this or that word, and so losing themselves, as many are doing, in a perfect labyrinth of theories and speculations, let us go straight ahead, and on lines that the Holy Spirit has always honoured, let us catch the old emphasis, the old atmosphere, and we shall be blessed with the old-time results.

And so I have written this book, not merely to do honour to the men who, under God, have given to us so glorious a heritage, but as an appeal to the conscience and heart of such especially as are standing on the threshold of a great and wonderful future. A great fight is ahead of us. I want my Church to be in it. I want it to be properly equipped for the conflict. And so in this book I once again
emphasize the one great central truth—that which in every age has nerved the energies and inflamed the souls of Christian toilers—that there is none other name given among men whereby we can be saved, but the one blessed name of Jesus. And further that everything to-day is pointing us to the necessity for pressing home that fact, on the lines of the Acts of the Apostles, of Erfurt, and of Epworth.

_ I believe a great revival is coming, _ and I want my Church to be in it; and so, once again, I have taken up my pen, and steeped it in prayer, and in confident hope send forth this little book in the earnest and assured belief that the Holy Ghost will place His seal upon it, and make it a message to the conscience and to the heart of our people.
II

THE PIONEER

Australia has waited long and is still looking for the coming of a Ralph Connor or an Ian Maclaren to open up for us the mysteries of her vast bushlands, her mining camps, her trackless sheep country, her rich river flats; to discover to us the folk-lore of the far West; to introduce us to the rough and rugged speech of the gold prospector; or of that strangest of all Australia's bush products, the strong-limbed, hairy-chested, rough-spoken pioneer of our great forest-lands. For of all the native products of our great Australian bush, commend me to the pioneer, the man who more than any other has given to us our rich and permanent heritage. Australia was England's greatest discovery. It was the dear old Mother Country that furnished us with the material for the opening up of these vast virgin forest-lands.

And so it is in my heart to pay a passing tribute to these heroic pioneers of our soil; other pens will one day give to the world the whole wonderful story. I have recently paid a visit to the rich river flats of our Eastern coast. I question if the British Empire can furnish anything better. I wondered not to learn that so many of our present-day farmers run their motor cars, and that in so many of their comfortable homesteads one finds a first-class piano, and young people who can play it. The farmers of to-day will ere long be the strongest cog in the wheel of our fair country's progress. They are the sons and daughters of those stalwarts of the past—well educated, with the blood of giants in their veins, with the fruitage of their toil in
the bank; men and women with iron in their blood, and faith in their souls; these are the forces that will ultimately rule these vast southern lands.

But what of their fathers—aye, and of their mothers? Never yet has justice been done to these noble pioneers—their strength of will, their powers of endurance, their patience and their courage. The same spirit that made the heroes of Waterloo and of Trafalgar, of Ypres and of the Somme, moved these Trojans to attack these virgin forests, and to transform them into fruitful fields.

I have seen some of the almost impenetrable bushlands of those northern rivers. A perfect labyrinth of beauty, with their giant and far-spreading Morton Bay figs, and their cruel nettle trees, rising sixty feet high, and every leaf a terror to such as happen to touch them; with the enormous and ever-varying eucalypti, and ironbarks, and tallow-woods, strangely interlaced with vines that are as cruel as fate, and as strong as manilla ropes, with an almost infinite variety of beautiful undergrowth of wattle and tree-ferns, flowering shrubs, delicate creeping vines, and the rarest of orchids; aye, and with the music of many gaily-plumaged birds in the branches overhead—enough surely to turn the head of artist, or to satisfy the longings of the most ardent lover of nature's poetry.

Such were the lands that these splendid men attacked, and gradually reduced to order. 'There were giants on the earth in those days'—men, aye, and women, who built their own bark huts, lived on the most primitive of fare, and endured hardships that transformed ordinary men into heroes. But this is not the place to dwell at length upon the toils and triumphs of these early pioneers of the Australian bushlands. Some day, I say, there will be found those who will give to the world this long-delayed story of never-ending interest. Still, as illustrating what I have it on my heart to write this day, may I place upon this page the record of one of these heroes of the soil, as
told me but the other day by one of his own descendants? A pioneer was he, in more senses than one—a Cornish local preacher, who in the earliest days of our Western settlement, travelled from Sydney, mostly on foot, over the then little known Blue Mountains, taking many days to reach his objective, and, with others of the same spirit, at once planted the Church of his fathers in wild bushlands where now stand flourishing and beautiful cities. To illustrate the sturdy character of the man—and there were many of the same stamp in those early days—it may be mentioned that in his far western camp they ran out of flour, with which to make the primitive bushman's damper. This lion-hearted Cornishman, without any fuss, simply 'humped his swag' and tramped on foot over those all but trackless mountain ranges, through treacherous swamp-lands and monotonous plains, away to far distant Sydney, to purchase a bag of flour, which the splendid man simply put on his shoulders, and then tramped back home, a distance as far as from London to York. In these days of railway trains and motor cars such a journey assumes almost impossible proportions, but was in those pioneer days undertaken by these heroes of the soil as a quite ordinary item in their life's programme.

Reading between the lines, all this stands forth to me as a parable, pointing with living finger to an even higher type of heroism of which it is my province to speak in these pages; for, thank God, the Spartan spirit is not all of the past, nor by any means all of the soil. The heroes of Galilee have often lived again in those splendid men who in later days, and amid more modern scenes, have given of their utmost to proclaim the evangel of the Crucified. The Christian pioneer of the Australian bush joins hands with the heroes of the American backwoods, and with the even greater stalwarts of those glorious first days of our British Methodist history.
A gathering of Sydney’s notable citizens has recently been held at our University to do honour to the memory of a distinguished Methodist pioneer—the Rev. W. B. Boyce. Dignitaries of the Church and of the State, learned professors of this our much-prized school of learning, headed by their honoured Chancellor, Sir William Cullen, wearing his robes of office, relatives and descendants of Mr. Boyce, together with many of Sydney’s leading men of affairs, filled the hall.

For what purpose were these savants gathered? To see unveiled the portrait in oils (by Longstaff) of this old Methodist pioneer, who was one of the founders, and one of the members of the original Senate of our great University. In the name of the donors, the President of our Conference, in a felicitous speech, presented the portrait.

‘The Chancellor (Sir William Cullen), in accepting the gift, said the Senate of the University was only too glad to have something to remind it of those who worked so strenuously in the early days, when that seat of learning was founded. Those far-seeing minds which devoted so much real labour to the shaping of the foundations of this country were always entitled to a high place in the thoughts of the people. Mr. Boyce was one of our great Australian pioneers. We talked now of this State as flowing with milk and honey—but who had started the springs running? The heroic men and women who had braved everything when this country was nothing but bush. That morning he had read of Oxley’s historic journey; and it made one feel once again that the difficulties of the pioneers were hardly realized—men who blazed the track, and who had left behind them descendants who had shown that, in physique, in spirituality, and in intellectual power Australia need not fear the future in competition with other parts of the world.’

What a remarkable record was that of this fine old man!
After doing yeoman pioneer service in South Africa, this little Yorkshireman was sent out to Sydney by the English Wesleyan Conference to aid in the establishment, on a Connexional basis, of the Methodist Church of Australasia, and to preside at its first Conference in 1855. Our Church in these southern lands owes more than will ever be known to the sagacity, the foresight, the wisdom, and—may I add—the personal service of this intrepid pioneer. The full story can never be told of the work done by him during his first sojourn in these lands. Keenly he watched the rapid development of the Church, taking his full share in its aggressive enterprises. 'In labours more abundant' he put the impress of his remarkable individuality upon our Church's early history. One incident—in itself perhaps insignificant—may be mentioned, as illustrating the spirit of the man. For some reason he had an aversion to saddle work, and, when appointed to preach at Parramatta, he would generally walk from Sydney, preach two or three times, and walk back to his home at Glebe Point, a distance in all of over thirty miles.

Let me add a personal word. When at the Mission House in London, Mr. Boyce had to do with my appointment, in 1870, to Australia, and gave me much advice touching my work in these southern lands. He offered a memorable prayer at the farewell service in City Road Chapel, arranged for several of us who were bound for these far-away shores. And when, years afterwards, I was appointed to the charge of the Glebe Circuit, Sydney, I found Mr. Boyce settled there, he having come out to give his last days to the land he had loved so much and served so well. facetiously the dear old man announced himself as my 'young man,' preaching in the Glebe pulpits once every Sunday, and spending his last days very happily amongst his many friends, his books and his manuscripts.

It may be added that the famous historian Froude in his Oceana, speaks of an evening spent with Mr. Boyce at
the Glebe home of Sir G. W. Allen—Mr. Boyce's son-in-law. Says he: 'The person whom I liked best was Lady Allen's father, a beautiful old clergyman of eighty-two, who told me that he had read all my books, that he disapproved deeply of much that he had found in them. . . . He followed me into the hall when we went away, and gave me his blessing. Few gifts have ever been bestowed on me in this world which I have valued more.'

But, I am speaking here, not so much of the great historic names of which in these southern lands we Methodists are so proud, but rather, of ordinary men, unknown to fame; who preached no great sermons, whose voices were never heard in the public courts of the Church, but who were loyal, first of all to their Lord, and then to the Church through whose agency they had been transformed, laymen and ministers alike, some of them of the youngest, who endured hardships unknown to the conventional, who trod in tracks that were a terra incognita to the ordinary, that they might give to the Australia that was in the making the privileges and the joyous experiences of the Church of their fathers. And they did it without any fuss; their names are unknown to any save to the few old folk who linger still amongst us. But they were giants, each in his own order, but giants every one of them.

My heart is fired at this writing as I think of a quartet of heroes of the eastern coast—Robert Belford, Isaac Rose, Silas Gill, and William James Towner—names little known amongst the present generation of younger Methodists, but veritable apostles of the Crucified; types, thank God, of many such who gave us our present heritage as a Church—noble Christian pathfinders, pioneers of the Church of God.

Robert Belford, whom we were wont to call, as a term of endearment, the 'Bishop of the Manning River,' was an Irishman from Londonderry, one of the handful of earnest
men who established Methodist ordinances in the present populous towns of the Hunter River Valley; and then pushed his way up the coast to the Manning River, ‘where, says he, ‘I was set down in the midst of dense brush. The Lord helping me, I cleared a spot for a makeshift, and, an influx of people gathering to the Manning, I formed a Society and had my regular preaching services.’ The ‘Bishop’ pointed out to me the spot where, under the wide-spreading branches of a huge Morton Bay fig-tree, he and a few others of like spirit held an informal Quarterly Meeting, and arranged for preaching services among the hardy pioneers; frequently wading through big and treacherous swamp-lands barefooted to reach their appointments. The dear old saint told me of an amusing experience he once had when preaching in the store of that valiant pioneer, C. Crefton, of Taree. A precocious youngster (son of the storekeeper and forerunner of the present-day church-goers who are for ever crying out for shortened services) conceived the brilliant idea that a long sermon should become an impossibility in that place, and so stole into the store early one Sunday morning and wound up a long row of alarm clocks to go off exactly at 12 o’clock. In the middle of the preacher’s appeal, away went those wretched clocks, to the amazement of the preacher and to the discomfiture of the faithful.

To give some idea of the spartan spirit of these pioneers of the Cross, it may be mentioned that within three months of his arrival on the Manning River the ‘Bishop’ mounted his horse and rode through the forest, 120 miles, to attend the Quarterly Meeting at Maitland, that he might plead for the appointment of a young minister for the new settlement, ultimately resulting in the Rev. John Pemell being sent. Oh, how I loved this true type of the whole-hearted men who blazed the track for us who followed.

What shall I say of the Bishop’s henchman, Isaac Rose,

1 Colwell’s History, p. 265.
that eloquent child of nature; big-bodied, large-hearted, an evangelist to his finger-tips, a mighty man of prayer; a man who, had he known it, possessed a fortune in his expressive face, and in the remarkable quality of his voice?

Had Isaac Rose been educated he might have become one of the very foremost of Methodism's stalwarts. His prayers follow me to this day, whilst at times he treated his congregations to flights of eloquence like those of William Dawson or of Robert Newton. Later in life my dear old friend paid a visit to England, and found his way to City Road Chapel at a time when the historic pile was crowded to the doors for some popular Connexional function. At first the stewards refused to find a place for him in the already packed building; but ultimately something in his appearance, or in the quaintness of his speech, attracted attention, when he was not only permitted to enter, but was soon seated on the platform among many of Methodism's stalwarts, and was, ere the meeting closed, called upon for a speech. Hitching up his trousers, the burly old man did speak, and to such purpose that the meeting cheered him almost to the echo.

What of that saintly and eloquent old man Silas Gill, who did so much to prepare the Eastern Coast Methodism for its present-day prosperity? In his own way Silas Gill was a giant of the order of Sammy Hick or of Billy Bray. In early life he had been brought to God under the preaching of that saintly evangelist, the Rev. Thomas Collins, and after marrying, came out to New South Wales in 1838, where he soon became known as a fearless and successful Christian pioneer. The all too brief story of this remarkable man's work is told in Colwell's History. In one place he was in the habit of attending the Methodist services sixteen miles from his home, carrying his child in his arms that long distance, and then home again, which he would reach at about two or three o'clock on the Monday morning.
Oh, how he toiled, and how he pleaded with God for the people of those river districts! In 1857 Silas Gill went to the Hastings and later on to the Macleay river. In the midst of difficulties big enough to daunt the courage of any ordinary man, he raised the standard of the Cross, and captured large numbers of those pioneer residents for his Lord.

Whilst preparing these sheets for the press, news reaches me of the removal, at the age of eighty-three, of another of the fine old heroes of the Eastern Coast, William James Towner. Remarkable stories are current of the work he did, the long journeys he took, and the unconventional service he rendered in the interests of Evangelical religion. Full of tireless zeal, he was ‘in labours more abundant,’ and did more than will ever be known to secure religious ordinances for the pioneer settlers of the then trackless Richmond River scrub-lands. It seems incredible to us, in these days of motor-cars and river steamers, that any man should pull a heavy open rowing boat from Ballina to Lismore, a distance of from forty to fifty miles, in order to consult with the young minister just appointed to the extensive Richmond River district, with a view to the planting of the Methodist flag on the Coast lands where he lived. It is even more wonderful that this intrepid pathfinder should have had the courage to face the dangers and the weariness of a journey on foot, through the dense and almost trackless forests of that Northern Coast land—from Ballina to Grafton, a distance of over four-score miles; and to work his way through all these weary miles of bush-lands simply in order to secure the appointment of a young preacher to minister to the few people scattered in primitive huts and calico tents, throughout that then little known Coastal country. He was just an ordinary pioneer bushman; but he was a hero of the kingdom; one of that noble band who secured for us the virile Methodism of these fertile northern lands.
These four men may be regarded as types of the character and spirit of many such, who, throughout these wide Australian lands 'blazed the track for Pentecost.' As has been recently written, 'they were pathfinders in the extension of the Kingdom of God. They had the faith, passion, and heroism of the Apostle-Evangelists. In perils oft they kept the faith, and through evil and through good report they put first the salvation of souls.'

Elsewhere I have told the story of our struggles, and ultimately of our triumphs, in the founding of the Pioneer Central Mission of our Church in these great Southern lands. If you, gentle reader, have read between the lines, as you have pondered the hardships and the triumphs of those pioneers of the soil of whom this chapter speaks, you will have gauged with fair accuracy our position. Without precedents to guide, with few sympathisers to cheer, a mere handful of us were called to blaze a track for the safe treading of those who were to follow. I marvel this day as I think of the childlike faith, the native heroism, the tireless energy of that small band.

The Sydney Central Mission was the outcome of what was generally accepted as a forlorn hope. But few believed in it; many openly expressed the belief that it was foredoomed to failure; and when, by the mercy of God, it began to move, some of our best people became disciples of Mrs. Grundy. Our methods were new, our spirit was militant. Conservative brethren shrugged their shoulders and—talked! During the first year of our pioneer efforts we were subjected to much hostile criticism on the part of excellent men to whom, alas, anything new was either a clashing with our standards, or a 'Going over to Rome.'

One of our prominent city ministers, for example, pleaded with me at our Monthly Preachers' Meeting, to desist—from what? He had been told that, in order to draw people to York Street, we had had attractive placards
printed, which we pasted round the hats of our workers, à la the London flycatchers, and sent them round the city as walking advertisements of the new Mission. To-day one can afford to laugh at all such charges, but in those days they were as swords in the sensitive flesh of a very young and very nervous pioneer worker.

One story is too funny not to be repeated. One morning I was invited to the beautiful home of Lady——, wife of one of our prominent political leaders, who met me with a warm grip of the hand, and the blandest of smiles.

‘My dear Mr. Taylor, what is this that I hear of you?’

‘Why—why—what have I done?’ was my surprised answer.

With a look that was an evident mixture of confusion and of amusement, and with a good deal of hesitancy, she faltered out, ‘Now, look here, my dear friend, when you were our minister you were a—a—a quiet, orthodox sort of man!’

I remember interrupting my good friend with the remark, ‘What in the name of fortune have I been doing?’

‘Well, I will tell you. They tell me (you see, Mrs. Grundy had been at work) that at York Street you have purchased an organ.’

‘Yes.’

‘That you have invented what you call a “Gospel Chariot” to carry it on.’

‘Quite true,’ I interjected.

‘And that you have it wheeled out near the Town Hall for your open-air service.’

‘That is so,’ I said, waiting for more.

‘Now they tell me that when you have finished your open-air service, you climb up to the top of that organ, sit on it as on a horse, and allow yourself to be trundled through
the streets, in order to attract people to your services. Now, my dear friend, do tell me—is this true?’

As well as I could restrain my laughter I replied, ‘Lady—, it is just as true, and no more so, than that at this moment I am standing on my head.’

These things are mentioned to indicate that pioneering work of this character was by no means easy and simple in those days. There were times when our hearts failed us, and we feared we should have to give it up. The lack of sympathy, the hits in the back, at times the unfairness of the criticism, to say nothing of the active and long-continued hostility of a militant band of so-called free-thinkers, who contested our right to deliver our message in the streets, and determined to silence our voices, at times threatened to stay our hands. I refer especially to those of the order of the man who with loud voice on one occasion denounced our message, and also the Book from which we delivered it, in these words: ‘Look here,’ he cried, ‘your Bible tells us that Cain killed Abel, doesn’t it? Well just you listen to this; in another place your Bible says “Go thou, and do likewise.”’ And yet that is the book you fellows preach to us from.’ Another of these men one night roused all the Old Adam that was in me. We were in the midst of a most inspiring service, when he suddenly burst out:

‘Look here, parson, you don’t believe in what you’re a-telling us.’

‘How’s that?’ I paused to ask.

‘If you do,’ said he, ‘then, Governor, take off your coat and give it to me; for that’s what your Bible tells you to do.’

I fixed that man with my eye, and said to him, ‘My dear fellow, I have yet to learn that my Bible tells me that I have to take off my coat, and give it to the first waster—like you—that comes along asking for it.’ That was the last we heard from him.
And so it went on. But thank God, 'the big trees' of error, of unbelief, of vice, did fall one by one under the strokes of the blessed gospel message, and where in those days was emptiness, and almost despair, to-day stands the virile and still growing Central Mission that continues to do so blessed a work in this great Southern city.
III

THE TRUE OBJECTIVE

Tell me, if you can, of any joy equal to that of the spiritual harvester! I have never been able to understand the position of the Christian minister who knows but little, if anything, of the blessedness of reaping. If our venerable founder was right in the statement ‘You have nothing to do but to save souls,’ what are we to say of the Christian minister who confessed to me one day that so far as he knew he had never witnessed a conversion in all his preaching days? Frankly, I do not understand the position of such. What would one say of the shopkeeper who opened extensive and well ordered business premises, engaged his staff, advertised his goods, and—never had a customer? The business man opens his warehouse for trade; for that and nothing else. Can you imagine a farmer clearing his land, cultivating his soil, planting his seed, and yet content to go on year in year out without ever gathering in a golden sheaf? The very thought is an absurdity. But what of the spiritual husbandman? Is he to be the exception to a practically universal law? Mark, I do not condemn. I simply cannot understand the position of such.

Of this I am certain. The Methodism of these great southern lands could never have been what it is to-day had the pioneer spirits—chiefly young men—who faced the enormous difficulties of their work, enduring unheard-of hardships, overcoming opposition, laughing their way through their difficulties, had they not preached for a verdict, sowed, expecting a harvest. To me it is inconceivable that any pioneer could be satisfied without recording
definite results. Results commensurate with the character of his call and the scope of his message.

Why do so many of us fail? How is it that the sharp edge has gone from our reaping-hooks? Why are so many of us suffering from the tyranny of a misplaced emphasis? Is it not that we have unfortunately allowed ourselves to be perturbed and weakened by forces that are opposed to us, and that have dulled the keen edge of our faith?

The fact is that some have got off the track through yielding to the pessimism that is generated by looking at our disease rather than at the provided remedy. And so, in Australia, and I presume elsewhere, we are being now-a-days treated to many a pessimistic pulpit statement of moral decadence, of social evil, of mental unrest, of spiritual declension.

What is the good of all this? Tell me, am I wrong in my conviction that it would be better and saner for us to gird up the loins of our minds, and—facing facts as they are—set to work steadily, in season and out, to apply our remedy? That is if we possess a remedy. Otherwise we had better quietly take a backseat in the comity of Churches, go to sleep, and let the devil come into possession.

The fact is, the world is passing through a similar crisis to that which faced our forefathers a hundred and fifty years ago. The devil’s weapons may be more up to date, his methods more cultured and refined. But he is busy on his same old job, and putting his entire strength into it—to dull the keen edge of the nation’s conscience, to flatter, to amuse, to disturb, to put to sleep. I emphasize the fact that there is nothing new in the onslaught of the enemy; it is only in method that his attacks strike one as so insidious and so dangerous.

The fact that the Church needs just now firmly to grasp is that, bad as is the moral atmosphere, warped as may be our spiritual judgement, deadened our national conscience, and even weakened our faith, we are just again passing
through a crisis similar to that from which, according to the convictions of more than one of our ablest, sanest historians, Methodism, in very large part, saved the nation.

The question that presses itself upon me, and from which there is no escaping, is—CAN WE DO IT AGAIN? We possess the formulae, can we apply the medicine? Do we know enough? Are we strong enough? Have we faith and fire enough?

To-day, in my partial retirement, I am like a man who, sitting on the mountain slope, is able to take in the widespread view that opens at his feet. What do I see? Here and there I descry a spiritual husbandman seeking, alas, to feed his flock with a cold and abstract philosophy, hoary with the age of Socrates or of Plato, but possessing little, if any, of the pathos and the power of the crucified Jesus; of course served up in quite an up-to-date attractive fashion, but without soul, without conviction—and that moves nobody to cry, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ Yonder I see one or two foolish spiritual farmers vainly seeking to tickle the soil into a harvest by carefully diluted doses of a new kind of fertilizer of a materialistic odour, and that bears upon its wrapper the significant label, ‘Made in Germany.’ And, yonder again I see others, resembling a farmer of my acquaintance who, possessing more cash than common sense, spent a little fortune in what he called experimental farming, trying every new type of machinery, and hoping for phenomenal results from every advertised quack notion.

Thank God, these are the exceptions. I am in a position to say that here in New South Wales the heart of Methodism is sound. Among the churches none are more faithful to the Evangel of the Crucified Jesus than are our men. I spend much time in correspondence with our younger ministers, and I rejoice in the evident and sane earnestness they evince to be true to our marvellous traditions, and to present the gospel just as did the ancient apostles, in
the power of the Spirit. Recently I have been in one of our best country circuits. In its fine old circuit church I have listened with delight to the forceful presentation of the truth as it is in Jesus, by two of our younger ministers. Each of them made a strong appeal for immediate surrender to Christ, and each one brought to land his fish. At the core, the Methodism of these lands is sound. Our 'League of Prayer,' the members of which are in the main young ministers, is becoming a power. Its members are in dead earnest for spiritual results. They are out for a verdict, and they get it. From not a few quarters I hear of gracious visitations of the Holy Spirit, of 'old-fashioned conversions,' and of a decided upward move within the Church itself. From one of our very young ministers in another State I have just received a glowing report of a great work of God, during which over one hundred have been led to the Cross. All this is alike gratifying and suggestive.

And so I come back to the thought with which I commenced this chapter. This, gentle reader, is the one true objective of the called apostle of our Lord—not to please, not so much to instruct as to save. To save first of all, and then, if you please, to administer the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby. But first of all there must be a spiritual awakening, a finding of that life of which Jesus Christ only is the giver.
THE YOUNG MINISTER

Would that at this writing my pen could but take fire! If I had the power to put all I feel on to this sheet of paper I should fail to do adequate justice to a class of man, of whose work as blaze-trackers of the Church of God in these vast lands of the south, so little has ever been said or written—the Young Minister. All honour to every dignitary of our Church; to the men who with so much of native grace have filled our Conferential chairs, managed our numerous departments, ruled our Synods, graced our city pulpits, all honour to them all! But I think of others, without whose heroic and endless and uncomplaining toil there would to-day have been no presidential chairs to fill, no great departments to manage, but few Synods to control; and our Church, instead of being a live, throbbing, aggressive force, would have been a negligible entity among the churches of these growing lands. I marvel that so little has ever been said or written of the mere youths who in large part have given us the Methodism of these lands—the young men who blazed the track, and proved to be the pathfinders of our present vigorous and expansive Church. Think of it they came, for the most part, direct from the forge or the plough, the office desk or the shop counter. But few of them enjoyed the privilege of preliminary training. They were raw and unfurnished, but they had 'the goods,' and they knew how to dispose of what they had. They gained their experience by many a hard knock, they sang their way through the pathless wilderness, and they went on
singing their way through every difficulty, and they—in large measure—gave us the Methodism of to-day, that priceless something that has so wonderfully helped to keep these great southern lands sweet, and has paved the way for commerce and for politics, for good living and healthy expansion.

Would that I could compel some of these to speak out the great story of their apostolic life work. Alas, 'they came, they saw, they conquered,' and then they sealed their lips. We have to-day amongst us a noble old saint, who when a young man, did a work the story of which would have enriched the stirring histories of the past. He still lives amongst us, over four score years of age—one of the greatest men of these times—as pioneer and pathfinder; yet to my solicitations for facts he smiles and shakes his head, and answers, 'I have nothing to tell.' Yet that man, in his own sphere, would almost equal the ancient heroes of the Church in his labours more abundant, his perils by night and by day, his uncomplaining endurance amid scenes that were forbidding; and to-day he goes in and out among us apparently unconscious that his has been the life of a prophet, a saint, a Christian hero!

My pulse beats quickly as I write of heroes like Dr. George Brown, who, when a youth of twenty-six, began his remarkable pioneer work in Samoa. And Dr. William Kelvynack, the silver-tongued orator of Australian Methodism, who when but twenty-three, and for quite a number of years, did pioneer work of the most pronounced type, in the vast western and southern portions of our State, travelling thousands of miles each year in the saddle, and doing a work that can only be described as heroic. I am thinking of Dr. George Lane, who, when a mere youth of twenty-two, was sent out to take charge of an immense tract of country in the south, and earned his spurs as a pathfinder if ever man did. Of Dr. J. E. Carruthers, still with us, whose first appointment, when little more than
a lad, was to Narrabri, then the Ultima Thule of Methodism in New South Wales, taking a week to get there, and the circuit an enormous one, including many centres in the north-eastern part of our great State. He himself has told the story of what pioneer work meant in the earlier days of our Church's progress, in such centres as Dungog and Deniliquin, Murrurundi and Wagga Wagga.

My pulse beats quickly as I think of the truly apostolic work done by a mere youth—a little man with a big heart and a hand ever open to help and strengthen all amongst whom he laboured—who, after four years of service in our city churches, went out equipped with Circuit horse and saddle-bags, to conquer a territory for our blessed Lord; fording dangerous rivers, climbing mountains, literally worming his way through the densest of forests, anxious only to deliver his wonderful message. Mr. Bourne has himself told me of some of those early-day experiences, of the hardships he and his noble little wife endured, of the almost superhuman efforts they together put forth to win those virgin forest lands for our blessed Lord. When he passed to his reward only two years ago, he was permitted to rejoice over the golden harvest that had come to the Church from such a sowing. Where he had stood alone, with little beyond his horse as Connexional property, ere he went Home, in that same district he saw 19 ministers, 3 Home Missionaries, 62 Churches and many thousands of Methodists. A hero truly, but whose voice was rarely if ever heard in Conference, and who never aspired to the big things of the Connexion.

When I arrived from England in 1871, to begin my life's work in Australia, I heard everywhere of the heroic doings of a young man named Robert Johnston, whose famous ride through the endless bushlands of the interior, with herds of kangaroos and flocks of emus as his chief companions, until at last he reached that far outpost of Colonial enterprise—Fort Bourke, over five hundred miles west
from Sydney, and planted the flag of our Church upon its soil.

Will it ever be known what Methodism owes to men such as these, and many another? Their self-sacrificing, shall I say apostolic labours, have given to us our present-day virile, still growing, spiritual Church, one of the great uplifting forces of these far-reaching lands of the south.

How uncomplaining was their spirit, how insufficient their equipment, how inadequate their stipend! Think of a student and a scientist such as George Martin living in a one-roomed parsonage; his study in one corner, his bed in another, the kitchen in a third, and the 'reception room,' in which to entertain distinguished visitors, in the remaining quarter; yet Martin was happy as he cleaned his boots and groomed his famous circuit horse on the doorstep. From that primitive parsonage there went forth a power that did much towards winning that Manning River for God.

What of the wives of these young heroes of the Church? Would that I had the tongue of a poet that I might adequately sing their praises. What these noble women passed through in those early days will never be known; some of them from our very best families, highly educated, delicately reared. What they endured in those pioneer days, what lonely days and sometimes weeks, what soul isolation, and with what an absence of the creature comforts that had previously surrounded them! I can but think of the heroism of my own dear wife, coming from a home of elegant plenty, and at once roughing it in our first parsonage. Well do I remember it. A decayed old house, with but two decent rooms, two tiny skillion additions—one a Liliputian dining-room, the other a wee little study, with a spare room on the verandah of seven feet by four feet. The verandah floor unsafe through the work of the white ant, the furniture of the very scantiest; and an
outside kitchen, the thought of which even to this day is repellent, with its slab sides, its stoveless bush fireplace, and its general air of discomfort. All the water for domestic purposes was what we could catch in a zinc-lined packing-case; no stable for my horse, no cover for my buggy. Well do I remember the anxious look I gave my English bride as I showed her round. 'Well, dear, and what do you think of it all?' Her answer was that of a heroine, and is put down here because it so adequately represents the spirit of the young wives of those early pioneers of our Church. 'Think of it?' was her answer. 'Look here, Will, I came out from England determined to like anything that you are called to face. If good enough for you, it is good enough for me.' That was the spirit that very largely made itself felt in those wide wild districts, where the greatest heroes of it all were frequently those of the parsonage.

Two further illustrations of what I mean are to-day living within a short distance of my home; one aged eighty-four, the other eighty-seven, both of them daughters of one of our New Zealand pioneer Missionaries. I question if Australasia has ever produced their superior as pathfinders of the Kingdom. One is the widow of that world-famed pioneer Missionary and explorer, the Rev. George Brown, D.D., in whose Life Story are given details of this heroic woman's toils and dangers in the midst of naked cannibal savages. But the full story can never be told. There are little graves yonder in the solitudes of New Britain that bear pathetic witness to the noble sacrifices made by this heroine of the Cross.¹

Would that I could tell the full story of the sterling heroism of the elder sister, who, as the wife of the Rev. William Fletcher, B.A.—that pioneer Missionary of

¹ Whilst passing these sheets through the press, news arrives of the translation (it can scarcely be called death) of this noble pathfinder of the Kingdom,
Rotuma—did a work for God, the importance of which may never be known, but which lives to-day in the character of the service rendered, first in Fiji, and especially in that little dot of an island of Rotuma. Think of it—a tiny volcanic outburst of land, but fifteen miles in length, and less than five miles in width, situated over 300 miles from any other land. Think of it—there, shut off from all the comforts of civilized life, this noble Missionary’s wife laboured, the only white woman in the group; without doctor or nurse, often for many months without letters or supplies, the mother of little children, the nurse of sick natives, the sharer, with her noble husband, in the toils and discomforts of so isolated a position. Here, all unknown to the distant world of people, they laboured until they gave to the natives the whole of the New Testament in their own language; and, as the pioneer Missionaries to the Rotumans, established the ordinances of religion in the midst of a people—amongst the finest trophies ever won for our Lord in the South Pacific. I commend a careful study of such lives as these to all who are anxious to grasp the true meanings of that triumphal eleventh chapter of Hebrews.

I have mentioned the absence of buggy shed and stable in that primitive first parsonage home of ours at Warwick. Funds were low; to build in the ordinary way was beyond our means, and yet that dear old Circuit horse ‘Bob’ must be cared for, that buggy preserved from the weather. Already we had learned that ‘necessity is the mother of invention,’ and our extremity often drove us to unusual expedients. I arranged for a congregational ‘Bee,’ and early one bright sunny morning off a big crowd of us went into the then untouched native forest—farmers with their drays, storekeepers, artisans, and bushmen with their axes and crosscut saws, their wedges and mallets; with us went our wives, with such a spread as would have satisfied the appetite of an epicure. Amid laughter and song we hewed
down those monsters of the forest, others with their crosscut saws cut them into proper lengths, and others again applied the wedges and clove the slabs asunder. What blistered hands, and tired limbs, and sun-burnt faces! But—what appetites!! None who were present will ever forget that mid-day meal! By sundown the drays were laden, and away we went with timber enough that had cost us nothing but sore hands and limbs, to erect the parsonage stable and coach house, which stands to this day, an illustration of what can be done by a willing and loyal people. Strange as it may seem, that night I was reading my study Bible, and quite by accident stumbled upon the passage in the Psalms: 'A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees.' I at once made that my text for the next Sunday night service, and didn't we have a time together, as we lifted the old axe of gospel truth upon the thick trees of error and doubt, passion and unbelief, rebellion and despair? Many present will not forget that service to their dying day.

Yes, those were indeed great days for us. My girl bride revelled with me in the freedom and the openness of such a life. For were we not doing God's work, and laying a strong foundation for those who were to follow us? What long journeys we had together, and what rough homes we had to stay at! One night I shall never forget. The pioneer farmer and his wife had made great preparations for the entertainment of the young minister and his English wife. To describe the food we ate is impossible. The bed on which we were supposed to sleep was made of husks from the maize cobs grown on the farm. The rustling noise that bed made at the slightest movement kept us in laughter a great part of that memorable night. And the mice, they literally ran over us. But what of this? How glad were those people to open their home for the itinerating parson; and how they valued the services that were given them!
This question of bush hospitality wherever the minister was concerned, was something that City folk find it hard to understand. There seemed to be no limit to the lengths to which these bush people's generosity would lead them. I think of a journey I once made, when a young man, to speak at a tent gathering in one of our bush circuits. After the meeting an elaborate tea was provided for all the people, followed by still another service. When it was over it was found impossible for many to reach their homes in the bush until next day. The farmer and his wife at whose home I was to stay entertained from thirty to forty persons that night. As the 'distinguished guest,' I was honoured with a place in the guest chamber, but had to share my bed with two strangers. The ladies, to the number of nearly twenty, slept on the floor of the little parlour—heads to the wall, and feet meeting in the centre; whilst the men guests slept anywhere, some in the barn and a number in a river-boat moored near by. But everybody was in good humour, and the farmer and his wife were made happy by the fun and frolic of it all.

I was invited by a young minister of that same wide bush circuit, our beloved Joseph Woodhouse, to take part in the opening of a new church; quite an event for those 'Children of the bush.' Would that it were possible to describe that function! The people had come on horseback from far and near, and seemed bent on a day's enjoyment. First came the Circuit feast; such a time of eating as one rarely has the opportunity of witnessing. Then a public meeting in the new building—a meeting that would defy the descriptive powers of the readiest journalistic pen to describe. The building was packed with people. They had come from far and near to see the wonderful thing—a real stone church. How they sang! It was easy addressing people like these! They cheered every point, they laughed at every story. The older ones were praising God all the while; the Simeon spirit seemed
to possess them. For once, everybody seemed anxious for the collection. And such a collection it was! The minister and the deputation both pleaded for an offering that should free the trustees from all worry as to the future, and it came. I have never seen anything like it. The speakers were fairly bombarded with subscriptions. Old men, with tears in their eyes, offered their pound, and young men vied with one another as to who should give the most. In less than half an hour all that was needed to balance accounts was forthcoming, and we sang the doxology. But those good people were not satisfied. Came the cry, 'Here, isn't there anything else wanted?' We thought of an organ. And at once away went those enthusiastic people, sending in their promises from every part of the building, until we had to tell them the contemplated organ was paid for. 'What next?' cried out some enthusiast; and soon again subscriptions came pouring in that paid for the minister's chair, the pulpit Bible, hymn-book, and cushion, matting for the aisles, hymn-books for the people and everything the two young parsons could think of. I have never seen such a spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm. When all was over and the doxology sung a second time, it was arranged that I should preach to them after tea. Again the church was packed, the atmosphere was electric, the spirit of expectancy was everywhere manifest, and the famous promise in Malachi iii. 10 was again fulfilled: 'Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now hereby, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' Preach? Eh, but it was easy work preaching that night; and soon the cry of the penitent was heard, and again and again with eyes that overflowed and with hearts 'bursting with gladness,' we sang the doxology, and there were added to the church that night a number of new-born souls.
I have attended and taken part in the opening ceremony of many a church and mission hall since that day, but never have I witnessed scenes that were more scriptural and more inspiring!
I have it on my heart to write still further of the young pathfinders of the Church; but first let me tell the gentle reader a story. I had been hard at work conducting a revival mission in one of our churches in the city of Newcastle-on-Tyne, England. Feeling tired, I went down to the mouth of the Tyne for a taste of the sea breeze; and was quietly sitting enjoying a refreshing cup of tea in one of the kiosks on the sands, when a dignified Scotch cleric seated himself at my table, and at once revealed his North-of-the-Tweed nationality by the persistent character of the questioning to which he subjected me. When at last he discovered that I was a Methodist preacher, he gave a peculiar sigh of contentment, sat back in his chair, gave a merry twinkle of his eye, and calmly said, 'Ah, I thought so!' Internally amused I quietly awaited developments, and was not disappointed.

'Do you know,' said he, 'you Methodists are a most remarkable people!'

'What is the matter with us, anyway?' I calmly asked.

'Well, let me tell you a story, and that will explain.' And I at once saw whither he had been anxious to lead me. With a merry look in his face, sitting back in his chair, he proceeded. 'I have just returned from a most interesting trip round the world; and one of the facts that has most deeply impressed me is the remarkable growth of your Methodist Church. I never seemed able to get away from it. Away in the far back-blocks of interior Australia
I saw numbers of bush churches, and in almost every case they were labelled "Methodist." In the farthest backwoods of America, if I came across a pioneer church, it was in almost every case that of the Methodists. Yes, and the good man warmed to his work, and his eyes twinkled more and more, 'the funniest thing I saw in all my journeyings was on the trip over from America. The passengers saw a huge shark swimming alongside the vessel, and the captain yielding to the whims of some of them, slowed down for a little, and ultimately caught the brute. Judge of my amazement when I tell you, in all seriousness, that among the contents of that shark's stomach was discovered a closely sealed pocket-book, which upon being carefully opened, was found to contain a ticket of membership in the Methodist Church. Yes, truly, sir, yours is a remarkable Church.' Very thoroughly that Scotsman enjoyed his joke, and so did I!

A little while afterwards I was called upon unexpectedly to address a meeting of Methodist ministers in the City of Chicago. This shark story came to my mind. I have witnessed some hilarity in public meetings, but never anything like the peals of laughter that greeted my telling of that story. To proceed in the face of such repeated outbursts was impossible. The well-known Dr. Traveller, their popular Home Missionary Secretary, all but lost his seat, meanwhile shouting out, 'Never mind, Brother Taylor; the Methodist is not the only Church in this world I know of that has harboured sharks in its membership!!'

Quite unintentionally my facetious Scotch friend gave utterance to a great truth. In these vast Australian lands, the Methodist has indeed frequently been the pioneer church; and generally the pioneer has been a young minister, who almost everywhere has seemed naturally to smell out every new settlement, whether it be a gold rush or a new wheat area; and soon the Methodist flag is unfurled, and a church started.
The one really remarkable thing, I repeat, about all this is that in nearly every case the pioneer has proved to be one of the young bloods of our Church. Few things have astonished me so much as the fact that so few of these mere striplings have made any serious mistake. Contrary to the usage, say, of British Methodism, where a minister must, generally, have reached middle life ere he is trusted with the honours and the responsibilities of Superintendency; here, in this new country, our young men have scarcely returned from the purchase of their first white tie ere they find themselves placed in charge of some huge new circuit, and left to sink or swim by the stern necessities of our Church's growth. Very rarely do we hear of anyone sinking. Sooner or later the men fulfil expectations. At my present writing I happen to know that quite a number of young men are urgently needed to enter at once the open gates that are offering. Right nobly our striplings may be depended on to make good. The pioneer blood seems naturally to flow in the veins of most of them. Were it necessary I could at this moment still further tell of the heroic deeds of many of them—men who laugh at fatigue, who not only possess the goods, but know how to deliver them. In New South Wales we are proud of the heroism of the young men who are to-day working the vast areas of hot, almost trackless country known as 'The Far West Mission,' 'The Riverina Mission,' and many of our wide country circuits, all worked by little more than youths. Yes, and worked well. They come to Conference, sit on its back seats, are never heard in that august assembly; but these are the men who are making the Methodism that fits in so splendidly with our pioneer colonial life, and that is going to prove one of the great saving forces of these lands of the south.

I want it to be known that our young ministers face difficulties of travel, and the pains of isolation, and the inconveniences of small stipends, irregularly paid, and the
want of companionship, with smiling face, just as a natural thing, a part of the programme of their life's work. What all this means none save those who have passed through it can ever know. I have been wicked enough to wish it were possible, for example, to put down some dignified clerics I have met in my life's work right in the centre of one of our vast black soil plains, in the middle of a wet season. I know what this means, and so did my heroic wife. In one of our pioneer circuits, if a thunderstorm came over the district on Saturday, there could be no service on the Sunday. Quite a big hole was made in my modest stipend in that circuit to provide for footwear that had been lost or gone to pieces in those fearful roads. It was, by the way, in that same circuit that my love of horse-flesh led me to a piece of extravagance that I soon had cause to regret. I have elsewhere told how badly a newly purchased circuit horse treated me on the eve of the foundation ceremony of our new church at Toowoomba—bucking me out of the saddle on to the hard metal road, all but breaking my ribs in the process. Needless to say, I at once bade farewell to that brute, and was soon charmed by the appearance of another, that I was led into buying. Eh, he was a magnificent creature was 'Snowdrop,' a big upstanding horse, as white as a snowflake and as easy to ride as a rocking-chair. He looked a beauty, with his finely arched neck, his flowing mane and tail, his delicately shaped head, and his noble paces. Proud of him? Yes—until I found out something! By the way, he had previously been owned by a horse-racing man in the West, who used to enter 'Snowdrop' for all the local hurdle races. Jump? Yes, he could do it well, but had an unfortunate habit of jumping at the wrong time. If, when my wife and I were out visiting among our country people, we came to a stream of water crossing the road, that steeplechaser would insist, much to the discomfort of those in the buggy, upon jumping that stream. But his white colour, that
had been my pride, led me into endless trouble. I should mention that the colour of the soil in my circuit was that of a rich chocolate, beautiful to look at, and that meant a fortune to the farmer who possessed a few hundred acres, but alas for our white dresses and white houses, they were soon dyed a pitiless red. Even so my horse. I would spend an hour washing that brute from the tips of his ears to the end of his tail, with warm water and soap, and then fasten him to the fence to dry. I was a proud man indeed as I rode out of my home paddock to visit my people. But a hot dusty westerly wind coming up, I would ride home again disconsolately seated on a red horse. Alas, I had to sell him to a local doctor who could afford to keep a groom.

Those who have not had personal contact with our red or black soil country can form no idea of the difficulties we were plunged into when rain unexpectedly came upon us. I can think of nothing more wearying than having to plough through twenty miles of a black soil road, after a heavy thunderstorm. I was greatly amused one day by hearing of a dignitary of the Anglican Church, whose horse and buggy had stuck fast in the black soil flats just outside an outstation in one of my pioneer circuits. My friend was a fairly good illustration of Euclid’s definition of a line, ‘length without breadth,’ so long was he and so almost inconceivably thin. The punster of the district suggested that he ought to be taken in charge by the local policeman for having no visible means of support. But this time he had taken off his gaiters and his shoes, revealing to all passers-by that he really was supported by a pair of legs. The sight of that dear old cleric, striving in vain to extricate his horse from that bog, his bare legs all plastered with that sticky black mud, was something that the beholders were not likely ever to forget.

These were among the many difficulties that our ardent young pioneer parsons had, and in many distant districts
still have to face. But how nobly they have done their work, and conquered their difficulties, intent only on bringing the good news of the kingdom to their scattered people. These are the men of whom any church may be proud. Very rarely have they failed us, at times they have faced and overcome experiences utterly foreign to the conventional, and in nearly every case they have been true to their sacred call. Let me venture to give an illustration.

For quite a while I have sat with pen in hand, and an empty sheet of paper before me. 'Shall I venture to write the story? Will not some of my sedate brethren shake their heads, and hint at the long bow?' Even so. But what matters, so long as I speak the truth? The Australian Christian pioneer frequently demonstrates that truth is stranger than fiction. My association with a young Methodist pioneer from one of the other States furnishes my most pointed illustration of this fact. We were thrown together towards the end of one of our Sydney Conferences. Resting from his pioneering work in another State, through the temporary failure of his health, he had come over to Sydney to recoup. We spent some weeks together, exchanging experiences; sometimes measuring swords, but drawn together by that mysterious bond of sympathy that can never be explained—that David and Jonathan kind of spirit that draws together and welds into one two men of utterly different temperament.

'Taylor,' said he to me one day towards the close of the Conference, 'I should like to go home with you for a few days, or even weeks. What say you?' 'Right,' was my answer, 'and the sooner we start the better, for I confess to feeling tired of all this talk.' To reach my home we needed to negotiate one hundred miles of the sea, and one hundred and twenty miles in one of Cobb & Co's famous bush coaches.

Unfortunately, on the morning of the day upon which
we had arranged to start, I was seized with acute pains in
the head, which, however, but intensified my desire to
reach my own home nest. Shall I ever forget the horrors
of those hundred miles on the sea? Half dead with violent
pains, I ultimately managed to take my place on the box
seat of the coach that was to carry us those one hundred
and twenty miles. The loquacity of my friend, as he strove
to help me forget my pain by listening to his stories—
quaint, original, startling, and never ending, was some-
thing never to be forgotten. But it was of no use. By the
time we had reached the quaint little township of Stroud,
it was seen that I could proceed no further. With care I
was lifted from the coach, and put to bed in the village
public-house, and mustard plasters applied to the nape
of my neck. There I should have lain for ten days, but
that a warm-hearted Methodist of the place heard of my
illness, and would have me transferred to his comfortable
farm house, where my new-found friend nursed me, with
a mother's care. Can I ever forget it? Until at last,
weary and weakened with much pain, I again ventured
to sit on the box seat of Cobb's coach, and with my nurse,
and literally my 'guide, philosopher, and friend,' I
essayed to negotiate the remaining eighty or ninety miles
of that horrible journey.

Strangely enough, we had not gone more than a dozen
miles when my friend was suddenly taken ill. The poor man
suffered agonies of pain hour after hour, as we journeyed
northwards. Late at night we reached an old public-
house, situated at a lonely point of the bush road where
the town of Gloucester now stands. With some difficulty
we got my friend from the coach, and put into an extem-
porized hot bath. Willy nilly there was nothing for it,
the next morning, but we must resume our journey—a
journey that may never be described! Lying prone on
the top of a heap of mail bags inside the coach, my poor
companion suffered untold agonies, as the coach slowly
jostled its way along roads—in those days little more than mere bush tracks. Reaching a rough settlers’ place on the roadside, about twenty miles from my home, the poor man became so seriously ill that we simply had to carry him into that hut, put him to bed, and then hurry on those weary twenty miles to secure medical aid. There my friend lay for some ten days, amid surroundings of the most primitive character, and suffering the most acute agonies. When at last we got him gently removed those weary miles to the comforts of my parsonage home, that remarkable man made us laugh again and again as he told us how, as he lay in that primitive hut suffering agonies of pain, he could now and again hear the door of his little room quietly open, and over the shoulder of the prying farmer, could hear the man’s wife whispering in awesome tones, ‘I say, is he dead yet?’

My friend represented the best type of the pioneers who made the Methodist Church the progressive force it is to-day. He took his commission to ‘preach the gospel to every creature’ with utmost seriousness, realizing that difficulties were made to be overcome, and dangers to be looked at with a smiling face and a resolute purpose. When in charge of a tract of country in the heart of this vast Continent, that was as large as an English county, a desolating drought rendered ordinary modes of travel impossible. The Circuit horse for the time being was useless. What did my heroic friend do but attempt to work that desolated Circuit on foot! Long and weary journeys he tramped that the people might not be without the consolations of religion during those weary months. How the heroic man kept it up is to this day a wonder to me.

One story he told me—so utterly unconventional, and indeed unique—I must venture to give in detail. It was shearing time on one of the vast sheep stations in the interior. Some of these stations are almost as large as
Yorkshire, and carry not far short of a million sheep. My friend and his horse, both tired with their long journey, arrived at the head station late one afternoon. On stating the purpose of his visit, to preach to the men in the shearing sheds, the squatter sought to dissuade him. ‘They are a godless lot. They won’t listen to you, you will be certain to meet with trouble; better stay here, and spend the evening over a game of chess.’ But my friend was determined to deliver his message. He had no sooner entered the great shearing sheds than an ominous silence fell upon the men.

‘Here, parson, what do you want here?’ at last came from a rough fellow close by.

‘I’ve come to preach to you men.’

‘Preach?’ cried out a number of them. ‘We want no preaching here; you have just got to clear out.’ Needless to say their threats were punctuated by language that cannot be reproduced on this page of clean white paper.

‘But, men, I’ve come to conduct a service, and will do so when your work is over.’

Something in the plucky little parson interested these fellows, and their leader cried a ‘Stop off’ for a few minutes; and my friend stood and watched the crowd gather in a distant part of the sheds. Angry words, and now and then loud outbursts of laughter, reached his ears, but pluckily he stood his ground.

At length, led by their Boss, and shaking with laughter, they came in a body to the young minister.

‘Look you here, parson, we make you a sporting offer,’ said their leader. ‘We have amongst us Bill ——, the prize-fighter. Now we have decided that if you’ll fight Bill, whether you win or lose, we’ll let you preach to us. If not, why then you clear out in double quick time. Now, what say you?’

‘But I am a preacher, not a prize-fighter. I want just to help you fellows.’
'Well, you've heard our decision. Now then, quick about it, what say you?'

To describe that crowd of fellows—their looks, their jeering laughter, their sulphurous language—would defy a much stronger pen than mine.

The parson was seen to pull himself together, and to their amazement he at length called out. 'I'm a preacher, not a prize-fighter; but preach I must, and preach I will. Bring forward your man.'

Who shall describe the atmosphere of that shearing-shed at that moment? Amazed, the men formed themselves into a ring; amid breathless excitement they took their places, and wagered on the result, needless to say, in favour of the professional. Meanwhile the parson had stripped, and was soon facing the prize-fighter. It is not within my power to describe in detail what followed. Breathless with excitement, that crowd of fellows watched the parson parry the strokes of the professional. With eagle eye he watched every movement of his foe, defending himself against every stroke, and every now and again getting home one that made the prize-fighter stagger again. The men were dazed, puzzled, and gradually they veered round, and were heard cheering on the parson, who never lost a chance to get home on his foe.

Round after round those fellows fought; gradually the prize-fighter was seen to falter, and as certainly on came the parson gaining point after point, and watching his opportunity to get in a stroke that would end the conflict. Ultimately the chance came, and a blow was struck that proclaimed the parson the victor. It is beyond my power to write of what followed. The despised parson became the hero of the shearing-shed, and the leader of the gang went up to him and, shaking him by the hand, said, 'Here, parson, you are of the stuff we fellows believe in, now preach to us as long as you like.'

And preach he did. I know nothing of the sermon,
about that he was silent. When his message was delivered he was about to close the service, when up jumped the Boss and cried, 'Here, stop a bit, parson, it is our turn now.' And going round that crowd holding his hat, he received a collection large enough to give the biggest of smiles to the circuit steward by and by. Presenting it to the minister, he said 'I say, Mister, you can come and preach to us as often as you like.'

Now, what was the explanation? It transpired that before his conversion—under the ministry of my old friend the Rev. Joseph Spence in Victoria—this young man had acquired some fame as a boxer, never imagining that it would come in so useful to him when out in the work. That, and the native alertness and grit of the man, were too much for the mere man of brawn and of hard punches.
VI

MY CIRCUIT HORSE

A conundrum: 'What would the Methodism of Australia have been to-day, but for the Circuit Horse?' The answer may never be found, but the fact remains that these faithful four-footed descendants of Bucephalus have played a by no means ignoble part in the spread of evangelical religion over the trackless bushlands of the Australia of other days.

The early Methodists of America were wont to ask these four questions concerning every candidate offering himself for the work of the ministry:

1. 'Is this man truly converted?'
2. 'Does he know and keep our rules?'
3. 'Can he preach acceptably?'
4. 'Has he a horse?'

As the Rev. W. H. Daniels has put it in his History of Methodism: 'The old fable of the Centaurs was never so fully realized as in the early Methodist preachers. The horses, it is true, were not in regular orders, nevertheless, they were a very vital portion of the regular travelling ministry; while for sound judgement as to the points and value of that useful animal, the saddle-bags men were rarely if ever excelled. . . . Alas! that none of the early historians in their pioneer chronicles have recorded the name and fame of some of these four-footed servants of the Church, which, besides the usual duties of their station,
were often required to serve as guides in the wilderness, bridges to the rivers, safety in a race for life before angry mobs, and which were honoured as creatures of their kind never were honoured before, by being held as an essential part of the qualification for the holy office of the ministry.'

I have just been refreshing my memory by the re-reading of the remarkable doings of some of our pioneer ministers in this State of New South Wales. Think of it: only sixty-seven years ago the whole of New South Wales and Queensland was worked as one Methodist District, with only 15 Circuits, 32 ministers, and 2,456 members. To-day there are 20 Districts, 504 Circuits and Home Mission Stations, over 400 ministers, and nearly 40,000 members of the Church.

Take one circuit—that of Goulburn—which in those days stretched from Bowral in the North to Albury in the South, and from Bathurst in the West to the Pacific Ocean in the East. The whole of this territory, as large as the area of several English counties, only sixty years ago was worked from one centre, and with a ministerial staff of four 'travelling preachers.' To-day that circuit comprises three extensive districts, worked by 32 ministers and home missionaries. All honour to the noble men who, without one thought of the heroism of their spirit, did a work, and did it uncomplainingly, the mere thought of which to-day sets us wondering. 'How could they do it?' 'Of what stuff were they made?' But what of their noble four-footed associates in this self-sacrificing service?

I have been reading the report of a speech recently delivered by one of the pioneers of our Church in this State, now an old man of over eighty, who in days long past did a really remarkable work on the frontiers of New South Wales. He has just been the invited guest of the circuit, where fifty years ago he preached the first
Methodist sermon. In the course of his address Mr. Weston said, 'In my sixty years as a Methodist minister I have preached more than 12,000 times, and in doing this have travelled, chiefly on horseback, 120,000 miles.'

I am trying to imagine this day what would have been the record of Dr. William Kelvynack, Dr. George Lane, Samuel Wilkinson, William E. Bourne, Joseph Hopkins, John Bowes, James Somerville, Joseph Oram, George Martin, and many another of the forefront men of the Church, who in early days travelled in the saddle their enormous circuits, but for that patient, silent, never-ending work of the circuit horse?

May I speak personally? I have elsewhere told the story of my patient friend 'Warrior,' who, day in day out, led me to my people's homes, and carried me safely over the roughest of country, rendering possible thereby the hearing of the gospel by many a distant congregation of bush people. I have also spoken to the praise of that heroic 'Coopernook,' who carried me, day after day, and often into the middle of the night, for three vigorous years a distance totalling fully 15,000 miles. But I have other stories to tell, of horses that I loved, and that earned to themselves the best of honours in the world of horse flesh.

Some years ago I wrote a series of articles in our Connexional journal entitled 'Chats with Charlie.' What a faithful old horse was he! How, together, we used to discuss matters of Church and State, together we built our sermons, and talked over the idiosyncrasies of our people, often, I fear, doing more than a little backbiting in the process. I cull the following from an old issue of the Methodist. 'Charlie is my colleague. I have never travelled with one like him. We have been daily companions for two busy years, and have never had one whisper of disagreement. Not once has he seen reason
for shirking any suggestion of work, I, as his Superintendent, have made to him. We have travelled thousands of miles in company. It has always been a joy to chat with him. During the whole two years, I am not aware that he has ever seriously objected to any position I have seen fit to place before him, in our numerous discussions. Whether the subject has been "The Higher Critics," or "The Down Grade Movement," "Ian Maclaren's latest book," or "the glorious revival in our Central Church"; the details of the last Quarterly Meeting's balance sheet, or the fixing up of the new plan,—we have always been in happy agreement.

'Some junior colleagues have an unhappy knack of seizing the bit between their teeth, bolting, and leaving their Super high and dry upon the road; whilst others I have known, who were adepts at kicking over the traces; and yet others, alas, there have been, who were masters in the uncanny art of jibbing. Charlie stands alone; absolutely free from all such fleshly idiosyncrasies.

'How shall I further describe my friend? The fact is Charlie is our dear old circuit horse. But, gentle reader, I pray you allay your irritation at being thus apparently "taken in." I assure you Charlie is no ordinary quadruped. It would in truth be a compliment to our race could I say I have never known a man his inferior. Take him as you may, he is a dear old fellow, and I have learned to love him very sincerely. Kick! Jib! Bolt! The college at which he matriculated knew nothing of all such human weaknesses. You should see him following my little "Dot" around the parsonage paddock for a lump of sugar, or try to force his nose into his Super's pocket for a rosy apple; or turn his head and smile—did you ever see a horse smile? I have—at the vain attempt of the youngsters to climb up his legs.

'And can't he go! You should just watch him, as out or pure wantonness, he dashes along our bush roads doing
his nine miles an hour without turning a hair and needing never the touch of the whip. He knows intimately well-nigh every Methodist home in the circuit. And like other folk he has his preferences. It would be as good as a sermon to some folk were they but to see him, as with haughty snort, he tears along past old Job Grumpy's place. That is where he generally gets rail fence for dinner. But doesn't he love to canter up to old Jonathan Smiley's? Charlie seems to smell that manger leagues away. Start him on any errand of mercy, such, for instance, as a journey to marry a young couple out yonder at Burraboodoo, and he will finish his sixty miles without a word.

'Oh, yes, Charlie and I are the thickest of friends. To him I have unbosomed many a secret, and poured out many a sorrow. He knows as much almost as his Super about the mean folk out at Skinney Flat, the place where a congregation of 150 contributes three and ninepence halfpenny to the collection and then complains that all the minister is after is the money. You would be all the better were you to see the manner in which he pricks his delicately-formed ears at my shouts of "Hallelujah" returning from a blessed soul-stirring service among the dear people at Blackstone. Could he but make use of all the information he has received on the subject of Methodist Theology and Polity, he would become a dangerous rival of Banks or Pope.

'Can it be wondered at that I am seized with the desire to give you, gentle reader, an occasional insight into scenes in which Charlie and I have been hitherto the only actors. I have a few things to say—with the permission of my faithful colleague, of course—that may prove of interest to not a few who may read these lines.'

The late William Arthur, the distinguished author of that historic book The Tongue of Fire, tells a quaint story of a remarkable horse owned by Dr. George Smith of Camborne. Mr. Arthur was the honoured guest of the
Doctor, who, as is well known, was one of the most distinguished Methodist laymen of his time. Mr. Arthur went for a ride on the Doctor's horse, but knowing little of saddle work, was told to trust the horse and all would go well. Trust him he did, and amused his friends afterwards by telling how that horse would persist in taking him to every Methodist chapel in the district, revealing something thereby of the work done by his local-preacher owner.

Even so Charlie! He knew, as I have pointed out, the home of nearly every Methodist in the town and district, especially those who kept a generous stable. And what a memory he had! There was one place, twenty-five miles from the town, situated on the tableland of an old goldfield, a place I visited about once a month. One hot day I pulled up at the side of a running stream, about half way to my appointment, for the sake of a cooling drink. Returning to the sulky, I picked a handful of grass and gave it to Charlie. Never afterwards would he pass that spot without stopping dead and looking round, as much as to say 'Look here, what about a bit of grass?' And needless to say he never asked in vain.

Can you wonder that I loved Charlie, when I tell you the following story? As I think of the narrow escape from disaster I had that night, I am still filled with wonder—and all through the sagacity and loyalty of that faithful circuit horse. He and I had been out among our people that afternoon, and, hurrying home for a cup of tea, before we together went out to conduct my class-meeting at Perthville, Charlie was placed in my old father's care for a feed of corn. After tea I took my seat in the buggy and away we went, into a darkness that could almost be felt. We did those ten miles in fine style, and I enjoyed much soul-refreshing amongst those country farmers. When, late that night we reached the parsonage gate, I was surprised to see my dear old father standing with uplifted hands,
and as we pulled up, to hear him cry out, ‘Oh, thank God, William, that you are safe.’

‘Why, what is the matter?’ I cried.

‘My dear boy, just get out and see.’ I confess to feeling more than a little shaken when I discovered that I had gone in and out of all those streets, over an awkward railway crossing, and along a somewhat busy bush road—there and back, without the bit being in that horse’s mouth. A dozen times and more we might have been dashed to pieces, but for the shrewdness and the faithfulness of my dear old Charlie. I tremble still as I think of the manner in which he rounded those street corners, swerved to let others pass us on that dark and narrow road, and made his way straight into that churchyard, and stood quietly at the fence, utterly unconscious that he had done the deed of a hero! And the strangest thing of all was that I, usually the soul of carefulness, should have continued ignorant of the details of that danger drive.

I sometimes hear our farmer friends talk of a something they call ‘Horse-sense.’ It seems to me that these faithful animals certainly do possess some mental power for which we do not give them credit. I have often heard it said by our country folk that there is a special providence that takes care of children and drunken men when on horseback. May I say that surely the same thing is true of the Methodist parson and his horse? When they enter our ministerial ranks some of our ministers know as little about horseflesh as I do this day about the management of one of our seagoing mail boats. Never shall I forget a drive I had by the side of a young probationer who had recently left the desk of a Sydney Government office for the pioneer work of one of our country circuits. He could preach, and was familiar with our Methodist literature; but about a horse and his habits, he was as ignorant as I am this day of the machinery of a locomotive. He was the proud possessor of a huge brute, with long ears, and
longer back, and still longer legs. My, how that horse, when he got started, could go! Up and down the hills, around the corners, across the bridges he rushed at top speed, and all the time that young parson kept using the whip, and allowing the reins to lie loosely upon that horse’s back. I did pray during that journey for ‘a happy issue out of all my trouble.’ We were on the border-land of a catastrophe every yard of that horrible journey. When I told his leading people—farmers for the most part—they laughed, and, shrugging their shoulders, said: ‘That man is a wonder to us. He drives to places we should never dream of taking a sulky to; he is always going at full speed, and the wonder to us is that he has not long since been dashed to pieces.’

I want to tell you of a remarkable journey I once took away yonder in the Queensland bush. After a blessed and far-reaching revival in Toowoomba, we had built our beautiful church in that city, and I accepted the responsibility of collecting the money to help pay for it. Mounting my dear old circuit nag, and leading a borrowed swag-horse carrying my impedimenta, I started on a journey of three hundred miles through the roughest of rough country. After a ride of fifty miles I gave a lecture to a bush audience on ‘Abraham Lincoln,’ and put the collection into my saddle-bag, the nucleus of my fund. Early the next day I started for a squatter’s station away up among the hills, in the hope of securing help for my new church. Approaching the home paddock, I reached from my saddle to extract my collecting-book from the saddle-bag on the horse I was leading. But that wretched brute was restless, and ere I could secure what I wanted, he moved off, the wind got into that bag, and, getting among the leaves of my Lincoln lecture, caused them to flutter, and—away went that frightened horse. Buck? Oh! how can I describe what happened? The creature stiffened his legs, arched his back, and seemed to face every point of the compass at the
same moment. How he snorted and shook himself to get free from my pack! Making one enormous bound he over-balanced himself, and down he came, right on the top of that swag. Away went my Abraham Lincoln notes flying before the breeze! and—away went my collection of the previous evening! Later on I picked up a few isolated coins from amid the long dry grass. But what of my poor swag? There it lay smashed, the contents scattered high and low. Some time previously I had prepared a musical lecture entitled ‘The Bells,’ à la C. H. Spurgeon, whose famous lecture on the same subject I had heard when a youth. Alas, my bells and my music sheets were scattered, and not a few of the former were broken. I confess that for the moment I was under the spell of two passions—anger and despair. Fortunately, a well-known bushman of the district happened to come that way, and together we laughed, and set to work to gather up the fragments. More I need not say, other than that I pursued my journey, gave my lectures, begged my way from station to station, and ultimately arrived at the parsonage, a tired but a richer man, for that journey helped us to find the cash for the building of our beautiful church.

I feel tempted to imitate one of my local preachers who used to amuse his congregations by again and again saying ‘Now just one thought more’—only in his case his sermon was like to Tennyson’s brook. I have just been thinking of an exciting experience I had with dear old ‘Cooper-nook,’ of whom I have written elsewhere. I am now an old man, suffering from an old man’s caution, and often sit and wonder at the unconventional things I used to attempt in those younger days. But they were all done in the interest of ‘the Kingdom,’ and that may be the reason why I so rarely suffered injury.

In my circuit was a place I frequently had to visit that entailed a wearisome three hours’ journey in the saddle over the roughest of bush tracks, and then several hours in
a leaky pulling-boat. One day I happened to hear that it was possible for me to avoid that miserable river trip by a diagonal cut through the forest, a blazed track through which had recently been made by some intrepid bushman. If he could get through, why could not I? At least I could make the attempt. I have recently been taken through that same forest land, but to-day there are excellent roads, and I enjoyed the luxury of a motor-car ride through this most charming of country. But in those days it was no joy-ride, and to-day wonder at my temerity in attempting it. But I was on 'Coopernook'; and if any horse could get me through he would. The first few miles were fairly clear, but ere long those blazed trees ceased, and I found myself in a wild and rugged forest country, with nothing to guide me save my pocket compass. I wish it were possible to describe that ride! It might have made the fortune of some of those London scribes who come out to Australia, are entertained at our best hotels, are furnished with heaps of guide-book information, and then go home to write up the wonderful country they have never seen. What a country was that! with its hills that in England would be called mountains, and its rocky gorges; its river swamps, the abode of healthy frogs and keen-eyed snakes, and its undulating flats. Here rocky iron-bark ridges, and there a forest of gigantic tallow-woods, black-buts, and turpentsines, awaiting the axe of the sturdy forester. Through forests of silky oaks and bloodwood-trees, with the never-ending Australian gum-tree in endless variety. Here a glorious patch of untrodden native brush, with its entangling lawyer vines, its wonderful orchids, its stag horn, birds' nest, and tree ferns; its beautiful wattle and sweet scented sassafras, its blue gum (that treasure of our medicos), and its dignified box-trees. And what a 'concord of sweet sounds,' if you are only there early enough in the morning to hear it, coming from the eager throats of happy bush birds of every colour and size—from the sombre river stork
to the sweet little twittering blue-wren; and now and again a 'thud, thud, thud,' as a mob of disturbed kangaroos, or less dignified wallabies, stump the ground with their tails as they hurry out of sight.

Through it all I gradually wormed my way, aided by my compass, but still more by the remarkable horse-sense of dear old 'Coopernook,' until, at long last, I found myself out on the shore of the great Pacific, where a new and a strange experience awaited me. I have spoken to coast men, who tell me they have never seen the like of it. As far as the eyes could reach, the beach was covered four or five feet deep with a strange sea scum or foam, through which, willy-nilly, I must needs push my way. There must have been a terrific storm out at sea, the foam of which, impregnated—as it seemed to me—with particles of oil, had been driven on to that shore. A strange experience truly, as we together plunged through; the faithful horse out of sight of any but his rider, whose head and shoulders only appeared above the frothy scum. Ultimately we reached the river head. On the other side was our preaching-place, on this side never a stable for my tired and faithful horse. I found that, under similar circumstances, the traveller's horse had been swum over the uneasy waters of that wide river entrance. I confess I liked it not. But here was a question of 'Hobson's choice,' and ultimately a boatman was secured. My saddle and precious saddle-bags were placed on board, the boatman took the oars, and I held on for very life to the ends of those reins, and into the river we plunged. I confess to a horrid quarter of an hour's experience as dear faithful old 'Coopernook' swam right across that wide river entrance, snorting and plunging, but ever keeping pace with the boat, and encouraged by the tender words of a very anxious parson; until at last, just tired out, we landed at our preaching-place, and I was soon preaching to as fine a lot of people as the Australian bush can produce. Usually
in bush journeys of this character it is mine to 'sing and make melody in my heart'—to listen to, and answer the innumerable tree-calls of those feathered songsters of the wood, and to talk, talk, talk to my intelligent companion, whose faithfulness alone has rendered such a journey possible; but to-day eyes and ears and brain have been all at high pressure, to make sure that no mistake is made, for that would probably mean a long night in the bush with frogs and mosquitoes and snakes and night birds as my companions. But from all that my faithful circuit horse saved me.

But alas! I fear me the glory of the days of the circuit horse are gradually passing from us. I have recently paid a visit to four of our wide country circuits. In not one is the circuit horse to be found. The noisy, uncertain, dust-creating, mind-distracting motor-car, or, worse still, that nerve-racking, ear-splitting, noisy motor-bike, have in each case displaced my old friend. True, the country parson can now cover more ground. It is now no uncommon thing for a minister to travel eighty miles and conduct three services in one day. But at what a cost? One of the charms of the saddle to me used to be found in the calm inspirational moments—moments of blessed soul communion with my Lord, that brought me into direct touch with the Infinite, and gave a point and a fervour to my message that somehow or another I can never associate with the noise and dust and rush of the motor-car. Neither does the modern car lend itself to that glory of the work of the old-time saddle parson—the Saturday spent amongst the people of Blue Gum Flat or Stoney Creek, that used to lead to such rich and permanent spiritual results. Motor-cars and 'slip rails' can never be made to go together.

But the motor-bicycle and the motor-car have, I presume, come to stay, and whether we like it or not, we must take a sad, sad farewell of our 'Charlie,' and 'Warrior,' and
'Coopernook,' and all their kith and kin. But—will the motor-car parson be able, in the long run, to do more work, and do it better, than used to be done in our happy pioneering days, when necessity made us companions of the ancient order of the saddle?
SPIRITUALIZE! SPIRITUALIZE!! SPIRITUALIZE!!!

I recently wrote an article for our Connexional journal on the eve of the opening of our New South Wales Conference that so exactly expresses my present convictions that I am tempted to quote from it here. Emphasis is given to these words by the news of revival that just now comes to us from the Home Country. Lloyd George is right—the only thing that can save England, and indeed the entire British Empire, is a revival of spiritual religion. Two notable confirmations of this opinion have recently come from the lips of His Excellency the Governor of New South Wales—Sir Walter Davidson—which I venture to quote as furnishing a further illustration of the widespread spirit of expectancy that is everywhere making itself felt. At the recently held Anniversary celebrations of our Sydney Central Mission, the Governor, who presided, speaking in the spirit of a true prophet, said: 'I see a great deal going on which justifies me in having the greatest hope that that spiritual revival, which is overdue, is very near our doors. I see churches thronged as they have never been for generations past. And I have seen and heard amongst all classes of the community that discussion of spiritual needs and possibilities which I do not think could have occurred a few years ago.' Furthermore, when presiding at a recent Presbyterian function, His Excellency explained that 'Dame Davidson was not at the festival, but in church, praying for the souls and bodies of the afflicted. Faith is on its trial,' added His Excellency, 'and she is one of those, the great majority of churchgoers,
who desire to put it to the test as to whether we Christians have dropped faith or not.' All this, as I take it, is significant of the altered atmosphere surrounding us on the question of the meaning, and scope, and future of our religious life.

My old heart glows with thankfulness at the news that already is reaching us. I believe this work will deepen and spread, and that the British nation will be saved from itself by the coming of the Holy Spirit of God, in a widespread, old-fashioned spiritual revival. Unless I utterly misread the present signs of the times, a great upward movement of religion is approaching. It must be. Herein lies our hope as a nation. Shall we—you and I—be in it?

I have just been reading a great sermon—the greatest ever preached. Every word of it strikes home, and makes me feel uneasy with a soul-questioning from which I cannot escape. Men call it 'The Sermon on the Mount.' To me it is the final reproof and appeal of our Lord to His Church. In proportion to my meeting the challenge of these eternal truths, I have a right to call myself by His blessed name, 'A Christian.' Only so far as any Church aims at scaling these idealistic peaks does it possess the right to stand within the charmed circle of those who hear the loved voice of the Divine Shepherd—'My sheep,' 'My Church.'

I have no sympathy with such as, by way of excuse for their compromising, assert that here we have a picture that no man can really copy; a Mount Everest that none have ever been able to scale; a standard impossible to reach. If so, then our Lord—and I say it reverently—has made a gigantic mistake, and is befooling the human conscience, belittling man's moral horizon, and robbing the homeliest of words of their common-sense everyday meaning.

What troubles me at this writing, and what has troubled
me for many a day, is that as I look abroad, I so often see a church that is not girding itself to climb these heights; that is content with the ignobleness of a nerveless mediocrity. Never in the history of the Church of God has there been a period when graver responsibilities were attached to Christian discipleship than are pressing upon us in these days. Answer me: Is the Church, as we see it around us, to any appreciable degree burdened by the sense of those responsibilities? Of what quality is our faith? The Apostle James, in that masterly appeal of his on the marvellous possibilities of faith, ventures to dip his pen in the gall of satire: 'Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble.' Alas! the difference between those dark spirits and the present-day average Christian is to be found in the fact that we believe, and do not tremble. It is the hardest thing in the world nowadays to stir, really to stir a congregation. Choose what theme you please, dilate on the glories of heaven or the horrors of hell, draw the most pessimistic picture of the earthward tendencies of our race, dilate as you may on the gravity of the moral outlook, fling at the people's heads the whole Tables of the Law, or seek to woo them by the tragedy of the Cross; it is the same. We listen, and listen, and agree to everything, and then imagine that we have performed all that is required of us, and quietly 'pass by on the other side.'

The other day I was chatting with one of our most popular preachers on the distressing problem of the empty down-town church. I ventured upon an old man's argument, and referred to the full churches of a quarter of a century ago. The answer came swift and fiery: 'The world has all altered since then. We are breathing an entirely different atmosphere. Men are not to be reached to-day as they were reached two or three decades ago.' I don't believe a word of it. It is the changed atmosphere within, and not outside of the Church, that
explains our failure. It does not require that a man should be a very keen student of Church history to be set at rest upon that point. Some Christians are just now dilating, day in, day out, on what they call 'the great apostasy.' But alas! it is the apostasy of the world, and not the backsliding of the Church, that they seek to emphasize. Try as I may, I cannot rid myself of the feeling that it is the Church of God that is largely to blame for much of the present neglect of religion, the forgetfulness of God, the ignoring of His laws, everywhere so patent to us all.

The Bible is not a book for a special age or for a special people. The Sermon on the Mount is as binding upon the Christians of Sydney as it was upon the apostles themselves. Christ’s law is eternal. When He said, ‘Seek ye first the Kingdom of God,’ surely He meant that those words should as much apply to modern-day Methodists as to the men of His own time and nation. But we don’t believe it. Our virgin faith is being broken to pieces upon the wheel of compromise. Thousands of Christians are unconsciously seeking to show that Christ made a mistake when He proclaimed that ‘Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.’ Our religion does not grip us, possess us, dominate us, as the Scriptures deliberately affirm that it ought to. And, sirs, that is the cause of our failure.

The sooner the Church awakes to that fact the better. Let us by all means debate the question of the Union of the Churches, the advancement of the educational policy of the Church, the erection of buildings, the management of funds, the necessary repairing of our vast machinery, all right and proper, if (but only if) these are made sub-
servient to the 'first things' upon which the whole teaching of our Lord and of His apostles adds line upon line and precept upon precept.

To-day the one absolutely paramount call to the Church is to 'Awake! Awake! Put on thy strength, O Zion!' Surely, if ever, this is the time for us to realize that our
'strength' lies not in organization or enlightenment, in consolidating circuits, or even in the taking up of new territory; but in the spiritualizing of all that we have got, in the saturating of all our existing agencies with spiritual self-sacrifice, spiritual devotion, in the seeking until we obtain a revival of Pentecostal efficiency. In the final analysis, this is the only thing that is going to tell. Substitute what else you may, make it subordinate to any other influence you please, and you are bound to meet with a disastrous failure. And may I add—and with a due sense of the meaning of the words I use—that the Church of God is absolutely powerless to meet the dreadful unrest of these days, the enervating materialism everywhere in evidence, the groaning of the nations under the heel of a cruel and an unscriptural Socialism that culminates in the fulminations of the I.W.W. or the fiendish cruelties of Bolshevism, until it gets back to its original programme; and, ceasing to pare down eternal truth to the level of present-day maxims and fashions, really girds itself to seek to conquer the world by a definite return to 'the faith once delivered unto the saints.'

If this be so, then why not emphasize our deep sense of need by a 'Call to Prayer,' that shall be the outcome of conviction, and of a real and over-mastering faith? Only God can help us in the crisis that lies before us. Unless we are willing to be swept by the rising tide of evil forces everywhere revealing themselves, unless we are prepared to take a back seat among 'the battalions of the Lord,' we must grasp the paramount fact that our only hope lies in the spiritualizing of every department of our great Church's work.

As an old preacher, I would fain offer a direct word to my beloved and honoured fellow-craftsmen. If there is to be an upward movement in our circuits, that movement must begin with us. There is more truth than appears on the surface in the old-time aphorism, 'Like parson, like people.'
A dead pulpit means a discouraged pew. A revival in the pulpit is bound to have a blessed effect upon the congregation. We hold the key to success or to failure. It was the apostles who, under God, made ‘the glorious apostolic church.’ And to-day our people are from many a quarter looking to us for a lead. Shall we lead them upward? Don’t you think the time has come for us very seriously to revise our methods, and courageously to strike out along higher paths? I am not so sure but that we should be acting under a Divine impulse were we to copy the example of a friend of mine, who, in the secrecy of his study, mourned before God over his inefficiency, especially his want of success as a preacher. One direct outcome of those days of soul-probing was that he gathered into one big bundle all his manuscript sermons, and, standing on a bridge, flung them into the middle of the river. They were so heavy that they sunk to the bottom. I never learnt what reception they met with from the fishes; probably they imagined that a modern Saint Anthony had come to preach to them. This I do know, however, that my friend’s ministry from that day took on a new power. There was life in the pulpit, and soon there was a moving amongst the pews; they filled up, and the church got on to higher lines of service.

Suppose that for six months—as an experiment—we dare to make everything in our busy ministerial work subservient to the spiritualizing of our own life, by constant waiting in ‘the upper room,’ by honest penitence, and by earnest soul-crying to God! Suppose that for that period we are content to remodel our preaching, thinking less of the garb in which the message is dressed, and more of the message itself; aiming not, as at present, at explaining the message, so much as at pressing it right home to the conscience and the heart! What the pulpit really needs is what—thank God—we can all get: more fire, more dynamic force, more divine unction, more soul. This
obtained, we shall soon witness the coming of a revival that shall mean the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy. ‘I will restore health unto thee; and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord.’ That is what the pulpit, what the entire Church needs to-day—the healing touch of the Divine hand. Shall we seek it?
VIII

THE CHURCH’S POWER-HOUSE

‘My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue.’

Something of the feeling of David is mine at this moment. I have sat with pen in hand for some time, wondering how best to tell the wonderful story. Elsewhere—(see The Life Story)—I have written of the rise of what is known as ‘The Forward Movement.’ Of all the first leaders of that movement, I alone am left. Charles Garrett, Alexander McAuley, Peter Thompson, Hugh Price Hughes, and S. F. Collier—all have gone. And so has A. R. Edgar, founder of the Melbourne Mission.

In the mercy of God it is still given to me to watch from a distance the steady development of that work in this great Southern land. The history of the Sydney Central Mission this day fills me with a wondering faith. For the work that is being carried on by the Rev. H. Clifton Foreman, M.A., and his noble band of helpers, I am devoutly thankful. A blessed power rests upon that work to-day. The prayer- and the class-meeting, the wonderful consecration service, still feed the fires that move that mission along.

It has ever been thus. The C.M.M. was started in the atmosphere of prayer. That same influence led to conversions every week through a long course of years. And that same blessed influence still adds emphasis to all that I have said and written about this great work.
I feel moved to furnish carefully preserved details of a remarkable story, which illustrates what I have ventured over and over again to affirm, that you can expect anything from, do almost anything with, a church that lives in the atmosphere of prayer. In this busy practical age we are, alas, tempted to forget this. Hence this chapter of facts, every one of them gathered from carefully preserved records of days that have been, and each one winged with a message to the Church of every name and of every creed. Let but the Spirit that is here emphasized take possession of any Church, and practically the same results will follow.

Showers of Blessing

'We simply cannot describe the Hall service of Sunday night. The great building was packed in every part, and many had to stand the whole time. From start to finish a deeply solemn sense of the Divine Presence was everywhere felt. The Rev. W. G. Taylor gave a second discourse on "Zacchaeus, or what happens where Jesus comes." At times he could scarcely proceed, so deep was the feeling manifest. Now and again the workers had to cry out just as the Old Methodists used to; they could not help it. We believe that scores went away wounded by the Sword of the Spirit.

'Whilst the people were leaving the Hall, and the workers were singing, the floor space was arranged for the after-service. Seventeen chairs were placed across the front of the Hall as a "penitent-form." Every one of those chairs was filled shortly after the meeting began, and ere we left seventeen persons professed to have received into their hearts the Christ of Zacchaeus.

'What drew the people—what held them—what brought them to the Saviour's feet? Just this, the spirit of prayer has taken hold of the C.M.M. members. For this we
devoutly thank God. We shall have conversions all along the line, if our people "continue in prayer."

'What brings them?' The Hall was again crowded to the doors, many having to stand during the entire evening. The power of God was present in a blessed manner. "What is it that brings such crowds?" That question, so often asked, has but one answer. The blessing of God rests, like a glorious pillar of fire, upon the place. The sermons preached are all on the oldest of old-fashioned Methodist lines. The music, whilst of the highest order, is all of a deeply spiritual character. The secret is here: Behind it all is an enormous amount of prayer. It is the Saturday night Consecration Service that makes the Sunday night so great a time of blessing and of grace. On Sunday night Mr. Taylor was assisted by his son, "Tom," who also gave an address in the after-meeting, when several men and one woman professed conversion.

Three Hundred Miles Away.—'A beautiful illustration of the wealth of love felt for the C.M.M. by those brought to Christ at its services is furnished by a communication just received from a group of good people living 300 miles west from Sydney, at a place where there is no church; most of whom were converted at the Central Mission Services. Every Sunday night at seven o'clock these dear people meet especially to pray that the power of the Holy Ghost may be present at the big service just then beginning in the Centenary Hall so far away. Who can tell us how much of the remarkable blessing resting upon our Sunday evening services comes to us in answer to the prayers of these far distant friends?'

Twelve Hours' Prayer-Meeting.—'Depend upon it, any church is bound to prosper in which the prayer-meeting is at a premium. A praying church is always a powerful and a progressive church. A full prayer-meeting spells a
powerful pulpit and a well-used penitent-form. Thank God, the C.M.M. workers are learning this lesson. Week after week the prayer-meetings have been seasons of wonderful blessing. At the suggestion of one of the workers the whole of the Prince of Wales' Birthday was given to prayer. From ten a.m. to ten p.m., without a moment's break, they continued with one accord and in one place. Ministers of the Anglican, Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist Churches, with consecrated laymen, led the meeting in turn. There was not a dull hour. Variety ever, but fervour throughout. Many were present the whole time. Others came and went, so that in all, many hundreds were with us. Oh, but it was good to be there! How the people did pray and plead for the coming of the Spirit! Faddists, who are often, strange to say, in prominent evidence at such meetings, were conspicuous by their absence. The people settled down on the lines of Scriptural earnestness for a mighty blessing, and they got it. We were especially encouraged by the frequent prayers offered on behalf of the contemplated "Home of Hope." With a praying people like this we are not troubled about the future. Thank God, O, thank God, that the C.M.M. is so rich in praying men and women.'

THE STORY OF A TEN DAYS' PRAYER-MEETING

It is with special emphasis that I venture to direct attention to the following report of one of the most remarkable meetings ever held in connexion with the Central Mission:

'Just fourteen months ago, in the parlour of the Young Men's Club, away up at the top of the Centenary Hall premises, early on a certain Tuesday morning, were assembled about a dozen members of the C.M.M. staff; met for counsel and for prayer.

'Never, never can we forget that morning. For fully an hour and half we continued on our knees, not so much
praying, as weeping before the Lord. We tried to sing, we tried to pray, but every now and again we were just hushed into stillness by the "Awe that dare not move."

'Oh, it was blessed thus to lie at the Master's feet, and simply drink in the sweetness that came from that face of tenderness. Every brother, every sister present that morning, has been a brighter Christian ever since.

'At last we sat down around the table, and Mr. Taylor tried to speak to us, but failed. After a while there came the words, very falteringly uttered, "Friends, we must have more of this." And there and then quite spontaneously, the decision was arrived at that we would have a Ten Days' Prayer-Meeting.

'It was a bold proposal. And many who had not been with us in that upper room, shook their heads, and exclaimed, "What next?"

'Soon the arrangements were completed, and what was almost a continuous ten days of prayer was held. Five public prayer-meetings a day, with a memorable Harbour prayer-meeting on Saturday, and any amount of secret pleading with the Master between whiles. Ministers and members of all Christian churches came to help, and the great Israel of the Lord came together for a mighty time of waiting upon God. Such praising, such praying, such wrestling with God, we never witnessed in our lives. At times the hall was transformed into a veritable "place of weeping." At other times, victorious outbursts of joyous Hallelujahs rent the air.

'Again and again we asked ourselves, during the progress of those wonderful days, "Whereunto will this lead?" Where, we knew not—nor were we anxious to know; we just put the whole matter into the hands of our Great King, and looked to Him for further light. It came, and, glory to God, the brightness of that shining is still with us.
One immediate result of these meetings was the surrender to Christ of not a few anxious souls during the progress of the meetings themselves. One beautiful case we may pause to mention. A well-known Sydney contractor came to one of the meetings, and was so strongly moved that he came again, and, all unknown to us, he set himself to work to find the Lord. After much of struggling, at three o'clock one lovely morning, whilst pleading with God on his knees in his office, "Jesus Himself drew nigh," and, in a moment, all was well with his soul. A little after six o'clock that same morning, this good man was at the Princess Street Parsonage—nine miles away from his home—to tell the joyous news, and to present, as a thank-offering, the most beautiful bunch of roses we ever saw. That man is to-day a leading Christian worker in one of our suburban circuits.

As the immediate result of this continuous prayer-meeting, the present successful Business Men’s Midday Services were started. Since then, every Monday and Thursday, city men—at times filling the large floor-space of the hall—have assembled for an hour’s worship in the midday hour. Ministers of all the Churches, including the heads of the various denominations, have taken part. At one time, an "All Night" of prayer was held, whose influence will live in this city for many a year to come.

These meetings have been an inspiration to all who have attended, and have had much to do in promoting the revival of religion now in blessed progress.

By a peculiar chain of providential circumstances, the remarkable Midday Open-Air Services, now so numerously attended in the city, grew out of the Monday and Thursday prayer-meetings. Now some ten of these meetings are held every week in the leading thoroughfares of this great city. We know of prominent professional men and merchants who have been brought to Christ at
these gatherings. "Do you see that?" asked a wealthy merchant only the other day, of a friend standing near him at one of these meetings, at the same time pointing to a large credit balance in his banking book. "Do you see that? I would rather part with it all than lose my hold of the Christ I found at one of these midday gatherings not long since."

'We ourselves have heard a well-known city man tell how, through the instrumentality of a mere child, he was won for Christ at one of these street meetings.

'We could lengthen our story almost indefinitely. In all directions the blessed results of these wonderful meetings are being felt. Many a depressed pastor has been made glad over a quickening in his congregation. Many an intelligent young man has been "set on fire for service," and many a blessing has gone out among the teeming masses of restless, worried men and women of this great bustling city, through these meetings. When we think of the small beginning of this great time of blessing, we naturally and joyfully fall back upon those words of the Apostle James, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth."'

*Remarkable Meetings.*—'Among the direct results of the "Ten Days of Prayer," held in the Centenary Hall last October, may be reckoned the remarkable Business Men's Midday Services since held every Monday and Thursday in the same building. We know of nothing on a similar line equally successful. For some years Glasgow has held prominence in the matter of midday prayer-meetings. But even in Glasgow we have not seen an attendance larger than that of these gatherings. Last week the building was full to the shutters, and a holy enthusiasm filled the place. The satisfactory feature about this work is that it has been a gradual development. For seven months we have noticed a gradually deepening interest, and to-day these meetings are recognized as a distinct religious influence
in the city. Ministers, professional men, bankers, merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, and labourers mingle together in praise and prayer. Latterly quite a number of ladies have commenced to attend. These meetings are full of healthy promise, for which we devoutly thank God.

_Ten Hours With God._—A visitor writes as follows of this truly wonderful meeting: 'The place was Centenary Hall, Sydney, and the occasion the "All Night of Prayer," arranged by the Committee of the Business Men's Midday Services. The meeting began at 8 p.m. on Friday, 21st ult., and closed on Saturday at 6 a.m.—ten hours with God—ten glorious hours of communion with the Divine!

'As I entered the room, at a few minutes before eight o'clock, a goodly number had already assembled, and the feeling came to me with power—"This place is holy, for God is here." It seemed to me that for one purpose the people had assembled, and that, as touching that one, there was perfect agreement. And thus it seemed to be during the whole of the night. There were no "ups" and "downs" in the meeting, but a constant fullness of the Spirit, and God moving to the depths all hearts.

'I suppose at one time several hundred people were present, and it was as if God was having His way in all those hearts. Once a good Sister prayed with unusual unction, and immediately all sounds were hushed, and in silent communings with Jehovah, the awe-struck worshippers breathed out their silent prayers to Him who "seeth in secret." Ah, in those solemn moments, men and women were approaching very near to God.

'I do not believe there was a Christian soul in all the building but experienced a very great and rich blessing; and the question was asked, "What shall the result of all this be?" "Shall we do better work for Christ because of
this meeting?” I answer, “Yes, we will.” Such baptisms of the Holy Ghost make better Christians of those who are the recipients thereof. The better the man, the better his work; and not until the books are opened before the Great White Throne, will the result of this glorious night of prayer be made known.

‘When the first grey streak of morning light came in at the windows, reminding us that we soon must part, we seemed loath to close the meeting and separate; but, thank God, we did not have to separate from Him who had made the place such a “Gate of Heaven” to our souls, and ever since some of us at least have felt like singing all the time.’

Now, answer me, gentle reader: Have I made good my case? Such records as I have given are but faint echoes of the spirit of the early Methodists who set England on fire. We shall never have the revival for which we long until there is poured upon us as a Church this spirit of prayer. A praying Church has always baffled the enemy of souls. If it be true that

Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees,

how much more so when the Church itself has mastered the art of praying! At any rate, here is our record. In all the difficult work of the Mission in its formative days, success, such as was granted us, would have been impossible but for the spirit of prayer that from the very start was given to the workers. I would I had a voice that could reach every minister’s study, every pulpit, every prayer room, every church-meeting in these lands, Oh! how I would fain cry out—‘Pray, brethren pray! if you want better sermons, pray; if you long for a purer, nobler atmosphere within your church, pray; if you really long
to see the children of your Sunday schools converted, pray; Preachers, if you wish your sermons to be winged with a power that is Divine, then tarry in the Upper room. Oh yes, Pentecost will come when the spirit of prayer has prepared us for its coming.
'And why not?'

The question was difficult to answer. I had been busy with the notes of this book, and ventured, with a good deal of hesitation, to show them to a friend. He glanced through the pages, and then shot at me the question, 'But why have you written nothing about our great Evangelical Hymns and your experiences in the use of them?'

I answered foolishly, evasively. To all of which my persistent friend simply threw at me the query, 'And why not?' Anyway it set me thinking, thinking about the great world of music, and its remarkable influence over men, especially in times of religious revival. And what a world that is! As Thomas Carlyle has so well expressed it: 'Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect music has on us? A kind of inarticulate, unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into it.'

What evangelical religion has done for us is to harness all that is best in this world of 'unfathomable speech' to language that is the expression of the soul's deepest longings, and then to send it forth as one of God's most successful agents for reaching the innermost chambers of the City of Man-soul.

What would Methodism have been without its Hymnbook?—or indeed, where would the Christian Church stand without its sweet ministry of song? I revel this day in our wonderful collection of hymns. Here indeed
we have Christianity set to music. Can you wonder that ours has always been a singing Church? The great revival in the eighteenth century was almost as much owing to the songs of Charles Wesley as to the preaching of his brother John. At any rate, the history of the great revivals that have swayed the Church during the past one hundred years is very largely a record of the divine influence of consecrated music. It is even so to-day. Is it not, very largely, his marvellous presentation of sacred truth through the vehicle of consecrated music that enables Gipsy Smith—under the sway of the Divine Spirit—to sound the soul-depths of the vast audiences to whom he ministers? I have no thought of undervaluing the marvellous work of Dwight L. Moody, when I affirm that it was the singing of Ira D. Sankey that first caught the people. Was it not primarily the gospel message, that forms the burden of the best of our revival hymns, as pressed home upon the vast audiences by Charles M. Alexander and his great choir of Christian singers, that in so marvellous a manner prepared for the thrilling gospel message delivered by Dr. Wilbur Chapman?

At this writing I find it difficult to hold myself in check, as I think of some of the Pentecostal experiences that have been permitted me as my soul has been swayed—like a willow branch before the breeze—by the power of consecrated music. Two experiences are, at this moment, clamouring for expression, one of half a century ago, and the other but of yesterday; but they were the same. One was at the Hull Conference of 1869. The Conference Lovefeast had just closed. And such a Lovefeast! The great Thornton Street Chapel had been filled with Methodists, and with Methodist fire; and now, with souls aglow, we found ourselves outside the great building. But no one wanted to leave. The power that was upon the people inside swayed us now that we stood on steps, and footpath, and road tracks. All at once a song was raised. The
singer was Dr. Thomas Bowman Stephenson, and the song he sang, to the oldest of old-fashioned tunes, was Charles Wesley's famous Pentecostal hymn:

O that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow.

Away went that song right down the street, gaining in emphasis as each line was taken up by the crowd, until that throng was in a white heat as they sang, as surely it had rarely ever been sung before:

Refining fire, go through my heart,
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter Thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole.

Eh, but that was singing! The mere memory of it thrills my soul this day, though over half a century has passed away since then.

But let me tell of an experience of but yesterday. None who were present will ever forget it. It was the eve of a great Spiritual Healing Mission, to be conducted by that man of God, Mr. J. M. Hickson. All the Churches had united in careful preparation. I question if Sydney had ever been swayed by such an influence. And now a preparatory service of Christian workers of all churches was to be held in the St. Andrew’s Anglican Cathedral. The great building was packed from end to end, packed by a huge crowd of prepared, praying people of varying creeds, but of one heart. The silence of that crowd was awe-inspiring. Scarcely a sound could be heard in the packed building, as prayerfully, expectantly we awaited the opening hymn. There were ministers in crowds, representing every section of the Church—High Church, Low Church, Broad Church; Professors of Theology, Doctors of Divinity, the Primate of Australia, Ex-presidents of the
Methodist Conference, professional men and merchants, women of wealth, girls from the shops, nurses from the hospitals—all were there 'with one accord in one place.' It is not for me to give details of that Pentecostal hour. But the singing—it is of that I want to say a word. Never, never shall I forget that awesome moment, when, without choir to lead, that immense audience sang, with thrilling emphasis, the soul-stirring words of the immortal Charles Wesley, 'Jesu, Lover of my soul.' Next to me stood a leading Salvation Army officer; it was a question of 'touch and go' whether he or I should be the first to 'cry out and shout!' When we got to the words,

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find,

it was as if our Lord Himself were moving in our midst, touching here one and there another, until our very souls were all aglow with a fervour of devotion that was divine.

As an evangelist who has conducted revival services in many countries, I have had less difficulty in managing the musical part of my work than has fallen to the lot of many of my brethren. For the most part I have found our choirs loyal, and even anxious to carry out the ideas of the missioner. But one thing has always worried me. Why should so many choirs persist in subjecting the patience of worshipful hearers to so severe a strain as is sometimes put upon them by the rendering of oratorio music, and of anthems full of twists and turns, and meaningless repetitions which, however suitable to the concert-chamber, are utterly unworshipful, and out of place in the solemn service of the sanctuary. Again and again, after such a musical exhibition I have felt sorely tempted to announce, 'Now let us resume the worship of Almighty God.'
In my reading of Wesley’s famous Journal this has ever struck me: that no considerations of ‘peace at any price’ could ever cause him to swerve from what he deemed to be the pathway of faithfulness to duty. Let me venture upon one extract. In an account of his visit to Warrington he writes: ‘I came just in time to put a stop to a bad custom, which was creeping in here; a few men, who had fine voices, sang a psalm which no one knew, to a tune fit for an opera, wherein three, four, or five persons sang different words at the same time! What an insult upon common sense! What a burlesque upon public worship! No custom can excuse such a mixture of profaneness and absurdity.’ I am curious to know how that Warrington choir received their words of reproof. But probably choirs were different in those days. And John Wesley was—John Wesley!

I am tempted to transcribe just one other extract from the writings of this remarkable and truly inspired man. He himself published musical works for the use of the people called Methodists. I must content myself by giving the headings to his ‘Directions for Congregational Singing’: (1) Sing all. (2) Sing lustily. (3) Sing modestly. (4) Sing in tune. (5) Above all, Sing spiritually. Should any choirmaster who reads these pages desire still further directions as to the managership of the psalmody of the church, he will find Mr. Wesley’s further directions well worth a careful perusal.

As for myself, I have rarely met with the choir that is unsympathetic, although I have often made demands that were as unexpected as they were far-reaching. One example will make clear my meaning. I had commenced a week’s mission in one of the most well-to-do churches in one of our English cities. On the first Sunday morning a big congregation of Methodist folk faced me. A sudden impulse seized me; and at once I told the people that I was going to leave the pulpit, and carry my message into the
streets; would they—families, Sunday-school children, and choir—go with me? The choir was one of the best in the north of England. Led by their conductor—a musical diploma man—they headed my procession. Hundreds followed. We sang and preached our way that Sabbath morning through those crowded streets. Not a murmur was heard from any. The head master of one of the leading scholastic institutions of the north walked by my side. Such singing those crowds had probably never heard. Will it be wondered at that during that mission quite a large number were added to the Lord?

How different was my experience in another of our churches! This time it was, alas! in my own Australia. Our triennial General Conference was in session, and I was to occupy the pulpit of the Conference church on the Sunday night. Knowing my methods, some of the local brethren expressed themselves as fearful of the reception I should meet with from the local choir-master. Before the service in marched the said dignitary of the organ loft, and handed me the order of service. Looking over it carefully, I turned to the good man and suggested an alteration. He was adamant, 'That is our order of service, sir.' 'But,' said I, 'I want an after-meeting, and I see from this paper that you sing the congregation out after the benediction. That will never do.' 'Still, sir,' answered the good man; 'that is our order of service.' With a smile on my face—partly natural, partly assumed—I said, 'Now, look here, sir, you can sing what you like up to my sermon. Then I am in absolute control.' In high dudgeon the angry man marched out; and his look, if it meant anything at all, was a challenge to me to dare alter the service. We had a wonderful time of blessing that evening. The place was full of the power of the Holy Spirit. I announced a prayer-meeting, and urged the people to stay. With thoughts of the choir-master in mind I gave out my last hymn, adding, 'We will sing the first verse, then I
will pronounce the benediction, and whilst we are all singing the remaining verses such as must leave the church will do so, and we will at once commence the prayer-meeting.' I never saw that choir-master again. I expect he left the church in a temper. Anyway, we had a truly blessed after-service. The workers were kept busy, and thirty persons professed conversion. Such a result was worth fighting for. So, at least, thought the Conference ministers, who spoke of the service the next day.

But what about my own part in this ministry of song? Brought up on conventional lines, I found it difficult to get off beaten tracks. Naturally, I had to fight 'the battle of my reputation,' and it was a real fight. Strangely enough, it was a bigger cross to me to sing a solo than to preach a sermon. But it simply had to be. And this day I wonder at my spirit of fear, for it is simply wonderful how the Divine Spirit has used the songs I have been impelled to sing. Over and over again, when dealing with penitents at the communion rail; tired with explaining, and pleading, and even with quoting from the Divine Word, I have found myself quietly singing, say Toplady's 'immortal stanza:

In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

And the singing has brought light and guidance, where all else failed.

We had a beautiful illustration of this in our Centenary Hall days. It was Sunday night, and the meeting was hard. Sermon, and appeals, and prayers had apparently failed. In a spirit almost of despair, I asked a young Christian woman to sing that plaintive little song:

Almost persuaded, now to believe,
Almost persuaded, Christ to receive.
INSTANTLY THE SPELL WAS BROKEN, AND UP FROM ALMOST EVERY PART OF THE BUILDING WEEPING PENITENTS WENDED THEIR WAY INTO THE INQUIRY-ROOM. IT HAS OFTEN BEEN THUS. EXPLAIN IT I CANNOT, I SIMPLY STATE THE FACT.

CAN I EVER FORGET THAT IT WAS A SONG THAT REACHED THE HEART OF THAT GRAND OLD SAINT 'HAPPY BILL,' OF WhOSE CAREER I HAVE ELSEWHERE GIVEN THE WONDERFUL DETAILS? DISOWNED BY FRIENDS IN ENGLAND, AN OUT-AND-OUT DRUNKARD AND GAMBLER; AFTER A DRINKING CAROUSE THAT HAD LASTED THROUGH SATURDAY NIGHT AND ALL DAY ON SUNDAY, THIS MAN WAS FIRST ARRESTED AT OUR GEORGE STREET OPEN-AIR SERVICE, BY THE SINGING OF HIS MOTHER'S FAVOURITE, 'JESU, LOVER OF MY SOUL.' TREMBLING AND SOBERED, HE LISTENED TO EVERY WORD; AND WHEN AT ITS CLOSE I SANG AS A SOLO THE QUAIN'T WORDS OF P. P. BLISS, SET TO MUSIC BY IRA D. SANKEY:

A long time I wandered in darkness and sin,
And wondered if ever the light would shine in.
I heard Christian friends speak of raptures divine,
And I wished, how I wished——
That their Saviour were mine,

the fountains of the poor fellow's heart were broken up, and that night had not passed ere he could join in the song

I know He is mine,
Yes, I know He is mine.

CAN I EVER FORGET THAT IT WAS WHilst WE WERE SINGING ON OUR KNEES, THAT BEAUTIFUL GOSPEL SONG OF MISS HAVERGAL:

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee,

that one of the most remarkable men I have ever met gained the victory over long weeks of soul anguish, and entered into rest? He was a man educated in the best of English schools, the personal friend of leading Scotch
families, but a wanderer 'far from the fold.' After conviction for sin seized him in our old York Street Church, that poor fellow carried hell in his bosom for long weary days; until, one never-to-be-forgotten night, without telling a soul of his distress, he stole into our meeting, and at long last found rest to his soul as on our knees we sang this beautiful hymn.

A still more remarkable case was that of a poor outcast drunkard, formerly a leading business man of the city, but now literally an outcast, begging his bread by day and sleeping on the grass in the Domain by night. For years he thus dragged out a miserable existence. One night whilst drunk he staggered into the Centenary Hall, a piece of broken wreckage. Troubled at the presence of the wretched ragged specimen of humanity in our midst, we ventured to speak to him. Describe that man's conversion I cannot. Almost in despair, I ventured to sing, softly, slowly, that plaintive song of Eliza H. Hamilton:

Helpless I am, and full of guilt;
But yet for me Thy blood was spilt,
And Thou canst make me what Thou wilt,
And take me as I am.

Oh how that wretched man held on to the words 'And take me as I am.' Over and over again we sang the chorus, whilst the many were pleading with God in prayer:

And take me as I am:
My only plea—Christ died for me!
Oh take me as I am.

And it was done. That man became the saint of the Mission, and scores of poor lost outcasts were led by him to Christ.

May I venture upon just one other illustration of this marvellous power of consecrated song to lead the despairing
soul to God and to rest? Elsewhere I have told the story of the conversion of a young infidel, who to-day is known and respected throughout Sydney as a whole-hearted toiler in the Lord’s vineyard. Well do I remember how we were almost in despair as we tried—by argument, by appeal, by Scripture—to lead this poor soul into the light; everything failed when, at last, late that night I was led to sing, slowly and softly, the well-known chorus:

I love Jesus, hallelujah!
I love Jesus, yes, I do.

Presently the dear man threw up his arms and cried, ‘I see it; I’ve got it; I do—Oh thank God, “I do love Jesus.”’

Little did I think, as I sat in the pulpit of the old Centenary Chapel in the City of York, long years ago, when conducting a never-to-be-forgotten mission, what results would follow upon my venture to sing the gospel. A professional singer in London had recently been converted, and resolved to consecrate her voice to helping at revival services. She was with me that morning in that old pepperbox pulpit, and sang for us. I can never describe the effect that song had upon me. I must have watered the floor of that pulpit with my tears as that young woman sang the Rev. J. H. Sammis’ sweet song:

When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Thought I, God is in this thing. Whether I care to or not, I must ‘trust and obey.’ And away I went into this ministry of song. Can I ever forget how one bright Sunday morning, just after my York experience, in the
beautiful Stephen's Green Church in Dublin I was impelled to burst out with that same simple song? Oh, how it gripped the big congregation! where ordinary hymn, or even sermon, failed, that song went home; and since that day, especially in my C.M.M. work, I have found that frequently where the sermon has failed, some simple song has found a place of entrance into the city of Man-soul.

May I venture upon a word of exhortation? I know of but little that will so hasten the coming of that widespread revival, for which we are all longing, as the reconsecration of our church choirs. To a remarkable extent our choirs hold the door, the opening of which means, Revival! In too many cases we have reduced singing to an art, rather than making it a passion. And I cannot rid myself of the conviction, as one has put it, that 'Mere Art perverts taste, just as mere Theology depraves religion.' We need the soul as well as the body to furnish the complete man—to fill our choirs not only with good voices, but with good people, who will lead the service of praise, as the consecrated minister leads the prayers of the people. Sitting in my study this morning I listened to the flute-like warbling of a bush bird in the trees near by. Oh, it was beautiful! But alas, it all came from the throat of the wretched butcher-bird, that terror of the small birds of our bush lands. The demands of our holy religion are for much more than for mere well-trained voices. The Church needs a revival—a truly spiritual revival—in the choir-seats, as much as in the pews of our churches. In the name of all that is best in religion let us simplify our ministry of song; let us commit to the waste-paper basket much of that music so popular with many of our choirs, the like of which was so strongly denounced by John Wesley; and with that music let us banish the choir-master's baton that is so out of place in our worship, and thus not only simplify, but in a very definite manner, spiritualize our
service of praise. We shall thus do more than many of us dream of to help in the coming of that revival of spiritual religion which is the only thing that can uplift the nation and save the world.
X

AN OPEN-AIR CATHEDRAL

When the full history of the C.M.M. comes to be written, one of its most important chapters will need to be devoted to the telling of the fascinating story of its street work. There, right in the heart of this great city, under the shadow of its imposing City Hall, with the Queen Victoria buildings opposite, and one of Sydney’s busiest streets on either side, there stands the spot where in reality the Central Mission was born. ‘Consecrated?’ Yes, indeed—by the tears, and struggles, and faith of many hundreds who at that spot found themselves, aye, and found their Saviour also! We took possession of that ‘Corner’ nearly forty years ago. None has ever ‘jumped our claim.’ Through all these years, here in the very centre of this great city, we have been allowed, twice every week, to sing, and pray, and proclaim our great message to the crowds of wayfarers who have never failed us. Lying on my table before me at this moment is a list of 788 persons who professed conversion during the first few months of the Mission’s work, and the majority of these were first led to ‘Old York Street’ by way of its open-air work.

I shall probably be charged with exaggerating when I venture to question if Australasia can furnish a more sacred spot. Here, with unfailing regularity, have gathered the faithful ones of the C.M.M., many of whom themselves here first saw the light. Here have been trained numbers of our young ministers, trained in the art of winning souls. The old Newington theological students were here wont
to join our own workers in active personal work, and here many a new convert first whetted his sword, and here told out the wonderful story of his redemption. It was here that large numbers of our most earnest and most faithful workers met their Lord; here Robert Hardy and 'Happy Bill,' 'Whitechapel George' and 'Jack Dillon,' 'The old Frenchman' and 'Jimmy Mills,' aye, and many another also, whose records are in print, first met their Master. It was from this sacred spot that came the crowds that transformed 'Old York Street' from a desert to a veritable garden of the Lord, and from the same hallowed corner crowds are still led into the larger centre—the Lyceum in Pitt Street.

If only those stones were gifted with speech! If only I had, at this moment, an artist's brush, or an orator's tongue, that I might, in realistic fashion, depict some of the scenes witnessed at that sacred spot! Our records reveal the startling fact that, again and again, our Gospel of Hope has here reached the ear of some poor victim of despair, and literally saved him from a suicide's grave. Here the rich squatter from the West has rubbed shoulders with the dead-beat, and both have here entered the land of soul-rest. Many an utterly broken girl of the curbstone has here—at long last—seen a ray of hope; many a poor fellow just discharged from jail has heard the uplifting word, and has resolved 'to make another try.' Many a weary, despairing man has left this place resolved to make 'one more effort,' and very many hundreds, who but for the message of this sacred spot would have gone under, have here been 'rescued, redeemed, forgiven'! For all this shall we not praise God?

In my time this consecrated 'corner' made demands upon one's energy, and one's faith, that oftentimes were hard to meet, for it was here we had to fight down the persistent and cruel opposition of a militant, free-thinking party, in those days outspoken and persistent in its attacks.
Here we were called to fight 'the battle of our reputation' with many of the Lord's timid but orthodox followers. This sacred spot furnished the workers for the numerous open-air services carried on by the Mission. An old record is before me, revealing the fact that at one time as many as ten street meetings were held every week. The following report of a new campaign about to be opened is supplied from an old copy of Our Greeting, and is here furnished that our readers may learn a little of the spirit that has through all these years operated among our workers:

'A New Branch of the Business!'

'Yes, Charlie was right; we feel inclined to thank him for his way of putting things.

'By-the-bye, Charlie is a bit of an original in his way. A denizen of the "Rocks," he was, some two or three years ago, drawn into Princes Street Church, where the salvation of Christ met and transformed him. There is never anything formal or stereotyped in his expressions. The man who can listen to Charlie's testimony without a broadening of the face must be a wet blanket indeed.

'We were on our knees at the Centenary Hall—a hundred and fifty of us. It was last Saturday night, and we were pleading for a special endowment of power, in view of the new departure the C.M.M. was about that night to make, in the establishment of a Saturday Night Open-Air Service at the intersection of George and Market Streets, with a view to presenting the claims of Christ to the teeming thousands wandering the streets at that time.

'All at once Charlie, with a very full heart, burst out praying, and this is what he said: "O Lord God, we are about to open a new branch of the business—Your business, Lord. Yes. It isn't our business, it's Yours! We're nothing but shop hands, Lord. The concern belongs to You, dear Father. Bless it. Fill the shop with the very best appliances, Lord, and make us real good servants of
the concern. We want to see real good business done every Saturday night. Do it, Father, for the sake of our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

'It was a prayer as sincere and devout as it was original. Many others caught the same spirit, and at 8.10 o'clock we rose from our knees certain that this new branch would from the start prove to be a going concern.

'The whole hundred and fifty of us lined up in York Street and sang our way to the chosen site. Already the C.M.M. brass band was at work, so that we found a vast crowd awaiting us. Soon the torches were lit, hymn-books distributed, speakers' platform erected, and away we launched into our Saturday Night Street Service, to the strains of "The Glory Song." Everybody was in good trim and meant business. From the start the crowds were impressed. True, the whole proceedings were strictly and of set purpose unconventional. We wanted the crowds, and we got them, and, thank God, we kept them for the whole hour. In all, some thousands must have heard the gospel that night. At times there was plenty of noise from passing trams and buses. At one time a whistling organ-grinder close by threatened to put an end to our meeting, but we stuck to our guns, and literally "Lifted up our voices," and shouted the gospel story to the people. We gained the victory, and went ahead. The drunks were much in evidence, of course. Open-air services possess a peculiar charm for drunken men. One of them—we judged him to be a "remittance man" from his appearance—took his stand close by the drum, and, with cigarette in his mouth, essayed to patronize the whole service in a manner truly ridiculous. At one time friend Gilbert was telling the story of a poor fellow who stopped him in George Street and asked, "How far is it to the station?" "One mile to me," replied Mr. Gilbert, "but three to you." "Why," cried out our remittance friend, "he was drunk." "Yes," replied the speaker, "he was drunk, just like
you." The laugh that followed did no harm, but quieted the drink-possessed young fellow.

'There were strange characters in that crowd—deadbeats by the dozen; young men about the town, and wild young women as well; fathers and mothers, with their market baskets in hand; sailors from the ships in port; probably hundreds of country folk—a strange medley of men and women, all listening to the same old story of God's love to a lost world, and not a few of them evidently impressed.

'We are certain the blessing of God is going to rest upon this new branch. As one said on Saturday night, "This business concern isn't going up King Street." (The Bankruptcy Court is at the top of King Street.) We are praying that the converting grace of God may every week rest upon the Market Street Service. At the close of the meeting Mr. Taylor, who was in charge, announced that he was about to return to the Centenary Hall, and would be glad if quite a number would follow him, that they might talk together more fully. A number of the consecrated C.M.M. workers also set to work buttonholing men and women in the street, and striving to press home the word that had been spoken.'
XI

CHRISTIANITY'S UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT

He answered and said: Whether He be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Such must ever be our answer to all who quibble at and criticize what we call sudden conversion. I never waste time in fruitless argument. Why should I? Fact and argument do not here live in the same street. The blind man with restored sight has always silenced the quibbles of doubters. A real conversion carries with it its own unanswerable argument.

Behind me there lies a long lifetime of blessed toil as an Evangelist. I am not boasting when I speak of the many conversions I have witnessed—in the British Isles, in Canada and the United States, in Australia and New Zealand. Tell me, you intellectual doubters, have I laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought? I have seen too many wonderful things—miracles of healing they may well be called; drunkards transformed into sober men, the blasphemer's tongue cleansed, doubters made into men 'full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,' hard men made tender and loving, selfish men transformed into men with big and benevolent hearts, outcasts made into saints, hell changed into heaven! Tell me, has the steady and growing experience of a long lifetime to count for nothing? Has my life-work proved to be a failure? I only ask the doubter to read carefully and without prejudice, the following well-authenticated facts, and then form his own conclusions.
De Profundis!

Is it not wonderful how the Divine Spirit anticipates the facts in the lives of those He calls to the privileges of His service? I was a young man, doing my best to work, on orthodox lines, one of our Australian country circuits; moving cautiously a step at a time, and utterly ignorant of the special rescue work to which years afterwards I was to be called; orthodox and conventional, yet full of youthful, and, may I add, Scriptural enthusiasm; but with a narrow vision, and I fear me a good deal of selfish dogmatism, in my methods of work.

One fact came to me—stirring, startling, unconventional—that I think of to-day as being largely responsible for the creation within me of a faith that laughs at impossibilities, and that put me in touch with the kind of work that at that time was years ahead of me.

I was sitting in my little study when a timid knock came to the outer door. On the doorstep I found a half-dead man. Shall I ever forget the sight? Comparatively a young man, sin had aged and bowed him. With matted hair and bloodshot eyes, and clothes all stained and torn with rough usage, and with a look, oh! so haggard and hopeless, the wretched fellow told me of his wrongdoing, and of this attack of illness whilst tramping through the almost trackless bush. As quickly as could be I got him into our local hospital, where for some time he lay betwixt life and death.

During my visits to the hospital I learned from him the saddest of sad stories. Here was an English local preacher who ought to have been in our ministry; but few of the official positions open to a layman he had not filled; the husband of a worthy woman, the father of children of whom any man might be proud, in a good way of business, the friend and relative of men well known in the English Methodist world. Yet here he was, a piece of broken flotsam on the rough sea of life, without money or friends, and
apparently facing a fearful eternity—one of the most hopeless cases I have ever been called to deal with in a life of unusual service.

Gradually he responded to the careful treatment of our local doctor. But oh, what agonies of mind he passed through during those weeks of convalescence! Forgive himself? Impossible! And, alas, hopeless as to the future! When the poor broken man left the hospital he came to our home, where loving hands gradually nursed him back to health. And oh, what a change! Here was no longer a picture of the effects of dissipation, but a handsome, keen, and, thank God, at last a hopeful man.

Need I tell the story of his struggles upwards? From the very borderland of hell he came back—a weeping prodigal—to his wounded Saviour. Well do I remember the night of his restoration. We had obtained for him better clothes, and secured for him the position of accountant in a leading store in the town. Regularly he attended our services, but hid himself away at the back of the building, a hopeless, silent man. But this night the message of hope reached his poor worn soul, and shall I ever forget the sight as, trembling and white, he almost rushed to the penitent-form, the fountains of his soul pouring themselves out in earnest pleadings for mercy? Was such a cry ever unheard and unanswered? When the poor man that night left the house of God he was at rest.

Need I tell the story of his upward fight, or of his ultimate victory? Thank God the miracle had been wrought. Old things had literally passed away, and all things had become new. No more welcome guest ever came to our happy little parsonage. He romped with my children, he almost worshipped my wife. Many a happy winter’s evening he spent with us around the parsonage fire. Aye, and many a sad confession of far wandering, and of wrongdoing, he made to us in those days of healing.
Need I pursue the story? He became a member with us at our little church. The class and the prayer-meeting were faithfully attended, whilst gradually his superior business knowledge gained for him advancement among the business men of the town. He found his way into the Sabbath School, and was ultimately appointed its superintendent. Later on, with much fear and trembling, he was induced to take a service on the circuit plan, and at once established himself as a preacher of more than ordinary ability, whilst in the social life of the church he became the trusted friend of all. It was simply impossible to associate this fine, upstanding, cheerful man with the broken wreckage of but a year ago. Alas, alas! how can I tell it? All at once this ‘brand plucked from the burning,’ this restored, redeemed, happy, and now faithful follower of the Lord he had so grievously forsaken, all at once, I say, he was stricken down. Upon a borrowed horse he rode out one Sunday to preach at one of our country places, fifteen miles out, and whilst returning was suddenly taken dangerously ill. When I got to him he was all but speechless, and in one of the wards of our local hospital his sun went down whilst it was yet noon. There was great mourning among our people at so mysterious an ending to a life at last so full of promise, but all were glad to have known one so bright, so hopeful, so good. The saddest feature of so sad an ending lay in the fact that he was gradually accumulating funds to make possible a reunion with the wife and children from whom his sin had severed him, but to whom, upon his restoration, he clung in the fond hope of a speedy reunion.

Fixing the Date

Whilst busy conducting Revival Missions in New York, one Sunday afternoon I was the invited guest of one of its best Sunday Schools—a remarkable school, with a well-known New York lawyer, a son of one of America’s Chief
Justices, as its superintendent, and with my friend, Anderson Fowler, as one of its teachers. Mr. Fowler was one of the merchant princes of America, with works in Chicago and offices in New York. Though one of the busiest of men, he still gloried in being the teacher of a class of young men it were an honour for any man to guide!

I had given an address, and we were on our knees, being led in prayer by various of the teachers. Feeling a hand on my shoulder, I looked up to find the superintendent anxious to secure my attention. ‘Do you see that boy on the third row of seats, the second from the aisle?’ Under much feeling he spoke of that lad being his only son. ‘He is a splendid fellow,’ said the father. ‘Tomorrow he leaves home for the University, and he is not yet a Christian. Would you mind going and having a talk with him?’

Quietly kneeling by the side of the youth, I placed my hand upon his shoulder, and quietly said: ‘I hope you are not angry with me for coming to speak to you?’

‘Angry?’ answered the bright young fellow. ‘Why should I be? If you wish to speak to me, it must be for my good.’

‘Thank you,’ I answered. ‘Now tell me, do you intend becoming a Christian?’

‘A Christian?’ he answered in surprise. ‘Why, my father is the superintendent of this school, and my mother is a Christian if ever there was one; of course I do!’

‘I am so glad to hear that,’ I answered. ‘Now I want to help you to fix upon a date for making a start.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘Simply this. Were I to fill in this slip of paper as follows: “I promise to give my heart to God this day twelve months, would you sign it?”’

‘No, sir, I would not!’

‘But why?’
'Why, sir,' he replied, under much feeling, 'I might not be alive this day twelve months.'

'Oh, if that is it, suppose I make it six months?'

His reply was a shake of the head.

'Well, shall I make it two, or one?'

By this time I could see that the young man was under deep feeling; as to each query, he shook his head.

Again putting my hand on his shoulder, I quietly whispered, 'If I insert the word "now," would you sign that?'

I have always been thankful that I had common sense enough not to say a word more, but sat back on my heels, and watched that soul in its great conflict. His broad shoulders began to heave, and I noticed the tears running down on to the chair.

After a period of almost painful silence the young man heaved a sigh, and, reaching forth his hand, he tried hard to speak. 'Sir—give—me—that—paper—and—I—will—sign—it.'

Lifting my heart to God in thankfulness, I quietly said, 'My young friend, you do not require to sign any document; do the thing I suggest, that is all.'

And he did! The surrender was there and then made. Christ came near, and he claimed Him as Saviour and King, and all was at rest.

The next day I was walking down Broadway at a time when its causeway was crowded with people. By accident I ran against that lad's father, who, seeing me, forgot his surroundings, threw his hands upon my shoulders, and with tears in his eyes, said, 'Oh, thank God, Mr. Taylor, that you came to New York. You have made one household a very, very happy one. Our boy came home from school yesterday, and at once nailed his colours to the mast by telling his mother what he had done. He has packed up and to-day has gone to Yale University, taking with him the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. Oh, sir, he is so happy, and, thank God, so are both his mother and I.'
GETTING IT SETTLED

I am thinking of another case, very similar to that of the above—his father a teacher in the same school, himself present at the memorable service above narrated, and also preparing for a University career.

I was being entertained at his father’s beautiful home, and was busy conducting Revival Mission Services in various churches of New York. One night I had retired, weary of body, to my room, when a quiet knock at my door announced a late-hour visitor. It was the bright young son of mine host, who had come to me deliberately to get settled, once for all, the question of his relationship to the Saviour of Sinners.

I need not to disclose what took place in my room that late hour. Here was a soul in distress. Who but the Physician of Souls could heal it? And, thank God, the ‘healing balm’ was soon applied, and that young man left my room resolved to face the life of the University under the sense of that great saving and protecting presence.

If only all our young men and maidens who are face to face with a University career would but act as these two young men acted! Thereby would be saved to our Christ, and to His Church, many a fine young soul, that, alas! has lost rudder and compass in the eddying currents of a University career. To one and all such I venture the word: ‘Settle the question, the question of your soul’s eternal salvation, ere you enter the danger-zone of a public career.’

FATHER AND SON

‘How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God.’ That is undoubtedly so; but the difficulty is not so much one of character as of circumstance. Let but the fountains of a man’s soul be reached, and sin becomes sin—whether the transgressor be rich or poor, and the Saviour appeals with equal force to each when the Holy Spirit is really at work.
With what peculiar force this was one evening brought home to me! I had been conducting a special service in a leading suburban church—the home of many faithful souls, the centre of many religious activities. A gracious influence had attended the message. I was confident as to results. Taking my stand behind the Communion rails, I was soon busy directing the anxious to the Lamb of God, the bearer of human sin, the sharer of human sorrow.

Looking up, I was startled to see one of the prominent commercial men of the city wending his way to the altar rail. At first I wondered, as well I might, for here was one of the strong financial men of the State—a man universally respected for his fine manly character, the chairman and leading director of one of his city’s largest commercial concerns, a man above suspicion in all matters of finance and business control, respected by all who knew him in the business world; a political leader among men of his party, and the trusted friend and adviser of the Premier.

A big, burly man he was, and never did he seem to me so big as that night when, as a weeping, anxious penitent, he sought the salvation of our glorious gospel. Beads of perspiration were on his forehead, and earnest was his cry to God for that grace denied to none who thus seek Him, as did this man, with earnest, pleading faith.

When at last the light of conscious salvation broke in upon his soul the congregation sent up such a joyous outburst of thanksgiving as had not frequently been heard in that building.

Shall I ever forget how that good man grasped me by the hand, and, almost choked by emotion, said to me: ‘And now, Mr. Taylor, would you like to know why I have done this?’ In answer to my pleading request he spoke as follows:

‘The other Sunday was my boy’s birthday.’ Oh! what a wealth of affectionate feeling the father put into those two words ‘My boy.’ It needed not that one be told that
here was an affection of no ordinary type. And who was that 'boy'? He had just completed his career in the University, where he had studied under the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, the medal man for more than one branch of study.

'Well,' said the father, 'on Sunday morning my boy came early into my bedroom, and under the deepest feeling said to me, "Dad, you know that this is my birthday, that I am about to receive from the University my medical diploma. Dad, I want to be a Christian doctor, and I have come to tell you that to-day, on my birthday, I am going to give my heart to God, and I intend to do it openly before my friends, at the Church service to-night."

'Well, sir, you may imagine that I was strangely moved by my son's avowal, and even more so when, at the service on Sunday evening, I saw my boy quietly but determinedly walk up to the Communion rail to give his heart to God. Why I did not follow I cannot tell you, but that night, ere I retired to rest, I registered a promise that the very first opportunity that offered I would do what my boy had done. That is why I am here at this moment, and thank God for what I have been allowed to do.'

That man became a still greater tower of strength in the business and in the political world of his city. He acted on managing committees of Christian charities; he became personally attached to the works of the local Central Mission; and a little later on passed through a severe and painful illness, trusting in his Saviour's love, and suddenly he was not, for God had taken him.

A LADY INFIDEL'S EXPERIENCE

The following interesting account was sent to me by the lady herself, and appeared at the time in the columns of the C.M.M. Gazette:

'I feel that I should be honouring God by writing a few lines to the paper which has proved such a blessing
to me. I wish to tell of my conversion, which took place in connexion with the C.M.M. a few weeks ago. I had been for six or seven years a Freethinker, but during that period was unsatisfied, always searching for something that I could not find in free-thought literature or in infidel lectures. Swedenborgianism and Spiritualism were also tried in turn; till at last, about twelve months ago, I confessed to myself that I was all wrong, and also that I was afraid to die. Being so wretched in mind, I concluded to work for my salvation. I would join a Church, which I did, and for some months attended regularly, all the while laboriously reading my Bible, and fancying I was on the right road. No! Nothing but disappointment again! So this plan was abandoned, and after another period of wretchedness I went one Sunday night to the Centenary Hall. Mr. Taylor was preaching, and his words took hold of me. He spoke of a conversation he had held with a Freethinker, who “could not believe the Bible, as it was so contradictory, and did not believe that God was a God of Love, or else why should there be so much wrong, pain, and distress in the world?” As these had been some of my stumbling-blocks I was interested, with the result that my doubts were considerably removed. The concluding portion of the sermon seemed to be addressed particularly to me. After the service one of the sisters invited me to retire for private prayer. I was miserably unhappy; so, after a struggle with pride, I did so. But though the prayers which were offered in my behalf were earnest and faithful, I got no peace that night—indeed, I felt infinitely more miserable.

'During the week which followed I resolved never to enter a place of worship again. Two weeks went by full of trouble, which I kept to myself, when one afternoon, as I was passing the Centenary Hall, something induced me to procure a copy of the Methodist Gazette—the first I had seen. On opening it, almost the first paragraph that met my eye was an account of my case, written by the faithful
servant of the Master who had spoken to me in the meeting. I was very thankful—how thankful I can never say—and immediately conceived the idea of writing to her for advice. Here was a real, warm Christian, who had prayed for me, and put her arm round me in her sympathy and desire for my salvation. But while the pen was in my hand the tempter said to me, "Don't make a fool of yourself; that lady won't care—won't even have time to write; has probably forgotten all about you. Keep your troubles to yourself."

'By-and-bye I did write, and my letter brought a loving reply (the writer expressing a strong desire to help, and making an appointment to meet me). "Now," I thought, "surely I shall learn what I am to do." Again came the tempter with, "Do not go; she will only talk about religion, and you have had enough of that." After a battle I did go, to find that my friend did not talk of religion, but only of the Lord Jesus Christ and His love for "even me." I had fully decided to become a Christian, and now wanted to know what I was to do. Always, alas! this idea of doing something! I went home believing it all to be quite plain; I would really force myself to accept all that I had been told.

'Trusting in myself, my peacefulness did not last long, so back came all the doubts and fears that had possessed me for all those long, weary months. There was no such thing as forgiveness for me. I had gone too far, had scoffed at the very name of the Lord, and He had cast me off. Then, in a few days, the new number of the Gazette came out, and there I saw some lines relating to my supposed conversion. I took that paper to my own room, determined to get peace with God or die; and, with it spread before me, I prayed as I never did before. I realized that I had got to give up trying, so I just said, "Lord, save me; I can do nothing"; and directly I seemed to hear a voice say, "I have redeemed thee; thou art Mine"; and oh,
I cannot describe the peace which in a moment flooded my whole being. What a fool I had been, waiting for something to be done for me, when that something was done more than eighteen hundred years ago. I knew from that blessed moment that I was saved, saved for time and eternity. I could say, “Now I have found the ground wherein, sure, my soul’s anchor may remain.” I was brought out of the darkness of infidelity into light and peace, and more—I am being kept day by day, being persuaded that “He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” I refuse to believe that it was an accident which placed this little paper in my way, and earnestly pray that it may prove a blessing to many, and also that the Lord will use His dear servants to lead many to the light which has dispelled my long-time darkness.”
GATHERING IN THE SHEAVES

He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

Is there any joy of the husbandman like the joy of harvest? As I think of it the blood tingles in my veins, for my forefathers were yeomen of the soil in far-away Yorkshire. At this writing I am thinking of the happy olden time, when the tilling of the soil and the sowing of the seed became but a memory, and the time of reaping had come. Eh, that was a happy day when the last golden sheaves were placed upon the decorated wagon, and with the horses bedecked with flowers, and with many coloured ribbons on the handle of the whip, the last wagon of the precious harvest-field came into the old farmyard, surrounded by happy harvesters, who, as they marched, sang their joyous songs, and gave out their happy cry of ‘Harvest Home, Harvest Home.’

Thank God, also, the joys of another harvest have been mine. Though now no longer able to lead on the sacramental hosts of the Lord, memory is still rampant, and as I sit musing in my study I am revelling in the thought of the many glorious reaping-times that have been. The thought of the pioneer is lost in that of the harvester. I seem, in this blessed eventide light, to see nothing save the gracious reaping-times that have been mine; the plough, the harrow, the seed-basket, the times of weeping, of storm, are, this happy day, all merged into the joyous cry of ‘Harvest Home.’

Oh, tell me, if you can, of any joy that is equal to that which is the possession of the spiritual husbandman. This is the one thing that counts. All else compared therewith
is mere scaffold-building. Again and again those words of our loved founder—John Wesley—keep ringing in my ears: ‘You have nothing to do but to save souls.’ Other work may lead to this, and is therefore relatively important; but oh, the thing itself—the using of the gospel sickle, the gathering in of the precious grain—tell me, I pray you, do you know of anything equal to it?

And so, with glowing heart I pursue the blessed theme, and tell the story of those I have seen brought to God. The records have been carefully preserved, and are to-day permitted to see the light, in the hope that many a young minister of the Cross may ‘catch the fire,’ and lay out his life, not to tickle the fancy or inform the intellect, but to ‘seek and to save.’ For, after all, that is the one thing that really counts.

It just remains to be added that many of these records are here given exactly as they were chronicled at the time in the columns of our C.M.M. Journal.

‘A Love-Feast that Fell to Pieces.—We had just completed a remarkable temperance campaign, conducted by that distinguished American temperance veteran, Francis Murphy, and on the morrow were to celebrate the Anniversary of the C.M.M. Between the two we arranged to sandwich an old-fashioned love-feast. And such a meeting it was; such crowds; such enthusiasm! We shall never, never forget this truly Pentecostal time. It were worth living for years to witness the scenes of Saturday night. From start to finish the fire of the Holy Ghost rested upon the place. There were others beside Mr. Murphy who could say, ‘I do not remember ever to have been in such a meeting.’ Would that we could reproduce some of the testimonies that were given. Not a few who, ten or twelve days previously, were reeling about the streets in a state of intoxication, were here clothed and in their right mind, telling in artless fashion, and with tear-dimmed eye, of the
wonderful thing the grace of God had wrought in them. The whole meeting was formed after the model of the old prophet's experience—Isaiah xii. was reproduced. The people literally shouted for joy. The meeting reached its climax when a member of the Permanent Artillery, a burly fellow weighing at least sixteen stone, rose to speak. This man had attended many of the Murphy meetings, had signed the pledge, and had watched with keenest interest the development of the crusade. To-night a mighty impulse of the Spirit of God took possession of him. He tried to speak, he stammered a broken word or two, the tears fell from his eyes apace as he struggled to keep down his emotion; we caught, at last, some such words as these, "Oh, what have I felt whilst listening to the words of one and another! Can I ever have the same experience? Friends—pray—for—me," and, with a big sob, the good man slipped back into his seat, and in a few moments was on his knees literally crying for help. There were no further experiences given that night. The love-feast was suddenly turned into a veritable "place of weeping."

'Within five minutes between twenty and thirty strong men rose and asked us to pray for them. They were soon gathered into the inquiry-rooms; competent Christian workers were told off to point them to the world's Great Physician, and ere ten o'clock was reached most of them were rejoicing in a new-found peace. Late on Sunday night we asked the artillery-man how it was with his soul. With a big, open face gloriously lighted up by the Sun of Righteousness, he answered, "I've never had such a day as this in all my life." Thank God, he was not the only man who could thus testify. This love-feast was a blessed beginning to what proved to be a wonderful anniversary."

THREE GENERATIONS REACHED!

New South Wales Methodism has been rich in the character of the laymen it has produced. Some of them H
have made for themselves a record as pioneers of the Church—some by personal service, others by the remarkable character of their money gifts, aiming at the direct advance of the Messiah's Kingdom throughout the vast areas of this State. The Rev. James Colwell, in his *Methodist History,*¹ has devoted many pages to graphic accounts of the character and scope of the work they have done.

At this moment I am thinking of one—my old and true friend, the Hon. E. Vickery, M.L.C., who, in his own line, stands without a compeer—a pioneer evangelist to the tips of his fingers, though he never conducted a service, nor even delivered an evangelistic address. The story has been told of the manner in which he was led to the consecration of many thousands of pounds to the equipment of numerous capacious tents, the employment of a number of tried evangelists from various parts of the world, and the sending them forth throughout the State with results that were startling, scriptural, and, I believe, permanent in their blessed results. I was close in the councils of Mr. Vickery at the time this great thought came to him. Never shall I forget the hours we spent together in his office, working out details. I have elsewhere told the story of the consecration of the first tent in the public Domain of Sydney on Boxing Day, 1901, when crowds attended, numerous evangelistic addresses were given, and a glorious harvest of souls was reaped.

I want to emphasize one touching incident that took place during the progress of that never-to-be-forgotten meeting. Just as one of the workers was leaving the smaller tent—erected as an inquiry room—he was accosted by a bright-faced little girl of twelve, who 'was anxious to find Jesus.' A delightful scene followed. The plan of salvation was unfolded, and the dear lassie was clearly led into the light. In the meantime the little girl's mother

had come in, and, kneeling by the side of her daughter, was carefully led step by step to trust in Christ. In a few minutes yet a further addition was made to the party by the coming in of the father, who, broken in heart, was at once led into the joy of personal salvation by the busy and happy worker. Meanwhile an old lady came into the inquiry-room, and knelt by the little group—the grandmother of the little girl—and she also was pointed to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Thus at the same meeting three generations were brought into living touch with the Christ. What a changed atmosphere for that home!

During the fifteen months of these remarkable Tent Missions the Hon. E. Vickery informed me later that 17,415 persons had professed conversion.

_The Secret of Power._—On a recent Sunday Mr. Taylor narrated the following remarkable incident in a sermon he preached on 'The Possibilities of Faith':

'A few months since we sent a young man from the C.M.M. Evangelists' Institute to conduct a six weeks' mission in a northern district of this State. On arriving in the central township he was thus accosted by one of the leading officers of the church:

"Well, young man, and so you have come to conduct a mission amongst us. Do you expect to succeed?"

"Of course I do, or I should not have come."

"How many converts do you hope to get during your stay?" somewhat testily asked the steward.

"I have prayed for one hundred souls," answered the evangelist, "and I believe I shall get them."

"One hundred souls? Why, we have scarcely had any conversions in this district for five years. If you get twenty you may consider you have done well."

'The mission was conducted, and at its close several of the officials of the church, together with the evangelist,
went through the list of names of such as had professed salvation. After striking out all doubtful cases, one hundred and one names were found on the list, about whose conversion they had little, if any, doubt.

"Truly a remarkable result. What is the explanation? The following incident will furnish the only answer that can be given.

"Returning home after one of the earlier meetings, the young evangelist was seen to be greatly dejected."

""What is the matter?" asked his host.

""I am in great trouble about the Mission," replied the young man. "We haven’t got the power that we must have if souls are to be saved."

""What is to be done?"

""Well, sir, I am resolved not to go to my bed this night until God gives me the assurance that the Holy Spirit will be poured out upon this district."

""I could not rest that night," said the old man, who himself gave the facts to me. "Hour after hour I went and listened at that young man’s door—twelve, one, two o’clock, and later still I went. Each time I heard that young man crying unto God, ‘O Lord, do save souls, do send us the Holy Ghost.’ That, sir, was the secret of that young man’s power in our district. Again and again he thus prayed far into the night. Ere long the answer came, and we are still thanking God that ever that young man came amongst us.’’

‘A Brand Plucked from the Burning.—Some weeks ago a sister of the C.M.M., in her visitation of the hospital, met a patient anxious to find Jesus. It was not long ere she was rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven. Her first thought was for dear ones who had not found that Saviour she now loved. Her father had been for some years a slave to the demon drink, and had spent a fortune in four years, during which time he had rarely been sober. ‘A
bad case," might well be said of such an one. But with the newborn love of Jesus in her heart this young Christian wanted to tell him how he, too, might receive forgiveness through repentance. "Will you pray for my father?" was the cry from her heart. The question was asked of one of the brethren, and passed on to others at the "mercy seat." Scarcely a week had passed when the man was seen at a mission service in one of the suburbs. Was it a strange thing that one of the C.M.M. sisters was there also? Going straight for the man, she pleaded with him as if she had been his own child. Had not God arranged that this man and the sister should meet at this place?

"The Devil had been master too long to let this man leave his service without a great struggle. His stubborn will would not bend. He was invited to the Central Hall, away from his old haunts. He came, and the Spirit of God took hold of him during the service, and he began to reason and pray. He stayed to the after-meeting, and was one of the first to go out into the inquiry-room. Those who witnessed his struggle will never forget it. Face set and determined, with tears rolling down his cheeks, he said, "There is no half-and-half with me to-night; it is God or the devil," and before the clock struck ten Jesus had conquered. The devil was cast out. To-day the man is "clothed, and in his right mind," and can be heard testifying to the fact in the street, in the suburb where he was so well known, and his voice is now heard in the meetings praising God, instead of his being turned out as a nuisance, as in the olden days. His second daughter found peace on Sunday night, and is now anxious for the salvation of mother and brother."

"Struggling Upwards."—'Truth is indeed stranger than fiction, and the romance of the true more wonderful than that of the imagination.' How remarkably these words of Samuel Chadwick are illustrated in the following story
by the young man who wrote it at my request. It was published at the time in our C.M.M. Journal.

'The story is a long and, to me, a pitiful one, and not to be told in the column space allotted by the editor of the Gazette. Ten years ago the voice of God called me to seek His face. I honestly tried to do this. I renounced my sins, my life became revolutionized, and, at the first opportunity, I joined the Church. But, whilst I knew of Christ as the Sin-bearer, I never grasped the great fact of standing up straight before God (with all my imperfections) in the strength of Christ, as my ever-present, personal, daily Redeemer. Sins which I thought were buried rose up and smote me. I seemed alone in the contest, and it was bitter. No one near me understood me. I did not know that it was the office of Jesus to understand me completely.

'Then there came the battle of thought. I weighed, I measured, I argued—from which there developed intellectual, but no spiritual, life, light, or power. The intellectual life grew, and I was credited with the possession of powers which I had never known before.

'Then came the stern battle of life, and perhaps it was sterner to me than to most men, for, in addition to feeling myself, I could see how it pressed on others, and I carried my brothers' burden too; my soul was filled with pity for the sickness of the world. So went on the years, and my existence was a revolution within and a siege without. My life was drifting; the old evils gripped me with a grasp against which I was powerless. Yet, in the midst of it all, there seemed to be the Christ saying, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." But, alas! I did not know how to grasp His power, and so obtain His rest.

'Then came a succession of passages in my life, so bitter! I had never passed that way before, and it was lonely and dark. I felt I was perishing. I knew that my intellectual life was dying; those to whom I turned either
forsook me in spirit or did not understand. My very existence seemed like a Gethsemane. In that dark hour I felt afresh that my only hope was Jesus Christ; and I determined at all risks, at all costs, unreservedly to cast myself upon Him.

'It was Sunday morning, and I resolved to take the step that evening at the Centenary Hall. But something within said, "Why wait till then?" So I at once went down to the 7 o'clock morning prayer-meeting, where my presence and story caused some surprise. There I yielded up my life to God, and promised that if He would take away my burdens I would serve Him. I let all intellectual doubts go—in fact, I let everything go, and took Jesus instead. Before I left the room my burdens were gone. I was saved. But it was really the next morning ere I fully realized that I had accepted Jesus. I saw that it was a psychological and supernatural, not an intellectual, transaction. What had before appeared so difficult now seemed easy. Not only was there peace, but power from above flowed in to maintain that peace. The chains that had bound me were broken. I stood free.

'The causes of some of the old burdens still remain, but they have no weight. The rough places of my life are being made smooth, and the waste places built up. Christ is to me now a living personal Friend—my Redeemer in reality. Old ambitions are dead, and new hopes are springing up.

My Jesus to know, and feel His blood flow,
'Tis life everlasting, 'tis heaven below.

'This epoch in my life took place seven weeks ago, and they have been seven such weeks! Not always rapturous, but always a deep, underlying peace has literally possessed me. And within my long-burdened, weary heart there wells up, day by day, God's own promise of something better and brighter beyond.'
XIII

GLEANINGS FROM THE HARVEST-FIELD

SHALL I venture another chapter like the last? To some such records as I am thus furnishing may probably verge upon the monotonous. But to me they are blessedly inspiring, and as true as they are inspiring. I have just been studying a copy of that beautiful oil-painting, 'The Gleaners,' by Jean F. Millet, described as 'the painter without rival of peasant life,' himself of true peasant stock. The picture is all aglow with the brightness and the warmth of an autumn sun. In the centre is a wheat-stack in the making, harvesters at work heaping the precious stooks on to the farmer's wagon, and others in the distance busy gathering in the sheaves. In the forefront are the figures of three peasant women, stooping as they toil, gleaning forgotten wheat-ears for their own home feeding. These women are my inspiration at this moment, for do they not fling me back upon the harvest-fields of the past, from which, I thank God, it is still given me to gather in sheaves of golden grain—the reaping of the Lord.

'Gleanings!' That does not imply that the harvesting is over. Here is a gleaning like unto that of Ruth the Moabitess, a gleaning 'even among the sheaves.' The harvest has never ceased; to-day the reapers are busy. Every week are conversions. That happy throng of harvesters—in hall, and street, and home, and hospital, and jail—are ever about their Master's business, and to-day my heart is cheered by the glad news that so frequently reaches me from the C.M.M. office of 'showers of blessing.'

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still falling upon the consecrated efforts of the missioners. For let it be known that the stories here furnished are but specimens of what it is still so frequently given to the workers of the Central Mission to witness.

'Monotonous?' Oh, blessed monotony! Would that this kind of inspiring sameness might make itself known in every congregation!

And so I venture once again to throw open the treasury of past years—for the encouragement of the weak faiths, for the information of doubters of every kind; a further record of trophies won in the great warfare, which I bring, in humble adoration, and lay at His feet.

'Need any Despair?'—At the last meeting of the C.M.M. Social Reform League one of the Mission workers told a story that in a very remarkable manner moved the audience. We give his remarks, as nearly as we can remember them, in his own words:

'From my very heart I thank God for this Mission. Three years ago I came into this hall a poor, miserable drunkard, without money, without friends. But it was not always so. The time was when I was in a good position, when I owned one of the largest businesses in this city. But I fell, and all through this cursed drink. I didn't become a drunkard all at once; I was drawn into it by the wretched habit of nobbyerizing. Little by little I fell, until I got so low that I had to sleep in the Domain—a miserable outcast.

"One night I was, when drunk, walking along George Street, when I heard your Mission-workers singing. I couldn't help but stop and listen. For oh, friends, I used once to sing those hymns, for I was once a teacher in one of our Sunday schools. Drunk as I was, I came along to this hall, being steadied on the arm of one of the workers. Stumbling up the stairs, I heard some of the people call out, 'Don't let him in, he'll only disturb the meeting.' But the good brother stuck to me, and in I came.
“Before that meeting closed I was on my knees crying aloud for mercy. And oh, glory be to God, my poor heart-broken cry was heard, and I left this building sobered and saved. For three years the Lord has kept me, and I am now getting along again, and am oh, so happy, for Christ is mine!”

The dear man ended with an appeal that touched many hearts, and, singular coincidence, was the means of leading a poor wreck, a boon companion of the speaker in other and more prosperous days, who happened to be in the meeting, to sign the pledge.

*A Wonderful Sight* was witnessed at the hall on Sunday night. It brought tears of gladness to many eyes, and must have occasioned a big outburst of praise among the angels. Scarcely was the after-meeting started ere persons in all parts of the hall rose for prayer. Within a few minutes every chair in front of the choir gallery was occupied by men and women who had voluntarily come forward seeking the Lord. They came from all sorts of places—one from Canada, another from England, others from country districts of the State. Six or seven of them were young men. During a moment of deepest solemnity, as the superintendent was giving advice to the long row of persons, all of whom had been carefully instructed in the way of the Kingdom, and every one of whom publicly testified to the fact of their personal trust in Christ, a noise was heard at the end of the hall, and other two young men came hurriedly up the aisle, and threw themselves in places just vacated by such as were now rejoicing in a new-found peace. Both of these had been buttonholed by workers who had been after them for weeks. In the case of one of them the struggle was long and severe, but victory was ultimately given. Whilst these cases were being attended to one or two others were led into the inquiry-room, and there brought face to face with the Christ they had crucified. Talk about happy faces! One might travel a hundred
miles and not see a more joyous-looking crowd than that which formed the band of C.M.M. workers towards the close of that meeting.'

A Blank Promissory Note.—One of the most successful evangelists—if not the most successful—given to the Church of God in Australia was the Rev. John Watsford, a native of Parramatta, N.S.W. After a most successful career as a Missionary in Fiji he was placed in charge of important circuits in New South Wales and Victoria. Everywhere he 'blazed the track for Pentecost.' Everywhere he witnessed remarkable revivals. A holy man of God, he was trusted and believed in by all classes. We speak of him with reverence as the pioneer evangelist of these lands of the South—one of the noblest of the many noble men raised on the soil of this great island continent. During a visit paid to Sydney our beloved Father Watsford told a story that is worth repeating in every part of the world.

'For some time past, as in Sydney, so in Melbourne, a number of our ministers have assembled every Monday morning to plead with God for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. At times these meetings have been overpowering in their influence.

'At the recent great Holiness Convention held in Wesley Church, one of our best-known and most honoured ministers told the story of his entrance into the full liberty of the gospel. "At our Monday morning meetings," said he, "I cried mightily unto God for the filling of His Holy Spirit, but it came not. Week after week I prayed, but apparently in vain. All at once, at one of our recent meetings, the whole thing was made clear to me in this way. It seemed to me as if the Lord held before me a blank promissory note and asked me to sign it, leaving Him to fill in all the blanks on the paper.

"Sign your name," said the Lord.
“‘Oh, I cannot do that,’” my heart answered, “‘without knowing what is going in above.’”

“‘Leave that to Me, and sign the note.’”

“‘But, Lord, I have made my life plans, and surely I am not required to sign in the dark?’”

“‘Yes, sign, and just leave Me to fill in the whole of your future for you.’”

And so the struggle went on until at last it seemed to me as if I took the pen, and, all fearful and trembling, I signed the note. In a moment the whole thing was done. I know that I am this day wholly and only the Lord’s, to be used just as He may see fit.’”

How to Stop Slander.—An educated Christian lady, wife of a well-known professional gentleman of Sydney, recently decided to conduct evangelistic services in one of our pretty little suburban villages. Now it happened that in that same village there dwelt a coterie of female gossips; in number, seven. These good ladies determined that no such meetings were needed in their neighbourhood, and resolved to go in force to the opening gathering to put a stop to the thing. Towards the end of the meeting the fair leader rose to her feet and protested, in the name of her fellow gossips, against the establishment of such meetings there. To her surprise, no one followed, and on leaving the building, hot words were bandied between the leader and her friends. ‘Why didn’t you support me? Didn’t we go to put an end to this thing?’ Answered one, ‘The fact is, the lady spoke so nicely we couldn’t and we won’t.’ That was but twelve months since. To-day six out of the seven of these misled women are converted and are praying for, and expecting to see, the seventh speedily brought to the feet of the Lord.

Out of the Depths.—About three years ago, in one of our class-meetings, a poor outcast, hungry and ragged, was brought to Christ. The struggle was hard, but the victory was of pronounced character. For over two years our
brother was ‘instant, in season, out of season,’ at all our meetings. As a street speaker he soon made his influence felt, and not a few were brought to decision under his appeals. Some time ago he left us for a northern town. At once he got to work among the poor people of the district, and led many of them to Christ. A few weeks ago he was invited to enter the ministry of a sister Church. This, after much of prayer, he declined. But again the call has come, and he has accepted an appointment as circuit evangelist in charge of a vacant station. We commend our brother to the prayers of earnest Christians everywhere. Such wonders grace can do!

From Poison to Prayer.—A poor fellow ‘down on his luck’—no work, no money, no food, and a wife and three children all but starving—came up to one of the Midday Business Men’s Open-air Services, now so numerously held in Sydney. His face was a startling index to the despair that gripped his heart. ‘What’s the use of living; I’ll end the whole farce!’ Such had been his cry, and he had spent his last coins in purchasing poison wherewith to put an end to his own life and that of his wife and children.

Standing in that crowd, with the poison in his pocket, he heard of the Great Burden-bearer. At first interested by the speakers, then impressed by the message, he was ultimately led to his knees. From poison to prayer was a big step, but he took it, and to-day that man, his wife and three children, are Christians—happy, trustful, hopeful Christians!

He Meant It.—At a recent Sunday evening’s service a good man was converted who had been deeply convinced of sin away in the country. Unable to obtain peace, he journeyed many miles to Sydney on purpose to give his heart to God at the Centenary Hall. His faith was not in vain. He returned home a happy disciple of Jesus.

A Nut for Infidels to Crack.—‘Well, George, we’ve come
to about the end of our stocking, and haven’t enough left
to pay the week’s rent. What’s to do now?’

‘Do?’ said the old man—a much-loved C.M.M. worker.
‘Do? Why, trust our Father, that’s all.’

But the good wife was much like the old soul who,
rescued from the ruins of her apple-cart that had come
to grief through the galloway running away downhill,
was asked how she felt as the horse went off—‘Felt?
Well, I dunno exactly. I trusted God until the harness
broke, and then I held on for dear life.’

The old lady shook her head in a little doubt, and expressed
herself as full of fear that the day was coming when she
would no longer have a house over her head.

‘Well, lass, how much are we short?’

‘Two shillings.’

‘And can’t we raise it nohow?’

‘Not at all, as I can see.’

‘Well, then, we’ll just take it to Father.’ And so the
dear old couple told their trouble to the God they had
loved and served for many a long year. Not a soul on
earth knew of their sorrow, for they are a self-respecting
couple, who would rather die than make a parade of their
poverty.

During Saturday and Sunday and Monday, they waited
for ‘Father’ to send them the two shillings. At times
their faith was at low ebb, but now and again they cheered
themselves by a look into the Promises.

On Tuesday morning the rent must be paid. With a
sad heart old George rose that morning and put on his
clothes. He came downstairs wondering what was going
to be the upshot of it all, when his eyes rested on something
bright under the front door. ‘What’s that? Why, it
looks like money!’

And money it was, and nothing more nor less than two
bright silver shillings, the exact amount for which he and
the old wife had been praying.
That happened three weeks ago, and our dear brother still knows nothing as to how the money got there. He accepted it as sent by the Lord, and went off with joyful heart and paid the rent.

Was it a Coincidence, or What?—On Sunday night week a business man of the city was convinced of sin. In the Old Country he had been a Christian and a Methodist, but in Sydney he had made a sad shipwreck of his faith. This night the arrow of conviction entered his soul. In the after-meeting he was afraid to ask for prayer and yet would not leave the building. After most had left, a strange feeling impelled him to go to one of our beloved workers, who is known as an indefatigable hall steward, and who, by virtue of his office, often finds a chance to win men for Christ. To him the good man opened his mind, and concluded by saying, 'Oh, it is no use. I am a hairdresser, and no hairdresser in Sydney can be a Christian.' With a strange glow in his face the steward answered, 'I tell you I know that this is a false idea, for I am a Sydney hairdresser and I am a Christian.' Soon the two men were on their knees in one of the vestries, and ere they separated the backslider was restored to the joy of God's favour. 'Just to think of it,' said the good man afterwards, 'that Mr. W—— should be the only man in this great hall to whom I was led to open my mind, probably the only man in the place who could really help me.'

True Optimism.—A man was converted some time ago, and was always brimful of praise. He lived in the sunshine all the time. Frequently his voice was heard in our testimony meeting, and always it was the voice of praise. One evening he came to the meeting with his hand tied up. Whilst at work he lost a finger. Well, everybody wondered what he would do that night, when he was evidently in much pain. But by-and-by he got up to give his testimony, and said, 'I have lost a finger. Praise God it was not my hand.'
Was it a Miracle?—On Sunday night, as Mr. Taylor was leaving the Centenary Hall, a gentlemanly-looking man came up to him, and, under deep feeling, said, 'Sir, I thank you from my heart for that sermon, it has saved me. Oh, sir, it has saved me.' In answer to questions the following facts were elicited. 'I have the best of wives,' said the poor fellow, 'aye, and children as well. But I am a wicked man, and have lived a bad life. Recently I have left my home, and have been leading a miserable life. In despair, I to-day wrote a letter to my family, bidding them a long farewell, and this night started for the harbour to throw myself under its dark waters, and so end the whole miserable business. Thank God, I heard your band playing in the street, and somehow was drawn into this building. And now, thank God, my eyes are opened. Oh, sir, I thank you, I thank you.'

'And what are you going to do now?' asked the preacher.

'Do? Why, sir, I'm going home again to ask my wife's forgiveness, and try and redeem the past.'

The peculiar feature of this story lies in the fact that the part of the sermon that was made such a blessing to this man was entirely unpremeditated. The preacher himself wondered why he was thus led to speak. He does not wonder now.

Among the Cabmen.—There cannot be far short of 2,000 cabmen and vanmen plying their trade in the streets within and around our great city. In the Old Country many special efforts to benefit such spiritually have been made by earnest Christian workers. Here little or nothing has been attempted. At last we have resolved to take this up as a much-needed branch of C.M.M. work. Sister Thomson, whose whole heart is in the thought, has volunteered to lay siege to the cabstands in the hope of winning not a few of these city Jehus for Christ. What patience, courage, faith, and sanctified commonsense will she need for her task!
Good News.—The latest news is of a most cheering character. A well-known cab and coach proprietor has heard of the work of our sisters among the cabmen of the city, and, being convinced that 'Sunday running' is the chief hindrance to good being done among these men, he has resolved that in future the whole of his employees—over seventy in number—shall be entirely freed from Sunday work. For this we thank God.

Smelling-Salts or Christ.—A month ago we were startled out of our propriety at one of our Sunday night services by the loud outcry of a young lady seated at the back of the hall. She was soon in charge of one of our Mission sisters, who partly led, partly carried her into the inquiry-room. Some good soul in the hall, thinking it to be a case of hysterics, sent us her bottle of smelling-salts. We couldn't help crying out, 'It isn't smelling-salts she needs; she wants Christ,' and, thank God, before long she found Him, and left the place at peace with God. She at once joined a Society Class, and is now one of the leading singers in our large choir. She has given a beautiful voice, as well as an earnest heart, to the Saviour. Many such cases God has given us lately.

An Irish Roman Catholic.—One Thursday evening, three months since, a poor Irish Roman Catholic, on whom was the smell of whisky, was drawn into the Central Hall Working Men's Service. It was a time of great blessing. The addresses, given by converted working men, went to the hearts of many poor fellows, who were evidently strangers to religious services. At the end of the meeting this poor Irishman was found at the penitent-form. Lustily he cried for mercy, and was pointed to Christ, the poor man's Saviour. We shall never forget the look on his face as late that night he rose from his feet rejoicing in the knowledge of pardon. 'Oh, sure, and just to think of it,' cried the poor fellow, as with tears streaming down his face he grasped us by the hand, 'think of it—I am fifty
years old this very day, and I have ne'er been inside of a chapel for thirty-nine years. The first time I come in the good Lord has met me. I was passing this hall to go to the theatre, but, glory be to God, I came in here instead, and I'm converted.' As may be supposed, we rejoiced over such a conversion, but with much of trembling. Giving tickets in one of the classes the other night, we found this man present, and, turning to the book, gathered that he had rarely been absent one week since he found the Saviour. It made our heart dance for joy to hear his experience of confident trust in Christ, and of love for the people who had helped him to such a happy life. Had some Christians we wot of been present at that working men's meeting, they would have shrugged their shoulders and exclaimed, 'Mere excitement.' So would we have thought at one time, but we have latterly been converted to other ideas.
XIV

AMONG THE 'REDS' AND THE 'BLUES'

In the early pioneer days of the C.M.M. there was no branch of our work that gave finer returns for the labour bestowed than that amongst the men of the British fleet of warships stationed at Sydney. The fact that I had been appointed Methodist Chaplain by the British Admiralty, and a member of the Royal Naval Christian Union by its founder Miss Weston, of Portsmouth, gave me a standing amongst the men I never otherwise could have secured. The fact that we furnished a large room for their use at the Centenary Hall, that we arranged for occasional social gatherings, and that I conducted a special parade service for the men early every Sunday morning, drew them to our services in large numbers. Every Sunday night the 'reds' and the 'blues' were to be seen scattered throughout the crowds attending the hall. It would require a stronger pen than mine adequately to describe the Pentecostal scenes witnessed in those days amongst these men. Old-fashioned conversions occurred almost weekly. During one 'Commission,' a truly remarkable work of God was witnessed amongst them. Some of the records of that time are now before me, and speak eloquently of this blessed work of God.

But let me first tell of one 'Sister of the People,' who was led to devote her whole time to work among the men of the Fleet. Utterly unconventional in her methods, caring nothing for what Mrs. Grundy might, and would, say, she threw her whole energies into the work of helping and saving the men of the warships. It was she who had
the honour of winning, and leading to Christ, that notorious

girl of the curbstone—' Queenie '—of whose remarkable

conversion I have elsewhere written,1 who from being the
terror of the police, and a menace to the frequenter of
Lower George Street, became a missionary of the Cross.
Lampooned by the gutter-press of the city, criticized by
many Christians who knew nothing of the world in which
our devoted sister felt called to labour, but trusted and
almost worshipped by the 'Blues' and the 'Reds,' for
whose uplifting she so heroically toiled, our noble little
sister did a work for God that attracted much attention
at the time, and that led to permanent results of the most
gratifying character. I gladly transcribe from records of
the time the following incidents of this truly remarkable
work of the Holy Spirit.

The following account of one of our ordinary Sunday
night services is culled from a report that appeared in our
organ, The Greeting. 'At night the great hall was packed
to its utmost capacity. Quite a number had to stand
throughout the entire service, and some had to leave the
building for want of room. This condition of things is
being acutely felt by us, and we long for the day to come
when we shall be able to open one of the city theatres for
additional services. The C.M. Superintendent, Mr. Taylor,
was in charge, and preached from Christ's estimate of a
lapsed Christian (from Rev. ii. 4-5). The Holy Ghost
was present in a very remarkable manner throughout the
entire service. In the after-meeting a number of persons
came forward as seekers.

'One of the most beautiful sights we have witnessed
for some time was that of a fine young bluejacket at the
penitent-form seeking the Saviour, with two of his comrades
praying by his side. Ere the meeting closed they all three
gave their experience. The first told of the wonderful

1 See The Story of an Australian Evangelist, p. 219.
joy he had in serving Christ, and cried out, "I’m so happy, I feel I want to shout," meanwhile throwing his arm over his head as if about to shout "Hip, Hip, Hooray!" The second told of the manner in which, only on the previous Sunday, he had found Christ in the Centenary Hall. Though it was hard to be a Christian on board a man-of-war, he had been wonderfully eloped, and ended a most touching testimony by saying, "And now the Lord has saved another of my mates, glory to His name." The young fellow who had just trusted Christ for salvation followed with just two sentences, "Jesus Christ has saved me here to-night. By His grace I will stick to Him right through to the end." As may be supposed, there were many wet eyes, and many a shout of "Glory be to God," from various parts of the hall, whilst these young men thus spoke.

'We were also delighted to see a father, mother, and daughter—all strangers from Melbourne—kneeling side by side pleading for God’s own peace. Thank God, ere the meeting ended it came to them in all its sweet power and blessedness.'

'Sister Nellie.—As might naturally be supposed, our brave little sister is often called to suffer for her heroic work of rescue among the tempted, and in many cases sinning, men of the Fleet. Several scurrilous paragraphs have recently appeared in one of the Sunday newspapers inquigning the character of our dear sister. As is natural, she is cordially hated by the most abandoned of the women of the street, and frequently comes home at night the bearer of honourable bruises, received when at work among the lost ones. The other night she received a blow that was of an especially severe character. For some days the pain was intense, but in no sense kept her from the work to which she has given her life.

'On Saturday afternoon, in broad daylight, in lower
George Street, she managed to rescue a bluejacket, who was stupidly drunk, from the clutches of a pair of desperadoes who had just succeeded in robbing the poor fellow of a valuable gold watch. She was fortunate enough to secure the stolen property, and to get the drunken fellow removed in a cab to a place of safety.

'Were it wise to do so, we could fill columns with stirring details of the work that is being done night after night in the streets of this so-called Christian city. Thank God, the Holy Spirit is putting honour upon this work. It is resulting in the sound conversion of numbers of the men in whose interest our dear sister is labouring.'

'Good News.—The Fleet left Sydney for southern ports a few weeks since. During the stay of the men-of-war at Melbourne several of the bluejackets, who had been deeply wounded by the Holy Spirit at our services in Sydney, were brought to the knowledge of Christ as their Saviour. We hear of two of them going to Wesley Church "on purpose to give their hearts to God," and of other two converted among their messmates on board ship. We have just read a remarkable letter written by a lad who gave his heart to God at the Centenary Hall, the Sunday night before he sailed from Sydney. On the run down the coast he was made a blessing to one of the worst men on the ship.

'We have rarely heard of a work of God of so blessed a character. A change for the better, that is commented on by the officers, is observable on several of the ships, and conversions are now quite the order of the day. We have just seen a bundle of letters from the new converts, written to Sister Nellie. It is delightful to read of the gallant struggles upwards of these brave fellows. On Sunday night week about a dozen of them were asked to address a great meeting in the Hobart Town Hall. One sailor writes that there were from 1,500 to 2,000 people present. In
their own vigorous manner they told the story of their conversion.

'So blessed is the work that they have written for Sister Nellie to go to Hobart for a few weeks, offering to pay her expenses. Needless to say, we have gladly given up our dear sister, who left by the Oonah on Tuesday. She has before her a special programme of work, particulars of which we hope to furnish week by week.'

'Sister Nellie had a rough time of it en voyage to Hobart, but a warm reception on arrival. She has been full of engagements among the bluejackets. We have seen a quarto circular giving programme of meetings, including a lecture on our sister’s ten years' work among the men of the Navy. In her latest letter she writes as follows:

"Since arriving here I have not been idle. On Sunday I was advertised to conduct the service at a very healthy little Mission. A wealthy lady of Hobart, having heard a good deal of our Sydney work (through a convert of the Simultaneous Mission with whom I had dealt in the inquiry-room at the Hyde Park Tent), made up her mind, as she was travelling, to visit Sydney on purpose to see the work for herself. But, seeing this advertisement, she came to the service here, and made herself acquainted, and asked me to dine with her, which I did last night. After dinner I had the pleasure of meeting a number of wealthy people from various parts of the world, and I gave them some account of our Sydney work. The ladies and gentlemen present were so interested that I was asked to go again. I am not forgetting to place the need for our Rescue Home before the people, and I trust I may be able to influence some to help us. I gave your name to an American millionaire, who was much interested in my story, and who asked me for your address."
Nineteen bluejackets have been converted since the fleet reached Hobart.

Thirty-five bluejackets, nearly all of them recent converts, are meeting in one class of the Mission.

Wonderful.—At the Superintendent’s class-meeting, held on the 14th inst., two officers from men-of-war in port spoke of their conversion, in the Centenary Hall, three months ago. Immediately upon his finding the Lord, one of them wrote to his wife urging her at once to give her heart to Christ. On Tuesday he received an answer that she, too, had been converted. “No wonder,” said the good man, “that I feel so happy to-night that I really don’t know what to do with myself.” The other told how, on the night of his conversion, he also wrote and told his wife all about it, and he, too, had just got an answer. The wife told how for fifteen long years she had prayed for him, and now that the answer had come she was so full of joy she could scarcely contain herself.

Sailors’ Sayings.—One of our seamen said at a recent class-meeting that he was not the same man at all since he started to sail under the new Captain, Christ Jesus.

Another, who was somewhat witty, said he had read of the fall of great men, and also of nations; but the greatest and most blessed “fall” he ever witnessed was when religion fell from his head to his heart.

Another lad says: “The Lord did not save me to be a cripple in His service, therefore I am going to nail my colours to the mast.” He did so, and, as the result, at the Mission Hall in Hongkong two of his mates were brought to Christ.

A Good Story

As an encouragement to Christian workers we tell the following story:

On the morning of Sunday, April 19, a young lady, a
recent convert, and worker from the Central Methodist Mission, in paying her various calls as ship visitor went on board the R.M.S. Austral, lying at the Circular Quay. In moving round among the men with her invitation papers she encountered three firemen, to whom she gave a pressing invitation to attend the evening service at the hall. She looked so happy as she spoke to them that they were constrained to consent to her request.

'True to their word, they found their way to the hall, and were so deeply impressed by the service that they resolved to come again. Monday night found them in a class-meeting of the old type. Before they left one of the men had given his heart to God. Next night they were all three at the protracted prayer-meeting. Wednesday they found their way to the love-feast. On Thursday night they formed part of our great Anniversary gathering, and as we left the building we saw the lady ship visitor giving to each of them a pocket Testament. Friday night they were again in one of our class-meetings. All this time God had been blessing the new convert, and striving with the consciences of his mates. After a long struggle a second found Christ, and left the hall with a face beaming with joy.

'About ten o'clock on Saturday morning—two hours only before the Austral was to leave port—we were surprised by the coming into the hall of all these three men. Said the youngest of the party, the one who had resisted the Holy Spirit all through the week, "The fact is, sir, I've come to settle this question. I've had a bad time of it, and feel better since my chums and I decided to run up this morning. Will you pray for me?" It didn't take long to get a praying band together, and before eleven o'clock that lad was singing for joy. Oh! were they not happy as they hurried back to their ship, just in time to take their shift, ere she started on her voyage to England. Nor is this all. At the Consecration Service that night a poor wandering prodigal sought and found Christ. When in conversation
with him afterwards, it was found that it was these three seamen who had led him to decision. Between the speeches at the Thursday's meeting they spoke to him about Christ, and this had led to his return to God. This young man has already joined one of our class-meetings.

'Does this story require a moral? Let every young Christian set to work for Christ, and the present great joy of our young York Street lady worker will soon be theirs.'

Unfortunately, some years ago, the 'Australian Fleet' was removed from our shores by the British authorities, to make room for our Australian 'Mosquito Fleet' that was called to take its place. Hence this record of blessed pioneer work among the 'Reds' and the 'Blues' must needs close. Some two years afterwards I paid a visit to Gibraltar, when on my way to England. From various sources I heard of the good work being done by many men of H.M. ships stationed there, who had served on the Australian Station, and who when in Sydney had first found the joy of personal salvation. It struck me then, and I have the same conviction as I write these notes, that the day of Eternity alone will reveal the ultimate issue of such a remarkable work of the Holy Spirit as we were permitted to witness in Sydney among men of H.M. man-of-war ships.
AFTER MANY DAYS

I AM now an old man—at least, so says the family register. But yesterday I worked hard in my garden for several very happy hours. On Sunday I preached in our local church—and, they tell me, with the vigour of a young man. I have just risen from the breakfast-table, where I have had as much enjoyment as a lad of seven who sat at my side. In climbing the hill of life I find myself this day like to one just lolling upon its grass-covered slopes where the evening sun still shines, and the flowers bloom, and the birds sing, and the lambkins love to gambol.

What is it to be old? I have just been listening to the Israelitish Prophet Joel, who tells me, ‘Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.’ Candidly, I do not understand him. Though this day I have passed my seventy-eighth milestone, I do not find myself ‘dreaming dreams,’ but, thank God, I do ‘see visions,’ many and blessed. I am revelling this day in the facts of a long and a very happy lifetime. True, at times I am tempted of the devil, tempted to think, ‘I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought,’ but I am thinking of Martin Luther, and that story of his flinging the ink-bottle at the devil’s head. I know all about how he was feeling, and so, when the enemy of my soul comes at me with his ‘well-circumstanced’ temptation, and reminds me of the Prophet’s wail, ‘Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?’ I just throw at his head the glorious facts of bygone days, and
with confidence say to him: 'Now, devil, what do you make of them?'

But this morning I want to answer, not the enemy of my soul, but the—at times—wearying criticisms of those among us who will persist in decrying evangelistic work of the old type, and who never weary of flinging at one the time-worn question, 'Your converts—where are they?'

I cannot help thinking at this moment of those noble old pioneers of our great Australian bushlands, of whom I have already written, for whom the wilderness and the solitary place has been made glad, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. Even such have no greater cause for a joyful thanksgiving than have I at this moment. Like them, I have toiled and wept, and at times worn myself in the trackless human forest in which I have been called to labour. But, thank God, sooner or later the time of the singing of birds has always come, and so at this writing I again pin my faith to the Psalmist's cry of faith: 'He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.'

And so, to cheer myself, and to help confirm the faith of other pioneer workers, I have set myself the task of illustrating, from my own experience, this joyous outburst of the old Israelitish Psalmist.

I have this day been busy among old and very precious records. To one of these, with a very full heart, I beg leave to refer. Many years ago, with much of fear and trembling, we opened our first C.M.M. 'Evangelists' Institute.' Our one object was to find out and give a working chance to young men—crude and ill-furnished, it might be, but who seemed to possess the stuff out of which successful evangelists could be evolved. We met with many difficulties. There were those who thought us quixotic, and who gave our venture a very short life. We had some failures, and more than a few discouragements;
but he would be a bold man this day who would dare other than wish the work God-speed. The day of Eternity alone will reveal the benefit that this Institute has been to many who, but for its aid, would never have been heard of in Church work. One list is before me—by no means complete, but full of encouragement this day to those of us who faced the first opposition, and who thus worked our way as pathfinders into the respect and confidence of our Church as a whole. In this list I find the names of over forty men who are to-day in the ranks of our ministry. Thirty-seven are superintendents of Circuits; several have done first-order work in the ministry of the Anglican, the Congregationalist, the Baptist Churches. Some have won their spurs in mission-fields, four are to-day doing the best of work as Chairmen, and five as Financial Secretaries of country Synods, and several, thank God, are making their mark as winners of souls. In all this do I, after these many days, find occasion for much of humble thanksgiving.

But it is as a personal evangelist I feel led chiefly to speak. Here, thank God, I take my stand by the side of Charles Wesley:

What we have felt and seen
With confidence we tell.

I have before me a heap of priceless evidence that illustrates the far-reaching and permanent influence of evangelistic work, and from which, thank God, there is no escaping.

In my sermon last Sunday I referred to a striking fact. Let me repeat it here. In my first circuit in Queensland, over fifty years ago, we witnessed a remarkable revival. During a period of several months some hundreds were brought to God. Amongst them was a group of lads mostly connected with the Brisbane (Albert Street) Sunday School. It is a remarkable fact that after the lapse of
half a century the whole of those youths are still living, with one exception, and he died suddenly during the sessions of our General Conference, to which he had been appointed representative by the Queensland Conference. What of the rest? One has been President of the Queensland Conference, and only recently I had the privilege of hearing him preach. Two of them are Members of Parliament; one the head of one of the largest business corporations in his State, a local preacher, and the leader of a thriving Society-Class; the other, also a local preacher, for some years the President of the Y.M.C.A. of Brisbane, the holder of more than one portfolio in the Queensland Cabinet, and at one time Acting Premier of the State. One has been for many years postmaster in one of our leading Queensland towns, also circuit steward and church trustee in more than one circuit. Another is to-day a well-known merchant in Brisbane. Another has held for long years an important position in the Civil Service of the State, and still another has been Secretary of a leading Government department, and is to-day one of the most useful and best trusted laymen of our Church. So far as I can gather, not one has wandered from the fold, but all are still actively engaged in Christian work.

In the columns of *The Life Story* I have given details of a number of remarkable conversions. Quite a number have been 'faithful unto death.' Of others still living I would venture to speak.

On page 168 will be found the confessions of a well-known burglar. The story of the remarkable conversion of 'Charlie' Woodward is known far and wide. But what of the man himself? A goodly number of years have passed since he was laid hold of by the Holy Ghost in the very midst of his work as a burglar. 'Charlie' is to-day a member of the staff of the Central Mission, and labours with distinguished success as an evangelist pathfinder
among men of our prisons and our slums. He has written a remarkable book—*Out of the Depths*—a book similar in spirit, and in aim, to *Down in Water Street*, the account of Jerry McAuley's remarkable work in New York. I cannot do better than allow 'Charlie,' as in my former book, to speak for himself:

**A Unique Men's Meeting**

'Through the Rev. W. G. Taylor, founder of the Central Methodist Mission, I became leader of the Friday Night Men's Meeting. I remember, as if it were but yesterday, that the Superintendent called me aside and told me he had made me leader of a Friday night class for men. I was dumbfounded. I felt I could not do it. I was a poor scholar, with hardly any education. I could hardly write or read, and, as far as preaching to others was concerned, I was, like Zacchaeus, up a tree; but that "G.O.M." just patted me on the back and said: "Brother, you have a red-hot testimony to give; go, tell it out, and God will bless it." So I plucked up courage, and I knew that with the help of God and the prayers of the Mission people behind me I would be able to do it. So I became leader of a men's meeting, and in that Friday night class many a crooked man has been made straight; some were saved, and then they saved others. For the first few weeks we had only a few men coming, so I called the few workers we had together. There were just about four of us, and we banded ourselves together to pray for the Holy Ghost's power. We went down on our knees and shovelled on the prayer, and got steam up, and out into the street we went after men. Within six months we had to get a larger room, and God wonderfully blessed us. We still carry on the same meeting. All sorts and conditions of men are to be found here, such as gamblers, drunkards, thieves, housebreakers, fighters, and others. The attendance
runs from fifty and over. Although most of the men are down in the gutter, they sit very quietly and listen to the speaking, and join heartily in the singing of the hymns.

'The speakers at this meeting are men who have been redeemed and saved from all kinds of sin. They have never been to college, but they have been to Calvary, and they have all had letters behind their names. Some have had B.A.—“bad all round”; others D.D.—“Domain dossers”; others M.A.—“mugs always.” Generally there are seekers at the close of the meetings—poor, hopeless, forlorn men. The workers, some of whom have themselves been lifted from the depths, gather around them and pray for them. It is a glorious sight to see these men, saved from the vilest sins, doing all they can to help their fallen brothers into the Kingdom.'

'Charlie's' book contains a remarkable record of conversions among what he calls the ‘Down and Outs.’ I venture to give one or two stories, which illustrate the great truth that, led by the Holy Spirit, no spiritual pathfinder need ever despair of bringing Home the lost ones:

'Sentenced to Death.—I shall never forget the night this man came into our meeting. He knew me, but I had no knowledge of him. He had heard about my conversion, and it appealed to him. "If such a sinner as I could be saved, why could not he?" So he thought he would call round and see me, and find out how it was done. So one night he came to our meeting. He just sat and drank in every word that was said. Of course, no sermons are preached at these meetings, but personal testimonies are given. Several men told what sin had brought them to, but through accepting Christ as their own personal Saviour their lives were changed, and now, instead of gambling, drinking, and stealing, they were
leading honest, sober, respectable lives. At the close of the service I made an appeal, and asked if there were any who felt that they ought to make a fresh start in life, with the help of Christ, and, if so, to hold up their hand. Several men did so. This man walked over to me, and, throwing his arms around my neck, wept like a child, saying 'For God's sake, Charlie, make me a better man.' That night this man found more than human aid. He was connected with a crime that startled Australia some years back, and was sentenced to death, but after serving ten years he received a pardon, and was released from jail, and now, thank God, he can truthfully say:

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free,
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

'The Converted Burglar.—In answer to the oft-repeated utterance that once a man adopts a criminal career little or nothing can be done which will make for his reformation, it may be said that the story of the life of the man here recorded proves beyond all doubt that through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ it is possible for a man, no matter how far he may have fallen into the depth of sin and crime, to overcome all Satan's temptations, to begin a new life and become an honoured and respected man.

'The first night I met the "Duke" was at the entrance to our Mission Hall, Castlereagh Street. He was leaning up against the verandah post by himself. I had a chat with him, and gave him to understand that we were holding a men's gospel service in one of the rooms. I gave him an invitation to come in. He accepted it, and came. At the close of the service an appeal was made for men to give up their old habits; to have done with the past life of a drunkard, a gambler, a
burglar, and to throw themselves at the feet of God for mercy and pardon. I then asked if any would give their hearts to Jesus right now, and, to my delight, the "Duke" accepted the call, and came. That was the turning-point in his life. He was a brand plucked from the burning. It was a marvellous work of God's grace.

‘At “Charlie’s” suggestion, the “Duke” wrote an account of his conversion, which I feel sure will be read with interest, illustrating, as it does, the boundless mercy and grace of our blessed Saviour:

‘“My life,” writes the “Duke,” has been a horrible one. The best part has been spent in jail. When I was a lad I was sent to a reformatory, and since then, for assaults and robberies, my sentences have amounted to twenty-two years. My last sentence was six years, and was served in Maitland Jail. When I was released I made my way to Sydney, and there I met one of my old pals, well known as ‘Curly.’ He looked different. He had been converted. After a little conversation he told me there was a men’s meeting, held every Friday night at the back of the Lyceum Hall, led by ‘Charlie’ Woodward, and it was worth while going. I made my way there one night, and was standing on the footpath when ‘Charlie’ came and asked me if I would like to come into the meeting. I told him I was waiting for a man named ‘Curly.’ ‘That’s all right,’ said Charlie, ‘he’s inside.’ So I went in. I was surprised to hear men giving their testimonies, especially ‘Curly’ and ‘Charlie.’ The reason why I went to that meeting was to get out of the way of the police, who were watching me. I and another fellow had arranged to go out to Rose Bay that very night to rob a house, but when ‘Charlie’ asked if there was any one in the meeting who would like to be prayed for, I raised my hand, and that night decided to become a Christian. Ever since I have felt a better man. Although, bear in mind, friends, I have made some slips;
but every time I make a slip I always come and tell 'Charlie,' and we get to prayer again and all is right. I ask you to remember me in your prayers.'"

Several years have passed since the 'Duke's' conversion. Shortly afterwards I married him to a fine young Christian woman, and, as 'Charlie' puts it in his book: 'After a long and painful illness the "Duke" passed to his reward about two years ago. In the last sad moments he put his arms around my neck, and said that he was going home to be with God.'

'Ned.—This man was one of my old associates; the last time we were together I can just recollect. A number of us were in a public-house drinking. A quarrel arose and there was a free fight. The police rushed the pub. Ned ran one way, the other pals another; I tried to get out of sight, but I found a big policeman hanging to me, so we quietly went together. I was the unlucky one, and into prison I went. Soon after I was soundly converted to God, and I did not meet Ned until he came and spoke to me while holding an open-air meeting recently. For over sixteen years we had not met, and Ned had spent much of that time in jail, while I had my freedom, preaching the gospel. Let Ned tell in his own words of the awful life he has been rescued from:

"My dear friends, I am certain that in giving this testimony to the world to show how the saving grace of God has changed my hitherto rotten life I must give you a clear and concise idea of my life before my wonderful conversion. Twenty years of life were spent in sin, and nearly all behind prison bars, serving time for all sorts of charges. Surely this was enough to harden a man's heart and blacken his soul for life; but yet Jesus has softened my heart by His wonderful power. I first saw the inside of jail at Darlinghurst at the early age of fifteen, awaiting trial on a serious charge. With
the aid of a smart crook lawyer I was acquitted. A few
months later, at the age of sixteen, I found myself back
behind the bars again, serving time. I stepped out of
jail at liberty when that sentence was finished, but
inside of five weeks I was back again to serve another
sentence. Whilst serving this one I thought I would,
when my time was up, become a good fellow again and
go straight. This I did for nine months, but once more
I went behind the walls and bars. Whilst serving this
sentence I made the acquaintance of some old lags. I
called them friends, and, when liberated, I went with
them right down in the mire of sin and shame, and
became a real criminal. One night I was caught in a
raid on a sly-grog shop, which really cloaked a gambling
hell and a resort of women of ill-fame, and went back
to Darlinghurst Jail for a few more long, weary months,
with a sore head and bruised ribs, the result of the fight
with the police.

""After two years had dragged by I was sent out
into the world to make a fresh start. But I was hopeless,
and I soon strayed into my old ways, and incidentally
back to Bathurst Jail for another two long, weary years.
I now had plenty of time to talk over with myself and
the prison chaplain the error of my ways. I realize
now what a good man he was, although at that time I
wished him anywhere but near me.

""I can assure you, that all this time I served my
boss, Satan, more faithfully than any other man serves
his employer. My life was so crooked that a modern
corkscrew is as straight as a ruler compared with it. I
tried for a bit to go straight, but the devil got me again.
I went back to Parramatta Jail for another six months.
I expect you think by this time that I had gone properly
mad. Yes, I had, and, more horrible still, there are
hundreds to-day in the same position as I was then.
After, it was nothing but sentence and jail, out and
back again, until I finished by standing before Judge Backhouse and getting seven years' penal servitude.

"I finished my seven years at the end of December, 1916, and came out with good resolutions, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions, if they are not backed up by a personal appeal to God. I soon fell a victim to Satan again, drinking, gambling, thieving, and bad characters, and back to Long Bay for nine months—my last sentence. I do praise God with all my soul for the blessed assurance that it will be my last.

"One Sunday, after being set free, out of curiosity, and for want of something else to do, I went for a stroll around the Sydney Domain, and, happening to listen to a Methodist meeting, was very much surprised to see an old crook friend preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Sixteen years previously I had last seen him in a police raid, bottles flying all roads, and he was caught. I had been told of his conversion, and I thought that he had got a bit light in his head; but now I know that he is very much right in the head. This man is my friend, 'Charlie' Woodward, a one-time crook, now one of the most respected men in Sydney.

"After 'Charlie' had talked with me he invited me down to the Methodist Mission, and I tell you I gladly accepted his invitation. And oh, the hearty welcome and loving friendship which awaited me! There are things which I never cease to wonder at, and I know I shall never regret the day I entered first the portals of the Methodist Mission in Castlereagh Street. For, after hearing an appealing sermon from the Rev. H. C. Foreman, I surrendered my unhappy soul to my Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and became a new man from that moment. Yes, I received Him as my personal Saviour, as I hope this testimony will lead many more to do."
On page 174 of *The Life Story* is given in detail the account of the conversion, nearly thirty-nine years ago, of 'A Young Infidel and his Mate.' I had a letter recently from one of the two. For years past he has been one of the most greatly honoured missionaries of the Sydney City Mission, believed in, and trusted by, the best men amongst us. Let me give an extract from his letter:

'We have just completed a twenty-three days' mission at the Glebe. I am pleased to say that we have had an old-time "York Street" revival. Three Saturdays we had an all-night of prayer. During the mission we had 65 converts, ages ranging from ten years to sixty. One woman we could never persuade to enter church or Mission Hall. But her son and her daughter were converted on the Sunday, and on the following Tuesday the mother came along to the service without her hat, and that night she was converted. On Thursday night she brought her sister and her mother, and they, too, were converted. It is a pleasant sight to witness that family sitting in the Mission Hall. Many other fine trophies have also been won for the Lord.'

And what about the Infidel's Mate of whose remarkable transformation much has been written? From the day of his conversion this man—a grandson of the famous Cornish evangelist, Billy Bray—has witnessed a glowing testimony. Many a powerful message he has delivered at our 'Open-Air Cathedral.' One of our ablest and best-trusted of fellow helpers, he is now living at a distance, still quaint, fresh, and powerful in his testimony. At one of our meetings his son was brought to God, and, much to the old man's joy, is to-day an earnest local preacher.

In still further reply to critics who question the permanent character of our old-fashioned evangelistic methods let me refer to one of whose conversion I have written in previous records (see *The Life Story*, page 190). It is the
case of a young fellow who over thirty years ago was taken—strangely enough—by a barmaid, to the Central Mission, under the promise of hearing some good music. The service made him 'utterly miserable,' but the next week, rather than lose the companionship of the young barmaid, he went again, and that night he was found at the penitent-form. I confess that the circumstances were so out of the ordinary that, inasmuch as I had no means of following up the case, I for a time hesitated about making it public. Many years have passed since then. One day recently a lady was reading a book whilst travelling in a Queensland railway train, and was led to hand it over to a fellow passenger. Glancing through its pages, she at length cried out in excitement, 'Why, here is an account of my own conversion.' The book was my *Life Story*, and the reader was the young man 'helped to Christ by a barmaid.' He at once wrote to me, and before me to-day there lies the picture of a fine motor-car fitted up as a travelling 'Gospel Mission Van,' and this good man sitting in charge. For a number of years he has been labouring in Queensland as a bush missionary; travelling out into the far 'never-never country,' carrying the gospel to the people who otherwise would never hear the great news. His letter reveals a man 'who is literally 'on fire for service,' and who is evidently being much owned of God in his difficult but blessed work. Thank God, truth is still stranger than fiction!

And what shall I more say? I could wish that space would permit of details of many another story that but illustrates my point, and furnishes unanswerable illustrations of the permanent value of evangelistic work.

Before me lies a letter from the 'Yorkshire infidel' of whose conversion (*Life Story*, page 291) I have written at length. Thirty years have passed since that good man's wonderful conversion. My last news is that he is master
of a business in the Midlands, a local preacher, who, to put it in his own quaint words, 'in my own way, and with all the care possible, and with the Master's help, I do what I can to show the people what a Saviour we have.'

In that same book (page 109) will be found the remarkable account of the conversion of a young woman, during the progress of a Mission I was conducting forty-five years ago in the Toowoomba Circuit, and of the blessed work she was able immediately afterwards to do in her own home district. As recently as during the sessions of our last Conference in Sydney, one of our country ministers told me a remarkable story of that young woman's after-work. She is still living, and naturally would rather that the facts were not repeated; but this I must be permitted to state—that in the long period of my work as an evangelist I have never heard a story that has so moved me with a joyful thanksgiving. Faithful in every detail to the facts of that day, she has lived and toiled, and been honoured both by God and by the Church she still serves so well and loves so deeply.

What is your answer, gentle reader, to all this? I can afford this day to smile at the criticisms of foolish folk who have often been heard criticizing the work of 'the mere evangelist' as a man of a mentally inferior type. Can our critics show us anything better? Was it not the Church's unfaithfulness to its old evangelistic ideals that has given to British Methodism for years past its unsatisfactory returns of Church membership—a record of failure which at last, thank God, is being transformed to one of blessed success? Why? Is it not largely owing to the fact that there is—judging by the reports that weekly reach us through the columns of our Connexional journals—a blessed return to old-time methods, as old as is Methodism, aye, and as Christianity itself, but wherever faithfully worked are certain to be followed by old-time results?
The present revival in England is the best argument we know of to prove how unworthy the jargon that some Christians, aye, and Christian ministers indulge in, that we must put on to the scrap-heap much that was at one time a power, but has outlived its day, and must alter our emphasis, and give the people the gospel in a new and more attractive dress. So has ever spoken Mr. Weak Faith, until there has come a wave of blessed revival of personal religion, when facts have demonstrated that it is the old gospel, served up as on the day of Pentecost, and as in the days of Wesley, that can ever be trusted to save the individual, the community, the nation.
I HAVE written these pages with the thought of our young preachers ever in my mind. Our hope for the future centres in you. In my partial retirement, my affection for you has strangely strengthened. Because of this, several years ago I was led to suggest the 'Young Ministers’ League of Prayer,' and to-day nothing affords me greater joy than the sending out letters of good cheer to our young men who are so valiantly standing by our great evangels, alike in the crowded city and in the far-distant bushlands of this Britain of the South.

And so I venture to send you this closing word of appeal. Never, I pray you, be satisfied with the ordinary. You carry the one and only message that can ever save the human race. Angels envy you; the blessing of good men rests upon you; devils fear you; and, best of all, the Holy Ghost is waiting to use you. I pray you put your utmost, and your best, into direct soul-saving work. The day of the ordinary is passing away. A thousand voices unite in pleading with you to put all you possess—of brain, of hand, of heart, of soul—into the delivery of your great evangels. Listen to this: 'If I were to put no more energy into my business than my minister puts into his work I should be a bankrupt this side of six months.' And he was a circuit steward who said it, and he really loved his minister. I knew both of them, and honesty compels me
to vote with the circuit steward. If that minister stood alone, no mention would be made of it in my chat with you to-day. Alas! I know of a goodly number, some of them old, but more of them young, who would be the better for a good big stirring up.

Somehow or another there is absolutely no affinity between me and the preacher who is so faultlessly correct, so icily cold! Such a spirit may be quite right in a barrister of the Equity Court, but nowhere in an ambassador of the Crucified; and that is what you are aiming at being.

I confess to you that there are times when I have to fight against depression for all I am worth when I think of some preachers—strong men intellectually, correct in their deportment, orthodox to a fault, but, oh! so utterly wanting in passion, force, fervour, call it what you will. Is it that these men have never had a vision? Or that they were trained in a school of repression? Or is it that the spirit and atmosphere of present-day theological colleges themselves need to be set on fire? Something is wrong—somewhere.

And, as a result, there are preachers who are merely suffered. The Church grows not under them. A revival is an undreamed-of thing in such a ministry. And, all unconsciously, these men are committing a sort of unpardonable sin. For, mark my word, the spirit of the twentieth century is intolerant of half-heartedness. It can stand ruggedness, it can even bear with ignorance, but it demands and will have warmth. And for a Methodist preacher, of all men, to be wanting here, is a paradox indeed. Why, Methodism is the direct product of enthusiasm; her first preachers were literally full of fire; the characteristic of her early converts was fervour; a friendly critic designated our Church as 'Christianity in earnest'; our theology is intense; our organization is built upon the lines of warmth; the class-meeting dies where the Church is cold, but is at
a premium whenever there is spiritual enthusiasm. Our hymn-book is full of the thought:

To bring fire on earth He came;
Kindled in some hearts it is;
Oh, that all might catch the flame,
All partake the glorious bliss!

Let us look out from our pulpits, out upon the great world around us, and we shall see that earnestness, enthusiasm, warmth, is, in a startling degree, the characteristic of the times in which we live. Rightly or wrongly, there is fire in the very atmosphere. The one word that describes to-day is 'Intensity.' In business the laggard 'goes up King Street'; in the learned professions there is only room 'at the top'; in our schools it is the enthusiast who carries off the prizes; in politics the man has to be all there, and always there. Aye, and the Church that is lacking here, and is content to become formal and conventional, will be borne with for a while, but is bound ere long to become a third-rate influence in the land.

I confess to you that I am jealous for our Church, and intensely jealous for our pulpit. We were called into existence as a protest against half-heartedness; our proper and only ideals are the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Reformers, and—shall I add?—the greatest Reformer of them all, Jesus. And so I wonder not that the devil should rub his hands with glee when he can tempt us to knock such ideals on the head. Martin Luther graphically pictures the devil holding an anniversary. One after another of his emissaries bring in their reports. Some tell of persecutions, the letting loose of wild beasts, and the shipwrecking of a Christian ship. But the devil is angry, and cries, 'What of that? Their souls were all saved.' Then comes another, and reports, 'For ten years I tried to get a single Christian asleep, and I succeeded, and left him so.' 'Then,' adds Luther, 'the devil shouted, and the
night stars of hell sang for joy.' But what if that Christian be a preacher?

Young man, for the sake of all that is true, don't let the fire-damp ever get down on your soul. Nurse the fires of enthusiasm as the miser hugs his bags of gold. In this you hold a treasure of priceless value. I commend a remark of the great Dr. Jabez Bunting to our Examining Committees. The British Conference was on the eve of declining a young candidate for the ministry because, although full of zeal, he was lacking in culture, when the famous doctor turned the scale by uttering the burning words: 'Give me fire and blunders; we may correct the one, we cannot create the other.' That remark secured a noble spirit for our pulpit.

'On fire for service!' I once heard that silver-tongued preacher, Dr. E. E. Jenkins, give that as the correct reading of Paul's words, 'Zealous of good works.' And what does it mean? It is the picture of a trained dog on the course straining at the leash, longing to be off; or of one of those monster locomotives at the Central Railway Station hooked on to the express—snorting and panting and hissing, just bursting to get away on its big journey—'on fire for service.' I once heard a good story from one of our ministers in America. It was the time of an American election. In the city of Cincinnati my friend saw a working man hurrying past, with certain colours on his coat, and with a pod of red pepper by their side. 'I say, what's the meaning of that?' asked my friend, stopping the man. 'The meaning? Why, don't you know? Them's Garfield's colours, and that,' pointing to the chili pod, 'means that I'm red hot for him.' Do you see? That was the right type of a man for a political campaign. What about your calling? You wear the colours of the Crucified, the Risen Christ. Are you red hot for Him? Let this be your answer to such—and oh! there are lots of them about—as would curb your so-called fanaticism: 'I had rather
any day be a fanatic than a Stoic.' I would much like to
shake hands with that Indian convert who, when he was
severely criticized for his too great eagerness in religion,
quietly answered: 'Surely it is better that the pot should
boil over than not boil at all.'

Take my advice, and study your Bible with my theme
in your mind, and you will everywhere face 'Fire! Fire!!
Fire!!'

Moses received his commission from the bush that
'burned with fire.' The sturdy Elijah challenged the
treachery of Ahab in the words, 'The God that answereth
by fire, let Him be God.' When Isaiah stood trembling,
a powerless man on the threshold of his great career, it was
'the live coal,' the fire from the altar, that transformed
and inspired him. Christ Himself emphasized the
character of His mission to earth: 'I am come to send
fire on the earth.' It was to this great truth that John
the Baptist so directly bore witness. 'He shall baptize
you with fire.' And on the Day of Pentecost 'cloven
tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them.'

My young friend, it is this, and nothing else but this—
the fire of the Holy Ghost—that is going to transform the
pulpit into a power-house. If you are really anxious to
learn what I mean, then study the life of Peter, before
and after 'the baptism of fire,' and you will learn the
secret. 'The tongue of fire!' Fire is the emblem of
unction, the symbol a tongue. This is how that inspired
man, William Arthur, in his *Tongue of Fire*, puts it:
'The instrument of the greatest war ever waged—a tongue.
Man's speech to his fellow man, a message in human words
to human faculties ... from the heart to the heart; a
tongue of fire; man's voice, God's truth; man's speech,
the Holy Spirit's inspiration; a human organ, a super-
human power.' That is what is meant by the words,
'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.'

Do you think I should trouble to have this talk with
you were I not convinced that all this is awaiting you? Oh! do not, I pray you, be satisfied with the ordinary. Aim at the best. At the threshold of your life's work you may elect to be a dwarf or a giant. To be the latter you must be touched with 'the live coal.' Let everything else bend to that. Pay a big price to secure it. I say 'a big price,' for remember, everything worth having has to be paid for.

To be 'set on fire' may mean to you much soul conflict, possibly sleepless hours, certainly much crying of the soul unto God, but it will be worth a Gethsemane to secure a Pentecost. And it is Pentecost that is going to make you a useful, successful, soul-winning preacher.

A word of caution ere I close. Pray do not make the mistake that so many have fallen into, that fire and noise are synonymous terms. Oh, dear, no! What a lot of noise you can get out of an empty kerosene tin! It is well to remember that there is fire, and fire! The magicians of Egypt, by their machinations, could counterfeit the miracles of Moses. In my time I have seen a good deal of fire, both within and outside the Church, that was wildfire. You may create fire by friction, and also there may be much of the flesh in the energy displayed by all of us. It was never more necessary than to-day to offer the prayer, 'Strange fires far from my heart remove.' One of the quietest preachers I have ever heard was the great William Arthur, whose wonderful book, The Tongue of Fire, I have referred to. 'Quiet,' did I say? Yes, but a strange, almost a marvellous unction attended him. As a lad I sat in awe at his feet; the power of the Holy Spirit seemed to radiate from the man. No wonder that he was spoken of as one of the greatest preachers of his day.

And now my talk is done. If only I have, in some poor fashion, touched the springs of your life, if only I have made you feel, as I feel this day, that without the power of the Holy Spirit a preacher, be he ever so able and
eloquent, is a failure, and that all I have indicated may become yours if only you are prepared to pay the price, I shall not cease to thank God for this privilege of speaking with you. Let me leave with you the soul-yearning cry of the sainted Brainerd—a cry that was heard in heaven, and was answered: 'Oh that I were a flaming fire in the service of my God!'