

CHAPTER X AN ABLE ADMINISTRATOR

ABOUT the year 1820 there was a Methodist chapel in the village of Fareham, in Hampshire. Methodist preaching, at this time, was of a very stirring character. Itinerant and local preacher “cried aloud, and spared not.” They lifted up their voices “like a trumpet,” and showed villagers their transgressions, and citizens their sins.

The trumpet in the village of Fareham gave no uncertain sound. There was a lad living in the adjoining village, named Daniel. Sometimes he would stop at the chapel door to listen. This gave offence. Some of the good people wanted to know why he did not come in or stay away. The reason may have been that his parents were regular attendants at the parish church. On one occasion, as Daniel was gathering up the crumbs that fell from the Master’s table, he got a very sharp rebuke. “I will not go there any more,” said he. The resolution was made, but it could not be kept. There was a strange magnetism about that Methodist chapel door in the village of Fareham. Daniel felt like Jeremiah when he said: “I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name; but His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones.” He was found at the chapel door again, and over the threshold. The word reached his heart. Daniel saw the truth, and grasped it. His parents, as we have affirmed, were members of the Church of England; but it was the stirring blast of the Methodist trumpet that aroused Daniel’s conscience and troubled his soul. It was under the Methodist ministry that he found peace. Is it matter for surprise, then, that he should say: “This people shall be my people, and their God shall be my God”? The little Methodist society at Fareham received Daniel into its fold. His parents were not pleased, but we believe that they were too wise to throw any serious obstacle in his way.

In a short time the Methodists decided to build a chapel in the adjoining village of Wickham. It was in this locality that Daniel lived. His father was the chief carpenter and builder in the district, and the work of building was intrusted to him and his son. In this chapel, ere long, the father had the privilege of hearing the son preach the gospel.

When about twenty-two years of age Daniel James Draper removed to Brecon. Here he worked hard in his own mental and spiritual interest, and in the interests of the Methodist society. He gave attention to “reading, exhortation, and doctrine.” One of his favourite verses in the prayer-meeting was –

Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold! Behold! The Lamb.

Little did he anticipate how truly and tragically the desire expressed in this verse would be fulfilled.

While at Brecon he was recommended to the Conference as a suitable candidate for the ministry. The recommendation was sustained, and Daniel James Draper was sent to the Chatteris Circuit, Cambridgeshire. But there was a wider sphere in which he was to labour. Several Australian Colonies had been formed. The hive in the Old Land was swarming. Thousands were flocking over the sea. “The world is my parish,” said John Wesley, and his sons in the gospel had been true to the maxim. Provision had to be made for the spiritual wants of the emigrants. There were men in the Australian Colonies crying to their Methodist fathers and brethren in England: “Come over, and help us.” The harvest is great; the labourers few. Strong

men are wanted – strong in body, mind, and soul. Such a man was Daniel James Draper. He had a splendid physique; his mental gifts were considerable, and his life consecrated to God. The eyes of some in the British Conference were directed to him. When asked if he would offer for mission work, after a brief consideration he expressed his willingness to obey the call of duty, and to do the will of God. Amongst others who spoke to him words of encouragement, was Dr. Bunting. Said he: “Years of labour may be before you, but success is certain; it must come.”

It was about the middle of October 1835 that a vessel sailed away from Old England, having on board John McKenny, Daniel James Draper, and Frederick Lewis. Their destination was New South Wales. John McKenny had already spent about twenty years in Foreign Mission work, chiefly in the island of Ceylon. Daniel James Draper and Frederick Lewis were new to the work. The latter part of their voyage was full of peril. The prospect of shipwreck attended the beginning of Daniel James Draper’s work, and actual shipwreck brought it to a close.

Says the Rev. John McKenny, in a communication to the Missionary Secretaries: “Our passage round was attended with great danger. We experienced a heavy gale from the east. ... It was indeed an awful night, and brought us all carefully to examine the ground on which we hoped for heaven, having eternity in view. It was now that we felt the infinite value of the gospel, and the exceeding preciousness of Jesus, our glorious Redeemer. Such was the state of things from the violence of the ship’s motion, and the sickness of most of the party, that we could not be together; but all were engaged in continued prayer. ... We did not pray in vain. About one o’clock a.m. our kind captain came round to our cabins and said, in a full voice: ‘The wind is changed, and is blowing us off the land, and all danger is over.’ Those only who have been in our condition can enter into the exquisite nature of our feelings. An unutterable sensation passed through our minds on finding that the Lord had heard our prayers, and rescued us from destruction and death.”

There was a work for John McKenny, Daniel James Draper, and Frederick Lewis to do.

Mr. Draper spent about ten years in New South Wales and Victoria. In every station he was successful. Part of his time was spent under a cloud of sorrow, and young wife and child being removed by death.

In the English Minutes of Conference for 1846 the name of Jonathan Innes stands opposite the Adelaide Mission. The appointment did not take effect. In place of Jonathan Innes, Daniel James Draper came. It is to this “man of God” that Methodism in South Australia owes much. The Colony and the Methodist Church were still in their infancy when he arrived – both were but ten years of age. From communications made to the Missionary Secretaries in London we see the spirit in which he entered upon his work. “There is only one Circuit,” he says, “in the whole of South Australia.” That Circuit was one hundred and fifty miles long, and should be divided into three – Adelaide, Willunga, and North Mines Circuits. Two more missionaries were required. There had been an increase of thirty-three full members no the quarter; the total number was three hundred and fifty. The congregations were exceedingly good. Classes met in private houses. The people, considering their circumstances, were exceedingly liberal. He concludes his letter thus: “If two more ministers can be appointed, we soon shall have a glorious cause in South Australia. Ministerial influence is absolutely necessary.”

Be they many or few, my days are His due,
And they all are devoted to Him.

Alas! there came another “rift within the lute”; fortunately for Methodism, it did “not make the music mute.” In 1846 the Government of South Australia decided to give State aid to religion. Grants-in-aid were to be made available for the Churches. This legislation, as we shall see, had a serious effect upon Methodism. The radical tendencies of Joseph Rayner Stephens and his brother John have already been noticed. They were men with faults, no doubt, but men of bold independent spirit, and as able as bold. Edward Stephens, apparently, was more calm and judicial; still there was the same spirit of independence. The bank manager, no less than the preacher, or editor, was able, energetic, and determined. As soon as the Government decided to give State aid to religion, a number of colonists formed themselves into a League to resist what they considered to be “a dangerous and disgraceful” innovation. At the head of this League was Edward Stephens. In opposition to the grant, public meetings were held; petitions were presented; deputations waited upon the Government. State aid to religion was denounced as a “violation of the rights of conscience.” It compelled individuals to pay taxes in support of doctrines and forms over which men differed. It was a misappropriation of public money. In all this justifiable agitation Edward Stephens was the leading spirit.

Mr. Draper, personally, was not opposed to the grant. Apparently, he remained neutral. The quarterly meeting decided to accept the same, consequently Edward Stephens and several others severed their connection with Wesleyan Methodism.

It is worthy of remark that when a body of men secede from the Methodist Church, as a rule they do not unite with other organisations. Invariably, they endeavour to establish an independent body, and to work it on Methodist lines. What an eloquent testimony this is to the tenacious grip that Methodist doctrine and discipline has upon the hearts of those who come under its influence! As we have observed, ere the Methodist Church in South Australia was seven years old there was a secession. The disaffected party were asked to join other Churches, but asked in vain. The magnetism of Methodism was too strong. They formed themselves into a separate body, termed “The Australian Methodist Society.” Fortunately, it had a ephemeral existence. When the division of the question of State aid to religion occurred, the seceders established an independent society. It was called the “Representative Methodist Church.” Its life was very limited, as was also the obnoxious law that called the new organisation into existence. Throughout the Colony there was such a cry raised against the grant-in-aid that the Government were forced to repeal the Act. So effectual and determined was the opposition, that the spectre of State aid has never again appeared to disturb the minds of our people. Great credit is due to Edward Stephens for the prominent part that he took in the agitation. No doubt the *Register*, under the able editorship of John Stephens, thundered out its telling anathemas.

In connection with the question of State aid to religion, we find three sons of one of the Presidents of the British Wesleyan Methodist Conference in conflict with their father’s Church. It was this subject in the Old Country that led to the retirement of Joseph Rayner Stephens. His brother John, then editor of the *Christian Advocate*, looked upon that retirement as tantamount to expulsion; hence his attacks upon the Methodist Conference – or certain member of it – became increasingly bitter. In the new Colony of South Australia, when the quarterly meeting accepted the Government grant, Edward Stephens retired from the Connexion. We are all wise after the event. At this length of time it occurs to the writer that there might have been (as Dr. Warren

suggested¹) a “more excellent way” of dealing with Joseph Rayner Stephens, and in this Colony it would have been well if the pioneer Methodist Church had not accepted money from the State coffers.

The withdrawal of Edward Stephens was a heavy blow to the young Methodist Church in South Australia. He was an able and energetic worker, and liberal supporter. Even at this length of time we cannot but regret the circumstance.

But the good work went on. At the close of the year 1847 Mr Draper posted another letter to the Committee in London. Again there was an increase in members. He speaks of new chapels being opened, and of considerable sums of money being raised. He expresses gratitude that the Circuit had been divided into three Circuits. He says: “I am left alone in Adelaide with sixteen places to attend to, at eight of which we have chapels. I shall have to work excessively hard, until I am assisted by another young man. ... But such is my conviction of the importance of taking possession of these places, that I am willing to exert myself to the utmost, and to make sacrifices that their case may be met. The Colony requires five ministers at least, in order that our Society may exert its legitimate influence. I rejoice that at so early a period there are three of us here. ... I cannot, however, be satisfied till we have five in South Australia – Adelaide, two; Willunga, one; North Mines (Burra), one; Mount Barker, one. My heart would rejoice if, on the arrival of the Stations of the Conference of 1848, the above scheme should be fixed, and a reinforcement sent out to enable the district to arrange it. Should I be permitted to witness this, I shall indeed rejoice in the assurance that I have been sent to this Circuit for a most important and valuable end.”

Mr. Draper makes a special appeal to the missionary authorities in London, based upon the special relationship that many of the emigrants sustained to the Methodist Church at home. It is an appeal that ought to have touched the hearts of the missionary scribes who dwelt at Bishopsgate Street Within. “Numbers,” he says, “of those who are scattered up and down this Colony are from your own congregations in England. Their condition is awful. Our hands are full – improperly so; as to our health, dangerously so. (“I speak as a fool.”) We work as hard as any preachers under heaven; but still there are many places that cannot be reached. Do, I beseech you, use every means to supply our wants, and generations yet unborn, in one of the most important of the British Colonies, will bless you. We have now about four hundred and sixty members in Society.”

The good man’s heart yearns over Zion. The fields are white, but the labourers few. In the interests of “generation unborn” he urges his plea; but apparently “Bishopsgate Street Within” gave no immediate sign. “My heart would rejoice,” he says, “if, on the arrival of the Stations of 1848, my scheme should be fixed, and a reinforcement sent out.” The good man must have been disappointed. The English Minutes for 1848 do not show that his desire was met. However –

To patient faith the prize is sure.

The English list of stations for 1849 gives the following: -

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Adelaide – Daniel J. Draper, Thomas N. Hull, William C. Currey, William Longbottom, supernumerary.

Burra (North Mines) – John C. Thrum.

Willunga – William Lowe.

¹ See Smith’s *History of Methodism*, vol. iii. p. 209. There may have been a wiser way of dealing with Joseph Rayner Stephens, but discipline must, at all costs, be maintained.

The Rev. Thomas N. Hull, who arrived from England early in 1850, deserves a passing remark. He was a gifted man. No mean authority (the late Rev. James Bickford) says: "As a preacher he gained celebrity for his logical acumen, refined taste, exalted eloquence, and impressive appeals." After about five years' service he returned to Ireland.

In 1848 Mr. Draper sent statistics of the Methodist Church in the new Colony of South Australia to the missionary authorities in London: - Chapels, 12; other preaching stations, 18; missionaries, 4; Sunday-school teachers, 85; local preachers, 35; class leaders, 30; members, 500; Sunday schools, 12; Sunday-school scholars, 800; attendants upon public worship, 2200.

This is a very creditable record for a Colony only then twelve years old.

The great even to Mr. Draper's administration was the building of the cathedral of South Australian Methodism. The church in Gawler Place, in the erection of which Edward Stephens and his wife had taken such interest, became too small.² It was decided to build a large church in a central position. The foundation-stone was laid by the Governor (Sir H. E. Young) on the 15th of July 1850. It was a national event. The entire cost was more than £6000. Without galleries there was sitting accommodation for 800 people.

The church was opened on 19th October 1851. This was another gala day in the early history of the Methodist Church. There was a prayer-meeting at seven o'clock in the morning. The record is: "A good time. Many present." The day was oppressively hot, but the people attended in crowds. Many came in from the country. The Rev. John Eggleston came from New South Wales to conduct the opening services. Long before the time for beginning the morning service arrived the chapel was crowded. Mr. Draper conducted the first part of the service, and Mr. Eggleston preached the sermon. The text was Ephesians ii. 18. The Rev. J. Gardiner (Presbyterian) preached in the afternoon. The text was Zechariah vi. 13. The chapel was again crowded in the evening, when the Rev. J. Eggleston preached from Isaiah xxvii. 4-6. The Governor, Judge, and several Members of Parliament attended the opening services. The collections were: morning, nearly £68; afternoon, 28, 10s.; evening, £47, 10s. Mr Draper remarks: "Immense excitement. Good done." On the following Monday there was a tea-meeting on a magnificent scale, realising £46. The opening services were continued on the following Sabbath. The entire amount raised at the services (including a bazaar) was £1250 – a noble sum for a Colony and a Church only fifteen years old.

One cannot but regret that in the building of this magnificent chapel Edward Stephens had no prominent part. However, another name was coming to the front – a name that will always be honoured in South Australia, and in South Australian Methodism – John Colton (afterwards Sir John), treasurer of the Pirie Street Chapel Trust. He arrived in the Colony in 1839, and for a great number of years was a leading spirit in Parliament, in philanthropic circles, and in the Wesleyan Methodist Church. His name is on the trust deeds of many of our churches, and it was his hand that laid many of the foundation-stones.

In 1855 Mr. Draper left the Colony. It had not yet reached its majority, but the success and permanence of Methodism was assured. Mr. Draper saw the membership grow from three hundred and fifty members to over a thousand. The finest of any of the churches yet built in the city of Adelaide by any denomination was erected in his time. In addition, a number of chapels had been built in the suburbs and country. He

² The Gawler Place Chapel, in the early days, was a fine structure, but it has long since disappeared. Where it once stood a large business house now stands.

was the principal factor in extending and consolidating the Methodist Church in the new settlement of South Australia.

We close this chapter with an account of the last days of this noted man. We have spoken of "The Romance of Methodism." That there is such, the record we have given amply testifies. But romance has a sad side as well as a joyous one; its dark shades as well as its bright ones. We saw the pioneer Methodist Church in the new Colony in need of a pastor. The need was made the subject of prayer. By the ministry of the winds and the waves an ideal Methodist missionary was cast upon South Australian shores. But in more senses than one, as the sequel will show, the winds and the waves do strange work.

When Mr. Draper left South Australia he returned to Victoria. In 1859 he was elected President of the Australian Conference. After an absence of about thirty years from Old England he felt a strong desire once more to see his native land. The little Methodist chapel in the village of Fareham still attracted him. It would be such a joy to see it once more, an again to tread the lanes that he had so often trodden in his youth. His parents were dead, and many of his early friends were gone, but the village, with the memory of its associations, remained. The buttercups and cowslips would still bloom, the honeysuckle would be as sweet as ever, and there would not be any change in the song of the skylark or the homely note of the cuckoo.

In 1865 Mr. and Mrs. Draper were in the Old Land. He had been appointed Representative to the British Conference. It was held at Birmingham. The fathers and brethren gave him the right hand of fellowship, and he won the esteem of all. He preached in Great Queen Street Chapel, at St. James's Hall, and in the village of Fareham. Here he had the graves of his parents renovated, little thinking how soon he would follow them to the eternal world.

After a short and happy holiday in England he was anxious to return: as he remarked to the Hon. W. McArthur, "I could spend another year in England very pleasantly, and should like to do so if my conscience would allow me, but I feel that I must get back to my work."

He engaged a berth for himself and his wife in the S.S. *London*. She sailed from Plymouth on 6th January 1866. There were more than two hundred persons on board; - amongst other: G.V. Brooke, the eminent tragedian, and his sister; also the Rev. Dr. Wooley, an able scholar, who was on his way out to his professorial duties at Sydney. There a wife and six children were waiting to receive him. Alas! they waited in vain.

A day after they sailed the wind increased in violence. There was a very heavy sea. The following day (Monday) some of the passengers became very anxious. The wind was blowing with great violence. Monday night was a night of distress. Many of the passengers read their Bible s together and engaged in prayer. On Tuesday the large vessel was tossed about like a cork, and whole seas dashed over her. The lifeboat was torn away by the winds and the waves. The masts were broken and the ship dismantled. It seemed as though the raging elements were venting their fury upon what was a noble work of man.

Daniel James Draper was not idle. It was not the first storm at sea that he had experienced. About thirty years before, in his first voyage to Australia, in company with John McKenny and Frederick Lewis, he had been nearly wrecked. It seemed as though what was once probably would now become actual. No time was to be lost. Now, more truly than ever, he must have felt the inspiration of the words of Christ: "I must work the works of Him who sent Me, while it is day." He began to point the anxious and distressed to the sinner's refuge - Christ.

During the whole of Tuesday night some of the passengers read the Bible in turns.

Early of Wednesday morning the captain tried to run back to Plymouth. The storm increased in fury. The sea ran mountains high. Both lifeboats were swept away. During Wednesday night one disaster after another overtook the ill-fated *London*. The engine-room was flooded with water. The vessel was now so damaged that it seemed impossible to keep out the sea. Various expedients were tried. Passengers and crew worked incessantly at the pumps. Still the water in the engine-room rose higher. The fires were put out. The engines ceased to work. In the midst of all these appalling disasters the noble-hearted Captain Martin remained perfectly calm and collected, never forsaking the post of duty. All that skilful seamanship could do had been done. He now ordered the maintop-sail to be set; but the wind tore it to shreds. "You may now say your prayers, boys," said he.

Thursday morning came. The gale was as fierce as ever. The vessel rolled helplessly in the sea. A tremendous body of water stove in four windows of the upper or poop cabin. The passengers and crew had worked nobly at the pumps, but the vessel was now half-full of water. The remaining boats were got ready. The starboard pinnance was lowered, but was almost immediately swamped and sunk. Captain Martin went down into the saloon. "Ladies," said he, "there is no hope for us, I am afraid; nothing short of a miracle can save us." Said Mr. Draper, very calmly, "Let us pray." The vessel was now settling down.

Mr. Draper was constant in his ministrations. Ah! there was grief-stricken fathers and mothers and little children to be comforted and encouraged. The only comfort now was the hope of meeting in heaven. The passengers were urged to "flee for refuge to the hope set before them." "Pray for me, Mr. Draper; pray for me," was the cry. What cries went up to heaven from that doomed vessel! Mr. Draper pleading for the salvation of souls, and passengers seeking pardon! "Prepare to meet thy God!" was the cry of the Methodist preacher. "My friends," said he, "our captain tells us there is no hope, but the great Captain above tells us there is hope, and that we may all get safe to heaven." Prayer was heard and answered. Before the vessel went down there was wonderful calmness on board – a spirit of patient resignation. Husbands, wives, and children clung to each other, going simultaneously – not down into the deep, but into the eternal joy and peace of heaven.

A boat was launched. Ah! there were deeds of heroism on board the sinking vessel. A husband was offered by a friend a place in the boat. "No," said he; "I promised my wife and children to stay with them, and I will do so." ... "Help me," he said, "to move the children to the other side, out of the water." He did so. They then parted – the friend to escape in the boat to tell the tale; the husband, wife, and children to pass into the eternal world. "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in death they were not divided." The men in the boat wished Captain Martin to join them. "No," said he; "I will go down with the passengers. Your course is E.N.E." Then, throwing them a compass, he added: "I wish you God-speed, and safe to land." Soon after, the vessel went down stern foremost. Nineteen persons escaped in the boat, and were ultimately picked up by an Italian barque. "When I left the ship," said one of the survivors, "the passengers had given up all hope, but there was a remarkable composure among them, and no loud sounds to be heard. I heard voices engaged in preaching and praying." The last words that the survivors heard Daniel James Draper say were: "Those of you who are not converted, now is the time; not a moment to be lost, for in a few minutes we shall all be in the presence of our Judge." It is said that he was calm and self-possessed, his wife standing by his side.

When a local preacher in Brecon he had often sung –
Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp His name;
Preach Him to all, and cry in death,
Behold! Behold! the Lamb.

How tragically the sentiment of the verse was realised!

From that dark and dreadful scene in the Bay of Biscay there come to us rays of light. Said the heroic Methodist preacher: “Those of you who are not converted, now is the time.” ... “There is hope that may all get safe to heaven.” It is probably that that hope was fulfilled. Said the dying thief at the last hour: “Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.” The cheering response was: “To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.” To the penitent, perishing, praying men and women on board the doomed *London*, would there not come the same blessed assurance? Hence the absence of panic – the “peace that passeth all understanding,” the trustful resignation. As a person was about to leap into the boat, a young girl put a piece of paper into his hand. On it was written: “Dear mother, you must not grieve for me. I am going to Jesus.”

If we keep our eyes fixed on the dark aspect of the wreck that we have depicted, our hearts will be inexpressible sad. To see fathers, mothers, and children locked in each other’s embrace, and going down into the angry deep, with a love that was quenchless, is almost too much for human reason. Alas! we are the slaves of our senses. The most real and abiding things on earth are the things that are invisible. The most real thing about the person who is writing this sketch is not the visible and tangible hand that holds the pen, but eh invisible and intangible agent that conceives the thoughts, translates them into words, marshals the sentences, and compels the hand to do its bidding – the mysterious “I” that knows itself as distinct from the body. Don’t look merely at the lost bodies on the ill-fated *London*, but at the saved souls. “And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha” (2 Kings vi. 17). “And Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” Not the corruptible body, but the living, energising, intelligent soul, by the eye of faith, in the light of Divine revelation, crosses the boundary line of sensual experience. See the spirits of the shipwrecked passengers escorted to paradise – fathers, mothers, and children entering simultaneously into one of the palaces of the great King. Yes. “In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go a prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Grasp this comforting assurance, and our wail or sorrow becomes a shout of victory.

As South Australian Methodists, we thank God for the work of consolidation and extension that Daniel James Draper did in the young Colony, and for his comforting, encouraging, and soul-saving ministry on board the doomed *London*. A fine church in Adelaide has been erected to his memory.