



Crown Studios, Sydney.]

*Yours as "His" Wm G. Taylor*

[Frontispiece.

# The Life-story of an Australian Evangelist

With an Account of the Origin and Growth of  
The Sydney Central Methodist Mission

By

WILLIAM GEORGE TAYLOR

(Ex-President New South Wales Methodist Conference ; Founder  
of the Sydney Central Mission).

With Portraits, Illustrations  
and Introductory Notes

London :

THE EPWORTH PRESS  
J. ALFRED SHARP

*First Edition, 1920*  
*Second " 1920*  
*Third " 1921*

66

**TWO GOOD WOMEN**

(One in Heaven, one on Earth)

**MY MOTHER AND MY WIFE**

*Whose quiet but ever-present and ever-precious  
sympathy has furnished the inspiration  
of my life*

## BY WAY OF BEGINNING

By the votes of my brethren I had been placed in the chair of the New South Wales Conference. The insignia of office were placed in my hands by my predecessor—a distinguished minister of the Church—the Rev. J. E. Carruthers, D.D. Among the numerous newspaper articles that deigned to chronicle the fact was a certain Northern journal that paid a high and much-deserved tribute to the worth and work of the man I was to succeed. Then followed a reference to myself, succinct, all-comprising: 'All that needs to be said of the new occupant of the Conferential Chair is that he is an evangelist.'

Even so; otherwise this book would never have been written. 'An evangelist'—that, and nothing more, nothing less. In that fact I this day breathe the atmosphere of a perfect content.

Again and again I have been urged to this writing by men whose judgement it were folly to ignore. For long I hesitated, for have not better men written finer records, which have been published and—forgotten?

Full well do I realize that pages such as these lay one open to the charge of egotism. Still, in the spirit of a true sincerity, and in the fervent hope that they may prove of interest to ministers and Christian workers who are in the making, I have yielded thus to tell this story of the evangelism of my life.

At times the pen has dragged, for it has been difficult to submerge the personal element; at others my soul, and, I trust, my pen have taken fire, and I have revelled in the privilege of magnifying the grace of God seen in the extension of the kingdom of our Divine Redeemer. In fairness to myself it needs to be mentioned that in these records I have rigidly refrained from cultivating what is

known as 'literary style'; here will be found no 'local colouring,' no tricks of the rhetorician, but a *story* told in simple, unadorned English, the facts of which, it is hoped, will convey their own message to the heart of the gentle reader.

The major portion of the book was written prior to the declaration of the late European War; and it was hoped that it would have seen the light at least two years ago. War conditions, however, rendered postponement imperative.

With a timid heart, and yet with fervent prayer, I launch this frail barque upon the waters. May these pages at least prove to be a message of guidance and of inspiration to many who this day stand upon the threshold of their life's great work!

With a grateful heart I desire to express my indebtedness to my friend, the Rev. James Doran, of London, to Mr. Marshall Broomhall, M.A. (editorial secretary of the China Inland Mission), and to others for valuable assistance so cheerfully rendered in preparing these sheets for the press.

'KNAVYTON,' LINDFIELD, SYDNEY

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY NOTES BY THE LATE REV. GEORGE BROWN, D.D., AND REV. J. E. CARRUTHERS, D.D. . . . II

### PART I

CHAP.			
I.	A STUDY IN ORIGINS . . . . .	19	
II.	CONVERSION, AND EVANGELISTIC BEGINNINGS . . . . .	27	
III.	APPRENTICE WORK . . . . .	42	
IV.	A CALL TO WIDER SERVICE . . . . .	52	
V.	DAYS OF PREPARATION AND OF TESTING . . . . .	60	
VI.	A MYSTERIOUS PROVIDENCE . . . . .	72	
VII.	FIRST APPOINTMENT: THE STORY OF A REMARK- ABLE REVIVAL . . . . .	77	
VIII.	PIONEERING REMINISCENCES . . . . .	89	
IX.	ON THE TABLELANDS: MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL ADVANCE . . . . .	99	
X.	NEW SOUTH WALES SPHERES: GRACIOUS REVIVAL RECORDS . . . . .	112	

### PART II

XI.	THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A MISSION . . . . .	127
XII.	A SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE AND A SPIRITUALIZING FORCE . . . . .	141
XIII.	THE REMAKING OF MEN: TRIUMPHS OF SAVING GRACE . . . . .	148
XIV.	CHRISTIANITY'S UNANSWERABLE ARGUMENT: MORE MODERN MIRACLES . . . . .	165
XV.	STILL MORE JEWELS FOR THE CROWN OF THE KING . . . . .	179
XVI.	AN AUSTRALIAN 'SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS' . . . . .	195
XVII.	TWENTIETH-CENTURY ANGELS . . . . .	207
XVIII.	THE GIRL OF THE KERBSTONE . . . . .	213
XIX.	AN AUSTRALIAN PERIL: THE PROBLEM OF THE LARRIKIN . . . . .	224
XX.	AMONG THE WEE BAIKINIS . . . . .	233

# IO CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
XXI.	EVANGELISTIC PHILANTHROPY: THE ROMANCE OF MISSION WORK . . . . .	242
XXII.	AN AUSTRALIAN PHILANTHROPIST . . . . .	258
XXIII.	A HANDFUL OF TOUGH PROBLEMS: MONEY, MUSIC, CRANKS, AMUSEMENTS, THE PRESS . . . . .	270
PART III		
XXIV.	EVANGELISTIC VISITS TO EUROPE AND AMERICA . . . . .	285
XXV.	EVANGELISTIC VISITS TO EUROPE AND AMERICA ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	295
XXVI.	LATER SPHERES OF SERVICE IN NEW SOUTH WALES . . . . .	309
XXVII.	QUIET DAYS . . . . .	317
XXVIII.	LIFE'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES . . . . .	327
APPENDIX	. . . . .	333
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS		
WILLIAM G. TAYLOR . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
	FACING PAGE	
EARLY PORTRAITS OF MR. TAYLOR . . . . .	60	
GROUP OF CENTRAL MISSION BUILDINGS . . . . .	134	
C.M.M. EVANGELISTS AT WORK. . . . .	196	
THE HON. EBENEZER VICKERY, M.I.C. . . . .	258	
INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR VIEWS OF THE LYCEUM HALL . . . . .	268	
LATEST PORTRAIT OF MR. AND MRS. TAYLOR . . . . .	304	
A REMARKABLE SOCIETY CLASS . . . . .	314	

## INTRODUCTORY NOTES

BY THE LATE REV. GEORGE BROWN, D.D.

(*President General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia, 1913-1917.*)

There have been two evangelists bearing the name of Taylor, each of whom has exercised a great influence upon the religious life of Australia. One of these was a visitor; the other was a resident in the Commonwealth. The two men represented widely different characters and modes of appeal and work; but they were both alike in their burning zeal for the salvation and uplifting of men, in their strong conviction that the only way for the accomplishment of these objects was by the proclamation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and its acceptance by their hearers, and they have both been honoured by the great success which they have achieved.

One of these men was a typical American, who had graduated in the streets and slums of San Francisco and among the rough characters who were engaged in the search for gold in those early days in California. He was known in after years as Bishop Taylor; but throughout these States the name by which he was best known, and by which he is very lovingly remembered, was 'California Taylor.' The success which followed his labours was of no ephemeral character, for in many homes the direct and indirect results which were so apparent when William Taylor preached the gospel throughout Australia are still manifest. Many other earnest preachers and evangelists have continued in the same great work. Some of the results of their devoted service we have seen and rejoiced over, but for the full record of their triumphs we have still to wait. In this also we only know in part. But the times change, and we also change with them—not in our

object, which is the salvation of men, and not in the means which we adopt for its achievement, for there is still for us 'no other name given among men whereby we can be saved' but the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, but in the widening out of our aspirations and purpose. Mr. Wesley told his preachers that they had nothing to do but to save souls, and in the sense in which he used the term he was right; but we scan a wider horizon to-day, and the Church is realizing as it has never done before that we only fully follow Christ when we take into our hearts all the mind of Christ, and care for the bodies as well as for the souls of men.

It is just here where the distinctive character of modern missions, as conducted by William G. Taylor and the Central Methodist Missions in all the States, is made apparent: no less concern for the saving of the souls of men, no new plan for their salvation, but a widening out of our object so as to include all that concerns the welfare of our fellow men in the work we do, because in so doing we find that we fulfil the will of God.

How far-reaching the work and aims of the Sydney Central Mission are may in part be gathered by reading the names of the different branches of work which are so effectively conducted. How many of our people realize that, in addition to the ordinary but all-important work of preaching and visitation, the Mission includes in its effective work such branches as Immigration and Employment Agency, Evangelists' Training Institute, Queen Victoria Seaman's Rest, Home of 'Sisters of the People,' Home for Fallen and Friendless Girls, Orphanage for Waifs and Strays, People's Central Hostel, Girls' Rest-rooms, Men's Shelter, Residential Home, Workmen's Home, 'Lycum People's Own,' Young Men's Settlement, Young Men's and Young Women's Guilds of Service, Mothers' Meetings, Working Girls' Brigade, Sunday School, Adults' Bible-class, Literary and Debating Society, Musical Department, Social Clubs, &c.?

It is chiefly to tell our people something of this great work that Mr. Taylor has written this book. It does not and cannot tell all that should be known. He can tell us something of the successes which have been achieved, and we can thank God for them; but he does not and cannot tell

us of the times of discouragement and weariness which he often had to suffer, when the magnitude of the work compelled the old cry, 'Lord, who is sufficient for these things?' A strong faith gave the assurance of ultimate victory, but the strain to a man of his temperament must have often almost reached the breaking-point. We and all our Church are thankful that he has been privileged to live to see even more than the fruits of the remarkable harvest, the seed of which was so often sown in tears. The book he has written will, I am sure, be welcomed not only by our own people, but by all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and who feel their responsibility for the carrying on of the work which He has given them to do. By a perusal of these pages they will be led to thank God and to take courage.

*[A pathetic interest attaches to the above note, inasmuch as it was almost the last this remarkable man was permitted to write, ere he was called to higher service.]*

BY THE REV. JAMES F. CARRUTHERS, D.D.

*(President of the Australasian Methodist General Conference;  
Editor of 'The Methodist')*

If there is one feature by which, more than any other, the ministry of the Rev. W. G. Taylor in Australia has been characterized, it is that of evangelism. He has evidenced to his brethren the possession of abilities and gifts that would have given him prominence in not a few other directions. He might have excelled as a writer, with his crisp style and faculty for picturesque and striking expression. As a departmental minister he would have been a fortune to any Connexional office, with his mastery and almost unique gift of organization. As a circuit minister he would certainly have had the occupancy in succession of the best appointments that Australian Methodism has to give, with the variety of opportunity and the sense of popularity they afford. But he has deliberately eschewed all these lines of service that he might 'do the work of an evangelist' in connexion with the Central Methodist Mission, of

which he was the founder, and of which, with brief intermissions, he was the superintendent for the long period of over a quarter of a century. Of that work he tells the story in these pages.

Whether or not the Sydney Central Methodist Mission was the first of its kind in Methodism, as is claimed by Mr. Taylor, it was at least among the very earliest of the goodly company of such organizations, and it was absolutely the pioneer of the Central Missions now established in all the capital centres of the Commonwealth of Australia and the Dominion of New Zealand.

All these Missions are avowedly social, redemptive, and philanthropic in their scope and effort. But they are primarily and essentially evangelistic. This is especially the case with the Sydney Central Methodist Mission. Yet again: all the Australian organizations of that type bear the impress of their founder; notably is this so with the Sydney Mission, which for years has taken its colour and tone from the fervid and intense spirit of the honoured minister who laid its foundations and built up its superstructure to its present imposing proportions. The difference between 'Old York Street' as it was in 1884, with its handful of people, its dispirited membership, and its depleted exchequer, and the flourishing organization of the Central Methodist Mission of to-day, housed in the well-equipped 'Vickers Mission Settlement,' with its network of evangelistic and philanthropic agencies, all throbbing with life and purpose, marks the measure of success with which the Divine Master has been pleased to bless an agency which at the beginning of its history accepted as its guiding motto '*A Living Christ for a dying world.*'

The author of this book needs no word of formal introduction or commendation. He is one of the best-known figures in the public religious life of the Commonwealth of Australia, and in the Southern World generally. And he is not only one of the best known, he is also one of the most trusted and honoured. His praise is in all the churches, and his name is one to conjure with in all areas of Australian life. His visits to the Homeland and America have also familiarized large congregations there with his name and work. By his friends in all parts of the world the publication of his 'Life-story' will be welcomed as portraying one of the

most striking and successful ministerial careers of modern times.

It was William G. Taylor's privilege to exercise his ministry during an interesting and important era in Australian history. He has witnessed marvellous material growth; he has seen wonderful political changes; he was more than an onlooker in the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia and the resultant birth of Australian nationhood. During these stirring and eventful times he has been at close grips with the inner life of the largest and most influential city of the Southern World, and has combated the forces of materialism and sin which are the bane of city life to-day. But amid all he has been unwaveringly loyal to the supreme allegiance. He has believed in the applicability of the gospel message to modern times and conditions. He has never doubted the power of the evangel of Jesus Christ; and right in the heart of a city throbbing with life, steeped in materialism, and, alas, saddened by much sin, he has adhered to the old Apostolic message, 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.'

Who can wonder that such preaching and such work have been as salt in its antiseptic and healing influence? By such means William G. Taylor and workers of like spirit and aim have rendered a service of incalculable value to these Australian States, already great and prosperous, and destined yet to play a part of vast importance in the great drama of modern civilization.

PART I

I

A STUDY IN ORIGINS

The charms of Cleveland—Great men born there—Ancestors and John Wesley—My mother—Village Methodism—Early Christian influences—A preacher a hundred and five years old.

I was born on January 18, 1845, in the quaint little village of Knayton, four miles from Thirsk. Backed by the Hamilton hills, surrounded by tree-clad knolls, verdant valleys, and running trout streams, it is as bonnie a little spot as can be found in the North Riding of Yorkshire.

Two years ago I revisited the old home, and found it almost untouched by the finger of time—the same quiet, out-of-the-world spot it was seventy years ago. I preached to the few old folk who gathered for worship, one of whom remembered my father living in 'the big house' at the time of my birth. The house still stands, though the grounds have been shorn of their glory—five noble poplars that were wont to give dignity to the dear old homestead.

Knayton is one of the many outposts of the Thirsk Circuit, famous in the past for its wonderful contributions to Foreign Missions, and for the character of the men it sent into the ministry. It is situated at the southern limit of one of the finest rural districts to be found in Yorkshire. Who has not heard of the rich vales of Cleveland, surrounded on the south by the well-known range of the Cleveland hills, on the east by the North Sea, and on the north and west by branches of the River Tees? Eh, but it is a lovely spot to have lived in! I count it no small honour to have spent my boyish days amongst its sturdy, honest farmers,

within sight of Roseberry Topping and of the famous Captain Cook Monument ; to have been educated in one of its Grammar Schools, and saturated with the blessed revival influences that, in those days at least, were the joy and the boast of our Methodist folk.

I know of no rural district in England that has sent into the ministry of our Church a larger number of worthy messengers of the Cross (see Appendix). The world is a better place to-day to live in, and the Methodist Church is a long way the richer, for that galaxy of worthy—in some cases distinguished—men who here found the Pearl of great price, here received their divine commission, and hence have gone forth to every part of the world as ambassadors of the Cross.

If ever a man had cause to be grateful for his forbears and for the friends of his youth, that man is he who holds this pen.

I come of healthy Yorkshire stock. As far back as can be traced, on both sides of the family-tree, ours has been pure North Riding blood. On my mother's side I come of long generations of stalwart yeomen of the soil. One branch of the family has been in possession of that picturesque old building—the loved resort of the North Country archaeologists—Leak Hall, near to Knayton, as far back as the days of Charles I. It was here I spent my boyhood holidays, helping in the fields, feasting in that ancient kitchen, and wandering through those awe-inspiring wainscoted bedrooms.

My mother's father, Thomas Morton, was of Kivington stock. Their farm was situated within a mile of Knayton. They were good Methodists, with only two children, a son and a daughter. My mother was educated at a boarding-school in Knarlesborough. She was early brought under deep religious influences, and as naturally as the flower expands before the morning sun her heart opened to the transforming power of the grace of God. My grandmother must have been a saint. One of her letters, written in the early thirties, and addressed to my mother, lies before me. It is the letter of one who lived in the presence of the Lord, the production of a cultured mind, yearning for the highest good of her only daughter. It was from such stock my sainted mother came. During one of my visits to England

curiosity led me to the old Kivington homestead, now in the possession of strangers. On mentioning my mother's name, the good farmer's wife said, 'Morton! Why, you'll find that name engraved on a window upstairs.' And, sure enough, on a tiny window-pane in a cosy little room, I found inscribed by a diamond ring the loved name 'Mary Ann Morton, 1828,' written in my dear mother's beautiful handwriting when only fifteen years of age. Here I stood as on holy ground. In this house my mother spent her girlish days. In all probability in this room she first trusted her Saviour. It was easy to imagine mother and child closeted in this spot in blessed and holy fellowship. In that room were generated forces whose uplifting influences follow me and her other children to this day.

I am thinking at this moment of the sayings of epoch-making men, telling of the influence their mothers have exerted over their lives. I can endorse them all. 'A kiss from my mother,' said West, 'made me a painter.' Sir J. Fowell Buxton, one of the champions of the West Indian slaves in the British House of Commons, once wrote to his mother: 'I constantly feel, especially in action and exertion for others, the effects of principles early implanted by you in my mind.' How noble the words of Lord Langdale, one of England's most brilliant Chief Justices: 'If the whole world were put into one scale, and my mother in the other, the world would kick the beam!' And better still is the boast of Abe Lincoln: 'All that I am, or hope to be, I owe it to my angel mother, blessings on her memory.' And certain it is that, but for the remarkable influences generated in that homely Kivington home, I should have had a different tale to tell this day. It was my mother's example that, in my earliest days, threw a spell over me; her prayers follow me still. Her reproofs made me tremble; her patience and her self-abnegation won my heart.

I shall never forget one pathetic incident that marked an epoch in my strange young life. At a Sunday-evening service in the old Stokesley chapel, when I was about eleven, I was deeply impressed by a sermon preached by an old friend of our family. His homely appeal reached my young heart. I tarried to the prayer-meeting, and in my corner earnestly sought the Lord. After the service

closed I still retained my seat in real distress of soul. Passing towards the door with hat in hand, the preacher noticed my troubled look, and, putting his hand upon my head, said, 'William, my boy, what is the matter with you?' Amid my sobs I managed to let him know that I was in trouble about my soul. Instead of going with me in prayer to God as he should have done, the good man patted me on the shoulder and said, 'Go home, William, my lad. Be a good little boy, and it will be all right.' Well do I remember how my young heart rose in revolt. This was not the answer I needed, and, hastily leaving the chapel, I ran through the streets, sobbing as I ran. Reaching home, I burst open the door and rushed into the arms of my mother, and cried out, 'Oh, mother, I want to be a Christian!' There were visitors present, but what cared I for that? With her arms pressing me to her heart she told me of a Saviour's love, and comforted my tumult-tossed spirit.

It was ever thus; there seemed to be, somehow, a peculiar bond of sympathy between her spirit and mine. We knew each other. I still possess scores of her letters written to me in my youth. They are still my benediction. What love she lavished upon her children! How wise were always her counsels! How, in the many deep sorrows through which she was called to pass, she poured out her heart in giving to and in creating sympathy in others!

On my father's side I am a Methodist of at least the fourth generation, probably of the fifth. My father's birthplace was Skelton-in-Cleveland, then (before the discovery of ironstone) a lovely straggling village, two miles from the coast, at what is now the fashionable watering-place of Saltburn-by-the-Sea. Skelton was several times visited by John Wesley. Although we have no record of his having preached in the village, yet on nine occasions he preached with remarkable results following in the adjoining market-town of Guisborough. On Sunday, July 8, 1759, Mr. Wesley writes of his first visit: 'From Stokesley' (where he had preached on the green in the morning) 'I rode to Guisborough, at the foot of the mountains. The sun would have been insupportable but that we had a strong wind full in our face for the greatest part of the day. At twelve we had a lovely

congregation in a meadow near the town, who drank in every word that was spoken as the thirsty earth the showers.' That same night he preached at Robin Hood's Bay, sixteen miles farther on, passing through Skelton *en route*. It was probably at this service that some of my forefathers (the Taylors and the Shemelds) first heard the great evangelist. At any rate, about that time several of them were converted. My great-grandfather, Thomas Shemelds, was born at Skelton in the year 1763, and his wife Elizabeth in the year 1761. Both were class-leaders, probably appointed by John Wesley himself. They lived blameless and earnest Christian lives, exerting a remarkable influence in the district. Of the family of five sons and two daughters, four were local preachers and one a class-leader. An original letter written by George, a son of one of the local preachers, and bearing date 'Stokesley, April 26, 1825,' lies before me. It is long, filling four pages of foolscap closely written, and is an answer to a letter written by his sister. Letter-writing in those days was evidently a luxury not often to be indulged in. Here we have a carefully elaborated statement of the great doctrine of personal regeneration. If he preached as he wrote, I am in doubt as to his acceptability. But there! people were different a hundred years ago; they were not out of patience with long sermons.

My grandfather, William Taylor, was born in Skelton in the year 1790, and was for some years a tower of strength to the rapidly growing Society. It was in his time that a long fight was commenced to secure a site upon which to erect a meeting-house. The squire of the parish was hostile to the Methodists, and every approach was repulsed. At length there came a preacher to the circuit who mixed a little of the wisdom of this world with his devout praying and earnest preaching, who determined that a chapel should be built. The Society was summoned to prayer. After much counsel and more pleading with God, the preacher resolved to beard the lion in his den. In a few hours he returned from the Castle with a smiling face. 'Thank God,' said he, 'we can set to work and build our chapel.' The squire has agreed to give us the land we want.' In reply to astonished questionings, it transpired that at first the great man was as haughty as ever in his

refusal. 'No, no; I want none of you Methodists in my village. Why cannot you all be reasonable and attend the church?' The wily parson was aware that just at that time the old squire was anxious to secure a much-coveted position of authority in the county. The election was to take place at York. Hints were thrown out, at first distant and obscure, that certain Methodists at headquarters were men of influence. The bait took. At first the old fish nibbled, and ultimately withdrew all his opposition to the building of the chapel on the understanding that these 'men of influence' did not oppose his candidature.

At once the work was started. Even the squire helped in the quarrying of the stone and in drawing it to the site. Soon—I believe in the year 1814—the little stone chapel was opened. It was in that building that years afterwards I did much of my 'prentice' preaching. Shortly after this my grandfather removed to Stokesley, and in the forties he migrated south—a remarkable thing for a Taylor to do—and opened a business in Tranquil Vale, Blackheath, one of London's choicest suburbs. Here, assisted by a friend, he had the honour of introducing Methodism to the village. The two of them secured the first meeting-place, invited the first preachers, and my grandfather became the first class-leader of what has since become one of the most influential circuits in London Methodism. Right up to the time of his death on January 2, 1872, he was a trusted member and official of the church; whilst for many years his daughter, my Aunt Esther, was in charge of a large women's class, and was in other ways prominently associated with the work of that then rapidly growing cause.

Owing to business difficulties my parents removed from Knayton about the year 1847, and, after a short period in Huddersfield, went to London, in various parts of which vast city they struggled hard to make a living. It was here, in Old Kent Road, that my youngest brother, Thomas Shemelds, was born. All his life almost he has been a staunch Methodist, filling every office open to a layman, with the exception of that of local preacher. About the year 1861 my father founded the business in Hull that ere long was handed over to my brother, under

whose fostering care it has developed into an extensive business corporation. As Sheriff of Hull, and then for two years as its Mayor and chief magistrate, he has served his city well. A magnificent oil-painting of himself, presented by the citizens of the old city, now graces the walls of the City Hall and attests to the high esteem in which he was held. Probably the work which, of all others, has best paid him for years of service is that of the Sunday school. In conjunction with the Right Hon. T. R. Ferris, M.P., and Mr. W. H. Slack, my brother has for many years been superintendent of Brunswick Street schools, with a present membership of 2,200 children, one of the largest Methodist Sunday schools in England.

About the year 1854 I was received as a scholar into the old Spitalfields Sunday school. Formerly a Huguenot church for the use of refugee French people residing in London, it came ultimately into the hands of the Methodists, and in my time was a struggling cause worked as part of one of the East London circuits. I have a dim recollection of having been told that the great Dr. Jabez Bunting preached at one of the services my family attended. I understand that I was present at that service. The fact is mentioned merely as furnishing a link connecting one with a past generation. Two things connected with Spitalfields I distinctly remember. As a boy I was supposed to have possessed a fairly good voice. I presume that this got to be known to the choir-master, who one Sunday morning lifted me over the high pew front behind which the Sunday school children were perched, and placed me in the choir seat at the front of the organ. I was a proud little chap that day, and have no doubt I made my sister and brothers green with envy as I strutted ahead of them on our way home to dinner. The more important fact, and one that will always stand forth amongst the recollections of those early days, is the deep spiritual impression made upon my young mind when a scholar in that school. It was the most peculiar school building I have been in. What a climb to reach it, situated as it was about the ceiling of the chapel among the timbers of the roof! In that strange spot there came to me thoughts of God, a knowledge of my sin, and a desire to be a

Christian. Although only nine years of age, I can distinctly remember the deep religious feeling that was mine as I listened to my teacher, Mr. G. J. Brown. After all these sixty years and more I treasure a little book he gave to me—a strange gift for a child of nine—*A Full Christ for Empty Sinners*, by the Rev. W. Romaine, A.M. On the first page I read, as the book lies before me, 'William Taylor, a small token of respect from his Teacher, G. J. Brown, June 11, 1854.'

Another of the distinct recollections of my childish days was the being taken by my father to a little chapel (of what denomination I know not) situated in a narrow street at the back of the London Hospital, to hear an old gentleman preach who was a hundred-and-five years of age. I remember how packed was the little place, and what holy ground it seemed to be to me. I can see the old saint still, as he stood in that pulpit, with long flowing white hair curling over his shoulders, and with uplifted hand and trembling voice pleading with the people to become reconciled to God. That which made a more lasting impression upon my mind even than the sermon was his placing his hand upon the head of my little sister Fanny, and saying, as he smiled with a smile that an angel might covet, 'God bless you, my dear little one.' Think of it—the hoary-headed saint of a hundred-and-five and the little lambkin of seven, both of them of the Lord's great fold!

## II

## CONVERSION, AND EVANGELISTIC BEGINNINGS

'Puffing Billy'.—The grip of the Sunday school.—A young prig.—The great decision.—Proofs of conversion.—Foundation Scholar.—Going into the world on four shillings a week.—Spartan resolves.—Morbid views of life.—Safety in service.—Remarkable answer to prayer.—My first sermon.—A big struggle.—My first 'fruit,' and what followed.

WHEN I was about ten years of age our family returned to Yorkshire. What changes in the conveniences of travelling since those days! We left King's Cross Station early in the morning by 'the Parliamentary train,' the only penny-a-mile train of the day. We stopped at every village station between London and Thirsk, arriving there late at night. We sat on narrow wooden seats with cruelly straight backs, and had the smallest of windows to look out of. The couplings of the carriages were mere chains. Every time the train started woe betide the person who happened to be standing. By the way, my dear old father has often told me how, early in the thirties, he stood with my grandfather on a siding near to Yarm and saw old 'Puffing Billy'.—George Stephenson's No. 1 Engine—come tearing past on one of its early trips from Darlington to Stockton, travelling at 'the terrific pace' of fourteen miles an hour.

My father took up his residence in the quiet town of Stokesley, right in the heart of the richest part of Cleveland. As it seems to me now, it was here my life really began. Our first home was a little cottage that opened on to the yard of Gentleman Farmer Brailthwaite. Don't I remember how I used to be carried into the third heavens by being placed behind the farmer on his horse, that I might open the gates for him as he rode forth to inspect his farms. And when the time of harvest came round,