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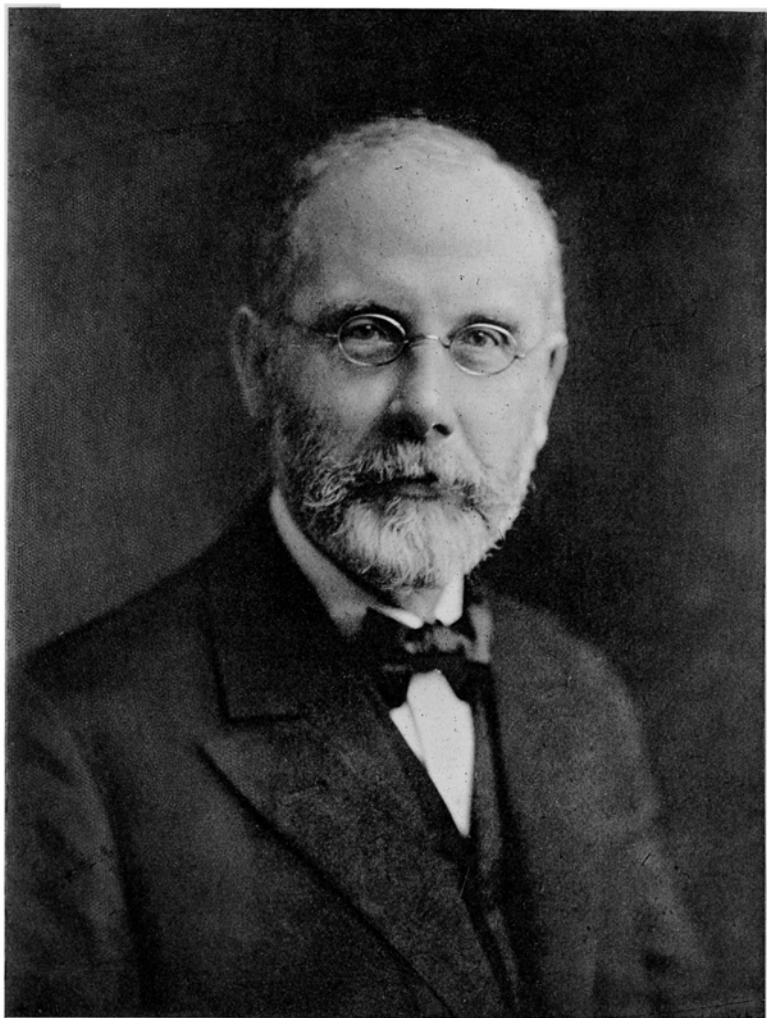


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W. W. Lullington.

# AT THE SIXTIETH MILESTONE

*INCIDENTS OF THE JOURNEY*

BY

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MARSHALL BROTHERS, LTD.  
LONDON, EDINBURGH & NEW YORK

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## GREETING

TO-DAY I have reached the sixtieth milestone, though when I was a boy I never hoped to reach the twentieth. I venture in all humility to raise a memorial, in this volume, to the Great Companion of the Way. Many with whom I have walked have passed on, but there are still tried friends who foot it with me. Yet the greatest joy of the pilgrimage is that He who planned the journey grants His own Presence day by day. To His name be all honour and adoration !

The road I have travelled has been varied and most pleasant : if I have known the sorrows I have also known the joy of life ; if there have been many failures, there has been much restoring grace ; if there have been stretches where the flints have cut the unshod feet, there have also been sweeps where the sward has been strewn with flowers ; if sometimes the mists have made it difficult to find the way, oftener the blue skies have been overhead. And my Guide is King of the Country that I am passing through.

It has been said that in a well-ordered human story sixty years should be given to service, and the seventh decade should be the Sabbath of life. But my rest must be in further service. So I but pause awhile at the milestone to remember all the way the Lord has led me ; to brace myself for the rest of the journey ; and then

with a braver heart and a blither step to trudge on. There is a turn in the road in front of me and I do not know what may be round the corner, but, with Gilmour of Mongolia, I can say "Heaven's ahead, Hurrah!"

*8th March, 1917.*

**BOOK I.—INTIMACIES**

## CHAPTER THE FIRST

### THE MAP OF THE ROAD

AFTER much hesitation, and still with lingering reluctance, in view of the sixtieth milestone of my life, I yield to pressure brought to bear upon me from various directions and set down in writing, so far as my memory still carries them, such of the events of my ministry as seem to be notable. In earlier days I kept a record of incidents, and preserved letters and mementoes; but one day I burnt them. I wish I possessed those relics now, but it was doubtless better to escape the fancied peril of that day than to provide for the need of this.

It may be permitted to me to state briefly the plan of my life. After a preparatory period of two-and-twenty years, I have now served in the Gospel for thirty-eight years. Fifteen of these were spent as evangelist in connection with my leader and friend, C. H. Spurgeon, of whom I shall have other words to say in a future chapter; eighteen years have been spent as pastor of the church worshipping at Melbourne Hall, Leicester; and five have been given as Home Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, a position in which I hope I may be permitted still to serve while strength for the service lasts.

I am Irish, but I have lived in England all these years of ministry, save only at such times as I have



been privileged to travel to a considerable extent in Europe, and with a more limited radius in Africa, America and Asia, at one time taking a prolonged and extended journey into China. I have met men under all conditions—saints and sinners, statesmen and wastrels, scholars and peasants. I have spoken before all sorts of people, to small meetings and crowded assemblies, to fifty thousand people and to five persons, in stately church and in wooden circus, in the open air and, as the subsequent narrative will show, in places more memorable. I have seen the Gospel of Christ prevail in all circumstances, and have witnessed both the sudden conversion and the gradual unfolding of the soul, the first rapture of the new life and the last testimony of the dying believer, the enthusiasm of the zealot and the patience of the martyr.

In company with my colleague and brother, Manton Smith, of whom I shall also have something further to write, I visited every part of the British Isles, and on one occasion went to Paris, holding missions, sometimes of a fugitive character, sometimes extending over months; now doing a bit of Salvage Evangelism, and, like George Whitefield, hunting for poor souls in the ungospelized wilderness; now helping brother ministers to gather in those over whom they had watched and prayed for years.

Whatever may be the experience of others, I find that now, even after thirty years or more, I never go into any centre of population without somebody coming to me to bear testimony to conversion or other direct spiritual blessing during those missions. I have found the fruit of them in the Far East, and in the cities of America, as well as at home. A generation has almost

passed, and yet the witness remains. Crossing the Atlantic lately, a minister in conversation informed me that he noticed that there were still remaining on his church roll a number of names which had been added about the same time in the year 1880. Having the curiosity to inquire, he discovered that they were the result of the mission we had the privilege of conducting in his town in that year.

This morning, as I write, a brother minister has come into my room and described his preaching experiences of last Sunday, where he found that no less than three officers of the church voluntarily bore witness that they were led to Christ during those days of evangelistic ministry. There is no use speaking to me of the failure of the Gospel; I have had too many evidences of its power. There is no use speaking to me of the fruitlessness of missions, when I find ministers and missionaries, church leaders, and consecrated Christians tracing their first impulses to such efforts.

Doubtless the conditions of to-day are different in many respects; but while people may justly object to the vagaries of unbalanced workers, I never could understand why they should applaud the preaching of the Gospel twice a week, and object to its being preached twenty times. True, the twenty times a week in one place, if it were continued, would put too great a strain on the people of that place, and that is the whole genius of making such appeals special and occasional. Sometimes I have found these services advertised as 'evangelical,' but it is a reproach to any church if all its services cannot be put into that category. The special services should be 'evangelistic,' but even then

the Church misses its high vocation if the evangelistic appeal is only heard from vagrant men at infrequent intervals.

No work for God is easy, but all work is delightful when it is in the way of His will and in the power of His Spirit. That which lies nearest to each man always seems to be the most difficult. In those mission days it became monotonous to be told in town after town that "this is the hardest place in the country." Each man spoke out his own thought, and his place was no doubt the hardest place to him, but in comparison with other places the superlative was superfluous. These hardest places were often the harvest places. I remember once when we were warned to expect little by a man who had himself once been a successful Gospeller, a great work of grace began, and when somebody asked him what he thought of it, he answered, "Well, it is contrary to my twenty-five years' experience." I can only say that my thirty-eight years' experience shows that when the time to favour Zion is come, then even the wilderness rejoices, and the desert blossoms as the rose.

In reckoning the sum of life, it is to me a matter of devout gratitude that I have been permitted to be pastor as well as evangelist. If I were to be asked which sphere I would choose, I would answer, "Both." But I am more than content to have served in one after the other, and in neither without signs of God's blessing. Life owes me nothing, and God has done for me exceeding abundantly above all I asked or thought. As evangelist one was more in the public eye, as pastor one was more in the people's heart. The quick spectacular results of the evangelist's life are missing in the pastor's service,

but there is the delight of watching the development of character, the maturing of gifts, and the growth of the children into, and in, the kingdom of God.

Lest I should be misunderstood, let me say that experience has convinced me of what I always believed, that even the children of Christian parents need themselves definitely to yield to Christ; nevertheless, it is the pastor's guerdon to claim and train these young people in the ways of God, and to watch the unfolding of the spirit from childhood to youth on to manhood and womanhood.

I have only been pastor of one church, but that is so large and so multifarious in its activity that it has afforded as wide a range of operation as any man could desire. Of course, there have been difficulties—the pastor who is without difficulties is without anything. But I have had the kindest of people to deal with, and the most willing supporters and helpers. In our church, for I am still a member of it, the Spirit and the Bible have been ever supreme as we have sought to rescue and to comfort men and women; we have always been conscious of the touch of the Divine hand as we have given the touch of human sympathy; and humbly I hope that the eighteen years in one place, with service often unheralded and inconspicuous, have brought as much glory to the Master as the former fifteen years more widely advertised and acknowledged.

But Leicester was a centre as well as a sphere, and the circumference has reached to the ends of the earth. I may be forgiven in saying that I would feel my life to be incomplete if it had not contained the missionary element as well as the pastoral and evangelistic. From

the Church with which I have the honour to be identified there have gone, and are going, missionaries to the lands afar ; while many of us who are staying at home have learned by prayer to do missionary work in other countries.

I have not been a missionary in foreign lands, but I may claim to have been a missionary traveller. When in 1907, in company with my friend, Charles Edward Wilson, I was sent to China, the meeting of the Church which released me for that important and somewhat hazardous embassy was so solemn that some who came to oppose my going, chiefly for my own sake, found themselves hushed before God ; and I say in all sincerity that it is my confident belief that as surely as the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them," He said it concerning us to the Church at Melbourne Hall at that time. We went forth called of God, furthered by the Church, and some of the experiences of that memorable journey shall find a place in this narration of the way God has graciously chosen and used one who, with a deep sense of personal unworthiness, yet dares to glory in the Cross of Christ, and to boast in the Lord all the day long.

The reward of service is always more service. On my way home from China I received at Ceylon a letter from my younger daughter telling me that she had volunteered as a Newnham student for China, where she is serving to-day. But I little thought then that I too should be called to such close identification with the Missionary propaganda as is now my privilege. I shall never forget the day when the Missionary Committee, standing, received me in the historic room

at Furnival Street, around the walls of which hang the portraits of the great men of the century, and in their name, their chairman, my friend Sir George Macalpine, invited me to undertake the secretariat in conjunction with my colleague of the East. Nor can I forget the spirit in which the Church at Leicester again received the indication of God's will and made it easier for me, though it was difficult for us both, to make the severance. Nor can I cease to cherish in my heart the remembrance of the great welcome I received in the Queen's Hall when the crowded assembly rose to greet me, nor the unfailing kindness and consideration I have received these five years from the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, and from the ministers and churches that support it. I should be less than honest, too, if I did not bear testimony to the debt I owe to my brother, Charles Edward Wilson, the Foreign Secretary of the Society, who unselfishly made way for me at the beginning, and unstintedly has helped me along the years. He himself, after honoured service at Serampur College in India, was called to the direction of the operations of the Society at home, and stands to-day one of the leading figures in the Missionary work of the world, whose guidance and help are valued far beyond the bounds of his own Society. If I gave way to the feelings of my heart I would express my obligations to many others who are with me in the Mission House, for indeed I owe much to them all.

What is perhaps the crowning honour of my life awaits me, when in reponse to what I am told was the enthusiastic vote of the Assembly last spring, I hope in a few months to enter on the Presidency of the Baptist

Union, and serve in conjunction with its honoured Secretary, the Rev. J. H. Shakespeare. Whatever else the arrangement may achieve which makes a Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society the President of the Baptist Union, it will at least afford evidence that the artificial and largely imaginary line between the work of God at home and the work of God overseas has ceased to exist. So forward, from the sixtieth milestone, in the name of Emmanuel, until the day's work be done.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND

### THE OLD HOME

AT the junction of the Botanic and Lisburn Roads with the Dublin Road in Belfast there stands yet the old home, one of two houses with a dwarf cottage nestling at the corner of the block, a clock over the door. I believe I was resident in two other houses previously, but of these I have the faintest recollection. I only remember that in one of them I heard one night the sound of weeping, and in the morning could not understand why my father lay so still when I was taken into the room where they had brought him after an accident which crushed him between two stacks of swaying timbers.

The old home is now a boot shop, and I ventured, on a visit to Ireland, to ask permission to go over it. What memories were recalled as I went from room to room, memories of my boyhood, of my mother, of the early days of Christian living! I noticed the number still on the door—121, and recalled, as I had often recalled before, the hundred and twenty-first Psalm, with praise to Him Who is the faithful Promiser, and the Unsleeping Keeper of His people.

The hall and the parlour now form the shop, and the kitchen that lay behind is an ante-room. It was hard to realize that in this front room we gathered, and



on great days feasted. I remember the things in the room of which we were, as children, so proud, a few of them valuable, most of them quite ordinary, but all of them treasured. Here I have sat long into the night studying : one of my Bibles has many annotations made in this room. It was by no means quiet during the day, with the trams passing the doors, but at night, with the curtains drawn, the noises were shut out. When I was a boy my two favourite books were Edwards on " The Freedom of the Will " (the volume had been my father's) and Soyer's Cookery Book: the physical and the metaphysical have always been blended in my life.

When I went upstairs I recalled how for years that little room on the first landing had been my bedroom, and further up on the first floor another room equally sacred in other years. Here also was the drawing-room, with a bedroom off it without other approach. Still upstairs there are three other rooms with low windows. In this, the largest, I remember one of my sisters lay ill with smallpox, and here my mother died on the 22nd of March, 1882.

Dear mother! She was early widowed, my father having been killed on the 29th of August, 1860. Brave and self-reliant, she kept on for some years a brickyard, one branch of his business (I remember the interest with which I watched the tiles squirming out of the machine), and until the end she had the concession from the Penryhn quarries of supplying Bangor slates to the town. I recall as if it were yesterday, when I was about fourteen and she was ill, that I went down town and sold a cargo of slates for her.

For years she had a presentiment that she would

die of cancer. Whether that was a prophetic instinct or whether the thought produced the disease I do not know, but one day she went to a specialist and received her doom. She came home, opened the door with a latchkey and stepped on to the mat inside. And she, who had always been in secret terror of this very thing, found that the peace of God met her there as she stood, and she never feared again. When I think of her standing there alone, finding grace sufficient for the need when it came, I think of two other scenes : of the great outer gate opening to Peter of its own accord, and of the Frisian martyr of whom it is said that when they brought her out to be burned " Fear fell from off her as a garment, and she sang a hymn."

My mother lingered for many months. Twice I came over from England in expectation of the end, and, in spite of our natural reserve, we held sweet converse on the highest things, but I was unable to reach her in time when the end came. My two sisters waited on her with devoted patience ; during the final day at intervals she kept calling for her only son ; in the evening, when only a maid sat at her bedside, she opened her eyes and, seeing her, said, " Oh, Eliza dear," and was gone. Her departure was like her life : there were no raptures, and no heroics, and no pretensions in either, but always a courageous heart and an unflinching faith.

To the shadowed home I came next morning, leaving a Mission in Chelsea in the midst, and travelling all night by the Irish Mail. I know that deep sorrow can cause deep sleep, for the guard had to shake me at Holyhead to awaken me : and I have never been hard since then on the disciples that fell asleep in Gethsemane.

It was in that same room that something was lost when I was a boy, and, as I was the only boy in the house, of course they blamed me for it. We looked everywhere we could think of and failed to find it. Going down stairs on the first landing there was a window, the water cistern was just below it, the window was open, and I remember how the thought came to me "God knows where it is," and I wondered whether, if I asked Him, He would reveal it to me. I had no conscious knowledge of His grace, but I put my head out of the window, and looking up to heaven, I prayed. Instantly I thought of a place where we had not looked, and, bounding up the stairs, I went to it, and behold, there was the thing that was missing! Of course they blamed me more than ever for hiding it, but I did not care, for with a rush there came to me the thought that I had touched God, and I have no doubt that that was one of the earliest impulses in my life towards the service of Christ.

In my early years I was frequently a guest with an uncle and aunt in the country near Lisburn, and became very interested as a boy in the farm life, and in the hand-loom weaving in some cottages near by. Sometimes the cottagers invited me out to dinner, and I distinctly recall gathering with the family round the table, on which was placed a hoop, and then potatoes boiled in their jackets were poured out of the pot inside the hoop, and a little pile of salt put before each of us, and we helped ourselves. We had buttermilk to drink—fresh buttermilk, one of the finest drinks in the world. That was the simple life.

In a volume entitled "Irish Methodist Reminiscences" there are references to the apostolic zeal of my father's

grandfather, John Lyons, who seems to have been a minister of the Methodist New Connexion. In a footnote to a passage which records that the Rev. S. Nicholson visited Smithboro' and "preached at Mr. Fullerton's, son-in-law of Rev. J. Lyons, near Lisburn, and felt the Divine presence," the author says, "Grandfather of Mr. Fullerton, one of Mr. Spurgeon's Evangelists. The seed sown forty years ago is seen to-day." This grandfather of mine was a Wesleyan Methodist. My great-grandfather Lyons, probably of Huguenot ancestry, seems to have been a flame of fire for Christ, travelling through rough and unfrequented parts of Antrim and Derry and preaching in market-places, fields and high-ways. "When in his prime he was like a lion in physical strength and courage."

From the old home I went to the Model School, where I got most of my education—Mr. Moore, the Head Master, making the deepest impression on my memory, though the Mathematical Master, Mr. Wren, made me his protégé, and developed that side of my mind. There is no need to write of school-pranks, though "an I would I could." Years after I was in Reading, and having some meetings in the Presbyterian Church, I went to tea with the minister, Dr. Nathaniel Ross. He said, "I only knew one other person of your name, and he was a schoolfellow of mine." I looked at him, and suddenly it dawned on me, "Why, you are not Nat Ross, surely!" And it turned out that he and I were the competitors for arithmetical speed. Dr. Ross has since then distinguished himself in South Africa. Dr. Hanson was also a scholar in the school, almost leaving as I entered.

To get to school there were two ways, and toward the twelfth of July to go one way meant that you were stopped and asked to curse the Pope ; to go the other it was equally necessary to curse King William. I have seen boys come into the school with wounded heads because they resisted. As for me, as I was not prepared to curse either of them, I went a long detour until the days of excitement were over.

Of course, there were the welcome holidays. At Christmas there were money prizes, and I remember that I devoted the first money I ever earned to the purchase of a turkey for the Christmas dinner, with no small pride in the achievement. In the summer we went to the seaside, generally in the steamship "Erin" to Bangor. The first occasion was memorable. I was awake early, and thought we should never start. When we got outside, my mother proposed that I should take her hand, but it was not likely that a young gentleman of some six summers was going to be led about by his mother like that, so I declined. Besides, I think it was the first day I had on long trousers. She did not argue the point, but at a convenient opportunity she slipped to the other side of the road, and when I looked from the tail of my eye to find her, I discovered she had gone, it dawned upon me that I did not know the way, and I set up bellowing like a great baby that I was. Of course she flew back across the road, and taking me in her arms she kissed away the tears, and kissed back the smiles again. After that I was quite prepared to let my mother lead me. Which things are an allegory.

From the old home, too, I went to business, serving my apprenticeship of five years to the staple trade of

Belfast—linen. At Broadway it was chiefly the manufacture of damask table linen, and the jacquard looms, with the designing and card cutting, the weaving and bleaching, the beetling and calendering of the product, the lapping and marking and papering, and a dozen other processes, until it came to account-keeping and stock-taking—all appealed to me, until at the end I think I may fairly say that I knew the business.

Then came a call to London from an old Irish house that wove damask in Lisburn and sold it in Pall Mall East, in the premises that now adjoin the National Gallery, though then, I believe, there was another house nearer, which has since been demolished because of the risk of fire to the Gallery. Here I had to do with all ranks of people and came into touch with the world—the county world, the club world, and, after hours, with the religious world, as shall be set out in the chapters that follow.

To the old home I came at intervals, until there arrived the days of sorrow and bereaval, and then there came a long break. And now it is a boot shop.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD

### THE OLD SANCTUARY

IN the centre of Belfast it stood in a square of its own ; and the last time I passed it, it seemed like a bare and solitary island, upon which beat on all sides the busy life of the day. Blackened by years of smoke, and shut in by its locked gates, it appeared cold and solitary, the grass-grown paths untrodden by worshipping feet. In architecture it was a miniature Parthenon, with trees growing on three sides ; and behind it were the school-room, the minister's manse, and the cottage of the caretaker.

To me, it is a sacred spot. There, I found Jesus Christ as my Saviour ; and there, for fifteen years, amidst Presbyterian folk, I worshipped God. Almost in infancy, I was led within its walls by my mother's hand, and I remember how elated I was when I heard her say to some one that she would be a proud woman when she was able to come to church on her son's arm ; I grew instantly taller that day, for I was the only son of my mother, and she was a widow. Ah, old sanctuary, how I loved thy courts ! How often was I glad when they said to me, " Let us go up to the house of the Lord " !

The church was famous in the land,—a centre of light and leading ; and its ministers were famous, too. In all its history it had but two leaders, Drs. John Morgan

and H. M. Williamson : it was built for the first ; and before the ministry of the second ended, the congregation had determined to erect a new house of prayer in a rising suburb. Its first minister was an ideal pastor ; its second was just as ideal an evangelist ; so the old sanctuary has had a perfect history.

We used to sit in the corner pew on the front row of the gallery, hard by the side of the pulpit ; and from my exalted niche I took a weekly survey of all that went on around and below. I recollect the ministers ; but my first and greatest memory is the sexton,—I remember his name even to this day. Perhaps I am wrong in calling him sexton ; he was the church-officer. We never got as far as naming him beadle or verger ; he was the church-officer. It may be that, through my boyish eyes, he was glorified ; but I have never seen his equal since. Dressed in shiny black clothes, with a spotless white cravat, a little man, with a noiseless tread, it was something to see him, three minutes before service time, ascend the pulpit stairs with "the books," and place them lovingly on the pulpit cushion ; then he looked round on the congregation, to see that everybody was in his place, stroking the tassels meanwhile : the people were as gratified as he appeared to be. That preliminary ritual was the event of the day to me when I first began to go to church. Everything else was in the nature of an anti-climax.

The first minister was a little man with a big heart. From the dim recesses of memory, I call up his figure ;—grey-headed, but wearing a wig, somewhat bent, with the collar of his undercoat an inch above the collar of his topcoat, and his black-rimmed spectacles, bought



in Smithfield at eightpence per pair. He always said that these eightpenny ones were better for his sight than any others. He was noted for his knowledge of his people; he knew not only the names of all his congregation, but the details of their history. He would meet the children, and, laying his hand on their heads in benediction, would call them "John," or "Mary," or what not, and win their hearts for ever.

To be absent on a Sunday was to have a visit from him during the week; and when he came to a house, it was a very solemn and notable day. I remember how he was once shown up into our house when the children of the home were in a very merry, romping mood. Great was their consternation when they found the good man standing at the door with eyes wide open in wonder. I am afraid I do not remember much of his ministrations during his visits. The only thing I clearly recall is that he had been able to retain his voice unimpaired by the simple means of bathing his throat in water every morning, and rubbing it vigorously with his hand. I made a mental note of that at the time—though then I never expected to be a preacher—and have found it ever since a most efficacious method of preserving the voice. Little did the good man think that that was the chief benefit which I was to receive from his visits.

As to his pulpit ministry, he was not an orator. His voice and manner were *couthy*, if English readers know what that means. I can scarcely believe that there was much originality in his sermons. On my desk, as I write, there is a large volume, his "Commentary on the First Epistle of John," published by Clark, of

Edinburgh, in which there does not seem to be a glimmer of genius, though it is all very devout and good. It is inscribed to my mother, "with a Pastor's prayers"; and I expect it was more by his prayers than by his preaching that he gained such a deep influence over such a wide area. On Sunday mornings, we would wait for some sentences that were never missing when he led the people to the throne of grace: he never forgot to pray for "the widow and orphan, the stranger and the fatherless, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the soldier and the sailor"—a very comprehensive utterance, to which the hearts of his people made a yearning response. He very frequently talked of good men, "who caused the widow's heart to sing for joy," and in saying the words he almost glided into what the Welsh call *Hwyl*; and of bad men that he "hated with a perfect hatred," the diminutive preacher looking almost fierce as he uttered the words. He seldom got excited in the pulpit, but the subject that roused him most was that of foreign missions. His church used to give the largest collection in the country; and as he raised his little red hands, and pounded on the pulpit, his people used to nod approvingly, and say (not during the service, of course, but at the first convenient opportunity), "Ah! the Doctor knows how to get the money out of us."

When I was young, he was an old man; and he had the good sense to know when his powers were failing, and to urge the congregation to secure a colleague and successor.

In due time, his colleague came to us from Aberdeen—a giant physically and spiritually—a great burly man,

in perfect contrast to the old minister ; with a certain affectation of speech which at length had become natural to him, and a mincing of words which was oddly at variance with the presence of the man who used them. The cherubim were always to him the "kerubim." Psalm was always "Sam." It was worth while coming to the sanctuary to see him as he sailed into the church and up the steps in his pulpit robes ; he seemed like a king ascending his throne.

He came to us with the reputation of a revivalist, and some of the congregation left at once ; others of them stayed for the sake of "the old Doctor" ; and one of the leading men indignantly remarked, "The Doctor preaches to us as if we were all saints, but this man preaches to us as if we were all sinners." He knew as little of the families of his people as the old pastor knew of eloquence ; but he knew much of God and the Gospel ;—not a weak, twaddling gospel, but the deep, strong, magnificent Evangel of the great God.

I do not think he found preaching easy. In later years, he often spoke of the burden of preparing sermons for the same people. He had the greatest contempt for anecdotes and little bits of poetry ; why, I do not know. In his grand church, he always seemed under restraint ; and though he preached well, the congregation did not increase. It was a town church, of course, and people were moving to the outskirts ; but that was not the whole reason. He was too uncompromising for most people, too straight, too aloof, too spiritual. Those who loved him loved him vehemently, and those who heard him most found it very difficult to listen to anybody else. He never published anything worthy

of his name, but he was a mighty man in the Scriptures. His week-night expositions of Galatians will long be remembered by the little company that gathered to hear them. And when he got down to his mission-hall, and spoke of Christ as the Door, or of the Valley of dry bones, he was at his best. In many another town than his own, when there was a moving of the waters, the first thought of the people was to send for him ; and when he went to them, he went as a veritable apostle of Jesus Christ.

Those who knew him will recognize the man behind my mist of words. In my mind, no doubt he is idealized ; but the real man was, in every sense, head and shoulders above his fellows. Like his predecessor, he had the honour of being Moderator of the Assembly ; and, like him, had the degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred upon him ; and, at length, full of years, and, alas ! also full of sorrows, he fell asleep.

Which of the two men—the pastor or the evangelist—did the greater work, it would be difficult to say. Under one, the old sanctuary almost filled ; and under the other, it almost emptied ; and yet, perhaps, it was circumstances rather than the man that emptied and filled the place. Both men were true ministers of Jesus Christ. They approached people from opposite sides, and probably the one was as necessary as the other to the growth of God's Kingdom. The head cannot say to the feet, "I have no need of you" ; nor can the feet say to the head, "I have no need of you."

From my perch in the gallery, shut in, not only by the pew door, but also by a seat descending in front of it, I looked out on the congregation. My nearest

neighbour was a man with silvery hair, who, when I got to know him better, was to me the embodiment of sainthood ; he was not successful in this life, but he left behind him a name untarnished and a memory revered. City merchants used to stride up the aisles, and solemnly take their places ; three bachelor brothers in particular are in my mind's eye, their name known over the world, who, not one minute late, and not one minute early, with unfailing regularity took their seat every Sunday morning. Grand dames, retired ministers, and common folk completed the congregation, with some deaf and dumb children who, like Timotheus, "sat on high" at the end of the gallery.

We sang the Scotch version of the Psalms of David—archaic and sonorous—for the most part. Often, we had Paraphrases ; but there were some members of the congregation, belonging to the old Covenanting stock, who felt it incumbent upon them to keep their seats if a Paraphrase was sung. As for hymns—well, we had some at the end of our Bible, as all good Presbyterian people know. They were five in number ; and, on the very infrequent occasions when one of these was announced, despair would sit on the faces of our protesting friends, and I think their sentiments would have been best conveyed in the opening lines of the last hymn—

"The hour of my departure's come."

Of course, there was a choir. With what eagerness the boy in the gallery used to note all the actions of these singers. The leader I first remember seemed to me, and yet seems, to be the very model of what a leader

should be. I think I still see his thin lips pursing up as he guided the choir more by joining them than leading them. He was our precentor; but the powers that were did not view him with such satisfaction as I did. I nearly broke my heart when he was dismissed. After him, and one after the other, came two musical geniuses, who had led the party of disaffection, and who volunteered to conduct the choir themselves. What searchings of heart there were as these men, hidden skilfully behind the minister's high chair, introduced innovations; first a *baton*, then a tuning-fork, and, finally—were we not on the high road to Rome?—a little musical instrument, half concertina, half harmonium; not to *accompany* the singing, remember; that would never have been permitted; but to give the pitch note. It was about this time that, in the General Assembly, the immortal debates on organs were held; and, amongst much other wisdom, it was gravely told of a precentor, in a Western congregation, who had been unfortunate enough to lose his teeth; and when he returned to lead the church singing, with a set of false ones, he was informed that it could not be tolerated, because the people did not believe in instrumental music!

The question of the collection was a much-debated point. I have always a sneaking affection for the method of my earliest boyhood, when the stately elder (for elders were always stately in those days; what a change in these times!) came to the end of the pew, holding in his hand the copper dish, fixed to a long pole, reminding one of nothing so much as a warming-pan; and, indeed, it *was* a warming-pan if you had forgotten your penny. He would pass this in front of the

people to the end of the pew, and draw it gradually back again, receiving the coins of the faithful. But amongst the changes the new minister introduced, this ancient and picturesque method disappeared. Instead of it, we had pedestals in the vestibule, and the aforesaid stately elders took their place beside these pedestals on which the collecting plate was mounted over a red cloth, and the worshippers deposited their offerings as they entered the sanctuary. But, alas! the last time I visited the church, I found that they had actually reverted to the seat-to-seat collection, without the long-handled ladles. For *auld lang syne*, I dropped in half-a-crown. I heard of it afterwards, as it was the only coin of that magnitude that day. But that fact has not prevented the people building a twenty thousand pound church in the suburbs.

The communion service of my boyhood was a most solemn and picturesque occasion. It only occurred, I think, twice in the year, and preparatory meetings were held during the previous week. I am afraid superstition sometimes mingled with the ceremony, but I am sure there was no flippancy; and I have often wished since, when I have seen the Lord's supper more frequently observed, that the same solemn spirit might be upon the communicants. It was at one of these preparatory services that my mother—long a communicant—was led to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. When we came to church on communion morning, narrow tables, covered with spotless linen, had been placed down the three aisles; and after the usual order of service, the tables were "fenced," and then the first contingent of communicants came out of their

pews, and took their places at the tables. I am not sure, but I think there were generally three contingents ; the lead tokens, which had been distributed by the elders, were collected, and then the symbols of our Lord's dying love were, with prayer and praise, and further address, distributed to the people. Not common bread, but shortbread was used on these occasions. Long before I was a communicant, I hungered for that shortbread ; but, alas ! when I joined the church it had disappeared, to give place to bread of which there is no shortness. Happily, the old crusted port has also disappeared, to give place to wine of a non-intoxicating character. That picturesque method of observing the Lord's supper was one of the things that afterwards was displaced amidst the changes of time. It was cumbrous and slow, no doubt ; but it induced a reverence of spirit which one would be glad to see restored.

The remembrance of these early days is, doubtless, more interesting to me than the account of them will be to my readers ; but I place on record the facts of the past, let them be worth little or much. It is something to get young people so interested in their church-life that they will enter into every detail of it, and think lovingly of it as I do of this old sanctuary. It was to me one of the greatest events of my young life when "the Session" decreed that the church was to be renovated ; the plaster ceiling to give way to a wooden one, the beautiful moulding on it to disappear, and the old pulpit to be broadened out into a platform. How scandalized we were that the Doctor's pulpit should be removed ! The idea of such a thing seemed almost



sacrilege. And then the windows on each side of the pulpit—windows of stained glass, fearfully and wonderfully compounded of the crudest colours, vivid yellows, and greens, and blues, the wonder and pride of my boyhood—wonders which I thought no church could equal, and I now hope none could; though, having experience of some village chapels, I am not sure; these were to go in deference to the dictates of modern taste. Well, it seemed as if the day of doom was about to break; but when we assembled in the church again, after our *conversazione* (you must remember that we never had *soirées* or tea-meetings), we looked around, and saw the beautiful wooden ceiling, the improved pulpit, and the chastened windows, and our hearts at length were reconciled.

Some notable discourses, heard in my youth, come to mind. I remember Narayan Sheshadri, the Brahmin of Bombay, with his white turban and native dress, as he held us spellbound; and Father Gavazzi, of Rome, as he thundered against the Papacy. Almost the day after Professor Tyndall delivered his address at the British Association, challenging our Christian faith, and specially our faith in prayer, I remember how Dr. Watts held forth to a crowded congregation upon the text, "Certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him." Epicureans and Tyndallites were demolished for ever as far as I was concerned. Dr. J. L. Porter, formerly missionary at Damascus, was a well-known figure; and when he preached, we used to listen for the sentence that, somehow, he always managed to drag into his sermons; and, despite our reverence for the meeting-house, we used to nudge

each other as he said, it seemed to us for the seventieth time, "When I rode my horse up the slopes of Olivet." As children, we often wondered if he would never get to the top. Pastor Bost, of La Force, too, pleaded there for his Orphan Homes in France. Dr. Barnardo preached there about the cities of refuge. Henry Grattan Guinness pleaded for missions; and when Moody came, his first Sunday morning drew to the old sanctuary an overwhelming crowd, to whom he discoursed on the love of God, touching my life, and doubtless many others, into new enthusiasm.

Many other notable preachers have "wagged their pow" in that pulpit. It would be tedious to mention them even if I remembered them, which I do not; but I do recall a young student, whose widowed mother—herself a minister's wife—was a member of the church. When he preached his first sermon in the place where he had so often been a worshipper, the ladies admired the new suit of black broadcloth that shone upon his back, and the men prophesied for him great things: but at the end of his University career he refused to sign the Confession of Faith, and drifted further and further from the church of his fathers, until at length he became the head of some Socialistic Brotherhood near London.

The last time I visited the old church, with my family, there was a dread array of empty benches. True it was holiday time. I thought my children would be impressed by what had impressed me as a boy: but—woe for the degeneracy of the present age!—the thing that struck them most was the Ulster pronunciation of a word of the text. The preacher was talking about John the

Baptist, and several times he quoted John's word to Herod, as if he had said "Thou shalt not *halve* thy brother's wife," upon which the young people afterwards remarked that they thought it was about the last thing Herod would want to do.

And so amid tears and smiles I took farewell of the old sanctuary. It is now no more. The stately Assembly Hall stands in its place.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH

### THE OLD SUNDAY SCHOOL

THE old Sunday School building lay behind "The old Sanctuary," and at its left side—a symbol, for those who could read it, that the school was the heart of the church. It consisted of two stories—which naturally governed the division of the school into two parts—and was approached in four different directions. From the road at the back, there was a direct entrance into the lower division ; while a gateway in a lane at the side, as also a path from the church at the front, and a somewhat tortuous passage leading past the minister's house and at the back of the church, gave entrance to another door at the other end. From the bright daylight one stepped, beyond this door, into awesome shadows, and stumbled up the staircase to the realms above.

Now, in the march of modern improvements, the old sanctuary and the old school have both disappeared, and the curious will search for either in vain ; but over the world are scattered those whose hearts may, perhaps, be touched into recollection by the description which, in very inadequate words, I propose to give of the place where many of us first learned the Way of Life.

I have said that the school was divided into two portions. The upper room, where my experience began, was again divided by a partition, with a brass rail and

running curtains, the girls on the far side, and the boys on this. Of course, being there, I was supremely convinced, as we all were, that it was in all ways superior to the room that lay below. A certain amount of lazy assumption tends greatly to the comfort of life.

We had, as our Superintendent, a man of God, calm and dignified, deliberate in his movements, and solemn in his utterance ; to me, he always appeared to be an old man, but perhaps that was because I was young. There were also two other Superintendents, one in charge of each room, of whom I may speak presently, and a Secretary, all alert, and always in evidence. It has been well said of our Superintendent, that he loved the school, and loved the scholars, but that he loved them themselves rather than their esteem. I have been told that he used to take the register of the classes home with him, each quarter, and pray for each scholar separately by name ; and, doubtless, many blessings have come to those scholars, in after life, through the prayers of this saintly man. Yet, such is the inconsistency of human nature, he would pass the very scholars, for whom he had been praying, without a word—at least, that was my experience. A syllable from his lips would have made me his slave, but it was never spoken. Though I was long a scholar, and some time a teacher, in the school, I absolutely never said a word to that Superintendent, nor had a personal greeting from him.

We never had any prizes, nor outings, nor tea-meetings ; we were all too sedate for junketings or competitions. With our severe code, such things would have seemed utterly out of place. I am not quite sure that we are

altogether gainers when we allow the natural atmosphere to be entirely replaced by the intensely spiritual ; certainly, breathing becomes more difficult the more highly rarefied the air.

The great occasion, however, was on Communion Sunday, which came twice a year. All the school would be gathered in the morning, in the lower room ; and our Superintendent, with the unction, received, doubtless, while on his knees, which then I felt, but scarcely understood, would read the story of the Crucifixion, in Matthew xxvii., pausing always at the end of verse thirty-six, and, with tears in his voice, reading it yet again, until the solemnities of the scene were pressed upon our young hearts as we heard the words repeated, "And sitting down they watched Him there." The old man has long since passed to his reward, but his memory is still fragrant. When I next meet him, I will not, for very reverence, allow him to walk on without speaking.

The Acting-Superintendent of our room was a man of altogether different mould. With resonant voice, and deliberate utterance, he opened and closed the school. His manner inspired confidence, and commanded attention. He had his own private rubric for the prayers, which were very comprehensive, and I believe any one of us there could have repeated them word for word. They were none the worse because they were so often used ; indeed, I think we liked them all the more.

In our room, we had a pipe organ, though in the adjoining sanctuary such "a kist of whistles" would have been thought a most sacrilegious innovation, and

have been deemed abhorrent to God. As we were not accustomed to instrumental music in the sanctuary, we valued all the more our opportunity in the school. It was always considered a high honour for the boy who was called up on the platform to blow the organ by diligent manipulation of the handle at the side. For years I waited to see if such a rare distinction would fall upon me ; and once, and once only—I confess it with shame, only once—I had the high privilege accorded to me, and then I am not quite sure whether I kept wind enough in the bellows. I have never been a purveyor of wind. Honours fall very unequally in this world, and I can only reflect that, sometimes, those who deserve the most get the least. But I am prepared to assert, before all the world, that I was once honoured, and that actually once I did the deed.

We had our own little hymn-book, and a very good collection of old-fashioned hymns it was ; there were no chorus pieces—America had not yet invaded England—and very few hymns about lilies, and stars, and such things. Upon entering the school, each scholar received a leaflet, gummed, to be put inside the cover of the Bible, containing rules for Sunday School scholars, which ran somewhat as follows :—

1. Come regularly and orderly to school, and depart orderly and quietly from it.
2. Love your teachers, and listen earnestly to what they say.
3. Prepare your lessons during the week, and prepare them well.
4. Pray for your teachers, and ask the Holy Spirit to bless their instruction to your soul.

I had three teachers. At first, my class was in the top corner, and for years I was taught by a man who afterwards went out in the Civil Service to Korea. Of the lessons in that class, I have not the faintest memory. My only recollections of it are, first, of a Sunday when, in the morning, I had from the library a book entitled *The Mirage of Life*. Always a quick reader, I took it home, and though I had also been at the morning service, I finished the reading of it, or so much of the reading as interested me, by the afternoon, when I returned with the book, and asked for another. The result, however, was that I was detained after the other scholars, and gravely reprimanded for saying that I had read the book in so short a time. My respect for my teacher did not increase when he asserted that it was an impossible feat; indeed, I was the more inclined to agree with Mr. Haig Miller that life was only a mirage, its anticipated pleasures fading as we approach them.

I am afraid the other boys in the class were not models of propriety; of myself, I say nothing, for as even the worst offender is not called upon to incriminate himself, why should I be rash with my words? To this day I have a recollection of a new form of diversion which some of the lads once attempted. They brought to the school some "buckies." (I believe in England they are called hips, though I cannot quite get the authorities to agree on the matter.) "Buckies" are the berries that grow on briars; and if the reader is not aware of the fact, I may inform him that they contain some very hairy seeds. I will not assert, being ignorant on the subject, that it is mentioned in the latest book on botany that these seeds are meant for the purpose to which,



on that particular morning in Sunday School, they were devoted, but that was undoubtedly the faith of the rascals who used them that day. They believed—is not their act a proof of their faith?—that they were intended to put down the backs of good little boys! Before I was aware of it, quite a number of these tormenting morsels had been pushed between my shirt and my skin. At first, the result was somewhat pleasing, and I did not resent it; but let any one, who is not prepared to take my word for it, only try the experiment, and he will find that, of all the irritating things on earth, the hairy seeds in “buckies” are the most irritating. I was in torture before the school was over; and that instant, like a madman, I flew over the mile of road that divided the school from my home, and in frenzied haste tried to evict the intruders: not until I had torn my clothes off, and bathed my back, was I able to consider the question whether life was worth living.

By-and-by I was promoted to another class, where I was able to touch the partition which separated us from the girls. My new teacher was a shrewd Scotsman, and the bent of his mind was quite evident in that his lessons were mostly from the Book of Proverbs. My chief recollection is that I learnt the important lesson that “a continual dropping on a very rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike”—a lesson which, acting like a danger signal, I hope has had some influence in guiding my path since then. What a world of wisdom is contained in these Proverbs of the Book! That young student well merited the rebuke of his professor, when, on his assertion that it was quite easy to write such proverbs, his tutor handed him a sheet of paper,

and told him to write some ! The facts are, that it is much easier to read them than to write them, and that the most difficult thing is to translate them into life. Still, though the Proverbs predominate in my memory, I owe much to my Scotch teacher ; many a bit of the Evangel he taught me, and I treasure the lessons I learnt at his feet.

My third teacher only occupied the place for a brief interval, but I think he has left the greatest impression on my life. He was a theological student, and he came burning with zeal for Christ, and touched a responsive chord in my heart, and I believe in others, too. He was not only a teacher, but a friend ; and I remember writing to him, when he went home on his furlough, and his appreciative response was long treasured. It is things like these that bind scholars and their teachers. To this day, the memory of an evening I spent with him at the Divinity Hall is fresh with me. He probably lost sight of me, but I watched his career with unflinching interest ; and when, a few years ago, worn out in body, he departed to be with Christ, I felt that the world contained one friend the less.

Occasionally, as I have already hinted, both divisions joined in the lower school. On Communion Sunday there was always a united missionary meeting, when either some well-known missionary, or some prominent advocate of missionary work, visited us. Once, Dr. Andrew Bonar came ; and amongst other things, he told us that he had asked the children in his school to write out what they thought was the most wonderful " numbering " in the Bible, and that, when the replies came in, he was most pleased with the answer of one who

said that the most wonderful numbering was, "He was numbered with the transgressors." Surely a memorable answer, again illustrating the Master's words, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God hath perfected praise."

Is it any wonder that I speak in loving memory of "The Old Sunday School," when it was there I first found the Lord, or that I think with tender affection of the man of God who was permitted to say the simple words which led me into the liberty of the sons of God? He often spoke to the school after that memorable day, sometimes about Andrew bringing his brother to Christ, or the priest being anointed on thumb and great toe, or other kindred topics; and all his words were treasured. One of the four or five of the teachers, then in the school, who are living now, tells me that he once came to her class, when they were reading the twenty-seventh Psalm, and afterwards, with his face all alight, looked at each member, and simply said, "The Lord is my light." It was as if they had received a shock as they gazed at a man of whom the words were so evidently true.

By-and-by I was permitted to be a teacher, and then I went to the lower room, where a benign and saintly man, whom I afterwards came to know much more intimately, was the Superintendent. To me, he seemed an ideal leader. He had not, perhaps, such an unction as the chief Superintendent upstairs, but he came near in human fellowship both to scholars and teachers, and took an intense interest in the school, and in each individual composing it. I grew very fond of my class of boys—some of them very poor, and some on a higher level in the social scale. One of them, I remember, one

day said to me a thing I never forgot, "Teacher, we are never by ourselves, are we? For, when there's only one of us, there's always two of us." If the grammar is doubtful, the sentiment is unquestionable.

When I began, in a timid way, to preach, I remember that I arranged one of my earliest cottage meetings in the home of one of my poor lads, which I had visited. I was then in business, and my first bit of sick-visiting brought me unalloyed joy. One day I went without my dinner in order that I might take a few oranges and things to the sick mother of my scholar. I cannot, even now, forget the blessing that came to me. It always lays emphasis on the exhortation of James that the true ritual of religion is, "To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction"; and nothing tends more than this, I am convinced, to keep us "unspotted from the world."

With great trembling, I stood up, at length, to conduct the teachers' prayer meeting after the school. My knees knock together, after all these years, at the thought of the effort of will that was necessary to enable me to assume such a large responsibility. I have spoken to more formidable meetings since, but never with greater trepidation. I was but a boy, and all the others were people of consequence; at least, I thought so then; and even now I cannot quite get away from early impressions, though I must confess that, on subsequent encounters, none of them seemed to have grown in dignity. Let me hug my fancy, even if it is a delusion, that at least once I have led a really important assembly!

When, at length, I was called from my native city, I quietly slipped out of the school; a lithographed

souvenir was presented to me, by the managers, as a mark of affection, on which it was certified that I had attended for twelve years—two years as a teacher. The date, 28th March, 1875, carries memory back to a generation that has vanished almost as completely as “The Old School.” If, at the end, the work of our life shall have been as effectually performed, we may be well content that the house shall be taken down.

## CHAPTER THE FIFTH

### THE MESSENGER OF THE ETERNAL LIFE

WE may have ten thousand instructors in Christ, but only one father, and I, who after the flesh never knew a father's care, but have as the earliest recollections of my childhood the memory of my father after he was killed lying in his coffin, treasure all the more the remembrance of the man who led me to Christ—H. M. Williamson, afterwards Doctor of Divinity, and then and afterwards minister of Fisherwick Place Church, Belfast.

I had but entered into my teens when I entered into the Kingdom of Christ, and I rendered to the man who said the illuminating words the devotion of a disciple. To my boyhood's imagination he was a hero, in my manhood's judgment he was both saint and divine, and as I sat yonder on the front seat of the gallery at his right hand I drank in the Word of Life, and had my soul shaped by his ministry.

It is impossible for me to forget the date of the Franco-German War—July, 1870—for when the peace between France and Prussia was broken, peace between God and me was made. I do not put down this statement in the strict theological sense. I know that Christ made peace for me and for all His people long ago on Calvary ; but in my experience, peace between God and me, and peace between me and myself, was made in the year

and in the month I hold sacred. If any one should say that a boy scarcely thirteen years of age could hardly have a spiritual experience worth noting, and could not be the subject of an enduring conversion, I willingly come forward as witness to the contrary.

I had long heard the Gospel, and long desired to be good. Trained in a home where there was always at least the outward observance of religion, though for a good while none of us were Christians, I always had desires after better things. When the new minister arrived in our church he evidently viewed things from a different angle, and he certainly spoke with a different accent, from the old pastor whose colleague he had become. He did not give the people credit for knowing the elementary things of the Gospel, so he preached them, and set forth the beauty of the new life until I began to desire it.

Well I remember my futile attempts to begin. One Sunday morning I made up my mind to be a Christian, and never doubted that I knew what to do. I must leave off this evil thing, I thought—and already evil things had place in my life—I must do this good thing, I must read my Bible more, and pray more, and repent, and weep if possible. That evidently was the proper way. So I began. On Sunday I prospered well, and on Monday and Tuesday I almost succeeded, but on Wednesday I made some serious slips, and gave it up in despair. But that was the less matter, for I began again the next Sunday. It never occurred to me to begin on the Thursday. In my self-confidence I thought I knew where I had gone wrong, and that I could guard against the danger. So I read my Bible more diligently,

and prayed with increasing devotion, prayed until sometimes I fell asleep on my knees beside the bed, I watched more carefully, and imagined I repented more deeply. Often I wept and hid the tears. Why should a boy of twelve weep? I wept because of my sins, chief among which was a sudden and flaming anger, which led me to say and do things I regretted afterwards with almost infinite regret. // I remember to this day banging my cousin's head with a tea tray until I made mimic thunder for the lightning of my wrath. For such things as these I scorned to say I was sorry, but, nevertheless, I wept before God; but it was of no avail. // Again and again I began on Sunday, and on Tuesday or Wednesday—or, in exceptionally good weeks perhaps, not until Thursday—I went despairingly wrong; indeed, I was wrong all the time. //

It must not be supposed that I was always in a penitent mood; indeed, I question if anybody else realized that I was ever penitent. My eldest sister confessed Christ about this time, largely through the influence of Payson Hammond, and she had to bear a good deal of persecution from her brother, who often thought to still his own longings by teasing her.

// Then came the wonderful Sunday afternoon when the new minister was to give his first address to the Sunday School. He said many things, no doubt, but I can only remember one sentence, and that was the living word for me: "All you have to do to be saved is to take God's gift, and say 'Thank You.'" Here was a new and a great light. Hitherto I had been trying to get God to take my gift, and trying to make it great enough to be worthy of His acceptance; and lo! it was



I who had to take, and it was His to give. Simply and quietly that Sunday afternoon my heart turned to God, and I took the gift for which I have been trying to say "Thank You" ever since. I have not yet learned to say it well, but I keep on trying to say it better, and some day, by infinite grace, I believe I shall have learned to say it perfectly.

I honour the memory of the man who led me to Christ above most men, and there are countless others who owe him a similar debt. I remember the fellowship I had with Dr. W. P. Mackay, the author of "Grace and Truth," in the fact that Williamson had also spoken to him the saving word.

He lived on the eternities and was not perhaps one of the most practical of men. He was sometimes so absent-minded that he passed his own children in the street, and he was never popular in the ordinary sense, for he never descended from the heights on which he lived. Not quite acceptable either to his brother ministers—one of them suggested to me lately that a man who came from Scotland and won the blue ribbon of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was not likely to find his brethren prejudiced in his favour. He was loved only by the elect, but by them he was loved fervently. With a heart aflame with love to Jesus Christ, and a passionate devotion to the Gospel, he was never more in his element than when he was dealing with seeking souls. In his own pulpit he was somewhat constrained, and when I saw him in London, once at Marylebone Church and once at Mildmay Conference, he made no particular impression. But as he spoke in mission halls or in field conferences, or as he went about

the country in Scotland during the revival times in the sixties, or in Ireland in the revival of 1874, he was a very apostle of Christ.

Born near Armagh, he ministered first in Dunblane, then at Huntly and Aberdeen, and afterwards at Belfast, where at length he fell asleep. He was a member of the famous Huntly Band, organized by the Duchess of Gordon. As her pastor and friend, he was associated with such men as Brownlow North, Reginald Ratcliffe, Duncan Matheson, Hay Macdowell Grant of Arndilly, and others. Dr. Alexander Whyte was for some time his assistant, and in his account of his own experience Dr. Whyte says: "At the end of my first year, when my Airlie savings were just run out, as God would have it John Wagnall, the student's bookseller, sent a message to Oreland College saying that Mr. Williamson, of Huntly, wished to see the first year's student. Huntly and its heavenly suburb Kinnoir will never be effaced from your principal's thankful heart." At the Edinburgh Missionary Conference I spoke to Dr. Whyte about it, and a new glow came into his eyes at the remembrance.

My late friend, John More, for some time Chaplain of the Forces, was also in those early days a member of the Huntly Band, and as we co-operated in evangelistic work, both in Cheltenham and in Woolwich, where he ministered, I think his unfailing friendship for me was largely due to his allegiance to Williamson. More than once after an address of mine he would say, "there were a good many hooks in that sermon—that is Williamson's way." I gladly consented, and was proud to think that I bore the marks of my upbringing.

Mr. More recalled to me more than once an incident

when some members of the Huntly Band, himself and Williamson amongst them, went to Rhynie on the fair day to preach in the open air. They took their place on the stand, but nobody came to listen ; and, defeated, they returned to the Free Church Manse to pray. The Manse was immediately opposite the fair ground, and as they were praying they heard a commotion, and one of them looking out saw the preaching stand surrounded by a crowd of people. They had been asking the Lord to show Himself strong on behalf of His Word, and the observer cried as he saw the throng, " He's come, He's come." God had answered their prayers right speedily. Yet it was all very simple. The Duchess of Gordon's coachman, after he had put up the horses, strolled down to the fair, and seeing the preachers' stand empty, it suddenly came over him that he might preach himself. No sooner had he taken his place than the people, who were not attracted by the black-coated Evangelists, flocked to hear the man dressed in such stylish livery. When the preachers of the day hurried out the people still waited, the power of God rested on the Word, and that evening the Free Church was filled with enquirers. More described it as the most wonderful thing he ever saw. And in the Manse that day there was a boy, the Minister's son, who afterwards became known to the world as Mackay of Uganda !

When Donald Fraser visited Aberdeen he said to a young minister, " Have you met Mr. Williamson ?" When he answered " No," he received the reply, " Ah, well, there are not many sharp arrows out of the Word that he has not shot." Nothing could be truer than

this. Nobody I ever knew could probe deeper into a sinner's conscience—somebody said he used to skin them alive; and nobody could more clearly lead to the verities of the Gospel.

His pen was not freely used, though now and again in a newspaper he would make a straight Gospel appeal, or publish an occasional sermon. No biography of him has been written. I could quote many of his sayings, but these would make a chapter of their own; a few examples must suffice. In later years, at the close of a meeting which we had conducted in the Ulster Hall, Belfast, I espied Dr. Williamson, who had slipped in to share in the after-meeting, and I ventured to call him to the front and ask him to tell the people what they had to do to be saved. The unexpectedness of his reply lodged it in everybody's mind. He simply quoted the text, "To him that worketh not but believeth," emphasized it by a few words, and left it as a nail fastened in a sure place.

In seeking to dispel the doubt of seekers he sometimes told the story of an old woman he had tried to lead into assurance of salvation. "Ah!" she said, "I haven't got Him, but I won't give Him up." And in illustrating the way God uses unlikely instruments, he instanced the raven that brought the meat to Elijah—"It was not his work, but he got the job."

He emphasized the truth that Christ receiveth sinners by saying "He began by saving a harlot and he ended by saving a thief." "'Come unto Me,' what is that but Christ beckoning with His hand 'This way, this way to Me,'" ; and as a bit of Christian experience this—"Some say, Get out of the seventh of Romans and into the

eighth. My best prayer for you is that you may get well into the seventh."

For Spurgeon he had a great regard. "Some one has called him the last of the Puritans," he said. "Not so! The last of the Puritans shall not be seen till the Mystery is fronted, till the number of God's elect is filled. Sovereign grace will need Puritans while the world standeth."

He became so widely known as a faithful ambassador of Christ that sometimes men who did not want in health to hear him, called for him when they were dying. There is one incident which, after the lapse of years, may, I think, now be told without reserve. A man who had amassed a considerable fortune as a squatter in Australia sent for him, and directly he entered the room handed him a signed cheque, telling him that he might fill it up for any amount he liked, and devote it to any object he chose. It was all done without any warning, and a decision had to be reached on the instant. There were a dozen directions, in any one of which the money could have been usefully spent; but Williamson refused it on the spot, and, looking the invalid straight in the eye, answered, "I know what you mean: you think the giving of this money will get you to heaven. I dare not encourage you to think that." He would not say peace, peace, when there was no peace. Then he endeavoured to get the poor rich man to receive the gift that would make him rich toward God: with what success I do not know. After his death it was found that the money had been willed to an excellent public object; some blamed the servant of Christ for missing a share of it for Christian enterprises; but

to him the welfare of a soul was more than all riches. I sometimes wonder how many of the rest of us would have been so heedless of the money, and so eager for the soul.

When his wife, to whom he was devoted, and on whom he was so dependent, was taken from him, his people wondered how he would face the trouble. The man stood revealed in his simplicity, his faith, and his singularity, when he quietly announced his subject, "God is love." That text in on his tomb ; that truth he has embedded in countless hearts, in mine amongst others, and, with eternal gratitude, I humbly lay this little wreath upon his name.

## CHAPTER THE SIXTH

### I DISCOVER MY LIFE'S BUSINESS

THOUGH I was alive during the great North of Ireland revival in '59, I was but a child. Afterwards I heard a great deal of it, but there are always two sides to such a movement, and I am sorry to say that I generally heard the wrong side. So in my early days I had no prejudice in favour of revivals—quite the reverse. But the visit of D. L. Moody to Belfast was an epoch in my life, as it was in the lives of thousands more. Long before he came I shared in the impulse from God which his visit to our land brought with it. The rumour of the work in Edinburgh crossed the sea, and some men, ever eager to welcome the signs of God's visitation, went over to share in the grace, and, if possible, to bring the evangelists to Ireland. My minister was amongst them, and when he came back and reported to the church prayer meeting what he had seen, my spirit was stirred. His wife had accompanied him, and out of the slender "Songs and Solos" of those days she sang some of the quaint hymns which were then unfamiliar. The piece that specially came to me as a revelation was, "More to follow"; it was, indeed, prophetic of my own experience. I could say with Wesley, in Aldersgate Street, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." Moody promised to come to Belfast, but

that would be many months hence, and I was not able to wait, for Moody's God had spoken to me.

Already I was a Sunday School teacher, and hopefully trying to lead the lads to Christ ; but beyond the personal knowledge of salvation, I needed to be clothed with power. I had never opened my mouth in public, nor dreamed of opening it. If any one then had told me that I should ever be a preacher, I would have laughed, and all my friends would have laughed, in his face. I was the shyest of the shy, almost blushed at my own shadow, and in spite of long experience and much practice, though in accustomed ways I can face a congregation without a tremor, till this day I am still shy and nervous in new places and circumstances.

The Young Men's Christian Association gave me my outlet. The report of God's work in Scotland stirred us up to pray, and every night in the week I went to the prayer meeting. During the day I lived over the meeting of the night before, and every day determined that I would break through my reserve that evening and lead the meeting in prayer ; and every evening I failed to do it. I do not believe I ever should have had courage to begin but for the habit I had formed, in imitation of a godly man whom I much admired, of standing up before the Lord at prayer time. One evening in the little meeting in the Association rooms, which were then very small compared to the accommodation provided to-day, there came a pause, and before I knew it I had opened my mouth. Afterwards I was panic-stricken, but my mouth was opened—I hope never to be closed. Then I began frequenting the mission room connected with the church of which



I was a member, and the missionary there, William Maxwell, and another worker, McLean, who also had his man, entered into a conspiracy to thrust them both out into the field. So it was arranged that the two of us were to begin a cottage meeting in the kitchen of a selected house. I need not stay to tell the story here, but it was a great event when I gave my first Gospel address; greater still to listen to my friend, Joseph Bromley, a convert from Roman Catholicism, whose voice, when he spoke, easily sounded to the end of the street. He is now a minister in America.

It was during these days that I had the joy of leading my first soul to Christ. After one of the meetings we walked home together, and, in response to my pleadings, he confessed the Saviour. He was in the same business house as myself, and we walked the streets a long time that night. I was chided for being late home, but I am not quite sure that I even heard the chiding; I was in the seventh heaven of blessedness.

At length came the long-looked-for day, and Moody and Sankey arrived. Those to whom such movements are familiar can have no conception of the revolution that can be made in a young life by such a ministry. My name was never on the list of converts—it could not be, for I was converted before—but nobody in that mission was more influenced than I. When we reckon up the result of such efforts to-day, it is well to remember that in varying degree it is still true that the best results are those that are never counted, and that many a holy impulse comes especially to young hearts which it is impossible even to weigh or to tabulate; a beam of light that will not change the

most sensitive scale a hair's breadth, will change the face of nature.

Shall I ever forget that early Sunday morning when we gathered in May Street Church, a great, throbbing crowd, and Sankey sang the hymn, "Here am I, send me"? Years after I told him what it did for me. And then when Moody spoke on the weak things of the world confounding the mighty, I had my confirmation service. The tent at Keswick had not then been pitched, nor the meetings at Brighton and Oxford held; but if ever a follower of Christ had his second blessing I had mine that day. I have had many another since, and expect still to have more. But though I knew it not at the time, and could not have explained it till long afterwards—perhaps, indeed, I am not able to explain it to-day—I verily believe I was then and there filled with the Spirit of God. There were other services that followed, but none so inspiring as that one held while yet the dew was on the ground.

The next night in Rosemary Street Church we had the great sermon on "No Difference," and there was a crowd of inquirers afterwards. I was very young and very raw. I was not ordained for the service, nor asked to engage in it; but it never occurred to me to do anything else than to speak to some of those seeking souls. Much to the surprise of my minister, who was himself busy speaking to some groups of people, I began to speak, too, and presently he came across to see what was happening. He listened, and in a trice gave me a card authorizing me to do the work that I had already begun. What an apprenticeship it was! What rapture filled my heart, as God used me again and again, and

as people stepped out into the light! To point people to Christ then and there became my business. I have already said that I was engaged in other business through the day. Morning by morning I went to the far end of the town to engage in it. The nearest way was across some fields, over stiles, and down lonely lanes, and morning by morning I went singing and praising God, praying and exulting in the Saviour. Since then I have often had times of rapture with Christ, but never more than in those months when every new morning gave me more of God, and every evening more of the souls of men.

There is no need to characterize Moody when all the world and all the Church knows his worth. "The greatest human I ever met," said Drummond, the man who accepted Henry Varley's challenge to let the world see what God could do with a man wholly consecrated. But stay, I do not believe that even Moody has shown the world what God can do with a wholly consecrated man. The vision yet tarries. There is still more to follow. But how great was this man, how great in his modesty, and in his boldness, and in the grace that he brought to these our islands, and in the power that he wielded afterwards throughout the world! Truly his own text was fulfilled in his own experience—he had set his face like a flint and he was not ashamed.

Before the mission in Belfast concluded, my one cottage meeting had grown to three, and as the months passed I was compelled towards the close of the year 1874 to go to places round about the city, notably to a farm house on the Cave Hill, to Ballydrain and Ballymyskaw; and so ripe was the harvest every-

where, that even the most bungling swing of the scythe held in my unpractised hand seemed to mow down sheaves of ripened grain.

In the providence of God I came to London just as Moody's great missions were beginning. There again at the Agricultural Hall and at the Haymarket I was permitted to help in some modest way. I was occasionally at Bow and Camberwell, too, but at that time these sections of London were out of my beat. Night after night I have heard the great evangelist tell the people that he was going to speak to them on the most important topic that could engage their attention. The subject was different each night, of course, but the introduction seemed always to be justified—every topic was the most important, because it was present truth. Sometimes as I pass I look at the Carlton Hotel, now on the Haymarket site, and contrast its present days of human luxury with those other days of divine splendour.

At Islington it was my good hap to meet Henry Drummond, and again at the Opera House in the Haymarket I was amongst his bodyguard. This, too, I count among God's good gifts. His meetings for men in the small Agricultural Hall are remembered, but I wonder does anybody else remember the smaller meetings in Orange Street Chapel, off the Haymarket, which he conducted night after night? He had not then risen into fame, but he was the same Drummond whom to know was to love. The thing that lingers with me is his story (I have seen it printed somewhere) of his dealing with a coachman when his host put him on the box in order that he might speak to him—how

as he sat beside him on that Scotch drive he enticed him to give the reins of his life up to Christ, the strong and wise Saviour, who would ever more be at his side.

When the great evangelists returned again to England I was an evangelist myself. I met them time after time, and I owe them more than I could say in many chapters; here I only make the record of my debt, without attempting to pay it.

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

### THE MASTER INFLUENCE OF MY CAREER

THE name of Spurgeon and the name of Grattan Guinness, in my young days in Belfast, were, in our circle, names to conjure with. In after life I came to reckon both as friends, and very early in my London experience I swam into Spurgeon's orbit. The morning and evening of the first Sunday I spent in London found me at the Tabernacle. With what wonder I viewed the rapt and eager congregation, and with what delight I listened to the sermon from the singular text: "The full soul loatheth a honeycomb, but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet"! It was to me as the honeycomb to the hungry, and my satisfaction was increased when, after a meeting at the West Branch of the Y.M.C.A., I found myself in the evening listening again to the same voice as the preacher discoursed on, "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another."

Not for some time did I join the Tabernacle Church. I became in fact a member of Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, then under the ministry of Dr. Boyd. After Moody's Mission I sought to gain and to give help in various directions. I offered to assist in any way in several missions amongst the poor, but, like Noah's dove, failed to find a resting-place, until I came back

to the ark that had at first sheltered me in London. I moved to the South side of the city, and was launched out on a career of service, quite lowly at first, preaching at street corners and in the lodging houses of the Borough. Those Sunday evenings in the lodging houses can never be forgotten; the sights and sounds and stenches come to me as I write.

Soon I was deputed to the charge of a mission in Kensal Green that involved a twelve-mile walk every Sunday evening, and afterwards, to my inexpressible joy and benefit, I was appointed to take the services every other Sunday in a little chapel at St. Mary Cray, in Kent. Associated with me in this work was my friend, who is still an elder at the Tabernacle, Joshua Chamberlain, and very soon we mutually entered upon another work in London in White Hart Square, Kennington. Those years were charged with grace. My colleague was one of the sweetest singers I have ever known, and to hear him raise flute-like the song, "Show me Thy face," and to see the rapture on Spurgeon's face as he sang it, was an experience to remember. In addition to these Sunday services we began to take little missions in and around London, and so helped in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

All this brought me into occasional touch with the beloved pastor, and as the years passed the links became stronger and stronger, until I may say without reserve that I became his friend. He wrote to me frequently (I have a great sheaf of letters in his own handwriting), and he allowed me to help him in various ways. When he lay ill I received from his home a telegram every

morning giving the bulletin for the day. His name is engraved eternally on my life, and if I were to recall all I know of this Greatheart, whom I acknowledge as my master, I should exceed a hundredfold the space at my disposal. So I must content myself with a few personal cameos.

Often I was at his home. The occasion sometimes was one of those memorable evenings after the College Conference, when a few of the men were invited to what often proved the climax of the week, frequently ending with the Lord's Supper; sometimes it was to seek fellowship and guidance in the midst of the mission work that afterwards fell to my lot; sometimes to meet other visitors or to rest after a drive through the Surrey lanes; once at least it was after I had preached on a Sunday evening in his study, Mrs. Spurgeon sitting by. As a guest in the home I have breakfasted with him in that same room, just we two, and have entered into his intimate thoughts. Those who think Spurgeon a narrow bigot little know the breadth of his vision, nor his longing for human sympathy. He used to laugh when he was lampooned—he said to himself that he deserved it all; but when he was overpraised, which was often, he became depressed, because, as he has told me more than once with tears in his voice, "I know it is not true." In the Down Grade Controversy he did himself less than justice, he was so anxious for the truth that was dear to his heart. He wanted fellowship, and yet, lest the Gospel should suffer loss, he felt driven to wound those who might have been his allies. Though I was young enough to be his son, he sometimes turned to me for help. As I write I am amazed at my privileges.



What a man he was! What a lover! What a friend!

I have been with him on holiday. Entertained on one occasion by Mr. Duncan, at Benmore, in Scotland, who, adjoining his house, had built a picture gallery as big as the Tabernacle, and collected into it a wonderful collection of pictures and statuary, I have heard Spurgeon preach on the lawn to thousands of people gathered from all parts of the surrounding country, and have driven with him over the hills. At one place—Colintraive—a party of four of us found only two rooms available in the little inn, and drew lots to fix our places; mine was with our host, and Mr. Higgs was placed with his pastor. I recall the excitement of a good woman as we walked that evening along the beach. She came running up to two of us, crying out, "Spurgeon's here! Spurgeon's here!" One especial day I remember when we went out in the launch fishing in Loch Eck, caught a salmon, cooked it on the lakeside, and feasted in royal picnic fashion. How these memories abide! One Sunday morning I preached at Kilmun. I went upstairs to prepare, and he was amongst the others downstairs. As I sat in my room I heard a gentle knock at the door, and when I opened it found him outside: he had climbed the stairs, no very easy task for him, to help me. "I have come to pray with you before you go," he said. Then we knelt down, and he prayed as he might have prayed for himself, that I might be helped to preach in power. His prayer must have been answered, for Mr. Alexander Allan, who was in the church that morning, became from that day a liberal subscriber to the Evangelists' Fund. But there was

the human side to the incident too, for the next day Spurgeon pointed out the house next door to the church with a notice exhibited, "Mangling done here," and insisted that that was where I had preached. What a companion he was! What an observer! What a hero!

As a student I sat at his feet. When I first came to London I was in business—and on three different occasions Mr. Spurgeon invited me to enter his college. I had no intention of being an official minister, but God's plan was fulfilled for me at last, and I entered the Pastors' College. Spurgeon there was at his best: it was the privilege of a lifetime to listen to his college lectures, and to see the soul of the man as he cast aside all reserve. When he told us that Barnes wrote much of his Commentary on his knees, and we were expecting him to urge us to greater prayerfulness, he pawkily added that, good as the Notes were, they probably would have been better if Barnes had sat in an arm-chair. As to doctrinal preaching, he reminded us that John Newton said that he put Calvinism into his preaching as he put sugar into his tea; and then he added, "Don't be afraid to put in an extra lump now and then." He was accustomed to say that "the best preacher is the man who charges his gun with all he knows, and then, before he fires, puts himself in." He would sometimes preach to us himself: the sermon he preached to the Baptist Union at Leeds on "Christ Crucified" was first delivered to his students. There were asides in it then that were missed afterwards: "*But* we preach Christ crucified—that is one of the Newington *Butts*." Even when he was absent his influence made an atmosphere which

was a Divine tonic. I studied hard, but I continued to preach frequently. Some objection was made to this, but Spurgeon encouraged me to keep at it. "That was what I did," he said; "when I began, I preached in the evening what I learnt in the day, and so I never forgot it." Those who poured water on the flame of my early zeal were not aware that there was one behind the wall pouring on oil. What a champion he was! What a leader! What a saint!

In the earlier years I heard him preach some of his greatest sermons. Two of them given on different occasions on his return from Mentone are unforgettable: "I have yet to speak on God's behalf," and "Supposing Him to be the gardener." Frequently, I have sat behind him ready to take the service if he failed, but the presence of an understudy generally carried him through.

On many occasions I have preached for him; I find a record of a hundred and twenty-nine sermons in the old Tabernacle, besides those I have given in the new. Always at watch-night, and not infrequently at the regular services of the church, and often at special missions I preached. Sometimes on Sunday evenings during the missions the crowds spread over to the other side of the road—the tramcars had once to cease running for a while. Not that everybody approved. Spurgeon was fond of telling a story against me about two old women, Tabernacle *habitués* who after one of my efforts declared that they did not approve of the preacher: "he's too hanalogical and hallegorical," they said.

Once I was called at an hour's notice to conduct the quarterly open service, when the seatholders had vacated

their places in favour of strangers. That was the most trying service of all. The preacher who had been substituted at the last moment was met on his appearance by a chorus of "tut-tut-tut-tuts" like the lapping of the sea round a shore.

Once I preached with Spurgeon himself. After dinner he told me his text, and assured me that he would only preach for twenty minutes, and that I should follow with twenty minutes more. Scarcely crediting his intention I nevertheless prepared a sermon on the same text, and found, when it came to be delivered, for he was as good as his threat, that the thoughts God had given to me aptly followed on those which he had spoken. His sermon is published in the regular series; part of mine has been issued in "A Finger Mark in My Bible," a little booklet that has been somewhat owned in leading people to assurance of salvation. The double text was, "Him that cometh to Me I will in wise cast out." What a preacher he was! What an expositor! What a divine!

During his illness, and after his death, I was permitted to revise many of his sermons. It would astonish some careless preachers to know how much they were revised. In those days, whatever the length of the spoken sermon, twelve pages of type had to be occupied; sometimes that meant the shortening, but more often the lengthening of the sermon. I think all the critics might be defied to discover what process was adopted in any particular sermon; when he recovered from his first illness Spurgeon himself could not do it, though he amused himself by trying. Mr. W. P. Lockhart, in the Memorial Service at Liverpool at the time of Mr.

Spurgeon's death, quoted two paragraphs from a recently published sermon as an example of Spurgeon's style. It was interesting to me, because they happened to be two paragraphs that I had supplied. The necessity of the case stilled any qualms I had in doing it, and the action so gained Mr. Spurgeon's approval that while he rested during what he hoped would be his convalescence, he recommissioned Mrs. Spurgeon, Mr. Harrald his secretary, and myself, to continue the task of revision on the same lines. Who can estimate the influence of these printed sermons? What a genius he was! What a worker! What a seer!

The room at Mentone where he breathed his last is known to me, and when his funeral services were held I was permitted to speak, with Ira D. Sankey singing, and Manton Smith by my side. When the coffin arrived at Victoria Station I was one of the little company to receive it, and as it rested in the Pastors' College, I spent, as the solitary watcher, some hours sacred to grief and to gratitude. During the time, with my own heart greatly stirred, I gathered a little group of students, and round that coffin, with our hands upon it in sign of fealty, we pledged ourselves anew to be faithful to the Gospel Spurgeon had preached, and the Lord whom he served. Then, alone, I walked to and fro with surgings of heart almost too solemn to be remembered.

When Spurgeon went from us, a rock that had stayed the drift of the desert sand was gone, and the years have only deepened the sense of loss. But he and we are waiting the day of the Lord's triumph. What a sufferer he was! What a witness! What a victor!

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH

### MY COMRADE IN MISSION SERVICE

THE hardest task of these records now confronts me as I endeavour to compress into one short chapter what I desire to say about my friend, J. Manton Smith. For fifteen years we laboured together in evangelistic work. Never was more loyal colleague. From the first day I knew him until at the end he wakened from his unconsciousness, on 17th July, 1900, and cried out, "Beautiful vision, Hallelujah," his life was both a benediction and a doxology. On one occasion we two were named "Wit and Humour," but a Christian lady gave a truer estimate, especially of him, when she called us "Peace and Joy." Spurgeon said that the sight of his face was as good as a fortnight's holiday.

His career was full of dramatic interest. In seeking lodgings at one house, when he first came from Northampton to London, he was greeted by the unexpected response that he could have rooms if he regarded the Sabbath. He replied that it was lodgings he wanted, and not lectures, but the good woman invited him into her house, welcomed him to her home, and, with the skill of a practised seeker of souls, surrounded him by influences which eventually led him to Christ.

He has told the story in his books, "Stray Leaves from my Life Story" and "More Stray Leaves."

Some of his incidents have become so largely worked into the marrow of my own memory that I may recount them subsequently. His first sermon was preached without intention ; he had undertaken to visit a village to announce that the appointed preacher was too ill to come, and the deacon of the church just said, " Oh, you'll do well enough for us," and, in spite of repeated protests, he was ushered into the pulpit. He announced a text, " Looking unto Jesus," and the sermon largely consisted of a repetition of it, with bits of his own experience as comments in between. In the evening he again spoke to the people, and on his return home he went to bed so fatigued that he declared that he did not wake until the Tuesday morning !

An incident which made a lasting impression on his life was the death of a minister of the Gospel who had become his friend. Even to the end of his career he was moved to tears as he spoke of it. His friend was taken to the London Hospital, and bore a beautiful testimony there in the operating theatre. Afterwards Manton Smith called to inquire about him, and the nurse said he could not come in, but the dying man, hearing his voice, said, " Yes, let him come." Then he took the hand of the young believer, and gave him the message which never ceased to echo in his heart. " Ah ! " said he, " Jesus has never left me once through it all. He has been my stay and comfort right along. And I must tell you He has been a deal more to me than He promised, through believing." He then gave him the details of the scarlet robe which had been put upon him for the operation, the table, and the testimony he had been able to give before the students, and went

on to describe the joy of the realized presence of Jesus with him. "And now," said he, "comes the message to you, dear brother. I shall never see you again on earth; I am going home, and you will follow and meet me there. But oh! *tell the people about Jesus!* I charge you to do this. If my Master would only let me preach one more sermon, how much I could tell the people, for I have learned so much more of the love of Jesus since I have been in this room." Then, with a tighter hand-grip and a louder voice, he added, just as his spirit passed, "Tell the people about Jesus. As long as you have breath, don't fail to tell the people about Jesus. As long as ever your blood flows through your veins, tell—tell—the people about Jesus!" The young disciple never forgot that appeal; it was henceforth the lodestone of his life.

Manton Smith was, in his prime, the finest speaker to young people I have ever heard; he could preach, too; and nobody could relate an incident with greater dramatic power. His rich, full voice, with perfect enunciation, made him a singer eagerly sought; he could lead a choir so as to gain its enthusiastic following, and he could play the cornet perfectly. Did I like that cornet? Well, if you had sat beside it at a thousand meetings a year for fifteen years, you would scarcely ask; but he liked it, and the people liked it, and in a large building it is undoubtedly the very best instrument to lead a promiscuous crowd in song. My colleague could do what I scarcely think any other man has attempted, sing the verses of a solo, and then lead the chorus at the end of each verse on the cornet. In later years he used a beautiful instrument, bearing the



inscription, "With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord the King"—the instrument the gift, the text the choice, of Mr. Spurgeon.

I first saw my friend in the Guildhall in Cambridge, where a meeting of children was gathered expectant of some speaker who had not yet arrived. When he came, with his flaxen hair, and ruddy face, his sunny smile, his sweet voice, and his cornet, a new light came into the children's eyes. Years afterwards he went out to evangelize with Alfred J. Clarke, who, after a meteoric career as brief as it was bright, was invalided to Australia. Then Mr. Spurgeon suggested (and he had but to express a desire to have it fulfilled) that I should join Smith. The letter was brought to me by Thomas Spurgeon, who has since become to me more than friend. More than once he has been my host. We have lived together in an appartement in Paris, have climbed Swiss glaciers in company, and I have often counted it a joy to stand at his side in the Tabernacle. When the first message came I was in the midst of a little mission in London, and after the evening meeting I journeyed to Bacup, to begin on 22nd April, 1879, what I could not then imagine would be a career of half a generation.

In the Rossendale Valley there is a population singular even in Lancashire. Many of the people have never seen corn growing, but the valley hums with industry, and wealth abounds. Those hillmen and millmen have opinions as decided as the clank of the workers' clogs which breaks the stillness of the morning as the day's work begins. Amongst these people I came a stranger, with a light touch as a preacher, to

take the place of a preacher who was effectively ponderous, and though I did not know it until long afterwards, after the first meeting they offered my comrade-in-arms a ten-pound note if he would send me back again. He refused, and his refusal was justified by the event, for before the week ended there were hundreds of people brought to Christ, amongst them the son of the very man who had been foremost in wishing me to leave.

From that time forth we went from strength to strength, visiting, with one or two exceptions, every town of any size in Great Britain, some places in Ireland and beyond, and many a village beside. Crowds gathered, and many thousands of people must have been converted. I recognize that it was Manton Smith who attracted the people to whom I preached. The crowds grew with the years, but we were conscious that fewer of the people outside the radius of the churches were touched as the times advanced, and that was, indeed, one of the impelling reasons for the dissolution of our partnership at the end. There was not even then the least lessening of our affection and esteem, and death itself "has not severed even the finest strand in the eternal cable of our love; the very strain has only twined it closer still, and added strength."

To do the work of an evangelist is not the road to fortune. Indeed, in any aspect, while the ministry of the Gospel is a most excellent calling, it is always a very inferior trade. Woe to the man who makes merchandise of the truth! My friend and I were in most cases received kindly, often with lavish kindness, in the places where we ministered. We were some-

times entertained in mansions, and sometimes in cottages. In one place my colleague declared that his bedroom was so small that before he could kneel to pray he had to open the door ; but even there the hearts of the people were large. We were never so badly off as those famous evangelists of Virginia, Poindexter and Broadus, who agreed to share equally what they received during their tour. After a summer's work in different places, they met only to discover that Broadus had received nothing, and Poindexter only a pair of socks, which they solemnly proceeded to divide, according to the agreement.

Yet Manton Smith left me a legacy—a legacy that has greatly enriched me, though I can never spend it. In the midst of his unconscious days he murmured, “By grace ye are saved,” and then, as his wife bent low to catch the rest, he added, “Aye, that's old Fullerton's text.” I am glad he was thinking of his friend, and though I do not know why he should associate that particular text with me, I take it from his dying lips as his legacy, and claim it mine. By grace he has entered into the heavenly rest ; by grace I follow on.

## CHAPTER THE NINTH

### THE PASTOR I FOLLOWED

ROUND a fifth name another group of experiences gathers, the name of the man I first met on the first Saturday of 1884, when I went to Leicester to conduct a mission which lasted for two months—F. B. Meyer. That mission was trebly memorable, for while it was in progress I also met her who has been my life's companion and solace ; and this, again, was the potent factor in my decision to become, ten years afterwards, the pastor of the church at Melbourne Hall, of which Mr. Meyer was the first minister, and she, with her mother, Mrs. Rust, a member from the beginning.

In those days Mr. Meyer used to call her his mother, too, and he was a frequent visitor in the home. Year after year I have eaten my Christmas dinner with him there, and laughed as in a cab he afterwards gathered Christmas puddings and took them to his rescued boys to spend the rest of the evening with them. He has always hated inaction, but the direction his force of character has taken, and the extent to which it has developed, have been the wonder and admiration of his early friends.

If a man was to be created to occupy such a position as his is now in the life of the Church, it will help us to understand something of the ways of God if we inquire

what should be the successive stages of his growth. For God does not make His leaders apart from discipline and experience. How should we begin to develop such another ?

First, there will need to be Puritan heredity and training. Noble character will never develop from easy, careless, uncontrolled childhood. It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth, and to be trained in ways of purity, reverence, and godliness. Of course, to this there must be added the arresting hand of God and personal decision for Christ.

Then there should come a spiritual influence, which shall impregnate the life with high resolves and knightly aspirations, giving distaste for everything low and paltry. A man such as Mr. Birrell, of Liverpool, whose son's name is even more famous than his own, would be a fit channel for such an influence.

To gain the goal we seek we would need now to ask for a Catholic enthusiasm, such as the advent of a Moody might give—an uplifting wave to sweep away the artificial and narrow boundaries of sect, and a Christly passion to bring the souls of men into the grip of the grace of God.

Into this amalgam of Puritan, Spiritual, and Catholic, let us now see worked something Natural. Let the man get away from bondage to others, and cease to be a copyist. Make him, in the old and good sense of the word, an adventurer. Free him to begin his life again, and, so far as he can, become original, working on the lines of his own being and following his own aptitudes.

Before our eyes he becomes a greater man, but there is still needed the mystical element—that sense of

the Unseen and touch with the Eternal which will raise all the other factors to their highest power. There is needed the vision which will make the man a seer, and the virtue which will make the man a saint, bidding him in a word become a partaker of the power of the age to come, power with God and power with man.

These five-fold characteristics will demand a sixth if they are to find sufficient scope for exercise. There must be added democratic sympathy. The man who loves God must love man ; knowing the power of the coming age he must be in touch with the age that is, and the men in it ; must know the good in men and the bad in them, and be ready, being also himself subject to the same temptations, to hold out a brother's hand to man as man, and to remove from the path of his fellows as many obstacles as may yield to his touch.

Let the growing life now be crowned with a fervid Idealism, filling it with devotion to great aims, and with sacrifice for holy ambitions. Let the man become a knight-errant, a champion for the weak, a voice for the soul of the people, a herald of the dawn ; and then pray that he may be long spared to use his sevenfold powers for the glory of God and man.

Leicester claims my predecessor as it claims me, and I believe that if he dies in England, his body will find in Leicester its last resting-place. His monument is Melbourne Hall, where, after five years' interregnum under the ministry of C. B. Sawday—a name ever to be held in honour—I was for so long his successor. Some curious ideas are current as to Melbourne Hall. Shortly before I left Leicester a lady asked me if the people had yet built me a church, or was I still preaching

in "that Hall"! There was in her speech a withering emphasis on the word "Hall." The fact is that Melbourne Hall and the buildings around it form a pile that could not now be reared for £20,000, and the Hall itself is more worthy to be called a cathedral than a church. It was designed for the work and by the efforts of my distinguished predecessor, and it is a worthy memorial of the years he spent in Leicester devoted to the publishing of the Evangel and the uplifting of men. Its name was given to it to remove any ecclesiastical obstacle that might have hindered men at that time from making it their spiritual home. It is, I believe, an open secret that the idea of the great Wesleyan Central Halls in the country was suggested by it. Melbourne Hall can therefore claim to be the pioneer of much earnest evangelism in the land.

After my marriage my home was in Leicester, even during my evangelistic days. During one of my absences my bedroom was occupied by C. T. Studd and Stanley Smith, and it was there that the scene so vividly described by Mr. Meyer took place. He says: "Never shall I forget a scene at seven a. m., in the grey November morning, as daylight was flickering into the bedroom, paling the guttered candles, which from a very early hour had been lighting up the page of Scripture and revealing the figures of the devoted Bible students, who wore the old cricketing or boating costume of earlier days, to render them less sensible of the raw, damp climate. The talk we held then was one of the formative influences of my life. Why should I not do what they have done? Why should I not yield my whole nature to God, working out day by day *that* which He would

will and work within? Why should not I be a vessel, though only of earthenware, meet for the Master's use, because purged and sanctified?"

At Regent's Park Chapel, London, I was again associated in happy fellowship with my friend during some weeks of special mission services, and shortly after he undertook the charge of Christ Church, Westminster, I ministered there. To his Men's Meeting that afternoon I used an illustration suggested by a conversation with one of the Dock authorities at Portsmouth. 'There was a steamer which plied from London to Portsmouth, such a lumbering, awkward craft that every time it entered the dock it either injured itself or the dock gate. In the colloquial speech of the quayside, it had a nickname expressive of the havoc it wrought. But one day it hove in sight, and while everybody was looking to see what damage would be done this time it sailed in easily and true. A bystander shouted, "Well, old Bust-'em-up, what is the matter now?" to which came the reply, "Same old ship, gov'nor, but we've a new skipper aboard!" I used the illustration both about the change wrought when Christ enters the life and the change that follows the coming of a man worthy to lead a church. The double result was that several of the men that afternoon yielded themselves to Christ (the story is told in Mr. Meyer's book, "Reveries and Realities"), and ever afterwards the men called their minister "The Skipper."

His pilgrimage from Melbourne Hall to Regent's Park, and thence to Christ Church, seems now to have been reversed. He has gone from Christ Church back to Regent's Park, and back again to Christ Church. Some



day Leicester will do honour to the memory of the man whose name, honoured in all the world, is imperishably associated with her annals. Melbourne Hall will stand as his best memorial when that eager brain and longing heart are still. May many years, crowded with noble deeds, lie between !

## CHAPTER THE TENTH

### LEICESTER AND BEYOND

DURING the nine years I spent in London I had four homes, two north of the river and two south. In the last Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain not only made me an inmate of the home, but a member of the family, and to the ministration of the gentle lady of the house, for which I can never be grateful enough, I owe health that returned after a time of physical weakness.

From this home I first went out on Mission Service, and to it I returned after longer or shorter absences. The visit to Leicester at the beginning of 1884 was destined to make a change, for there I met my wife, and there on June 25th of that year, in Melbourne Hall, we were married, a great crowd gathering to witness the wedding. From that time my home was for other nine years in Leicester, in the house of Mrs. Rust, my wife's mother, and my mother-by-adoption. There my two daughters were born, and there came as guests many of the excellent of the earth, whom it was an honour to entertain.

But none was more excellent than the dear mother ; none more yielded to Christ or instant in service. She founded, and was until her death at the age of eighty-seven, the President of the goodly band of Biblewomen in the town—some twenty or thirty of them ; and in her

earlier days was so frequently on errands of mercy among the people that her equipage became known as the Gospel pony and the Evangelical chariot. She was absolutely fearless in speaking for her Master. My friend James Mursell, as a student, once came to preach in Leicester in his grandfather's church, and was commissioned at the same time to collect the subscriptions for Rawdon College. When he called on Mrs. Rust her first question was, "Young man, are you converted?" Somewhat taken aback, he said that he had been preaching the day before; but the only answer was that that was not enough unless he himself had a change of heart. Of course, she offended some people, but many more were led to the Lord by her witness. At her funeral service, a man to whom she had often spoken without avail was so touched by the memory of her life that he received Christ as his Saviour.

There were many gatherings in that house—the drawing-room is one of the most beautiful in Leicester. On our wedding tour we bought at Neuhausen a musical table and a musical chair, which would begin to play if any weight were put upon them. These were in that room, and at a prayer meeting on one occasion one of the ladies unwittingly rested her elbows on the chair. It gaily started off with "The Blue Bells of Scotland," the poor lady being quite unconscious that she was the offender. There was no stopping it, and those in the secret hoped that it would play itself out on that tune. There was a pause, and again the elbows leant on the chair and "The Last Rose of Summer" began in the midst of a prayer, so that there was now nothing for it but to carry the offending furniture in disgrace from

the room, much to the consternation of the person who had unwittingly started the music, and not altogether to the increase of the devotional spirit of the meeting.

One story she delighted to tell of a scene in the train on the way to Ramsgate. A nigger minstrel came into the carriage, and a clergyman in one corner offered him a tract, only to be met by the question whether it was "something to eat." The clergyman did not know quite what to reply, so the man with the blackened face said he did not believe in God. On this Mrs. Rust, looking over the edge of the book she was reading, said quietly, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God." "What!" he said, turning fiercely on her, "do you call me a fool?" Looking him straight in the eye she said—and I can well conceive the piercing look she gave him as she said it—"No, I do not call you a fool, but God does—and you certainly look like one"; on which he subsided, and when the train stopped at the next station he got out, while the young clergyman thanked her profusely for her word in season.

With our headquarters in Leicester, Mrs. Fullerton and I, latterly with the two children, went evangelizing far and wide. But at length, in 1894, I became the Pastor of her church, having then been living in Leicester nearly ten years. Many of my friends warned me that I was making a mistake, but the way was clear, and I settled. On February 3rd my ministry began at the Saturday evening prayer meeting, and I shall never forget how the peace of God met me at the threshold of the Lecture Hall as I was entering. I had no doubt as to God's way before: that gave me double assurance.

So the eighteen happy years began, and, with scarce an ebb, the tide of blessing flowed all the time. I promised my second mother that I would not leave Leicester while she lived, and so it turned out.

Needless to say we had hosts of friends both in and beyond the Church of which I was minister. My sympathies have always gone out to all the saints. Once as an experiment I addressed a letter to "The Church of Jesus Christ, Leicester," asking whoever got it to be good enough to communicate with me that we might see whether it was possible for such a letter to be delivered at all. By return of post I received an answer from the Vicar of Christ Church, and he smartly said that it was only another instance of the intelligence of the Leicester Post Office that the letter had come without delay to his Vicarage. He also hinted that as his was a poor parish, any help I could send would be welcome. To which I replied that I was glad to believe that his Church was part of the Church of Jesus Christ, and I hoped that he would also admit that the Church of which I was Pastor was also Christ's Church. I made him the offer that if he would come and preach for me, I would be glad to go and preach for him. That ended the correspondence.

During these years of ministry the Church was generous enough to send me for a winter to Algeria, and to permit me to go to China. In Algiers I spent the most of the time at Hamman R'irha; baths—as the name implies—on the lower slopes of the Atlas Mountains. On the Monday, when we were returning, I had a branch of an orange-tree, with twenty-two oranges on it, packed in a specially prepared box, and showed it to the young

folk of the congregation the following Sunday, as an illustration of my "Children's Talk."

It would be impossible for me to exaggerate the debt I owe to the officers and members of Melbourne Hall. I gave them my heart and they gave me theirs, and then all else was easy. I never had an assistant minister, because all the Church was so ready to serve. We had three Deaconesses, and a Convalescent Home at Castle Donington; a church magazine distributed far and wide; and for some time a monthly sermon was published which made two volumes that are now no longer to be obtained. During the Leicester days, and before, I also edited for seven years a monthly magazine, and published a number of other volumes, all now out of print. The only publications of mine now procurable are the Carey lecture, "Christ in Africa," and the volume entitled "The Practice of the Presence of Christ," containing the addresses I gave last year at the Keswick Convention.

Here opened up another avenue of service, and in spite of the necessary limitations of such gatherings I can speak of much personal blessing at the Conventions, not only at Keswick, but at Killarney and at Portstewart, at Llandrindod and at Crieff, where I have been permitted to take part. The lesson of them all is just the abiding Presence of Christ, so that in the Christian life, having begun in the Spirit, we are not so foolish as to seek to be made perfect by the flesh.

In Leicester a man used to sit on the far gallery of Melbourne Hall on Sunday evenings, so intent that I noticed him specially. At length somebody told me that he was one of the leading Spiritualists of the town.

I wondered at his coming, for there was nothing in my ministry to attract Spiritualists. One evening when I was seeing people he came, one of the first. I greeted him warmly, and said that I was glad to see that he came so regularly to hear me. Quite bluntly he said, "I do not come to hear you"—which was rather hard on me. "Well," I responded, "why do you come?" And at length he told me: he was under the impression that every time I stood up to speak the spirit of Robert Hall stood up behind me, and he came because he declared he saw that great preacher quite distinctly. If it had been true, to have been helped by the most eloquent preacher Leicester ever knew, the greatest preacher of his day, would have been a great thing for me, though it would have been rather hard on him. But the assurance that the years have brought to me is that the herald of God's truth need never stand alone, for always there may be the consciousness of Christ's Presence, by His Holy Spirit; and quite simply I may say that it has become a habit, before public prayer or speech, definitely to receive the Holy Spirit for that particular service, and to His praise I can testify that in spite of the imperfection of the instrument He has been able to use it to do something for His glory.

I tremble to write about it, but I cannot refrain. At times the veil has been so thin, between ourselves and the Master, that it has almost been possible to see through. When my younger daughter lay ill with croup in London, it seemed as if one night she was past hope. The Christian physician, Dr. Cronin, who was attending her, had prayed in the room, and from the midst of a Mission I came home weary. I remember

anointing the child's chest with liniment, and then going to rest while her mother kept watch. Nothing can shake that mother's assurance that, a little while after, the Lord Himself came into the room and bent down over the child and touched her into health. The mother looked on breathless, the vision faded, and in the morning the child was better, and was soon well.

Far away from that, in Tsowping, in Shantung, China, when we were there, a member of the Church had been apprehended and put in prison for a theft which had been committed in the lady missionaries' house. He was undergoing torture, and Mr. Wilson and I were urged to intervene on his behalf. But though it seems hard in particular cases, it is an unvarying rule with the missionaries not to come between the people and the law of their own country. It was Christmas Day, and the missionaries, for our sake, sought to make it as much like a home Christmas evening as they could ; and we, largely for their sake, sought to enter into the simple festivities. But we were all of us thinking of our brother in captivity. That night I woke suddenly with a consciousness of a Presence in my room, and as distinctly as words were ever uttered in my hearing I heard the sentence "I was sick and in prison and you visited me not." In the morning our boy Marko came to that same room and pleaded that we would do something for the prisoner ; a little while after, almost the whole Church came into the compound, and when I went to them with Mrs. Nickalls (who came to translate) they kow-towed to the ground, beseeching that their brother should be rescued. I could only urge them to pray, assuring them that the Lord would deliver, and we prayed together,



confident that the Lord would help us. And that very day the captive was, for some unaccountable reason, set free. I saw him afterwards in the hospital at Tsing-chowfu, the very city where now that croup child is labouring as a missionary. So the lines of experience cross each other, and again and again we are assured of the fulfilment of the great promise, "Lo, I am with you always, day by day, unto the close of the age."

These chapters of "Intimacies" may close by recalling an incident from the experience of a doctor who was a member with us at Melbourne Hall. Unthinkingly he had booked two engagements for the same day, so he wrote on a postcard to a younger brother asking him to take one of them. The card was filled, and although at that time people were not permitted to write anything but the address on the other side, he turned the card and wrote "Be of good courage, brother." When the young man got it he had to pay a penny for the exhortation. The Post Office authorities, to show the reason of the surcharge, had stamped an official explanation, and it happened to fall so that the whole read like this: "Be of good courage, brother—Contrary to regulations!" In these troublous times I take the exhortation to good courage to myself, and pass it on to others, being well assured that it is contrary to no regulations in heaven or in earth.

## BOOK II.—ACTIVITIES

## CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH

### ADAPTATION OF METHODS

DURING the forty years or more of active Christian service which I have been permitted to render, there have been in it certain definite principles and lines of approach. Looking back over the fifteen evangelistic years, I recall the methods which experience almost hardened into a ritual because of their adaptability to the need of the time. Once Mr. Spurgeon wrote to me that there was no plan better than no plan, and no method better than willingness to adopt any method, and in this I cordially agree, so in years that followed there was a constant adaptation of means to ends,

When Manton Smith and I in the old days entered upon a mission, we almost invariably began with the children, arranging a meeting as large as possible for young folks on the first Sunday afternoon. From the beginning we recognized that the children have a primary place in the heart of Christ. My comrade was never more in his element than when he was speaking to a mass meeting of the Sunday Schools of a district ; he would hold them spellbound for an hour, and send them out bursting with delight : his sunny face, his picturesque stories and his cornet, all appealing to them. Not only were they themselves influenced, but after that they formed excellent advertisers for the mission in their own homes.

During the rest of the mission Saturday afternoons were usually given to the little people.

Having begun with those who were easiest to reach, we then laid plans to secure those to whom the approach was most difficult, and the second and subsequent Sunday afternoons were devoted to the men. The result of this was that a large proportion of men came to the other meetings. Sometimes, but not always, men's subjects were treated at these gatherings; but long before the era of Brotherhoods, even if the mission extended into months, we met the men, often in huge crowds, week after week, and not a few of those gatherings afterwards became permanent.

The next element of success was song. In all the meetings, singing, subordinated to the Gospel, was largely used. In his best days my comrade was one of the finest solo singers it was possible to imagine: to hear his rendering of the hymn "Rock of Ages" or "So near to the Kingdom" was a thing to remember, and his power of teaching the people new hymns and *making* them sing was phenomenal. At first we used to rest on Saturday evening, but at length, resting on the Friday, we invented "Song Services," selecting a number of pieces with a consecutive bearing on one subject. This made a great popular appeal, and gave my colleague ample opportunity to use his special talents, while I was able, between the hymns, to give a number of sermonettes. I look back to these Saturday evenings with nothing but satisfaction. They laid hold of many people who would never else have been attracted to the meetings, and it was such a little while between Saturday evening and Sunday that many of them came

under the influence of the definite evangelistic appeal the following day. We issued quite a number of musical publications, some of which had large circulations.

Not content, however, with the evangelistic appeal, we used our opportunity for at least three afternoons in the week, and sometimes oftener, for a Bible Hour. At first, following Mr. Moody's lead, we called them Bible Readings, but on one occasion I found my hostess habitually absenting herself from these meetings, and when I asked her the reason, she said that she was really too nervous to join in the reading of the Bible. The title almost justified her impression that it was the people who did the Bible reading, so to clear away that difficulty we promptly changed the title, and I fell so much in love with it that during my ministry in Leicester each Wednesday evening I regularly continued the Bible Hour. If I might be permitted to make the suggestion to my brother ministers, I would press upon them the desirability of consecutive and definite study of the Bible at stated intervals with their people.

During the eighteen years of my pastorate there I had the joy of going through the whole Bible twice, and of giving detailed attention to every book of the New Testament, as well as to some of the Old Testament. In addition to this, we made an extended study of such subjects as the Holy Spirit and Prayer. I also sought at the Bible Hour to tell the people in narrative form the history of the days of the Son of Man, and nothing attracted larger congregations, or evoked deeper interest, than the four evenings which were devoted to the simple telling of the story of the final twenty-four hours of our Lord's earthly life.

In review of the years, I am thankful to affirm that from first to last the people have been reached without resort to sensationalism. But please draw a distinction between sensation, which is the evidence of life, and sensationalism, which is the refuge of the charlatan. The servant of Christ should ever seek those things that are dignified as well as those things that are true. Of course, homely, friendly methods were welcomed; reverence is not synonymous with starch, and anything that gave brightness to the services was eagerly sought. In Birmingham Town Hall, for instance, years ago, the services were made most attractive by a good brother who skilfully arranged in flowers the text of the evening along the front of the platform.

The appeal of the unusual, too, was not despised. Once in the midst of a mission, in Bath, the river rose in flood, and put out the fires in the gasworks, and the whole city was dependent for light on lamps and candles. We invited the people to bring their own lights with them. For two evenings the scene in Argyle Chapel was most picturesque. There were lamps on the pulpit, and on the book ledges in the pews all sorts of candlesticks—china, tin, brass, silver, of all shapes and sizes, while some of the people held their candles in their hands. Many a Rembrandt picture presented itself to the preacher's eyes on those evenings, with the twinkling radiance of various brilliance all over the church, and in the dim light many a heart turned to God. A similar scene on a lesser scale was witnessed in Stafford one evening when the electric light of the town failed. Indeed, I have found that it is easiest to get near the spirits of people in the gloaming, and even

now on Sunday evenings in the late spring and early autumn, I prefer to do without artificial light while I plead with the congregation for my Master.

Another unusual and most interesting service was held in Burton-on-Trent some years ago, when I was announced to preach at five o'clock in the morning. Special trams were run, and, in spite of fears, the large building was filled, mostly with workpeople before they began the day's labours. I was reminded of it only a few weeks ago by a brother, who not only told me my text, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" but was able to recall much of the sermon. It was a great occasion. Probably John Wesley, who usually preached at five in the morning, would think it needless to chronicle a single service like this, but we live in soft and degenerate days.

The expert soul-winner will always stand revealed in his conduct of after-meetings. There can be no hard and fast line drawn here; only a sympathetic and alert spirit, ready to follow the least indication of God's mind, can determine what method is appropriate to the occasion. It is fatal to get into a rut; always to ask people to give some indication of the desire is as bad as never to ask them to do it.

One thing I have learnt by hard experience is that it can only on the most exceptional occasions be right to ask all the Christians in a building to rise; when that is done, whatever be the motive, the unconverted people feel that a trap has been sprung upon them, and a sense of injustice remains.

Occasionally it may be wise to ask the people to turn to each other and speak to their neighbours about Christ,

but there are times when this leads to great constraint, and a general reaching for hats and coats. I have adopted most mission methods, and pin my faith to none of them ; it is only the Spirit of God that can do the work ; everything else is secondary and comparatively unimportant. Yet here, as elsewhere, and specially here, there must be no slovenliness ; there is never a call for expert skill more than in dealing with inquiring souls.

The inquiry room has its use and abuse ; the popular phrase " passing through the inquiry room " carries a pathetic suggestion. The penitent form is sometimes the most courageous and effective appeal. Sometimes it is good to ask people to remain after others go ; sometimes it is better to ask them to walk boldly up before the whole congregation ; sometimes the hand may be raised ; sometimes seekers may be asked to rise ; sometimes it may be helpful for people to declare themselves by some spoken word as disciples of Christ. It is most effective on occasion to ask those who have been Christians since a certain epoch to bear testimony, and then request those who desire to be Christians to stand and join them. Many a time the best way of all is to cast oneself on God, and in the midst of the closing solemnity to dismiss the hushed congregation.

The greatest snare is to become the slave of any method, and to lose dependence on the Gospel and the Spirit of God. The men and women we want to reach most are least affected by outward manifestations. In fact, to do the work of an evangelist requires no less skill and patience and prayerfulness than to be a successful pastor of souls. To be a fisher of men and to catch



them singly is perhaps the highest art and this can be accomplished both in season and out of season.

After a series of services in Belfast, a man came to my colleague, Manton Smith, and myself, and though I suppose he scarcely meant what he said or said what he meant, he pointed to a chair, and expressed his wish to buy it, exclaiming: "It's a mighty lucky chair." In answer to our unspoken astonishment, he explained that he had attended the meetings every night, and every night he had sat just behind that same chair praying that God would send somebody to sit on it whom he might point to Christ; and, with Irish enthusiasm, he continued: "Every night I have had a soul for Jesus off that chair. I think it is a mighty lucky chair." But, of course, it was not the chair, but the man with a holy purpose behind the chair, and Christ in the man, that did the work. We want to multiply those "lucky chairs."

John More and I once sat at a late breakfast in Bergen, in Norway. I think we had been out seeing the fish market, and had postponed our morning meal until our return. The other guests had all gone, save an old gentleman who sat opposite to us. We began talking about Norway, and, of course, we soon found ourselves discussing fishing. Presently he said: "I have been coming to Norway for the fishing for the last thirty years, and I shall never come again; this morning I have received my death sentence." Then it transpired that that morning he had been forced to see a physician, who had told him that a fatal disease had laid hold of him, and that he could not possibly recover. The pathos of the occasion was beyond speech: the tears

flowed fast, breakfast was pushed aside, our hearts went out to the grief laden and bewildered traveller, and bonds of sympathy knit us together as first one and then the other of us spoke of the way of life. I shall never forget how eagerly he listened as we bore witness to him of our assurance in Christ Jesus ; how his eager eyes glowed as he received the Word ! When we bowed in prayer, Christ revealed Himself to that man's stricken heart, and so on the morning when he heard his earthly doom he also heard his heavenly destiny. A few months afterwards the double verdict of those hours was fulfilled, and I doubt not that that death proved the gate of life. That morning in Bergen it was we who were privileged to be the fishermen, and Izaak Walton spoke truly when he said : " One at a time is good fishing."

When I entered on the ministry of the Church in Leicester, the changed temper of the time led me largely to avoid mission methods. On rare occasions only did I ask any public manifestation from those under concern of soul. Instead of that, one evening a week was devoted to seeing inquirers, and during the eighteen years I recorded the names of 2,110 persons who came to see me with definite spiritual interest. Besides these there were, of course, many who came on business.

Already I have referred to the emphasis put on Bible study in the work of the Church as well as in the work of Evangelism. We never adopted the plan of Men's Meetings on Sunday afternoons, believing that better work could then be done amongst the young, but in latter years we organized a great Men's Meeting on Tuesday evenings which often crowded Melbourne Hall, and was always well attended.

The children, as I have said, were always our care, both at the centre and at the three districts of the town where we had Mission Halls. There were no fewer than 2,500 scholars in these schools, with two hundred teachers, quite a congregation in themselves, while as for the children, sometimes I felt like the old woman that lived in a shoe. I believe in the Christian experience of children. I have baptized several young folk at nine years of age who have given as clear a testimony, and lived as true a life, as any Christians I know, and we constantly received young people into the fellowship of the Church.

Years ago in Suffolk I met an earnest Christian man who told how his little boy had instructed him on this point. The boy wished to be identified with the church of which his father was an officer, but he was always told that he must wait until he was a little older. One night the father came in from the farm, took off his boots, and settled in by the fire, when he suddenly remembered that he had forgotten to fold the sheep. He was very tired and loath to go out again, so he turned to his son and said: "You are getting a big boy. I should think you could fold the sheep, Tommy." "Yes, father," the boy briskly answered, "I am sure I could." "Very well," said the tired father, "you go and do it." The boy returned glowing with pride. "You have folded all the sheep, Tommy, have you?" "Yes, father." "And the lambs?" "No, father, I did not put the lambs in. I thought they might stay outside until they are a little older." The father looked at the boy, and the boy looked at the father, until, with an amused smile, the father accepted the rebuke, and quietly said: "Tommy, you go and put the lambs in the fold, and I

will propose you at the next church meeting." I have met a good many people whom I would like to put into that father's chair by the fireside, while the boy was out in the field the second time.

It is my custom to speak a little while to the children during the service on Sunday mornings. One day I told them how, many years ago, a minister with his four boys at home on a certain Sunday afternoon, sought to make simple to them what it is to trust Christ, and when he asked them if they understood they answered "Yes." Then he said: "If any one of you wants to give his heart to the Lord now, let him come and kiss me." The boys sat silent for a while, and then the youngest, five years old, came and kissed his father; then one after the other came, until the eldest, twelve years of age. One of those boys long afterwards, when he had himself retired from the ministry, said: "If ever I gave my heart to the Lord that was the time I did it." The Sunday morning I told that story is marked as one of the great times in my life. I asked the little children of the congregation who desired to put their life in Christ's keeping to come and kiss me, and the number of little people who responded to that simple appeal was overwhelming. That was years ago, and I have no doubt that many of those lives were definitely committed to the Lord then.

Some years afterwards I had another happy experience. It was suggested that in our school we should observe a Covenant Sunday. In the afternoon I went down to the senior division, and said a few simple words about entering into covenant with Jesus Christ. At the end I asked any of the young people who would make covenant

with the Lord that day to come and give me their hand as I sat in the corner of the hall ; and to my delight, shyly and quietly, first there came a stream of boys, and afterwards quite a number of girls, some scores in all, who put each a small hand in mine as token that they put their hands in Christ's strong grasp. The most of these young people afterwards came eagerly week by week for further instruction.

If I may become bold in glorying, I will mention yet another incident. Some years ago, having a great longing that the elder children of our schools should confess Christ, I wrote a letter to the boys and another letter to the girls, making an appeal to them to follow Christ. The letter, lithographed in facsimile, was put into one of my best envelopes with my monogram on the tab, and on the corner of the envelope there was printed : " Please do not read this until you are quite alone." In response to those letters I had almost a hundred replies from those who had listened to the appeal and were glad to confess themselves Christ's disciples.

One of the finest things we did for our young people was the organization of a series of " Christian Education Classes." I chose five capable leaders, and on Sunday evenings after the service we went through the subject for the following week, with the synopsis which I had already prepared. Some two hundred students were enrolled, the same study was taken with each of the five groups, and each week questions on the subject of the previous week were answered on specially prepared forms. In this way we went over the fundamentals of our faith and practice, and these two hundred became stalwarts in the faith.

The pulpit work was a continual joy to me. All during the years I never had to look for a subject for a sermon : the subjects always found me, and at the end of my pastorate I found that I had a record of just two thousand sermons. Besides these there had been numberless speeches and addresses.

All the accessories of Church life were in evidence : we had between seventy and eighty meetings a week. We had open-air meetings all the year round. The Church was strong on the question of total abstinence from alcohol. We had a system of Temperance Circles of which I was the head centre, having ten recognized temperance enthusiasts of various ages and grades round me : they in turn had each ten round them, and their circle members each other ten. So we registered quite easily 1,111 members, and stopped there, having only an annual meeting to report progress. That the Temperance sentiment was strong may be gathered from an incident in which I was a sharer. In response to a note I called at one of our houses and found the large dining-room table crammed with what had been the contents of the cellar. It was a teetotal home, but these old brandies and wines had been part of a legacy some years before. My friends had come to the conclusion that they could not keep the stuff any longer, and the mother of the house had called me in to share in its destruction. I was unprepared for the occasion, and suggested the advisability of sending the bottles to the Infirmary. "No," the lady said, "I should be responsible for any harm it would do there ; but," she added on second thoughts, "I will give it to you if you like." As I begged to be excused, nothing remained

but to begin operations. She had said in her note that if I called I need only stay twenty minutes, but the task proved very much more formidable than she had imagined. We drew the corks, and between the dining-room and the lavatory basin in the hall my friend went to and fro pouring away the contents of the bottles, until the very odour of the house was almost intoxicating.

## CHAPTER THE TWELFTH

### FAITH'S MAGIC WAND

IN visiting some friends of the late General Gordon, I was shown a little book, entitled "Prayer in the Name of Jesus," which, after marking it freely, he had sent to his mother. One sentence, which had one line against it in the margin, ran, "Nothing good for us is so great, nothing so trivial, but that we may receive it from the Father if we ask in the name of Jesus." But against another phrase there were three heavy marginal marks: this is what appealed so strongly to the man who in the Sudan was never disturbed when he put his handkerchief outside his tent door, because everybody knew that he was talking with his God—"Prayer is a magic wand in the hand of faith."

During all the years I have been persuaded that no good could be accomplished without personal and public prayer. In Leicester we always sought to begin our Sabbath when the sun set on Saturday, and the Saturday night prayer meeting has been maintained without interruption. The direct result of these meetings has been incalculable, and the reflex blessing scarcely less. How often on Saturday night have I gone fagged to the meeting, with a good deal of preparation for Sunday still unfinished, and how often have I come back buoyant in heart, and with a mind so cleared that the thoughts



that dragged heavily during the day have arranged themselves easily in ordered sequence!

Sometimes, too, in our church we began the autumn work with a day of prayer, and on these occasions, instead of holding one large meeting, we generally arranged for a number of smaller simultaneous meetings. A very exhilarating experience it was to have sometimes as many as four prayer meetings in progress, in the early morning or late at night, at the same time in the same building.

It used to be the custom in the early days for the teachers of the Sunday School to make definite request that they might have fine weather on the day they took the children into the country, and there is a legend in the Church that on one occasion it was raining in the next field and the rain never crossed the hedge. Very vividly I remember another experience, when, after a long drought, the reservoirs in Leicester were almost empty, and we set ourselves to pray for rain. A strong assurance arose in our hearts that rain would speedily be given. I but voiced the common sentiment in declaring that the answer was already ours, but afterwards people came and told me how they had got up early in the morning and raised the blinds with some trepidation to see whether the God of Elijah had proved himself to be our God, and how greatly strengthened was their faith by the downpour from the skies.

It is not always that such access and certainty of conviction are granted, but sometimes one feels the prayer grip as certainly as a boy feels the kite pull, and faith becomes assurance. In a little Scotch town I remember there came one evening a young girl very

much exercised concerning her fellow-servant, who was not a Christian. She asked that we might join in prayer, and, on rising from our knees, it seemed so certain that prayer was answered that I ventured to say to her, "You will find your friend has already decided for Christ when you get home." The next evening both girls were there to tell the story that at the very time we had kneeled to pray for the absent friend she had been overwhelmed with the sense of her sin, and at home had kneeled in prayer for herself, seeking and finding forgiveness and peace.

At another place a Sunday School teacher wrote a letter referring to a remark in a sermon on confessing Christ, in which I had emphasized the fact that when we read that "If thou shalt confess with thy *mouth*," the word "mouth" meant just what it said—"mouth." This teacher wrote, saying she never supposed that it meant anything else, but that in reading her Bible she had come across the word "whatsoever," and the thought suddenly came to her that up till that moment she had never quite believed that the word "whatsoever" meant "whatsoever," just what it said. She had limited the Holy One of Israel. Instantly she had a vision of her class of ten girls, and, resting on the word "whatsoever," she began to pray that they might all be led to Christ during the mission. It was one of the intensest joys of that campaign to have a letter every night from that teacher saying that so many more of her class had come to Jesus, until at the end her faith was justified, and her testimony that the promises of God meant just exactly what they say encouraged many more to believe.

One of the great privileges of the evangelistic days was to be brought in contact with so many honoured servants of Christ. Amongst others, I can claim that Dr. Barnardo became my fast friend. Frequently I was guest in his home, and on one occasion with our families we spent a holiday together in Wales. Perhaps the fact that we were fellow-countrymen drew us at first together, but there was the closer link of common service. More than once he asked me to join him in his work for the children, but, though that did not seem possible, my comrade and I frequently helped in the mission work at the Edinburgh Castle.

One day, when I was staying at his home, the morning prayer, which was always conducted with great devoutness, centred round the urgent need of money for the children's rescue work. Very definite request was made that God would supply the need. Then in the old hansom-cab, which was a familiar object in the East of London, we drove to Stepney, where Manton Smith met us. As we entered the office, there sat on a bench beside some ragged children, a plainly-dressed lady. She accosted the children's friend, and said that she had come to give him some money.

Jauntily he removed his hat, and held it out for the gift. There was no suggestion that the donation would be a large one, but evidently the lady had disguised herself. She said she had been inquiring into the Home, and was so interested in it that she had determined to give him something, and she dropped a banknote for a thousand pounds into his hat. He had not recovered his breath when she added that one thing she liked about his work was that no destitute child was ever refused

admittance, and because of that she increased her gift, and dropped another note for a thousand pounds into the hat. It was becoming exciting, but she had not yet finished. She had visited the Home, she declared, and found there that the children were being trained for Christ, and because of that she gave him another thousand pounds.

When Barnardo asked her name she refrained from giving it, and gently said that the Lord knew. When he begged that he might at least acknowledge the gift in *The Times*, she said that it did not matter, and even before she could be adequately thanked she had walked out of the office, and until this day nobody knows who she was. I believe it was the largest gift ever received for the Homes, and it was an experience never to be forgotten when we three went into an inner room, and sobbing thanks were given for the answer to the prayer of the morning. It is almost invading one of the sanctities of life to attempt to describe the scene. With the thanksgiving there mingled the broken prayer that the Jacob spirit which was often sought to gain the gift by human skill might be replaced by the guilelessness which would gain it by simple faith. I have never forgotten the influence of that moment, and have often rebuked my own Jacob nature by the memory.

When all our hearts were stirred at the time of the Welsh Revival, and we waited wonderingly to see what God would do in England, I was urged by many people to begin meetings of a similar nature in Leicester, but was happily restrained. God had another way for us. During the delay, unknown to each other, several small groups of people began to pray that God would visit

us. The prayer group which gathered round one lady, a Deaconess Sister, who has since, with her husband, served God in Paris, gained special liberty and enlargement in supplication. The strong conviction came that the Spirit was about to work amongst us in power.

There was also vouchsafed to me one Sunday the assurance that the time to favour Zion had come, and when I stood up to preach that evening it was with no uncertainty ; I was sure that God was going to do something remarkable, and at the close of the service, with but the scantest pressure, about one hundred people rose to declare themselves for Christ.

We were overwhelmed with praise, and for two months afterwards, at the usual services, there was a continual stream of confessions of Christ. The power of the Spirit was poured into the ordinary channels, and ere the movement ceased there must have been quite five hundred people who were influenced. In another church in the town there was a similar blessing. The wind bloweth where it listeth, but there is an inevitable connection between the breath of prayer and the wind of God. Prayer is still the magic wand in the hand of faith.

My farewell to Leicester was preceded by singular and notable signs of God's presence. Though I did not know it, God was preparing for me the crown of my ministry.

First of all, in October 1911 there came a remarkable movement amongst our young people. We made an effort to secure their attendance at public worship, and it was crowned with instant success. The movement arose out of the suggestion for the establishment of a

League of Worshipping Children, so eloquently pleaded by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll in the *British Weekly*. As he forcibly pointed out, if we now lament the decreasing church attendance, the next generation will certainly have to mourn further decrease, unless some special effort is made to train the youth of to-day in regular habits of public worship. So we inaugurated our League of Young Worshippers, adopting that title with the thought of encouraging other young people besides children to attend the public service on Sunday morning.

Each young worshipper promises to attend regularly and punctually, and to bring a Bible. The morning Sunday School has been shortened to encourage children and young people to come to Church. In specially provided boxes placed at the entrances young worshippers drop the tickets which are supplied to them once a quarter, and so the attendance is registered. As far as possible, the young people do not sit *en masse*, but with parents or guardians, and in some cases parents who have not been in the habit of attending have begun to come with their sons or daughters, and during the years that have elapsed since then the same results have followed. Quite recently there has been a renewal and extension of the effort. There is a Junior and Senior branch, the transition line being at fifteen years of age. Certificates are to be given for forty-eight attendances in the year, and then, after three years, the young worshippers will graduate, and have their names upon a Roll of Honour.

No fewer than four hundred persons have adhered to the League, and at the first quarterly muster, after the morning service on the first Sunday of the year,

over three hundred were present, eager to share in the service, keen to maintain the League, reverent and devout. The young folk feel that they are recognized, that they have a place in the service, that they are expected to behave quietly, to listen attentively, and to worship. Where there are no parents or guardians, solitary worshippers are asked to adopt a boy and a girl for Sunday morning, and they have lost their solitariness in doing it, and where there is an eager heart they have been able to invite their two young people to their home to tea, to send them a greeting on their birthday, or to take them for a walk into the country on occasion. A new spirit has come upon them; the congregation has a family feeling, and I doubt not that scores of these young hearts have already been yielded to Christ.

Now there comes the chronicle of a thing even more remarkable. The two had no connection in our minds, but looking back we can see how distinctly we were then led. On the threshold of November in the same year, suddenly one afternoon the injunction came to me as clearly as if spoken by human lips, "You should have a hundred new members this year." The additions to the church membership for the year had been normal, and there was no sign of unusual movement among the people; yet the impression on my own heart was so strong that, lest I should be disobedient to the heavenly vision, I turned to a Deaconess Sister who was by my side, and said, "We should have a hundred new members this year." She thought I had announced a long-considered plan, and gazed at me in astonishment. "Why," she said, "there are only two months left"; but then she began to tell me of person after person whom she

thought should confess Christ. That evening I also told the Elders of the Church, and after long discussion they arrived at the same conclusion.

The next Sunday evening I called together by post-card about a hundred of the more earnest members of the church for twenty minutes' conference, and here, again, there seemed a readiness to make it a definite subject of supplication. On my part I announced that, in keeping with my consistent habit, I would not ask anybody to join the church, but that on November 13 I would be in my room from seven o'clock in the morning until ten o'clock at night to see any of those who applied. It was a great venture of faith.

The next Sunday, on the book ledges of the pews was placed a slip, which said, on one side—

**More than a Hundred people are praying  
that a Hundred New Members may Join  
the Church this year.**

P.T.O.]

and on the other—

**The Pastor will be in his Room to see  
applicants all day on Monday, Nov. 13th,  
from 7 in the Morning till 10 at Night.**

P.T.O.]

That day in November was a day not to be forgotten throughout eternity. Remember, it was not inquirers who were invited, though some inquirers also came: it



was those who desired definitely to take the responsibility of church membership. I think the very definiteness of the demand formed the strength of the appeal—an appeal to secret disciples to declare themselves, and to waverers to decide. Many prayers were going up as in the early morning I went to my vestry. At seven o'clock a husband and wife came to witness, and soon we three were kneeling together praising God; and then during the day a stream of people came with scarce pause sufficient to allow me space to eat, until at the close of the day no fewer than eighty persons had made application for church fellowship.

One of my friends who shared in receiving the people declares—and I join him in the testimony—that he never felt the Spirit of God so near. Friend brought friend, Sunday School teachers brought members of their classes, parents came with child, child with parent, husband accompanied wife, wife accompanied husband, old people came, and amongst the rest came a little lad of eight years of age, who gave as clear a testimony as any of the others.

A week afterwards, from three o'clock in the afternoon until ten o'clock in the evening, I was kept equally busy. The following week I had a similar experience, and the result was that before the year ended, from amongst the applicants one hundred and twenty-one persons were received into the Church, and on the first Sunday of the year 1912, in accordance with our custom, I gave the right hand of fellowship to no fewer than one hundred and fourteen of them, giving each a separate text.

It had been a mission without a missionary and without meetings. Generally, when we think of ingathering

the people, we expect a series of intermediate agencies between the intention and the result. We act as a man reasons, reaching the conclusion by logical steps, but in this case we acted as a woman who, with the finer instinct, makes one leap from the premiss to the conclusion. Our experience bears the same relation to an organized mission as the turning of the water into wine, or the multiplying of the bread for the thousands, bears to ordinary vintage or harvest. Both are the work of God, but one is so wonderful, and so evidently God's own work, that we call it a miracle. I believe that to-day there are tens of thousands of people in our land who would respond if a similar appeal were made to them definitely to take the specific step of witnessing for Christ at a specific time. I write these words in the hope of stirring up others of God's servants to make the claim on God and the venture of faith before men, and, having made it, to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

Lest this should seem to underestimate or to ignore the benefit of an organized mission, let it be recorded that a third manifestation of God's grace came to us about the same time. Less than a mile from Melbourne Hall, in a new suburb, we had for some years been endeavouring to win people for Christ by means of a Sunday School and meetings in a smaller hall. Again, without relating things in our own mind, we invited Mr. Jim Bryant, who was recommended by my friend Mr. J. W. C. Fegan, to come for some special mission meetings in November, and so great a success rested upon the effort, especially amongst men, and largely amongst men who were utterly careless and godless, that our brother remained with

us until the end of January, and ere I ceased to be Pastor of the church I received into our fellowship quite a considerable number of those who had been recently converted. One man who had not opened a Bible for seventeen years, another who had not had a sober Christmas for twelve years, another who had not had a sober Christmas for fifteen years, and there were no fewer than twelve cases in which both husband and wife were converted.

At the Mission House in London prayer is put in the forefront of all our activities. Each Monday morning the staff begins the week's work with half an hour of united prayer ; each day a bell is rung at noon calling on all in the house at the moment to pause in their work for five minutes' quiet meditation and prayer, and the echo of that Prayer Bell has gone round the world. At our General Committees half an hour is always reserved for Intercession. We publish a Prayer Calendar with subjects for prayer each day ; Prayer Booklets describing the spheres of work and seeking to guide prayer week by week ; a Birthday Booklet asking that each missionary should be remembered then ; and very gracious have been the responses to these petitions.

In Leicester we had as a member of our Church one who in her day was a well-known figure in the town—Mrs. Cobby, one of the band of Biblewomen to whom reference has already been made. She was somewhat of an eccentric, but as true as steel in her devotion to the Master. She had great power of repartee, and a fearless spirit. It was part of her duty to take the messages of the Flower Mission to the inmates of the Infirmary. She was not supposed to minister to them in any way

there were two Chaplains appointed for that purpose. But the love of Christ flowed out through her words to the sufferers as she handed them the bouquets. Nobody attempted to stop her talking, for everybody knew it was no use. Greatly emboldened, she actually spoke to the nurses about their souls, and all knew they were in danger when she appeared.

One day when she was distributing her flowers, the doctors were announced, and, of course, on such occasions every one else quits the ward. Mrs. Cobley was making her way to the door when a young doctor in a frolicsome spirit shut the door and intercepted her, saying :

“ Well, Mrs. Cobley, I suppose you have been telling these people that God hears prayer.”

“ Yes, sir,” she answered, curtsying. “ My Father always hears His people when they cry.”

“ I am very glad to hear it,” he replied, “ for I am very hard up this morning. Do you think that if I asked your Father for a five pound note He would give it to me ? ”

Now that was a poser. To answer “ Yes ” or “ No ” would have been equally wrong, and the group waited with some curiosity for her answer. Though I question whether she knew anything about Socrates, she answered after the Socratic method ; answering one question by asking another.

“ Suppose you were introduced to the Prince of Wales to-day, sir,” she said, “ do you think you could put your hand in his pocket the first day you knew him, and ask him for a five pound note ? ”

He dimly saw where she was going, but he was bound to follow her, so he haltingly replied, “ No-o-o, I suppose

I would need to wait until I got to know him better."

"Yes," she finished in triumph, "and you will need to know my Father better before you can ask Him for five pound notes."

She was the victor: they opened to let her pass: and in that saying of hers is all the philosophy of prayer.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH

### THE DAY OF THE DECORATIONS

THOSE who observe the Christian Year, though they may be in danger of laying undue stress on one aspect of truth at one time, or confining the thought of it to one season, have doubtless the advantage of an ordered system which allows no implication of our Lord's earthly life to escape notice. I venture to turn memory to the advent of Jesus, and to recall the Christmas morning services along the course of my years in Leicester.

On this one occasion in the year we decorated our sanctuary, and to do it we called in the willing help of our Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour, a band of keen young men and women who were always ready to render any service, whether it was to speak for Christ, to invite people to the meetings, to help in school or mission, or to contribute to the happiness of invalids or worshippers. Accustomed to take offerings of flowers or fruit to sick-rooms, they were as ready to arrange evergreens round the pillars and rostrum, the organ, the walls, and the windows of our church for the great festive day of the year. Bearing in mind my experience in Birmingham, to which I have referred in a previous chapter, when the text of the evening was displayed in flowers along the front of the platform in the Town Hall, I suggested that a Christmas motto should be similarly set out

before the people in Melbourne Hall. There, in the summer, tin moulds were filled with clay, and the flowers stuck into it; here, in the winter, the letters were cut out of sheets of cotton wool, and stuck on a background of cloth, red at first, but afterwards of some art shade of blue or terra-cotta that harmonized with the brick walls. The motto was generally the text of the Christmas sermon—not always, for on two Christmases I was absent, once in Algeria, and once in China, and for three years at the beginning our imagination was not sufficiently quickened to grasp the desirability of such an arrangement. Because the text had to be a short one, in order to be clearly set out, it became at last quite a difficult thing to select a suitable Scripture phrase; indeed, the fifteen Christmas mottoes here mentioned seem almost to exhaust the possibilities of the case, and I do not know what my successor will do if he continues the idea.

Not knowing whither it would lead, we began with the simple inscription, "IMMANUEL;" and, feeling our way (it seems almost ludicrous in the retrospect; but remember there was always a year between), we kept to the same motto the two following years, only varying the spelling, "EMANUEL" one Christmas, and "IMANUEL" the next. However it is spelt, that word embodies the great fact of Christmas. It has been suggested that this is but the name by which His mother was to call Him—she who knew that in very deed He was the Son of God; it seems certain that no one else ever used it as a name, nor is it likely that she ever did. Yet all a name implies of personality and relation is there—God with us.

The other great Isaiah text of the Four Names was never used in our series of mottoes, simply because it was too long ; but when we began to vary our thought, one phrase of it furnished the next inscription, " PRINCE OF PEACE," and on the following year the same idea found echo in a phrase from the angels' song, " ON EARTH PEACE." In spite of the sad irony of the Boer War, which almost immediately followed, and of the events of the years since then, we hold to our faith that the bells shall yet ring in the advent in power of the Lord, whose coming shall make the angels sing again over a ransomed earth.

Though the variation had hitherto been slight, our way was now clear before us to choose a different text each year, and the second advent was linked to the first by the motto of the following Christmas—" HE SHALL REIGN." The assurance of the triumph of Him who was once the Child of Bethlehem gave zest to our contemplation of His nativity. Twelve months more passed away, and our thoughts were turned to the eternal past rather than to the eternal future when the motto was chosen, " GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON." The only fault of this choice, which, indeed, furnished enough suggestion for three sermons, was the length of it, but the emphasized words before the eyes of the people were " God " and " His Son."

A little ingenuity had to be used the following year to display adequately the words, " THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH " ; they had, in fact, to go into two lines, but the first was made so prominent that the thought of the Dawn that brightens to the Day penetrated the minds of the people. When Christ came it was like the



first appearance of the sun after an Arctic winter, eagerly watched by the dwellers in the night; the darkness returns, but they are sure that before long the light that has risen on them will abide in perpetual day.

Brief and very significant mottoes were chosen for the two following years. "GOD MANIFEST" emphasized the wonderful truth that when God became flesh and dwelt amongst us He revealed, and did not hide, His nature; there is nothing in God that is not in Jesus, and nothing in Jesus that is not in God. "THE FIRST-BORN," which served as the text for the following Christmas, spoke of the Eternal relationship of the Son, His family position, His Resurrection, and His glory to which He stands pledged to bring all His brethren.

The next year found Christmas shadowed among us by the death of a saintly lady who was greatly honoured by us, and our gladness at the return of the day of the Christ-Child, and the day of all children, was somewhat subdued. I chose as the motto, "MARANATHA," much to the surprise of some people, who were under the impression that it was an imprecation. Indeed, just before the service a privileged lady broke into the minister's room to know if he knew the dreadful thing that had been put up. Perhaps my readers may think that, however beautiful in itself the word may be, it was scarcely suitable for Christmas. To them I would reply that, just as the Christians of Paul's day were accustomed to greet each other with this suggestion of hope, "The Lord cometh," I imagine that those who waited for the consolation of Israel before the birth of our Lord may have used the same Aramaic word. I think of Simeon greeting Anna thus as they met in the temple, the joy

growing greater, and the emphasis deeper, as they saw the day approaching. At any rate, the result of our Christmas morning service that year was that the motto found its way into some of our homes, and for a long time afterwards, even in some cases to-day, it became the salutation between some of the folks when they met each other, and their ardent prayer when they knelt before God. The Lord cometh! May the Lord come!

One of my choicest experiences in Church life was the friendship of a group of girls who were all aflame for Christ, and ready at any sacrifice to witness for Him. The glory of God just beamed from their faces; far and near they went in the county to help others, and many lives must have been influenced by theirs. But the white scourge came to them, and I fear they communicated it to each other. Consumption has been called the death of the elect; it was true in their cases. One by one they passed over, those remaining of the group becoming more ethereal and spirituelle as their companions went.

At length the last of them lay dying. She was one of those who had helped in the Christmas decorations, and as the end of the year approached she was eager to know what the motto was to be. I astonished her one day by saying that she should choose it herself. I think her illness was made a little more joyous by the thought that she might in this way bear her last testimony, and after long search she chose "THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS." In spite of its length, we used it. I preached upon it, and the people felt that even on a dying bed Christ was sufficient for the need of a human soul, as He will yet prove Himself to be sufficient for the need of the whole earth.

These things are not, perhaps, as interesting to my readers as to me, though I indulge the hope that some glee akin to the joy of Christmastide may come even to them in the review of these holy Scriptures that have meant so much to other people. The next motto was "THE CHILD JESUS," whose very name worked such signs and wonders in the early days. The following one was "THE SECOND MAN," who begins a new manhood, and, in the expressive phrase of our forefathers, becomes the federal Head of His redeemed people. When Jesus was born in the Khan of Chimham (I think it must have been there, since sites do not change in the East : the Scripture references to Chimham can be easily found), He was the Second Adam, who to the fight and to the rescue came ; the quickening Spirit, who gave eternal life to the sinful men who traced their lineage to the first Adam, who was only a living soul.

The following motto was "THE SON OF GOD IS COME," and we rejoiced that it proved possible for us to join in those words of full assurance in John's first Epistle, when he exults in the certain knowledge we have of both the historic and spiritual facts. "BORN KING" was the challenge of the next Christmas. Our Lord not only became a King, not only is destined to reign over the universe, but for this cause He was born, and for this cause came He into the world, even as He asserted to Pilate. And, finally, the last Christmas message I gave to my beloved flock was this, which may well serve as the crowning glory of Him whom we trust, and honour, and serve, "BORN SAVIOUR." He knows well how to save His people from their sins, for He was born to it. Hallelujah !

## CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH

### MEMORABLE SERVICES

IN review of a ministry which, in our own land, has extended from the Channel Islands to the Orkney and Shetland Islands, which has included services in other lands, and on board ship on the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, as well as on the China, Indian, and Mediterranean Seas, which has been exercised in stately churches, and in modest chapels (though why we should name some buildings churches and some chapels I cannot understand), in school-rooms and in barns, in music-halls and in mission-halls, in theatres and in skating rinks, in circuses and in tents, in cottages and in colleges, in drawing-rooms and in lodging-houses, in market-places and in gardens, in Y.M.C.A. huts and in Salvation Army Barracks, there are yet some occasions which, while differing from each other, stand out as different from all the rest. I put aside the memorable opportunities which had been granted to me to speak by interpretation to people of other languages—French, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Arabic, Chinese, Singhalese.

The Watch Night Services at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which for many years Manton Smith and I conducted, were great times. I possess one of the most interesting photographs of a congregation which, I suppose, has ever been taken. One year, when the

great building had been redecorated and newly lighted in the roof with sun burners, a picture was taken by gas-light of the crowd which thronged the place. I spoke for half-an-hour ; the camera was opened when I began, and the exposure lasted all the time of my address. The photograph is evidence that, at least on that occasion, the people remained still while they listened to me. I have another picture which I put alongside this—Melbourne Hall, crowded with men ; but that was taken by flashlight, and is not so wonderful.

Most vividly I remember a service which, on Sunday afternoon, March 28, 1886, my friend Newman Hall and I conducted on Calvary. Not in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which, though sacred from its associations, can scarcely be considered as the site of the Crucifixion, but on that little hill near the Damascus Gate, which even now is without the city wall, and, in its highest isometric line, assumes still the shape of a skull. General Gordon, amongst others, directed attention to this site. In his little book, "Reflections on Palestine," he says : " If the Cross were placed in the centre of the skull hill, the whole city, even to the Mount of Olives, would be embraced in those stretched arms." He made a model of the hill, and I was able to secure a replica of it in Jerusalem stone. Mr. Merrill, the American Consul, whom I met at that time, strongly supports this identification. It derives additional interest from three things—first, that Jeremiah's grotto, where he is said to have written his Lamentations, is beneath the hill. It lends prophetic pathos to his lament, " Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by ? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow," when we think of the

greater Sufferer who died on the top of the hill. Then there are the ruins of a church dedicated to St. Stephen, which seems to indicate that this was the usual place of execution. And, in the third place, an epitaph from an early Christian grave has been found hard by, with the inscription still legible, "Buried near his Lord." Not far from the hill is a rock tomb, with room for two bodies, which, if not the place, shows us the sort of place in which our Lord lay.

To this hill a few strangers in Jerusalem wended their way that sunny day, and, perhaps on the very spot where the blood of Jesus crimsoned the earth, and sealed not only Calvary, but all the world, for God, we sang, "When I survey the wondrous Cross," and as we sang we could with anointed vision see the Cross of Christ as the eternal fact in God's universe. We read the nineteenth chapter of John's Gospel, and as we read the incidents became vivid. My friend spoke on the sayings from the Cross, and the voice of Jesus seemed again to make the air vibrant, until we heard the shout of the Conqueror. Then it was permitted to me to say some words about the strong Saviour who here, as the great Deliverer of men, stretched forth His hands to swim to our rescue, and though all God's waves and billows went over Him, reached us in our sin, and became the Author of eternal salvation to all that believe. We lifted up our voices in another hymn, "In the Cross of Christ I glory," and Dr. Howie, of Glasgow, led us in thanksgiving and prayer. The stigmata were not impressed on us as on Francis of Assisi and on Catherine of Siena, but none the less we went away bearing, as the slaves of Him who redeemed us, the brands of the Lord Jesus.

Another service which claims a special niche in my memory was at John o' Groats. We were holding a mission at Wick, and the postman who went to the verge of Scotland suggested that we should hold a service there. He promised to do the advertising if we would do the preaching. Nothing loth, we consented, and on the appointed day found ourselves at the appointed place. A few friends from Wick accompanied us, but, so sparse seemed the population, we did not expect many others at the meeting. The postman, however, had done his work well, and from all parts of the district the people had come, as well as from the island of Stroma, which lies a little beyond the mainland. Gathered in a little building that appeared to be a barn, though it was difficult to imagine where, in that bleak region, the harvest grew, we had one of the most enthusiastic meetings it has ever been my lot to conduct. The swift current between the place where we were met and the island within sight furnished the thought of our iniquities which separated us from God, and inevitably led to the fact of the salvation which crossed the gulf and restored us in Christ. My comrade sang to the people, many of whom were fishermen, and then somebody said that they had a song which they could sing to us. Shy at first, they gradually gained confidence (I believe a woman had to lilt the tune to begin with), and they poured forth a wild, barbaric measure to some of the weirdest, quaintest words imaginable, until they lost themselves in the song.

Where or how the hymn originated, who composed the minor air, or who is the author of the words, we failed to discover. In its primitive crudeness it lies

close to the heart of Nature, and touches a responsive chord in Nature's children. There is, I believe, no limit to the number of verses. I suppose, indeed, that the hymn grew, and that it is still growing. Wild and plaintive as the winds of that northern land, sobbing and breaking like the waves of the rocky shore, it was, when sung by those lonely and mystic men, an apocalypse of the longing and the faith of the human heart. We harmonized and printed the tune, but did not venture to use the exact words. Mr. Sankey used our words, and revised the tune into a greater jubilation, and his version has been widely used. But nothing in my mind can replace the original music and words, which, when I remember the wildness and aloofness of the stormy land where the hymn originated, and still is sung, become charged with eloquent meaning. Here are some of the verses :—

I love the Lord, I know I do—  
 A Shelter in the time of storm.  
 And that's not all, He loves me, too—  
 A Shelter in the time of storm.

Oh! Jesus is a Rock in a weary land,  
 A weary land, a weary land.  
 Oh! Jesus is a Rock in a weary land—  
 A Shelter in the time of storm.

They say we are a noisy crew ;  
 And that's not all, we're happy, too.

If you want to catch the heavenly breeze.  
 Get down in the valley upon your knees.

When I look up, He smiles so sweet,  
 Saying, " Children, have you any meat ? "

There were several other singular services which were held in Scarborough more than thirty years ago.



I suppose I am the only man who has ever preached in a Turkish bath. The first service was quite spontaneous, and yet it was the result of preparation. We visited the bath each week, and on the first occasion we fell into conversation with an old physician, and ere we parted we prayed together. The following week we were met by the announcement that the expense of the bath was already met (we guessed, but never knew, who had made the arrangement), and that afternoon the doctor not only came himself, but brought a friend, and before parting we sang as well as prayed. The singing brought the shampooer into the room, and we found that he was a Christian man. The rumour of these happenings somehow spread, and next week one of the ministers of the town came with us, and the medical man brought his son, who, influenced by the mission in the town, was seeking salvation. Our gathering that day turned into an inquiry meeting, and we rejoiced with the angels over one soul repenting. The fourth meeting was the last, and now, if I may say it without being misunderstood, we warmed to the work. Several ministers were present, all of those who had been before were there, and the inquirer came, and one or two others for the first time, the shampooer also being numbered in the group. It was quite a respectable congregation—in numbers, at all events. We did not debate the philosophy of clothes, though there is no place where it could be debated with more purpose than in a Turkish bath. Each of us, wrapped only in a sheet, seemed equal with his fellows. It was, perhaps, incongruous, a picture of it might appear ludicrous, but we were all in earnest, and the peculiar circumstances were forgotten. We

held a regular service ; we prayed and sang, read the Scriptures and preached, and before we had finished there were tears that mingled with the beads of perspiration on our faces. As far as we were concerned, it all just happened ; if any one was responsible for the inception of the idea, it was that godly physician, but I do not think that he had any other plan than to bring men who needed the evangel in contact with the men who had come with the sole purpose of proclaiming it.

Great as had been the blessing on that mission, great enough to be remembered even to-day, I think as we went away we reckoned that the most interesting and relatively fruitful of all the meetings was the service in the Turkish bath.

## CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH

### EDDIES IN THE STREAM

MY experience of the life of evangelism, while on the whole full of encouragement, was not a record of uninterrupted success. Indeed, we used often to say, when everything went smoothly at one place, that we might prepare ourselves for some difficulties at the next. It seemed as if God meant to keep us from being unduly elated. This, of course, was not an invariable rule; no doubt we interpreted our experience by our predispositions, just as people imagine that when a piece of bread falls on the ground, it always falls the butter side down; but even our very difficulties often had a humorous side, and there were other experiences which, while they occasioned us much concern at the time, are, in retrospect, only laughable.

During a mission at Shoreditch Tabernacle, long ago, there was a robbery; some one broke into the sanctuary and rifled of their contents the money-boxes affixed to the wall. The case was reported in the London papers, and though it was before the era of the new journalism, it was largely embellished. It was said that the thief had not only taken the money, but as there was a special mission in progress, he had also stolen the flute which Mr. Fullerton, one of the missionaries, used in the services, though, strangely enough, he had left the cornet that was used by the other missionary, Mr. Manton Smith.

The *Daily Telegraph* came out with a long article on the comparative merits of the flute and the cornet, making rather merry at our expense ; the *Sportsman*, and other papers, also debated the incident in a rollicking spirit. So much attention was called to it that at length even the thief became alarmed, and he threw a letter over the front railings in which he confessed that he had stolen the money, but in the most solemn manner asserted that he had not touched the flute, nor would he dare to do such a thing. We had our private amusement out of the incident, for I never had a flute, I could not play a flute if I had it, and I would not play it if I could. But it all served to bring people to the meetings, and whatever may be said about the merits of a cornet in mission meetings, at least it represents the clear and certain sound of the Gospel as it should be preached with its call to action, in contrast with many of the utterances of the pulpit, inducing repose, that are more like the toot-tootlings and the soft cadences of the flute.

A very different misunderstanding arose in a country town as the result of an enthusiastic but misdirected effort on the part of one man. When the meetings began, it was evident that there was a very widespread interest in me, and we were somewhat puzzled by cryptic questions as to my past experiences and as to my travels in lands where I had never been. The thing was so intangible that it could not be definitely met until we discovered that for some weeks before our arrival the colporteur of the district, with the idea of helping the mission, had secured a supply of one of a series of penny stories being issued at the time, and had circulated the

story entitled "Will Fullerton's Folly" as being a true and faithful account of my past life. The mistake was quite natural, for after the hero of the story, who had been guilty of some defalcation, had absconded, he was converted—I think it was in Australia—and became an evangelist. Before I came, both his crimes and his virtues were fastened on me, but when the people discovered that my life story had been very different, I am afraid that for some of them the glamour was gone.

Another story which has gained some currency is without foundation, as far as my comrade and I are concerned, though even Mr. Spurgeon, who himself has suffered from apocryphal renown, has fixed it upon us in one of his sermons. It is true that it has been used sometimes in our meetings as an illustration; perhaps that is why it has become associated with our names. An enthusiastic friend of all good works, a man as fervent for Christ as he was fearless in confessing Him, invited two evangelists to accompany him down the Clyde. On the way he produced a bundle of tracts, and, with many an ejaculatory "Alleluia," went up and down the deck, distributing them amongst the passengers. One of the evangelists sat at one side of the ship, and the other at the other side. Sitting beside one of them was a man who looked at the tract distributor with scorn and amusement, and said, "Is not that man a fool?" He was astonished at the answer, "Yes, but do you know who he is a fool for?" And still more astonished when, after his negative reply, the evangelist added, "He is a fool for Christ's sake."

The good man, thinking he was in undesirable company, rose and went to the other side of the ship, and, singularly

enough, sat down beside the other evangelist, who, having some inkling of what had passed, immediately touched him on the shoulder, and asked him if he was a Christian. By this time, thoroughly excited, the poor fellow got up, as if he had been electrified, and shouted, "There's a gang of them! There's a gang of them!" Of course, the illustration is evident. What we need in Christian work is not solitary endeavour, nor over-indulged propriety, but a gang of people who are willing even to be counted fools for Christ's sake.

Those who take a decided stand in the Master's name will never know how far their influence may reach. Some years ago, in order to speak in Dundee, I arrived at Tay Bridge station, where I had been told it would be more convenient to alight, hard on midnight. My host had assured me that the lateness of the hour would be no inconvenience, but when I arrived in the deserted roads the difficulty was to find the house, which, though it had a name, was without a number. There was positively nobody to ask at first, but presently there came along the road three drunken men, and, though it did not look very hopeful, I stopped them, and asked them if they knew where my host lived. Steadying themselves by embracing each other, they solemnly began to debate the point, and though I was both tired and hungry, it was so amusing that I was in no mind to hurry the debate. At length one of them turned to me, and said, "Is he a releigious kind o' chap?" Instinctively I knew that this would be the right man, and I answered "Yes." At once they directed me to the house, which was not far away. When I entered it, I congratulated my host upon his reputation in the

town ; when three drunkards at midnight knew that his chief characteristic was religion, he had evidently not hid his light under a bushel.

In nearly every town we visited as missionaries there would be some peculiar person attracted by the mission, who would attach himself to us. In one place I remember an old actor, who came regularly to the morning prayer meeting, and as regularly in a sepulchral voice began his prayer with a rather startling epithet, uttered in a most tragic voice, "Eterrnaal Paarrent." It was really difficult to avoid a smile even at his prayer ; and in other cases it was quite impossible, as, for instance, when, in another place, a man besought the Lord that, as the Gospel feast was spread, there might be a great clatter of knives and forks ; or when a third, with evident reference to the Lord making bare His arm, besought the Most High to roll up His shirt-sleeves, and do a mighty work. An old shoemaker, whose hands were stained by his toil, caused some amusement in a meeting once by holding them up, and asking, as he endeavoured to probe the consciences of the people, "Are our hands clean ?" These are but samples of things which, even if they seem to be irreverent when written, were actually in their original setting the unconsciously humorous expression, in the language of nature, of a deep earnestness of feeling.

A man once came to me, seeking further light, and to assure me that he was not altogether an irreligious man, said that when his wife was dying, he had read out of the Bible to her ; he had begun at the first chapter of Proverbs, and before he had finished, his wife had died. I could only look at him in astonishment. But it was tears, not laughter, which followed the appeal of a

simple youth who attached himself to my colleague during the mission, and on the morning of parting, as he bade him good-bye, peered into his face, and said, with a croon in his voice, "You will tell Jesus I carried your cornet for you, won't you?"

With profound gratitude to God I record that, in spite of the great crowds that so often gathered at our meetings, we never had a serious accident, and though we met with difficulties, they generally, in the long run, turned out to our advantage.

One night in a church on the South Coast, while my friend was taking the first part of the service, I discovered that there was a fire in progress at the rear of the building. Slipping out of the pulpit, we managed to subdue it before the time of the sermon, and I was able to take my place as if nothing had been the matter. In another town the mission had scarcely begun when we received a letter from the Mayor stating that an epidemic of scarlet fever had suddenly broken out, and that all public meetings were to cease; but when the interrupted mission was resumed, after a month or two, we found that the interval had only prepared the hearts of the people to receive the Gospel. In another border town we arrived one Saturday evening to find a Parliamentary election in full progress, and the mission overshadowed, even forgotten, by those who were to make the arrangements. The result was that after the Sunday meetings we went into a little place amongst the Welsh hills until our friends in the town recovered from their excitement, and those days in the village of Brymbo were amongst the most interesting of all our experience.

This chapter may not appear to have very direct



relation to the great object which must always be before us ; but it may serve to remind us that we have to do with human nature, that the fount of tears is close to the fount of laughter, and that when men are moved in any direction, there is always the opportunity of moving them toward the Highest. An illustration of this must end the chapter.

In one place my colleague and the minister of the church sat immediately behind me, in a very narrow pulpit, and when I was speaking, in forgetfulness of everything save the needs of the people before me, I suddenly swung my arm round with closed fist, and hit Manton Smith on the side of his head, actually knocking him over. The meeting, which had been deeply solemn up to that instant, broke into ripples of laughter, and the people continued to laugh until some of them cried. It seemed, indeed, as if the whole impression was destroyed, but though I laughed too, I also prayed, and there came to me a sudden thought. When quietness was somewhat restored, I said, in effect : "I am not ashamed of being excited, but with souls perishing and Christ waiting to save them, I would be ashamed of myself if I were not excited. If I, who preach to you, lose myself in the greatness of the appeal, what should be your feeling as you listen to it ?"

The people were caught on the rebound, the pendulum swung from merriment to one of the greatest solemnities I have ever experienced, and the night of laughter, which is even now remembered in that church, became also the night of penitence.

## CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH

### A MISSIONARY JOURNEY

TEN years ago it was determined that I should go to China. The Baptist Missionary Society gave the commission, the Church at Melbourne Hall separated me to the service, and my home circle made the willing surrender at the bidding of the Master. The journey became a world-tour; but of that I shall hope to write in the next chapter. In this I confine myself to the missionary aspect of the undertaking. It is no new theme, for on our return we presented a lengthy report to the committee that sent us forth, and afterwards embodied other aspects of the events of the seven months in a volume entitled "New China: A Story of Modern Travel"; but now I write, not as administrator, nor as traveller, but simply as a disciple of Christ, who went forth in His name to his brethren afar. It was ten years ago, and yet it seems but as yesterday.

Besides the long stay in China, the expedition included a brief stay in Japan and Ceylon. These island experiences proved complementary to the events that fell out to us on the mainland. Our own society once had a mission in Japan, but for sufficient reason discontinued it, and we searched in Tokio for its site in vain. But it must have given a good testimony, for it is on record that a Japanese woman, also searching for it after removal, was heard to inquire "the way to the place

where they mend broken hearts." No mission could be ambitious of a finer renown than that. In Ceylon our society has still a flourishing work. It has already celebrated the centenary of its inauguration, and we are praying and expecting a revival of spiritual power, to render glorious and sacred the revival of memory and of effort that is assured.

In Japan the great mountain shrines at Nikko claimed our deep and fascinated interest. It is impossible to paint a picture vivid enough to impress the uniqueness of the place on the mind of any one who has not seen it. There are the hills and the giant trees first of all (the great cryptomeria avenue fourteen miles long leading up to it), the rushing torrent in the valley, and the bewildering stairways up the steep heights. Then on every point of vantage there is a temple, terraced, enfolded, convoluted ; the architecture fantastic, the environment picturesque. Lavish have been the labour and the expense bestowed on them. Even on the exterior they are lacquered in brilliant colouring, and gilded in barbaric splendour. All this is magnificent, but behind it there lies the mystery of Shintoism, that influence which is the strength of Japanese character, that religion which is unexplainable to the Western mind, rooted in the history of the past here enshrined, treasured in the soul of the people to-day, and destined to affect the form of the Christian Church in the Japan of the future. For even at Nikko, which should be the impregnable citadel of the ancient Japanese faith, the word of the Gospel has found entrance ; even in the temples there are seekers after the truth, and perhaps there, as in Jerusalem in the olden days, the historian of the future will have

to record "that a great multitude of the priests were obedient to the faith."

But China itself was our objective. We went far into the country, by river, by rail, and by road, spending fifteen days in one road journey and twenty-one days in another, with a caravan of mule litters, and an undesired escort of soldiers, who never left us under any conceivable circumstance. Most mornings we rose at four o'clock and began our journey before sunrise, having frequently to light candles to find the tracks on the road by which our course was guided. Between the great cities there always ran the single telegraph wire, and although we heard nothing of the outer world for weeks, this always reminded us that we might, on occasion, get into touch with home.

Morning after morning we saw the sun rise behind the mountains which one by one we turned or crossed ; evening by evening we rested in Chinese inns, all bare and dirty, some unspeakably filthy and repellent. Once we spent a night in an opium den, more than once in an opium refuge. When we came to a mission station we were glad as for an oasis in the desert. A simple dish of oatmeal porridge or a cup of coffee made us grateful, and Christian fellowship made us glad. We came into contact with missions connected with every branch of the Christian Church, and rejoiced with them all. In the far interior we were objects of curiosity, and passed through crowded streets of eager sightseers. In Shensi for some days our road lay through persimmon orchards ; in Shansi we travelled for a while over tracks black with coal dust ; in Shantung we crossed the plains that lie open to the floods ; tropical heat merged into

arctic cold before we were through, and deluges of rain that soaked to the skin were forgotten in dust storms that penetrated even inside our locked bags.

The China Inland Mission furnished some of the choicest experiences of the journey, first at Shanghai, at its headquarters, where we had the privilege of preaching the Gospel one Sunday evening, and of joining the prayer circle after breakfast one morning. Very sacred that prayer time was as one by one the Provinces were taken, and missionary by missionary prayed for by name. Afterwards, in Honan and in Shansi, we met many of the workers at their stations, or in conference groups, and were ourselves refreshed as we sought to edify them. One day we had the pleasure of meeting the widow of Pastor Hsi.

The Jewish tablet at Kaifengfu claimed our interested attention, and while we were examining it, one of the few remaining Jews came and stood by. In this city there formerly existed a synagogue, but the poverty of the people compelled them to sell the materials of which it was built, to dispose also of the rolls of the law in their possession. So the Jews, whose forefathers came from the dispersion in Babylon, journeying still further and further East, until in the early Christian era, and probably long before, they settled in China, have become absorbed by the Mohammedans or Buddhists around them.

The Nestorian tablet in Sianfu is even more interesting. The inscriptions on it, partly in Syriac and partly Chinese, make it certain that as early as the year 505 the Christian faith reached China, that the early missionaries met with great success, having even the

patronage (probably fatal patronage) of the Emperor, and that in those days Christianity was known by the name of the Luminous Religion. It may be that the echo of this ancient Nestorian faith still survives in some of the secret societies of China, but if so, the sound has grown very faint.

One of the most striking results of missionary effort in all China, or, indeed, in the world, is to be found in Fuyintsun, which, being interpreted, means "Gospel Village." Its story is a romance. A quarter of a century ago a Governor of the Province of Shensi, who was a native of the Province of Shantung, found that, owing to the Mohammedan rebellion and the inroad of wolves that followed the depopulation of the country, there was great need for new settlers. He sent to his native province, asking people to come, and promising them a grant of land.

There was a great exodus. Some of the Christians of Shantung set forth with the others, like pilgrim fathers, for the new country, their scanty belongings in wheelbarrows, which they trundled in front of them week after week until they came to their promised land. During the journey they had frequent discourse as to their prospects, and they determined not to settle with their Confucian fellow-pilgrims, but to establish a community of their own. When they made their request for a special site, it was granted, and they founded the little colony, hoisting their flag of loyalty to the Lord Jesus at once. Then they appealed for missionaries, themselves bore a good witness, and when we were present we witnessed a baptism which brought the membership of the church up to a thousand.

My journey to the village is unforgettable. We started, a few of us, in the early morning, but what with delays in crossing the river and doubling on our track, it was one o'clock at night ere we arrived. My colleague had gone on the previous day, and had been received with all the honour Oriental courtesy could devise. When our caravan drew near, some watcher passed the word on, the church bell was rung, and the whole village rose from its slumbers. Though it was pitch dark, not a ceremony was neglected. Lanterns lighted the way, pistols and crackers were fired ; the elders received us, then the teachers, then the members of the church, then the boys of the school. It was a royal welcome, evidencing the gratitude of those faithful hearts for the glad message that had been sent to them from the West.

Months afterwards in Shantung, the province whence these people had emigrated, we had another road journey in the biting cold to the mission station at Peichen. The night we were compelled to spend before crossing the Yellow River was so bitter that in the morning we had to find our way between ice floes to get across. To explain what follows it needs to be said that the Yellow River is here higher than the surrounding country, having silted up during the years. Instead of dredging or diverting the river, the Chinese have built great banks on either side, to restrain the flood, and not always with success. The remarkable thing about the mission station at Peichen is that it is actually built inside these dykes. The silt has risen there so high that the river is driven to the southern bank, and though the building is in the bed of the river, it is reckoned to be in the safest place. But then things always go by

contraries in China. When we were there, all the preachers of the district gathered in conference to meet us, and ere the meetings were over we were all rejoicing in the realized presence of God. As one old man put it, he had never dared to think himself worthy even to ask for the Holy Spirit—his life had been so unfruitful; but now he had actually received the Gift, and would be able to return and tell others. We are encouraged to believe that our conference years ago has yielded abiding fruit.

One other great effort which came under review during our journey demands notice before this chapter closes. The capital city of that same province, Tsinanfu, long resisted the Gospel; some of the missionaries who attempted to enter in the olden days were stoned out of the city. But when at length the way was opened the servants of Christ entered royally. One part of the city was said to be haunted by evil spirits; there the intrepid missionaries went, and built the Institute and Museum, to attract and educate the people. The Chinese, seeing that the men from the West were immune from the evil spirits, took heart of courage, and began themselves to build houses in the district, until now that part of the city is the most sought after, the mission premises, since enlarged to include church, school, hospital, and the Shantung Christian University, standing high in the centre against the sky line. Every day there is a steady stream of visitors, sometimes thousands in one day, and all of them listen to a Gospel address before they leave. The glad message is by this means spread far and wide; the Confucian pilgrims who pass by nearly always come to see and to listen; the



students who throng the city are frequent visitors, and the kingdom of Christ has no finer agency in China or anywhere else than this.

This missionary journey put into my life a missionary obligation, which I am now doing my best in some humble measure to fulfil.

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTEETH

### FRUITAGE OF A WORLD TOUR

THE missionary journey which I attempted to describe in the last chapter was immediately fruitful in several directions, so far as the work of the Society which sent me was concerned. Notably, an advance was arranged, and has since been carried out, in part, in the province of Shensi, and union in the educational work of the Shantung Christian University was confirmed. But the harvest of which I now write has been gathered in my own personal experience.

Strangely enough, the first result was that I solved the Sabbath question. During my ministry I have met a considerable number of people whose minds are greatly exercised as to the proper day for Sabbath observance, whether the seventh day or whether the first day of the week is the fulfilment of the law? Indeed, in Leicester I welcomed into church fellowship several persons who made it a matter of conscience to rest from their business on Saturdays, and I was compelled with some frequency to debate the question with other ardent advocates of the seventh-day Sabbath. The usual arguments proved unavailing, and at length I insisted upon the geographical impossibility of observing the Sabbath at the same time all over the world as sufficient justification for change of day, if only every

seventh day is kept sacred. The world-tour has rendered this argument impregnable in my own case. As on all voyages west over the Pacific Ocean, we dropped a day when we passed the 180th degree of longitude. We went to our cabins one Sunday night, and slept but the usual time, but when we woke it was Tuesday morning. So the year 1907 had for me only 364 days. I lived as long as other people, but the time was spaced differently.

The singular result of the rearrangement was that my next Sabbath, while it was on Sunday, was also on the seventh day. There is now no question with me whether I shall observe the Lord's Day or the seventh day, for they are the same. Counting from the Sunday before the day was dropped to the Sunday which followed, there were, as the Monday was omitted, only six days. What is to my friends the first day is, therefore, to me the seventh, and I am able to render a literal obedience (if literal obedience is the keeping of the seventh day) to the fourth Commandment, and yet join those of my fellow-believers who rejoice to set apart the first day in memory of the resurrection of the Lord and of the advent of the Spirit. If, therefore, it is possible in my case, judging by any standard, to join in the beautiful custom which has commended itself to the general sense of the Christian Church, and yet yield obedience to the strictest letter of the Commandment, it surely cannot be charged on others that they offend, simply because they have not voyaged over the Pacific. It must be a matter that is non-essential, or else, do what I will, I am wrong. If I keep the eighth day, I must choose Monday; if I choose Saturday, that is not for me the seventh day, but the sixth!

After this experience it seemed an almost ludicrous thing to find, both in Japan and China, some missionaries teaching that the seventh day is the only Sabbath well pleasing to God, and teaching it in a land so far east that either Saturday or Sunday is almost equally removed in exact time from the hours devoted in this land to the weekly rest ordained by God—ordained and written not only in the moral law, but in the very constitution of man. I say this in the utmost love to my brethren, say it, indeed, because I wish to see them delivered from a bondage that is as irrational as it is unnecessary.

As my experience of the people in those far lands increased, a conviction came to me that amongst all nations, and not only amongst the Jews, there are people who may be counted as "worthy." This is my third fruitage. I am not careful to safeguard the statement. I know, indeed, that it was only to Israel, and only for a temporary mission, that the disciples were sent on the occasion recorded in Matthew x. But there were then those who did not know Christ, whom our Lord recognized as in some sense different from their fellows, when He said, "Into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy." Whatever He meant about the Jews I mean about the nations. And just as there are those who are worthy, there are those who prove themselves unworthy, like the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, before whom Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, "Seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the heathen." Only by Christ can men come to the Father, but does not the Father by His Spirit come to men even before they turn

to Christ? What else can our Lord mean when He says, "Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto Me"? The Spirit of the Father goes before the missionaries preparing their way, and making some persons, from the human side, worthy of being claimed for Christ, and brought to His feet. This is in effect the great doctrine of election, and what I had learnt long ago from the Bible was taught me afresh on my world tour from my contact with men.

Again, I learnt that the preaching of the Gospel is doing two things in the world. It is calling out a people for the Name of Jesus, and it is calling the whole world to readiness for the day of the Lord's Epiphany. It is doing everything for somebody, and something for everybody. It enters into a nation like a great yeast, and unconsciously changes them, as it is changing China and India to-day; and it appeals for the personal devotion of heart and life which those yield who become Christ's confessors and servants. So missionary work is not alone to be judged by the number of converts it can report, nor is other work than the direct preaching of the Gospel to be counted foreign to the missionary sphere. In the nature of the case, we are bound to educate and civilize, but the yearning of the missionary heart must ever symphonize with the yearning of the Master's heart for the love that, welcoming Him as Saviour, will also enthrone Him as Lord. Yet amongst the others the news of the Crucified must be published, so that when our Lord shall appear, all nations shall have heard the story, and be able to recognize Him as He comes.

The final fruitage was long in ripening. My journey to China brought me to London, but not until after four years' further ministry in Leicester. Though I could not know it at the time, this is quite evidently part of the divine plan, and, feeling that, I am at peace. More than I can say I miss my own congregation, but I am thankful that I have as many opportunities of preaching the Word of God as ever. Indeed, as a family, we are all devoting ourselves to the missionary enterprise. Mrs. Fullerton is on the Committee of the Women's Missionary Association, and my elder daughter has recently been elected President of the Girl's Auxiliary of the Missionary Society. Experience in other lands is an incalculable advantage in the conduct of affairs at home; having been a Missionary traveller, it was easier to become a Missionary Secretary, and, since it is God's way, it is well.

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH

### MISSIONARY VIGNETTES

VERY early on my voyage East I discovered how it is that so many travellers criticize missionaries. They hear the ship's gossip, always adverse to the missionary idea, of those who have never been further than the ports of these far countries. The result is that tourists and young men going out to business appointments are dissuaded from approaching the missionary where they land, and, as there are but two sections of European society in any large Eastern city, when the missionary and his friends are avoided the stranger is inevitably thrown amongst the gay and the godless set, and there his bias against the missionary is confirmed. There are people in the East who, for sufficient reason, do not want to think well of the missionary, and there are other people in the East who are ready to purvey for them the sort of information they desire.

When I went out I could not but be biassed in the missionary's favour, but I tried to take a dispassionate view of the situation, and I here draw a few thumb-nail sketches of things which I myself saw—things that will never figure in any official missionary report. The vignettes are of widely different events, but I ask the candid reader whether they do not convey a common impression.

It is, of course, open to any one to say that my eye was not true. Well, that may perhaps account for the perspective, but when I relate a fact, a fact is a fact, even though the perspective be faulty. Sailing down the Japan Inland Sea with a party of missionaries, one of them gave us a very pregnant bit of advice. He said, "Never take an opinion of the Chinaman from anybody that does not love him." I venture to say the same thing of the missionary. Love is a truer lens than hate.

In the heart of China I was in the central missionary house of the city. One evening there was a great commotion: a missionary who had brought two Chinese villagers from their house to a summer resort, and was now returning, had lost them amongst the busy traffic of the riverside. Disconsolate, he returned to their temporary home, and with his wife and family sat inert on the verandah, while others had to bestir themselves to track and discover the missing villagers. It would have been fatal for him and for the work to allow him to return without them. Eventually they were found: they had gone on board the wrong boat, and by courtesy the proper boat was delayed until the whole party were safely got into their places. Now, as I have said, I was biassed in the missionary's favour, but quite frankly I was not blind to the missionary's faults. And as I looked at that bewildered man on the verandah steps, I jumped to the conclusion that here was a specimen of the men that it would be better to keep at home. Why was he so listless, so helpless in an emergency? In my self-confidence I passed sentence upon him, and I did not scruple to give voice to it. Then they told me his story.



He had been in the Boxer trouble, his house had been wrecked, his furniture smashed and made into a bonfire ; he had been dragged across his courtyard time after time ; at length his clothing had been saturated with petroleum, set alight, and he was left as dead. Unheeded and untended he lay, for I know not how long, then, signs of life being evident, he was rescued and nursed back to consciousness. After all that, instead of renouncing his missionary career, he had, with the marks of the fight upon him, returned to service. And then, at a crisis, his nerve failed ; I, who had never suffered anything for Christ, in my haste judged him to be unworthy. But it was my verdict that was unworthy. I went back to that man, and could almost have bent down and worshipped him ; his patient resignation and fortitude now outshone his helplessness and dejection, and I understood now how ready everybody else was to act for him, and smooth his path. Once for all I was cured of the tendency to form an adverse estimate of missionaries by first appearances. I know to-day some missionaries who seem to be failures, but even about these I hold judgment in suspense, for I do not know all they have endured, and in some cases, at any rate, I am sure that to know all would be to pardon all.

Some time afterwards we came to a city where there were only two missionaries, and they were women. Judged from without, it is not wise in China, where gentlewomen live such secluded lives, that missionary ladies should be alone in a city, or that they should walk the streets unattended, especially as unbound feet in a woman, except in the case of a Manchu lady, have

hitherto been regarded as a sign of something that a good woman would seek to avoid. Yet here were two ladies organizing and guiding a mission alone. We could not, of course, stay as guests in the mission house, but it was quite allowable for us to spend the day there, and, as we marked their gentle ways, we wondered that women so frail could be so courageous and adventurous. When we heard their story our wonder grew. They, too, had been in China in the trouble time; they had been hunted from that very city; had hidden in the mountains, in the fields, beside the river. They had been driven from hiding-place to hiding-place, and only after terrible suffering had reached the coast. The people of their city were sure they were dead. When peace returned these brave women were asked whether they would return. The instant answer was "Yes." "But you must go to some other centre," it was suggested. Resolutely they answered "No, we will go back to our own city or nowhere." There was nobody to go with them, so they went alone. Every step of the way recalled the horror of the past, but on they went, unafraid, until when they were seen approaching the city the news spread, the crowds gathered to see them enter, and the people said, "The Christian's doctrine is true: they have risen from the dead."

In another city there were amongst the missionary band a young man and his young bride. She had come from a home of refinement, even of luxury. The missionary board voted a modest sum to build them a house in a healthy spot, outside the city wall, and with a woman's keen interest she had watched the house rise, had planned cupboards and convenient corners, had

planted a little garden, and beautified the house in a hundred dainty ways. It was almost finished when news came that a missionary with a family of children had been appointed to the station ; and instantly that young missionary couple determined that as the children could not possibly thrive in the dull, dank city dwelling, they themselves would remain there, and let the new-comer have the house they had reared with such care and expectancy. " Quite right too," I hear somebody say. Yes, but have you ever done anything like that yourself ? Has it ever occurred to you to live in a back street in order that somebody else may have your beautiful home ? It is just as easy to do a thing like that in Britain or in America as it is in China. Perhaps easier.

Still another city, and in the mission compound. Here is the modest garden, and in one corner there are three mounds. They tell a story to those who can read. A man and woman lived here (again a woman gently nurtured), their first child was born and died, their second, their third. Each time a tiny grave was dug in the garden. The children died because the house was not fit for them to live in, and in desperation the parents, out of their own slender resources, built two healthy rooms. Their fourth child lived, and, in living, proved that the others need not have died if only they could have been adequately cared for. Yet that mother and that father have never whimpered, never paraded their sorrow, never blamed the Society that was so slow to care for their comfort, have not become warped or soured. Do you say that is a little thing ? Look at your own bright children, read

your own heart, and remember that a missionary mother feels as keenly and loves as dearly as you, and then answer.

Away in the hill country lies another city, and there quietly lives a Chinese evangelist who has earned renown in his mission, and the gratitude of the whole Church, by his fidelity, when it would have been so easy for him to have faltered. Every missionary in the Province of Shansi was killed, but only the merest rumours of the trouble reached the coast. It was needful that somebody should penetrate into the interior and learn the truth. Whoever went risked his life ten times over, but without a tremor this man volunteered. After hairbreadth escapes he fulfilled his quest and brought out the awful tidings. Now he is an old man with failing health, but in common life he glorifies Christ even as he did in those stirring days. Tested and disciplined, he stands true; modest and gentle, he confesses the Name and the doctrine, and it would be hard for any one who knows him not to believe in missions.

In another and more populous city I met a Chinese pastor who preached with convincing power, and was as successful in winning men for Christ as he was popular. Any position in his mission was open to him; he was indeed destined for the largest church in the capital city, when he asked that he might be sent to a little station in Manchuria. Nothing could turn him from his desire, and at length he revealed his secret. It was there that the Boxers had killed all his family and friends, and he conceived the idea that if he could only preach to his father's murderers they would turn to Christ. No thought of vengeance was in his mind, save the

revenge of love. He went, he preached, he returned disappointed : none of them had believed his message, and when he had told me the story, told it because it was almost dragged out of him by a brother missionary, I asked him how he felt about it all. He smiled, seemed to think he had done nothing in particular, and supposed he was not worthy to have the joy of leading these people to Christ, though he still prayed for them, and expected them some day to come, as he had come, to the Redeemer's feet.

Still another picture. A Singalese pastor was chosen to minister for a year amongst a savage people in a fever zone. He went, obedient to the summons, but counting the days until his return. After the first day he cheered himself with the thought that there were only three hundred and sixty-four left, and so on. But when at the end of the year he came for a brief furlough, although again he was called to leave wife and children for Christ's sake, he said, with a light other than of this world on his face, that he was now counting the days until his ministry was resumed amongst the people he had learnt to love. Fever and loneliness were nothing compared with the zeal that flamed in his heart.

Make but a composite picture of these seven vignettes, and I venture reverently to say that you will have a portrait very closely resembling the image of our adorable Lord.

## CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH

### MARTYR SCENES

THE Church of Christ is little aware that it is again in the martyr era, that within the memory of living men there have been four great organized persecutions of the saints—in Madagascar, in Uganda, in Armenia, and in China. While men at home are rejecting the Gospel, our Lord can find others on earth who are willing to die for it.

I never felt to be so near a martyr as when I stood by the cast of the body of Geronimo in the museum at Mustapha Superieur. As I gazed long at that noble face I tried to imagine the day in 1569 in which he was built into the wall of the fort because he declared himself to be a Christian, and that other day in 1853 when, the wall being demolished, the plaster was run into the hollow space where his body had lain, and after it had hardened it almost seemed as if the martyr was again ready to make the great Confession. Though separated by leagues and by years, I feel I know Geronimo, that I could recognize him if we met, as perhaps we may meet some day, where the noble army of martyrs praise our King.

But let us remember that men are not martyrs because they die ; they die because they are martyrs. The New Testament word for witness is practically the word martyr, and all Christ's true witnesses have the martyr

stuff in them. In a previous chapter I mentioned the Chinese city, Ping Yang fu. There I saw two old people, man and wife, who in the Boxer time were spared the death stroke but because of their faith had a cross marked deeply on their foreheads. Plain peasant folk they were, but there could be no doubt as to Whom they belonged; they bore branded on their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus, and their faces glowed with the light of heaven. They did not die, but they were Christ's true martyrs.

At the Philadelphia Congress I saw more living martyrs, men whom a friend of mine has named "the Knights of the Knout." They came from the plains and the prisons of Russia, from the snows of Siberia, and of the Caucasus—some with backs scarred, some with wrists and ankles marked with chains, some with bowed bodies, some with seamed and pinched faces, all prematurely old. And they were all of them martyrs. They had suffered for preaching Christ, and in prison and in exile they had still preached, baptizing thousands of converts, often at dead of night. When that band of men was introduced to the assembly in Grace Temple, again I felt I was in contact with the self-same Spirit that dwelt in the martyrs of the olden days.

That August night in the year 64, when Nero lighted his palace grounds with lamps, each of which was a living Christian, dressed in a tunic steeped in pitch and wreathed in flame, was, as even Renan admits, the greatest day in Christian history after the day of Calvary. It ushered in an era that culminated in the ten killing years between 303 and 313, and ended in the triumph of Christianity over Paganism. Again, central in the history of Christ's

people came another martyr epoch, which ended in the triumph of the Gospel over Rome. And as the victory of the early Church and the victory of the Reformed Church were gained by blood, the victory of the Missionary Church bears the same royal sign.

We need not, indeed, go to far lands to be reminded of the price that has been paid by the saints for the faith we inherit. Martyr scenes lie around us in our own country. I know a church in the south of England which treasures the memory of one of its ancient pastors, who was imprisoned for years because he dared to preach the Gospel, and died in his prison. Yet he did not ask their pity; instead, he wrote exulting in the fact that he was called to suffer, and his words adorn the vestry of the church. "This honour have not all the saints," he said. It is most true, but all the saints share in the heritage which these brave soldiers of Christ pass on to us, and praise the Lord who gave them grace to suffer shame for the Name.

Ten years ago I travelled by road day after day through the great martyr province of China—Shansi. I met time and again those who seventeen years ago had suffered agonies worse than death, indignities that cannot even be thought of, barbarities that make the blood run cold even when they are hinted. Nobody can ever know, and happily many of them already forget, what they endured. But, like Dante, they have a look on their faces that tells where they have been, that humbles those of us who have been called to bear so little for the Master. Truly this honour have not all the saints.

At Fengchowfu I saw the sole survivor of the band of missionaries that once occupied that city for Christ.



He was absent at the martyr time, and hurried back to his now lonely post, almost chiding himself that he had not been there. He was as great a martyr as the others; his life thereafter was a daily sacrifice. I asked him, and I have asked others who were at home on furlough when their brethren laid down their lives, whether they were sorry or whether they were glad that they were away, and I never yet met a man who said he was glad. I think they all feel somehow as if they have no right to the years that have since been given to them. I think I have seen a yearning in their eyes that says that in their hearts they almost envy their brethren who were taken. I have never dared to ask a woman that question, but I have met one who had her head on the block expecting the sword to descend, and she bears the testimony that at that moment a peace of God filled her heart that she did not think it possible for any human creature to possess. We need not mourn for the martyrs who died; they went home in triumph. Nor need we mourn for ourselves; we can follow in their train.

At Show Yang I rested in the house from which a brave man and his wife and little boy were dragged in chains to die. Here there were no surviving missionaries, nor surviving Christians—all were slain, slain so cruelly, some of them, that the mind reels at the recital, and I spare the readers of this page the shock the telling of it would mean. Since I have been home I have seen the beautiful picture of the English boy-martyr, one of the fairest faces imaginable, and it is told of him that when his parents thought of leaving him at home here, he said, "No, father, I could not be a martyr in England, but

if you take me to China perhaps I may be one." Do you think he shrank from the ordeal at the last? I inquired about him in China, but though nobody could tell me, I know he went with a light step and a glowing face to his doom.

At Sinchow I was in another martyr scene. Outside the east gate of the city I saw the hole remaining even to-day where the outraged bodies of eight missionaries, men and women, had temporary burial, before they were removed to the little martyr cemetery that is now reserved beyond the walls. Those eight found no ark of safety amid the flood of hate and violence that surged round them at that time. Between the two gates of the city, the inner gate shut behind them, the outer gate not yet opened, they were done to death. The torches on the walls gave light on the scene, the sun was struggling to rise on the early morning that witnessed their martyrdom. To write about it stirs compassion, to stand that day on the spot brought us into fellowship with their sufferings. But it never occurred to us to pity them. We prayed rather that we ourselves might be more worthy.

But the great modern martyr city of the world is Tai Yuan fu. There on one day there suffered for Christ no fewer than forty-five persons men and women and children, the three from Show Yang among them. As a system the Papacy is the very antithesis of what the Church of Christ should be, but that day proved that there is one thing which Roman Catholics and Protestants can do in common—they can both die for their Lord. I do not argue about it, I only record the fact. We saw the place where these disciples were imprisoned, we walked with chastened feet over the road they went

with feet of conquest ; we saw the place where they bowed to the brandished steel. The tablet that records their names had by had even that day been dishonoured by some one who had spat upon it. But what matter, since they had earned the victor's crown? Happy people !

Many Chinese Christians also suffered that day, but by some miracle three were spared. Two of these we saw, the other was in the country and we missed him. Liu, Han, and Chang discovered each other while the martyr blood was still red on the ground ; they said to each other, " The worship must not cease," and though the mob was at the door, they met in a little room, and they sang, and prayed, and worshipped in the name of Jesus Christ. Of old the Master said, " Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." I will dare to say that never was that promise more amply fulfilled than when these three simple men thus met on that day of terror. They were in the fiery furnace, and one walked with them in the fire like unto the Son of God. I have wished, and I still hope, that some great artist will paint that picture : the three Shansi Christians worshipping Christ at the risk of their life on that martyr day, the prophecy that when men have done their worst against the Lord's anointed, China, and not China only, but all the world, will be found kneeling at His feet.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH

### MORE THINGS CHINESE

BEFORE returning to the further narrative of things in England, another chapter must be devoted to things Chinese. If an excuse is needed, it can be found in the engrossing interest of the present situation in that wonderful land.

Its two great rivers—the Hwang-ho and the Yang-tse-Kiang—may fitly represent the China of yesterday and the China of to-day. The first, usually named the Yellow River, because of its colour, is, perhaps, more truly known as the Sorrow of Han. A glance at the map shows its lack of purpose; it sprawls all over the country, west and north, and west and south, and west and north-west, and is useless and devastating. That is the China that was. The Yang-tse, on the contrary, from its rise in the hills runs straight to the sea, and is navigable for a thousand miles. That is the China that is to be.

The greatest thing we can do for China to-day is to pray for it; really pray; pray with such intelligence and intensity that our prayer will work, and avail much in its working. It is possible by prayer to affect the lives of others, however far away, for prayer, like thought, annihilates distance. Once, in Leicester, I tried to impress that thought on the people, and I urged

them to choose some place and definitely intercede for it. A bright growing girl came to me some days after and shyly said that she had begun to pray for a city in China. I asked her what it was, and with some hesitation she phrased the name—Yang-tse-Kiang! She said she had searched the map and fixed on that. She did not know, and I did not tell her, that she had fixed on a river, not on a city. I did not tell her, because I believed that God would bless all the cities on that river in answer to her prayer.

To see a company of Chinese Christians at prayer for the first time is a sight never to be forgotten. They turn their backs to the pulpit as they kneel—all of them in blue gowns; and when I saw them, they all had the long, black, glossy queue hanging down their back. These are the men. In country places the women are always apart, with a curtain between them and the men, but both are in sight of the preacher. On more than one occasion, in speaking of prayer, I have reminded the people that one of the men missionaries might speak through the curtain to one of the women missionaries on the other side, and *vice versa*; speak to each other, and be certain that their prayer is heard; get the answer, indeed, without seeing each other at all, being only assured by the preacher that each was there ready to listen to the other. And so God waits behind the veil, unseen by us, ready to hear and to answer us when we call. It was good to see how those Chinese worshippers grasped the truth, and turned and nodded to each other with glowing faces as they grasped it. That man knows nothing of the Chinese who says that they never smile. They actually beam with glory on occasion. To hear

a company of peasant Chinese singing is also a thing to be remembered, for they generally begin on the lowest possible note and get lower and lower as they proceed!

Of course, I could only speak by translation, and much depends on the spirit of the person who translates, as well as on his knowledge of the language. On one occasion the late Dr. Mateer, before a company of students, rendered my English into the beautiful Chinese of which he was the acknowledged master. Others, too, made my speech radiant by their interpretation, though once, when Dr. Bergin was translating, I launched into the significance of a word as representing the thought, and he had to draw me up short to explain that such an idea was altogether foreign to Chinese idiom. That, however, was not so trying as when, in another place, quite early in my experience of China, I sought to enlarge on the rest that Christ gives to our nature—to conscience, will, emotion, imagination, heart, and, to my dismay, discovered afterwards that although Mr. Madeley bravely followed me, he was only able to say the same thing over and over again, for in the Chinese language there is only one word, it appears, for a man's inner self.

As they have no alphabet, but only ideographs representing things, it is very difficult—next to impossible, in fact—to make a new word. Combinations of things well known suffice. For instance, the telegraph wire is, with a touch of poetry, called "the lightning thread," and the railway engine "the fire chariot." They told us in Shantung of a Christian who came excitedly to the missionary, saying that he had seen a railway train for the first time, and he was so glad,

for he had never known before how Elijah went to heaven ! It was a very natural mistake, for in the Scripture the same combination of signs is used for Elijah's chariot of fire. Which furnishes us with an illustration of the difficulty of making clear to the Oriental mind the difference between the spiritual and material, and emphasizes the danger that the Chinese may be content with the knowledge of our arts and sciences, and never apprehend the power of Christ ; may rest satisfied with our discoveries, and never reach to the revelation of the things eternal that has come to us from God.

At the present moment they are ready to learn all we can teach them. The men of the world are giving them all worldly knowledge, but there is a secret known to others which only they can impart—the mystery that has been hidden from the ages, and is now revealed in Christ. Woe to Christ's people if they do not make that secret known ! Woe to the world if the Chinese mind is hardened before it learns the way of God ! This is the greatest disaster that threatens the world to-day. If we give China Western knowledge without Christian faith, in a little while China will give us Eastern morals without heathen reserves, and that will be a worse corruption than has ever yet been known. The world is at the parting of the ways, and Christ waits to see if His Church is to be faithful. All differences between Christian people sink into insignificance in view of this universal challenge.

There can be no compromise. It may well be true that we have much to learn from other peoples as to the interpretations of the Gospel, but the Christian faith itself is intolerant of all others. Again and again

in interviews with the great men of China (and we were received by many Governors and leaders) we sought to explain our faith ; after listening patiently for a while, almost invariably they exclaimed, " Yes, yes ; we are all seeking the same thing—trying to make people better." That was their courtesy, but on our part it will be cruel kindness to admit that there is no difference, or, at most, only the difference between a shorter and a longer way round.

One day my companion and I were ahead of our caravan, and we came to a fork in the road. We went a little along the path to the right, but seeing a Chinese gentleman coming up in his cart, we retraced our steps to inquire of him the way. He alighted from his cart, and, with as much ceremony as we could command, we inquired of our honourable brother whether the road we had chosen would lead us to a certain city. He bowed, and, in the blandest way, he assured his honourable brothers that they had made an excellent choice. Still unconvinced, we ventured to ask our distinguished friend where he himself was going, and, without the least embarrassment, he told us that he was going to the same city. " And which way," we inquired, " does our honourable brother intend to take ? " He indicated the road to the left. Then we said that, perhaps, we had better choose the same way. Quite calmly he answered that we had again made a most excellent choice. He was more concerned to say something that would please us for the moment than to direct us into the way that would lead us to the desired end. His courtesy took no account of truth, and if to gain the goodwill of man or nation to-day we deny the only truth



that can lead men to God or heaven, the men we please for the moment will have reason to curse us at the end. Let the truth be told with all courtesy and charm, of course, but the Chinese and all others must know that the way of Christ is the only way that leads to the city of God.

With some satisfaction we remember that before we left China we were permitted to address a letter to the rulers, urging the claims of Christ. Dr. Timothy Richard had it beautifully written, and sent to all those in high places, and some of the replies gave indication of the change which is already coming over the country, a change so great that whereas in the Boxer time the missionaries were killed wherever they could be found, in one place recently a missionary was put in charge of the police, and in another a battle between the Imperialists and Revolutionaries was actually postponed for a day to allow a refugee missionary party to pass the zone between the two armies.

In a certain city the missionaries have bargained with the beggars that if at ordinary times they are exempt from their demands, on feast days a large gift shall be given. It was the fifteenth day of the Eighth Moon when we were there, and it was, therefore, the beggars' day. They came to the missionary compound, and stoically bore with the preaching, waiting expectantly for the benefaction that was to follow the benediction. The great outer gate was shut, lest those who had been helped should press in again, and then through a narrow doorway the beggars passed into the room, where one of God's men stood with piles of cash, ready to bestow his bounty. The children came first, then the women, then

the men. Near the end an old blind man, hesitating, stood by the doorway, and held out his hand for the expected alms. He knew there was a giver somewhere, but he did not know where.

Across the threshold he stepped, and reached out his hand first to a child, and then to me. Neither of us had anything to give. His groping hand reached in vain for the giving hand. There was needed a guiding hand, and it was the tender hand of a woman that took his, and gently led it to the hand that gave the gift that made him glad. That is what China and the world needs. What Seneca said of ancient Rome is true of all men: "None of us has strength to rise. Oh, that some one would stretch out a hand!" Once on a Cross, a Hand was stretched out with the gift men need; that Hand is still stretched out from the Throne, but the groping hand of sinners needs the guiding hand of saints, that they may find the giving Hand of the Saviour. Perhaps that guiding hand is to be yours.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST

### MISSIONARY WATCHWORDS

THE great missionary watchwords are, of course, to be found in the New Testament ; they ring clear and true down the centuries—" Pray ye the Lord of the harvest." "Go ye into all the world." "The Gospel shall be preached among all nations." The Old Testament sounds the same note. "He will not fail nor be discouraged." "The earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord," and many more. But there are some missionary phrases which, very suggestive in themselves, have almost an infinite value added to them by their setting.

In recent years the first has often been quoted, but when I saw it more than thirty years ago it appeared to me almost as if it had been written by the finger of God. Certainly it is altogether remarkable that it should have been allowed to remain during the centuries since it was first written. It is in Damascus, that famous old-world city, belted by trees until it looks like a pearl amongst emeralds, and full of historic interest and association. It is a city having tragic associations for me, even from boyhood, for a cousin of mine, a missionary there, was stricken down in the outbreak of 1860 by the mob in the street called Straight. I was taken to the spot where he died, and honoured the memory of a brave man. It had another interest, too,

for amongst my mother's correspondence I discovered a faded letter which uncovered a romance which linked me with the missionaries who received us in the city, all unaware of it. But these personal matters, interesting though they are, did not move me as we were moved one day when we climbed over the silversmith's bazaar, and on the outer wall of the Mosque, which had once been a Christian sanctuary, read the inscription chiselled long ago and still quite legible:—"*Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*" The Moslems, in their search for anything that might remind them of the faith of Christ, in order to destroy it, had somehow overlooked this legend, and though they must be aware of it to-day, they allow it to remain, a silent and solemn witness against themselves, an eloquent and ancient prophecy of the triumph of Christ.

The next phrase is on the door of the mosque of Saint Sophia, at Constantinople, a building which, famous as possessing the flattest dome in the world, was, like the Damascus Mosque, also built as a Christian temple, with pillared marbles from Ephesus and elsewhere. Here, too, diligent search has been made in order that all Christian emblems might be obliterated, yet in several corners of the edifice the figure of the fish, that ancient cryptogram for Christ, has been allowed to remain. But a thing still more remarkable is to be seen. The experienced dragoman who guided us drew our attention to some Greek letters on the door, evidently an abbreviated proverb or greeting. We set ourselves to decipher it, and my fellow-travellers, Monro Gibson and Robert Taylor of Norwood, grew keen as they got

on the scent. We made suggestion after suggestion, until at length the puzzle was solved, and the legend stood plain:—*Jesus Christ assists thee*. That was the greeting that met the Christian worshippers in the olden days; we can imagine Chrysostom cheering the persecuted saints as he rang it out from his golden mouth in trumpet tones. We can understand how many a weary and tried soul, whose downcast eye would be lifted for a moment on the threshold of the church, would get new courage as he read it, even before he ventured to join the worshipping throng. And although the worshippers of the false prophet pass it by unheeding to-day, even as they neglect the Gospel, there is the message on the very door of their shrine, waiting their acceptance.

In another Moslem city I saw the third watchword. In the centre of the Arab quarter of Algiers a few brave women have made their home, that they may be able constantly to bear testimony for their Lord and Saviour. The difficulties are enormous, they are surrounded by a fanatical population, opposed by the suspicious Government, daily waging war against ignorance and pride, daily met by scorn of their sex and of their faith, and yet they persevere, calm and expectant of victory. It is a beautiful witness they bear for Christ, and the secret lies in their unwavering faith in Christ. In the inner room of their house their faith stands revealed in the assurance which daily greets them, as it hangs illuminated on the wall, a text taken from Ostervald's translation of the last verse of the eighteenth Psalm:—“*C'est Lui qui delivre magnifiquement.*”

There is another room where I was privileged to be

a guest. Many miles lie between the two, but the same spirit of quiet confidence in Christ breathes in the Christian hearts in this Chinese, as in that African home. It is at Ping Yang fu, in the house where, in the Boxer time, fourteen missionaries of the China Inland Mission were for a fortnight besieged by the hysterical and murderous populace. The marks of their swords are still to be seen on the doors, that greatest indignity, in Chinese estimation, having been inflicted on the house. We met for worship in the room beyond the central open court, the room formerly occupied by Dr. Millar Wilson, one of the martyrs of the killing time, the room where, after the escape of the other missionaries, the maddened people thronged, pouring the medicines on to the ground, spilling even the contents of the tins of condensed milk, and making general havoc. Imagination, however informed, fails to realize the devilry and dismay of those days, the tumult and the frenzy! Conceive, then, our feelings when we gazed on the words now vivid in that very room, words expressive of the faith of the men and women who have returned to their post in spite of what they endured in those awful weeks; there it stands, having tenfold significance when we remember what the walls have witnessed:—  
*"In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord."*

Do the missionaries flinch in the hour of trial? Far south of that spot, and further west, in the great city of Sianfu, another sentence entered my heart, spoken by a gentle woman as naturally as one might say "Good morning." We sat together, a little group of Christ's servants, planning for an advance in the province of Shensi, and the question came as to who would go

forward and occupy a city a fortnight's journey north. After prayer and conference, it seemed as if by general consent one brother was designated, and he expressed his willingness to go, if his wife were also willing. It meant facing loneliness, enduring hardship, encountering danger, shutting herself off from such meagre comforts as are possible in the larger centre, putting beyond the reach of a doctor herself and her little children, over whom her mother-heart yearned as much as any mother at home ; and yet when we asked her whether she would go, she smiled as she quietly gave answer, "*I'm here on business for my King.*" I truthfully declare that I am thrilled from head to foot even as I write the words. There was no parade of courage nor call for sympathy. Such things were all in the day's work for one who had long ago made the great surrender, and there was nothing more to be said. There was no applause, no renown to be gained, no welcome to be expected in the more distant exile—well, it was business for the King, and He would not forget.

Even now we render Him our heart's homage. He who is to reign over the universe shall reign now over all our life. We who have faith in His Cross give Him the Crown. It was the afternoon of a Good Friday when a company of us gathered amidst the ruins of the amphitheatre of Ephesus, that great open auditorium which was capable of holding thirty thousand persons, the very seats on which the people sat yet remaining. There, on one memorable occasion, they cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," praising the name in which they gloried. A few of us from the ends of the earth came to that crumbling edifice, but not to praise a passing

object of human homage. Heart and lip vied in giving honour to Him who died for us, but who, as the Living One, shall abide when all the idols of the earth are forgotten ; and as we sang together, " All hail the power of Jesu's Name," it seemed as if in all the great temples of the world the people would hasten to "*Crown Him Lord of all.*" That is the greatest missionary thought and watchword.



## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND

### THE HEATHEN AT HOME

THE heathen are those that dwell on the heath. They are not only heathen who are without the knowledge of Christ; they are heathen who are outside the city of God. There are, of course, the urban and suburban populations, who in one sense belong to the city, though they are beyond its boundary, who shelter under the city walls, and claim the name Christian, yet deny the power thereof. These more truly belong to the heath than to the city, but they do not consider themselves heathen. They face the city if they are not in it

In a broad sense, Christendom is not heathen, for it has thrown off its ancient superstition. Nor are Jews and Mohammedans heathen, for they acknowledge God. A new phrase, "Non-Christian peoples," has been invented to meet the difficulty, but it only creates a new difficulty, for no nation, as a nation, is vitally Christian. The world has never yet been even a Christian village, though the Pitcairn Islanders, and the founders of the Gospel Village in China, of which I have already written, came very near it. There certainly has never yet been a Christian town nor a Christian country. If we think with exactness, we must say that all outside the city are on the heath. These are the heath-en. These the

dwellers in God's city must seek, being persuaded that at last the heath itself shall be included in the city, and that Christ shall have universal sway.

All the heathen are not abroad, and the heathen at home are not all outside the Churches. Nor are all outside the Churches heathen. In my pastoral visitation I have met time and again men dying who in their life have felt after Christ, and in very truth have rested their souls upon Him, who have never, or but seldom, darkened a church door, as we say. I cannot understand their position, but I cannot doubt that they were accepted by Him who breaks not the bruised reed-flute, nor quenches the smoking lamp-wick. These seemed to be heathen, but were not.

A very large number, especially of men, who only attend the popular men's meetings of the day, or who are members of adult schools, and count that sufficient, are, I believe, in heart truly Christian. They are Christ's men, though Abraham be ignorant of them, and Israel acknowledge them not. It is my conviction that there were never more unconfessed Christians in our land than to-day. It may be that the social transition through which we are passing is chiefly responsible for their aloofness, but whatever the cause, and however much we may regret their position, there they are, in heart, honouring Christ, though His name is not upon them. For some years at Melbourne Hall we had a great men's meeting on Tuesday evenings, a much finer thing than a Sunday afternoon meeting, and meaning more. There were about a thousand members, with an attendance sometimes more and sometimes less. Many of those men came also to the regular services of the

church, but others only came to the men's meeting, and at the men's meeting they yielded to the claims of Christ, although they had not yet overcome their prejudice against the regular public worship of God. The meeting appreciated nothing so much as a manly statement of the Gospel, but a deep distinction is drawn between the message and the organized church.

In support of the statement that many of these men were secret Christians, I may record an experience of one of my friends, who is well known as one of the leaders in another place of this work amongst men. Some misunderstanding arose between the men and the officers of the church building in which they met, and they consulted their former leader. They were perplexed by the attitude of the church, and asked him the reason of it. He explained that probably the church equally failed to understand their attitude. Not one of them was a member or communicant, yet in that quiet room, one by one, in some cases with tears, they declared their reverence for Jesus, their hope in Christ, their faith in the Saviour, their desire to follow the Lord, they confessed it there, but they do not confess it elsewhere, nor is it likely that they ever will. Their children may come to the church, but they themselves will pass over without honouring Christ as He demands. When we are inclined to mourn declining membership, let us remember the thousands in Israel who have ceased to bow the knee to Baal.

The leader of our adult school in Leicester once asked the members of his classes who did not attend public worship to state their reasons. Twenty-two of them responded, with the following result. Without comment,

I give their excuses (for they can scarcely be called reasons) in their own words :—

One said the body needed recreation on Sunday. Another would go if he worked less hours. One said he was in all the week, and wanted to get out on Sunday. Another that he was out all the week and wanted to stay in. Others refrained because preachers were a poor lot, because preachers talk above their hearers, because they were highly-paid officials, because they do not practise what they preach. One man said he would like to have a chance to argue the matter, and because he could not get it he did not attend.

“It is good for those who can't keep right without it,” said another, while a companion of his said that he could be religious without going. “I would be a hypocrite if I went,” said one. “I cannot go, because of my shabby clothes,” said another. Still others excused themselves for various reasons. One had had no invitation; another said he wasn't wanted. “I was not visited when I was ill,” said another; “The sittings in church are appropriated,” was the stumbling-block to another; while in even a more critical spirit some affirmed that the Churches do not teach the truth; they fail on social questions; churchgoers are not sincere; the members of the Churches use their religion as a means of gaining money.

These are the actual utterances of a representative group of men, not the guesses of those who seek to explain their position. The shallowness of their excuses is the most pathetic thing about them; the most encouraging thing the smallness of the gulf to be bridged in order to reach those who make them.

It is amazing what a little thing will sometimes win people. When Mr. Meyer built Melbourne Hall he had inserted in the opaque glass of each door a transparent strip, so that people could see where there was an empty seat before they ventured in. It is things of that sort that win people. At one of our missions a young fellow was converted who was induced to come in from the passing crowd in the streets by being told that there was an Irishman going to speak, and a man going to blow a trumpet. Frequently we overcame the inertia of people by taking the largest hall in a town and announcing that nobody could come in without a ticket. That was much better than an entreaty to come, which would have suggested we had something to gain by getting the people; it aroused desire, because it suggested quite truly that the gain was to be theirs. Once a handbill in the form of a cheque was very successful in arousing interest; at another time a series of tickets exactly like railway tickets appealed strongly to the people, especially one which looked like a ticket for a double journey, and announced the subject, "Return, Return."

In my early days I have rung a bell through a village street to invite people; many a time I have marched behind a banner. But such methods are now so common that they are in large measure ineffective. One of the greatest compliments ever paid to me was when in a certain town they announced that there would be a mission conducted by W. Y. F., using the initials only, not the name. I have no doubt that while some attended because the letters were familiar, others came to see what sort of man they represented.

A woman once met one of our Leicester Church

members and said, "I am coming to Melbourne Hall some Sunday to hear that black man." Quite uncomprehending, he replied, "What black man? I do not know what you mean." "Why," she answered, "that man with such a lot of k's in his name." Then it dawned on him that I was preaching a series of sermons on Habakkuk, and that there was an advertisement of them outside the church building, and, astonished, he passed on. It was the curious name that drew her. Voltaire said "Habakkuk was capable of anything," but he did not know that he was able to attract a woman to hear the Gospel. Yet we may well recall the fact that the prophet is actually the great-grandfather of the Reformation. Luther from Paul and Paul from Habakkuk learned the great doctrine that "The just shall live by faith."

We must get alongside the heathen if we are to win them. During one of our missions there was a man who came one Sunday afternoon in his working clothes, though he had been present in his Sunday best in the morning. When we asked him the reason of the change, he replied, "You see, my brother never attends a place of worship; he has no Sunday clothes, and I knew that if I called for him in mine he would not come. So I put on my working clothes and fetched him, and here he is." Best of all, that man continued to come, and to-day he has Sunday clothes of his own.

To reach these heathen at home is the great work confronting the Church to-day. It may be done by personal effort, by effective preaching in the open air, and, perhaps, most of all by persistent and worthy maintenance of public worship. When they are touched,

they are sometimes more easily won than are religious people. As an old Edinburgh flesher said in accounting for his sudden conversion, "You see, I'd naethin' to fa' back upon." And such converts are the best evidence of the power of the Gospel. One of the younger leaders of the Church of Christ has recently put it in epigrammatic form: "It is the converted burglar, not now the blood of the martyrs, that is the seed of the Church."

Great sinners make great saints. In recent years one of the least fatigued workers and most earnest soul-seekers I have known is a woman in Leicester, who declares that until five years ago she never had a Bible in her hand. She can read but indifferently still, but she has become quite an intelligent and instructed Christian, and by her neighbourly kindness and unfailing testimony for Christ has influenced many other lives.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-THIRD

### DOWN IN CROWN STREET

CROWN STREET is a down-town street in Leicester, and but few people could direct you to it. Yet there miracles have been wrought, and are still being wrought to-day. There is no hint of the miracles in the short and insignificant thoroughfare, but there are two signs of the battle that is being waged and the victories that are being won. On one side of the street is a public-house, on the other a mission hall, and it is between grace and all that it implies, as represented by the mission hall, and alcohol and all that it includes, as represented by the public-house, that the battle is keen. There are other sins than drunkenness, and there are other saints than converted drunkards; but then there are also other places than Crown Street, and at Crown Street it is drunkards and gaol-birds they seek to win. I know no other place where there are so many of this class saved in proportion to those who comprise the mission. Thirteen of the regular attendants have been in prison, in the aggregate no fewer than six hundred times!

It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. So scant was the success twelve years ago, that it was almost determined to renounce the mission, but a last and almost despairing attempt was made to revive it. A brother from Wales was invited, the people at



their wits' end cried unto the Lord, and before the mission began the first convert was won by prayer.

It was my friend John Henry Snow, who continues to this day a shining witness to the power of grace. His wife and family were members of the Church at Melbourne Hall, of which I was pastor. They had long prayed for father, and, though often disappointed, had not wearied. For twenty-seven years he had not been home to a Sunday dinner, so eager had he been to get to the public-house directly it was opened after service time, and on Saturdays up to the hour of closing he was also to be found there. One Saturday afternoon, indeed, it was different. The mother and children somehow felt that day that they must pray for father to come home to tea at half-past five; so certain was the wife of the answer that she not only put an extra cup on the table, but poured out the tea. And sure enough at the instant the father's step was heard coming down the side passage, and he came into the room, saying that he did not know why he had come home, but he had felt that he could not stay in the public-house any longer.

He was deeply impressed, of course, when he learned of the definite prayers on his behalf. He could not but believe in the power that now broke the habit of years. He knew that the same loving hearts were praying for his conversion, yet back he went to the public-house the next day. Often he was disturbed in conscience, yet nothing happened until that other Saturday night just before the Welsh preacher began. A little group, including his wife and family, was gathered for prayer in Crown Street, and, led by the Spirit, they definitely prayed that the father might be brought into their midst.

It was a daring petition, for it was Saturday, above all days, and none of them knew where he was. As a matter of fact, with eight or ten others of his gang he had been out in the country drinking and gambling during the afternoon. In the evening they had come to the public-house opposite. They called it "The Red Lamp," though that is not its proper name. Till late at night they continued there drinking, knowing as little of the meeting on the other side of the street as the little group gathered there knew of his whereabouts. But God knew. The prayer crossed the street, and just at the juncture when he had called for half-a pint, and it was put on the counter by the publican, the prayer was answered. I do not offer an explanation. I only record the fact that, though he tried, and tried hard, and tried again and again, he found himself physically unable to lift that half pint of beer. He could not stretch out his hand. Then—and I quote the words of one who was present—"he called for a bottle of aerated waters all round, and he could not stretch out his hand for that either." Something had happened at last. The men looked at each other in wonder, and he rushed out, not knowing where he was going. But he went straight across the road to that praying group, who were almost as astonished to see him as Rhoda was to see Peter. Prayer was renewed, and it was little wonder it prevailed. They had asked that this man might be brought to the meeting; now they prayed that he might be brought to Christ, and towards midnight the answer came. He yielded, and from that instant all desire for intoxicating drink was taken from him.

His conversion caused great excitement amongst his companions and in the neighbourhood generally. The place in the public-house he had so constantly occupied was now vacant. One of his mates, the next to be won, laughingly says that he left Leicester for years, and bade Snow good-bye in that corner, yet when he came back he was still sitting there. But now that place was deserted for ever. The name of the second trophy is Matthew Kemp, but he is known familiarly in the district only as Mattie. He had been in "The Red Lamp" that memorable Saturday night, and for three weeks he resisted the call; but when he came, he came with his whole heart, and he is now the most notable figure in the band of rescued men.

More than thirty years ago Manton Smith and I held a mission in his native town. We remember it because of an experience unique in our career. On our arrival we found it necessary to hire and to seat a skating rink, and no seats were available in the town. But we determined not to be beaten, so we called on a brewer and borrowed some barrels, on a timber merchant and borrowed some planks, and then set ourselves to arrange the planks as seats supported by the barrels. It was unwonted exercise, but though when the night came we were stiff with the exertion, we preached none the worse for it, and the people thronged all the more.

Amongst the rest came Mattie. His wife-that-was-to-be was in the choir. He tells me that I often pleaded with him then to renounce his drinking habits, but he had a long way yet to wander. Since that time he has tramped thousands of miles over the country. In the summer his habit was to tramp at night. During the

day he would rest under some hedge near a public-house, where he could alternately sleep and drink. All the while grace pursued him. For five days before it found him he had been drunk—drunk, too, before noon on the day of his conversion. Then he slept, and in the afternoon he got drunk again. After another sleep, it was his intention to go out at night and get drunk for the third time. But instead of going to “The Red Lamp,” he went to the mission hall opposite. He cannot explain it, but the God who stayed the hand of one man guided the feet of the other. Into the astonished assembly he stumbled, and listened with unconcern until an old mother rose and gave her testimony. Then the thought of his own old mother came to him, and the vision of the thatched cottage of his boyhood. And the great wonder happened. He became a new man in Christ Jesus.

It was not for another fortnight these two won a third. Then they began “to pal up,” and, in their own language, “they went for some of the rough diamonds of the South End.” They were being watched both with solicitude and with suspicion. The publicans openly declared as August approached, “We shall see them blind-drunk arm-in-arm for the holiday.” Bank Holiday was, indeed, the supreme test, but prayer brought them through it safely. It seemed as if God was waiting for this evidence of reality, for immediately afterwards progress was swift. Man after man was won from “The Bottle Gang,” one of the most notorious and difficult groups of ne’er-do-wells in Leicester—men who got a long pull of beer in their bottle and then went to a convenient doorstep to drink it—until the gang,

much to the delight of respectable people, was broken up. It was a thing to make the angels glad to see thirty or forty men humbly take their place amongst the children of the Sunday School. Instead of the mission being abandoned, a shop next door was rented, and there these men met to praise God and help each other.

A year passed, and another great capture was made that led to a new plan of operations. One of the original band of drinkers was, in the descriptive phrase of one of his companions, "just out from doing three months, and was handled again." Already he had been in prison eighty times, and had spent nearly nine and a half years of the last twenty years of his life there. This time he was sentenced to a month, and was required to find surety that he would afterwards keep the peace for six months, else he was to be kept in prison for three months more. Mattie went to the prison to see him, and was refused admission; but he persevered, and at length gained entrance. "Chuck the game up," he said to the prisoner, "and I will go bail for you," to which Albert said, "I would not go bail for myself even for fivepence." He was asked to think it over, and a promise of another visit in a fortnight was made. The day before the month's sentence ended, true to time, his friend saw him again. For the first time for years tears came into his eyes, and he said, "By the help of God, I'll never come to this place no more." He put himself under his visitor's control for six months; bail was given, he was converted, and is now one of the most earnest of the band.

This suggested a new method. Men could be captured

in the police court, and it is now the habit to be there every morning ready to take any man in hand who is willing to come under their care. The magistrates find that this is an effective plan of dealing with drunkards. One man who was no fewer than one hundred and thirty-five times in prison has, after several lapses, been laid hold of in this way, and others are constantly being lifted out of the mire. The secrets are that the men believe in the power of Christ to save, in the efficacy of prayer to help, and they "pal each other up"!

At first, if there was no meeting in Crown Street, they went to any other Gospel meeting or lecture in the town, or, failing that, spent the evening in each other's houses. But when the band grew larger, something more was necessary, and the Adult Schools of the town, which the men had been encouraged to join, opened in a central position a Guest House, where homeless men may be housed and other men may meet, be supplied with refreshment, play games, or hold prayer meetings as they feel inclined.

I cannot forget an incident that happened on the eve of my visit to China. The Crown Street band determined to come to the tea which preceded the farewell meeting. Outside Melbourne Hall another man, who had heard of their intention, joined them, but he was so drunk they refused to bring him in. What all their appeals had failed to do, this refusal accomplished; he felt himself abandoned, and a few days afterwards, when he was in company with some racing touts in a public-house, he suddenly said, "You pay for that half-pint. I'm off to Crown Street. I have done with this game. My pals have a better game than this." That night he

signed the pledge, and the next night he received Christ as his Saviour.

Nowhere has my heart been more stirred than when in Crown Street. I have listened to the testimony of these inconspicuous people, who live but to glorify Christ and to seek others for His praise. Nowhere have I heard hymns sung with such abandon and spirit. Truly those who have been taken from the horrible pit and from the miry clay have also the new song put in their mouth, and the Lord establishes their goings.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FOURTH

### THE MAN WHO WON A TOWN

THIS chronicle concerns a man with whom I have had many points of contact, my mission comrade still more. Once I determined to write his biography. This chapter may be perhaps accepted instead.

His name was Ned Weeks, and he was so identified with the people that they never gave him any title either fore or aft. The town he may be said, without exaggeration, to have won, is Northampton. Thither he went in 1876 as an unknown sandman from a London foundry, and when he died in 1899, after twenty-three years of incessant testimony for Christ, as the funeral procession passed by, the windows of the houses were darkened in token of sorrow, and the streets were thronged with people assembled to do honour to the memory of one who went from them as a victor, having conquered thousands of hearts and won hundreds of souls.

It all began in a mission conducted in a dilapidated circus by my friend Archibald G. Brown, the Gospel preacher unapproached in quaint picturesqueness, daring originality, and sanctified passion, and then at the very zenith of his power. Manton Smith, who was at that time a member of his church at the East London Tabernacle, was there to help him as only he could help, and his presence was the more notable as North-



ampton was his native town. Needless to say, crowds thronged the services, and many signs followed the preaching of the Word. These were the golden days of evangelistic enterprise, and the end of the mission only brought a demand for further ministry. What was to be done? The services should certainly be continued in the circus, at least on Sundays, if only somebody could be found to conduct them. Manton Smith suggested his friend Ned Weeks, but when he told them what sort of man he was, the suggestion met at first with derision. The more it was discussed, however, the more it commended itself to the ardent souls eager for the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, and although some were doubtful, a telegram was sent, asking him to come for a week. They did not know that they were inviting him for twelve hundred weeks.

That message revealed the man. It found him in a familiar posture—on his knees. Working amidst sulphur fumes, his lungs had become affected, and, like a little child in trouble, he went to God, and in his lisping voice he was praying, "Farver, please give me fwree days' holiday," when he received the invitation to go to Northampton for a week. "Directly minit," he said afterwards, "my Farver give me twice as much as I asked." Prayer was the very breath of his life, his unfailing refuge and strength. Some time previous to his exit from the foundry his soul had been much grieved by the blasphemy of the men in the adjoining place, and he prayed that he might be given access to them to warn them of the evil and to point them to the Saviour. Having prayed, he was bold to declare to his mates that his Father would give him a door into the

other premises. They derided his faith, but did not weaken it. With the simplicity of absolute confidence, he told God that as he could not climb the roof, nor get in at the door, he wanted a hole in the wall. A day or two afterwards his master came to him and told him that as the business next door had been so badly managed, it did not pay. It was offered for sale, and he had purchased it. "We shall need a door through the wall," he said, and Ned, quick to seize the opportunity, asked if he might not knock a hole in it at once. So he was permitted to answer his own prayer, and, getting a crowbar, he worked with a will until the hole was big enough for him to crawl through. Then, appearing before the astonished and silenced men on the other side, still smothered with the dust of the wall, he stood and preached unto them Jesus. He told them of his prayer, of the way it was answered, of his own past life, of his joy in the Saviour, and, as a result of that singular apparition and appeal, there was quite a reformation in that foundry. This was the man of prayer that was now being summoned to a life work where he had abundant opportunity of putting God to the test.

But when the telegram came to him, he was unable to read it. He had never received a telegram before, and, trying to disguise his astonishment, he asked his master, who brought it to him, what was in it. Then he asked if he might go. "But surely there is some mistake," said his employer. "You cannot preach, can you?" "Well," said Ned, "I can try." And he tried to some purpose. But he could never read. His life had been a hard one; his father, a carter, had trained his boy brutally, and had never sent him to school.

As a boy, he was accustomed to horses, though he was not familiar with books ; always eager for a fight, and able to hold his own in an encounter, though he would have woefully failed in an examination. But his wits were sharpened by the life he led, and he was able to read men and to influence them. After his conversion he tried to learn to read, but never managed it. He had a prodigious memory, and learned many chapters of the Bible by heart, so when in a meeting, with a little affectation, he opened the Bible as he quoted the Scripture passage from memory, it mattered little that sometimes he held the Book upside down. Ill-equipped as he seemed to be, he was yet God's chosen instrument for the work.

A chosen instrument, because he was ever ready to witness to the truth he knew. Immediately on his conversion he began to bear testimony for Christ, and his example so stirred another man that they joined in open-air preaching on Mile End Waste, never missing a night. Sometimes they were surrounded by great crowds of people, who were as fascinated with Ned's mother-wit as they were impressed by James Dunn's earnestness, until hundreds of them were apprehended by the Spirit of God for the service of Christ. Little wonder, then, that when his prayers brought that telegram, and his holiday was assured, he rushed out amongst his fellow-workmen, waving the paper like a flag of victory, and told them that he was going to Northampton for a week to preach the Gospel. There was no astonishment as to the preaching, but they were surprised that he should go to Northampton! They warned him that he would never come back alive. "Why," they said,

“they are all snobs and infidels down there.” Now, truth to tell, though he knew what infidels were, he had never heard of “snobs” before, but though it sounded like something dreadful, he was not to be frightened. He had the Luther-heart that cared no more for foes than for tiles upon the house-tops. In due course he came to understand that snobs were nothing more than shoemakers. But that was not yet.

The phrase took possession of his brain. As the train rattled over the metals it seemed to repeat the words, “Snobs and infidels! Snobs and infidels!” And as the little, gaunt, unlettered man ventured out to face the mysterious unknown, he prayed that he might have grace to meet them. In the exaltation of his new experience it was impossible to repress the life that throbbed in his spirit. Some farmers in the carriage who had been successful in the market showed their gold, and he gravely declared that he possessed something that money could not buy. Then, in answer to their inquiry, he assured them that he had found it; that, in fact, it was a pearl. All unsuspecting, they asked him to show it to them, and, nothing loth, he began to speak the praises of the Saviour. You see what sort of a man he was as he went forth to the new enterprise.

The week that followed is still remembered. His first effort was an impromptu in the open air when he approached a crowd listening to an infidel lecturer, and gained a hearing while he told them of his call, his acquaintance with infidels, and his desire to know the “snobs.” Many of the people followed him to the circus, and there God gave him favour with the people. The week was crowded with service and with services.

With a face on which shone the light of God, a tongue set on fire of heaven, a simple mind and untiring feet, he found his holiday in telling out the glories of Christ in workshop, at street corners, in the home, and in the meetings. His tremendous earnestness and activity created such a profound impression that, before the week was over, a request was sent to London for another week ; and then it became clear that his stay in the town was not to be measured by weeks at all.

Nothing short of conversion would satisfy this man. He knew what it was to be converted himself, and he never tired of telling the story. A tract was left at his house by a City missionary, and his curiosity was aroused to know what it said. He could not read it, and he was too proud to ask his wife to read it for him, so he waited till she had gone out, and then his little boy spelled it out. It seemed to have been written all about him, so straight had the arrow been directed ; but instead of being repentant he was incensed, and he lay in wait to attack the good man who had given it. But when at length they met, his arm seemed powerless ; he was assured that the same tract had been left at the houses of his neighbours, and was the more perplexed. Soon afterwards he heard William Carter, the sweep, whom God so greatly used about this time to bring people into the light, and so deep was his anxiety and so dense his ignorance that he waited behind and offered the preacher five shillings if only he would bring him out of the terror in which he lived. He did not possess five shillings, but he promised to pay it in instalments ! Was there ever a more desperate seeker ? Indeed, about this time he was on the verge of suicide, and only lack of opportunity

prevented him. As he was going towards the river, two of the governors of the ironworks met him, and he turned back, and at his wits' end he called upon the Lord in his trouble. There and then in the foundry yard he was delivered, and like a man demented he rushed in amongst the fitters and other workmen, crying out, "I'm a saved man!" The passion for the souls of others possessed him at the same moment, and through all the years he never turned back.

It will be seen that he was utterly fearless. Many incidents of his London life might with advantage be told: of the persecution he endured at Custom House Quay on the Thames—persecution that barely stopped short of murder; of his prayer that he might be delivered from his tormentors, and put amongst Christian people; of the lukewarmness that threatened him when his prayer was answered, and of his renewed prayer to be taken where he might have something to do for the Master; of his enthusiasm and insight in dealing with the souls of men; all these were his preparation for the work of his life that now opened out to him.

The early days are the best remembered. Faith was then triumphant. In visiting he called on a woman whose husband always became drunk on the feast night; this was the very day, and the wife was in agony. It was given to him to declare that the man would come home sober, and then afterwards in the village he drew his bow at a venture at the man who got drunk once a year, and won him for Christ.

One night he was unable to sleep, and, rising early, he found his way to the racecourse, strangely impressed that there he had some work to do. As the morning

began to dawn he encountered a man who was just trying to summon courage to make an end of his life. To him he opened up the appeal of the Saviour. Discovering that he was married, he recalled the day when he had said "I will" to his wife and she to him, and urged him as simply and as definitely to say "I will" to Christ; and when light dawned on the soul as a new day dawned on the world he took him home to the wife who so nearly had lost her husband, and at the breakfast table led her also to the Lord.

Another night, early in his country career, he was housed in a farmer's house, and for the first time in his life was put upon a spring mattress. With childlike glee and disregard of consequence, he bounced up and down, singing, "Sweeping through the gates of the New Jerusalem," until the people of the house became alarmed, and came in to see what was the matter. He only sang the more, as he delighted in the unaccustomed luxury; they laughed as he laughed, and sang as he sang, until he declared he could not sleep at all, and began a midnight prayer meeting.

In a little while Ned declared that a hall would be built on the site of the circus. It was a daring step to take, and was long debated; one man who shared his faith urged the committee to determine the matter one night, and the resolve was taken. That night that man was called to his rest. So strong was his assurance that the land would be his that Ned sharpened the stakes ready to mark out the ground before the day of the auction, but he was outbidden after all, and the land was sold for another purpose. Prayer was still his refuge, and as he waited before God the voice of God came clear to his

soul, "See the man that bought it." That man, since dead, I knew well, and he was little likely to be carried away with emotion, but God had spoken to him, too, and when two members of the committee, at Ned's entreaty, visited him in a neighbouring town, and he heard their story, he exclaimed: "Was it you I was bidding against? That explains it: I could not get a wink of sleep all night"; and he, lawyer as he was, gave them as much land as they wanted, and a donation of a hundred guineas beside, "Praise the Lord!" ejaculated Ned. "He knew we did not know how to buy land, and that we did not want it all, and He sent the lawyer to buy it for us." On that land Abington Square Mission Hall stands to-day.

He was never without a ready answer; it seemed in very truth as if the Spirit taught him what to say. True, the words were sometimes rough, but, like the pomegranate skin, they always had sap and sweetness beneath them, "Ah!" sneered an infidel, "your Father left Jesus to fight the devil alone." To whom Ned responded, "Look here, my boy, if He hadn't, you would have said, 'Two to one is not fair play,' but my Jesus beat the devil single-handed. What do you think of that?"

When a man brought him a pot of beer from a public-house and said that if he did not drink it he would throw it over him, he simply met the threat with the retort, "Yes, throw it over me, not at me."

Once he offered a sovereign to any man who could show the way to heaven without Christ. A man from the crowd claimed it, and said it was very simple—all that was necessary was to make a ladder long enough; but



he was nonplussed when, quick as thought, the answer came, "Jesus says, 'He that entereth not by the door but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.'" These are but specimens, and probably not the best specimens, of the sanctified repartee suggested by his wit, which was as keen as a razor edge and as kind as a surgeon's knife.

When he lay dying, he dominated his sphere as a king on a throne. Even in the public-houses they spoke low, and their first question was, "How is he?" He was the people's man; one of themselves, he had given them an example of unsullied life, and of rugged preaching, and one of them explained it by saying, "He is very thick with the Almighty." So he passed to his crown.

**BOOK III.—DISCOVERIES.**

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY FIFTH

### TRAGEDY AND GRACE IN EVANGELISM

THE results of Evangelism must necessarily present many features of a similar character. A decision for Christ based on previous knowledge, though it is hastened by special impulse, however critical in the individual life, cannot in the nature of the case have many dramatic features. Some of the finest cases of conversion are the least emotional, and often the quietest experiences reach the furthest ; the record of these is on high ; the simple statement of fact suffices for the record on earth. Most of the conversions I have been permitted to see go into this category. There are others, however, that present features of peculiar interest, and if memory were but clearer, there is no doubt that the number might be enlarged. The discovery of the ways of men and the ways of grace is in itself a liberal education.

During my mission days, for instance, there must have been a score of people who in remarkable ways were saved from suicide by the providence and grace that led them to hear the Gospel in the hour of their despair. There was a painful monotony in such experiences, the dread purpose in conflict with abject fear, until both were mastered by the Spirit of God. There must also have been a score of others during these years who were reconciled to home and friends after years of bitterness and strife.

I have now in my possession somewhere a revolver which was given to me by a man who had tried several times to take his life; had once lain down on the railway track, had once missed fire with a pistol, and had ultimately purchased a better weapon to make a final attempt on the life that had been so terribly marred by folly. When he was attracted to the meeting in a public hall, arrested by the Word of God, and won to Christ, he was still unwilling to surrender his revolver. The thought at the back of his mind was evidently that it would be as well to be prepared for emergencies. When it was pointed out to him that his surrender could not be complete until he ceased to contemplate the possibility of return to his old life, with strong crying and tears he yielded. How vividly the scene rises before me, when, as a sign of his absolute trust, he handed over the symbol of his rebellion, and went forth resolute to live for Christ.

Such conversions are of the Augustine type. To him and to them God's message is, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." There must be no open door left for return. I am reminded of a friend of mine who attempted to win a man notorious for his drunken habits. Again and again the curse of alcohol spoiled the hopes of those who prayed and worked for his rescue; but at length the drunkard professed to be truly converted and, not to do things by halves, it was determined to strip him of his rags and give him a new rig-out. They took him to a clothier's shop, purchased everything necessary, and then, to complete the business, they visited a hatter and told the newly-dressed convert to choose a hat. He chose a soft felt one, and departed,

speaking confidently of his future. But when he was gone, one friend said,

“I don't like that soft hat ; I wish he had chosen a hard one.”

“What difference can it make ?” said the other, “whether it is soft or hard ?”

“Ah !” said the mission worker, whose long experience of human nature had led him to understand the working of the sinful heart, “he has often lain in the gutter, and I am afraid he chose the soft hat so that in case he is again overtaken by the drink he will again lie in the gutter more comfortably.”

It was too true. In a little while he had returned to his wallowing in the mire. The soft hat was his undoing.

Conversions evidenced by restitution have frequently come under my notice, always with the result of leading people of the world to believe in their reality. I can tell of many such instances : a boy owning up to a broken window, and offering to pay for it ; a debtor apologizing to the tradesmen who had been long kept waiting for their money ; a clerk confessing to his employers his falsification of accounts ; a relative restoring to its lawful owners money of which he had defrauded them. These cases might be multiplied, and there might be added to them not a few where apologies long delayed have been given, and quarrels long continued have been settled, as the result of the grace of God. Practical proofs such as these of the Gospel of Christ are not to be gainsaid.

Sad beyond telling, if we turn to another side of things, have been the confessions of the havoc wrought by

passion, that monster which asserts in such mastery its power, apart from volition, in so many lives. With will and intellect weakened by excess, there almost seems need for confession in such cases, and yet there is the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of opening the heart to any one resident in the same neighbourhood. But the passing evangelist is frequently made the depository of the life's secret and shame. He cannot give absolution, nor can any man, but he can often give guidance, brace the courage of the despairing heart, and arouse new hope by assurance that when the body is for the Lord, the Lord is for the body. I dare not do more than hint at the shameful stories I have been compelled to hear; of one young man who actually accustomed himself to read the Song of Solomon in order to inflame his lust; of another who vehemently argued that if the thought of evil is sin, he might as well indulge in the act, since he would be reckoned a sinner in any case; of others who, with shattered nerves and tokens all too evident of the result of their folly, came more to pour out the story of their woe than with any expectation of deliverance. These are the true tragedies of life, and in our meetings for men I often took the opportunity of urging my brothers not to cast the pearl of their manhood before the swine of evil desire. Those who criticize the work of the evangelist have, perhaps, forgotten how great a work a wise man can do in this direction simply because he is not permanently remaining in the same town.

Of course, work amongst women had better remain in the hands of women, but occasionally there have been incidents when opportunity clearly indicated duty.

I remember a young woman, a dresser, I believe, at a hospital, who had assumed all the slangy manners of the modern fast man, yet came in deep distress to ask counsel in a very difficult situation. She keenly desired to be a doctor, and one of the men students, knowing of her desire, had offered to see her through, if meanwhile she would join fortune with him. The temptation was enormous, and the struggle keen; but though she not only argued against her own modesty, but against her early training, at length the victory was won, and with the decided "I will not" to the subtle temptation, I hope there was an equally decided "I will" to Christ's call.

Another case comes to my remembrance. After a prolonged meeting, so late that most of the others had gone home, I was walking through the almost deserted street of a cathedral city, when I became conscious of some one following me. It was a respectable-looking woman, and she evidently wished to speak. I was in no mood to encourage her, but she was desperate, and at length she ran up and reassured me by calling me by my name. With many apologies she began to tell her trouble—the most peculiar trouble that I ever knew to afflict a human spirit. "Was she, or was she not, doomed to perish?" On the spot I answered, "No." But that was not sufficient. I did not know her dreadful position. I assured her again that if she wished to be Christ's, there could be no doubt that Christ wished to save her.

"Yes; but you do not know," she said.

"Well, if you are the greatest sinner in the city, Christ will save you," I replied.

“ Ah, but,” she answered, “ it is not my own sin that keeps me back ” ; and, anxious to end the interview, I answered, “ Nothing else can.”

She stammered, and hesitated, and then she told her trouble—a trouble she had never mentioned to mortal before. I listened eagerly now. “ I am an illegitimate child,” she sobbed. Somehow she had got it into her mind that bastards could not be sons of God. If she had opened her heart to any wholesomely-minded Christian, the torturing terror of her life might easily have been removed ; instead of that, her mind had become warped and morbid through long brooding, and it was not until a stranger in her city home could be approached that she dare put her destiny to the test.

All this took less time than I have spent in writing about it. Under the gas-lamp (I could take any one now to the spot) the nightmare of years was lifted off her soul. I have never seen a look of greater gladness on any face than sprang to hers at that moment. There was nothing more to say. I lifted my hat as she cried, “ Oh, I do thank you ” ; and we went our ways. There is no mention of that blessing in the report of the mission, but then God’s records must be so different from ours.

Ever conscious of the fact that few souls are saved by argument, and mindful of the truism that, though you may shut an infidel’s mouth, you do not necessarily open his heart, I have always avoided the negative method of dealing with human souls. Some men may be called to contend with sceptics for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, but the number of these must be very few. In spite of the fact, however, that direct attacks were never made on the infidel position,



there were not wanting many evidences during these evangelistic years that sceptics and agnostics were led to faith in Jesus Christ through the plain presentation of the Gospel.

The story of the Prodigal Son is being repeated all round us, often, alas ! only in its earlier stages of wandering and want, but not infrequently, through the Gospel of Christ, it is also repeated in the return of the truant, and in the joy of the welcome home. Instances clamour for a place in these records. As I was associated with the Metropolitan Tabernacle, perhaps I may begin with an incident that happened in that centre.

One evening during a mission there a young Scotsman rushed into the vestry, and asked to see me. He flung himself through the door, evidently almost wild with excitement, and directly I came to him he said,

“ I shall never forget the meeting last night. All night long it has been ringing in my ears, Lost ! Lost ! Lost ! ”

It was the second or third night of the mission, and on the previous night the text had been, “ The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.” We two were in the old Tabernacle, alone in that room associated with so many memories. The pictures of the great preachers of the past looked down on us from the walls ; the great, and famous, and saintly had often been there to have speech with Spurgeon, but I question if ever it had witnessed a more memorable scene than when the young Scotch prodigal came to open up his heart and to seek to return to God.

“ I should like to tell you my story,” he said, and, knowing well that the best way to deal with human souls

is to let them pour out their own thought first of all, I nodded and listened.

"I am a prodigal son," he said. "Years ago in Dundee I lived so recklessly that for the sake of the other members of the family I was packed off from home. I went to America, to Australia, and all round the world. This year I came home again, and found that my father was dead. My mother took me back home again, thinking that I would be sobered by the loss, and for a while I went on better. I don't know what devil got hold of me, but a month ago I broke out worse than ever, and then even my mother had to admit that she could not have me at home to disgrace the family name. I was desperate. I would listen to nothing my mother said, but I told her I would go away. She packed my box for me, and five days ago I came up to London on prodigal's allowance. The first night or two I spent round about the Elephant and Castle. Last night somebody invited me to come in here, and after it I could not get a wink of sleep all night; it has been ringing in my ears ever since: Lost! Lost!"

The great, strong fellow could go no further; he burst into sobs, and I began to tell him something of the love of God.

"But that is not all," he said, pulling himself together. "This morning I thought it was about time to put on a clean pair of socks, and I got a pair out of the box my mother had packed for me."

My curiosity was deepened as I listened, and I wondered whether he was a true man or not; but the next words dispersed all doubts. He was speaking of his socks, and, pointing to each foot, he said, "I put on that one,

and then I put on this, but I found something hard in the toe of the second one, and I said I could not walk about like that all day ; so I took the sock off to see what it was, and that is what it was," he said, holding out a crumpled piece of paper to me, and again sobbing like a child.

It was a letter from his mother. He would not suffer her to speak to him in Dundee, but, with the ingenuity of love, she had devised a method to reach him, and had written him the letter which he would be sure to find when he would be sensible enough to read it, for he would never have changed his socks unless he was moderately sober. And God, who had heard the mother's prayers, had prepared the son's heart to listen to her pleading by bringing him under the sound of the Gospel the night before, convicting him of his sin, and driving him through a wakeful night to see his need of a Saviour.

I took the letter into my hands and read it, and I do not believe it was fancy that detected the trace of tears on it. I must leave those who read this narrative to imagine how that mother pleaded with her boy. I forget what she wrote, save only one sentence, which was engraven on my memory, and has continued with me ever since. "My boy," she said, "you have wandered far, but you are not beyond the reach of God's mercy, for He says, 'Look unto Me all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved.' And you have not got beyond that yet."

Into the vestry of the preacher, who in his youth had by that very text been led to look to Jesus and live, there came this prodigal boy of a godly Scotch mother ; the same appeal was made to him in this unexpected happening, and after all his wanderings he found the way to

his Father's home. He had not wandered too far. I cannot tell what became of him, but I am sure he was in earnest that night. I asked him to give me the letter, but, as I expected, it was too precious to him for that. The message in the toe of the sock had done its work.

An incident of entirely different character happened in a northern town. It is the most striking parallel I have ever met in modern life of that young man in the Gospel who was on his way to Christ when the devil threw him down and tare him. I do not remember—indeed, I do not think I ever knew—the inner workings of the mind, only that the son of a reputable family had disappointed his people's hopes, and had gone far astray.

One evening he was so much impressed that he found his way the next afternoon to the Bible Hour which was being held in a quiet and decorous church. There was nothing in the topic, or the address, or the hymns to provoke what happened, but the meeting was never finished, for towards what should have been the close of it this young man was seized with an unaccountable paroxysm, and as he sat there in the pew, burst out with oaths and curses of the most horrible description. The people were aghast; some of them had never heard such words before—certainly there had never been such blasphemy inside the church walls, nor the thought of it.

The congregation rose, and some of the more timid at once made for the door. We got beside the man who was writhing in the grip of an over-mastering emotion, and while the rest of the people dispersed of their own accord, a few of us pleaded and prayed with him for an hour. Calm at length came. It seemed almost as

if the demon had been cast out, and from that hour that man became a confessed follower of Jesus Christ. I saw him many times afterwards, usually on his visits to London, and his experience became brighter and brighter as the years rolled round.

In another northern town, in the midst of a work of grace which is still remembered there, it was laid upon the heart of the minister to seek the conversion of a man notorious for his scepticism and his hatred of everything that bore the name of Christian. He had been a wanderer on the earth ; as a soldier of the South, he had gone through the American Civil War. He had an insurgent and desperate spirit, but when he was invited to share the minister's hospitality, and meet the missionaries of the hour, he accepted, and at the appointed time appeared.

Swearing had become such a habit with him that even at the tea-table he again and again broke into oaths. The crowds at the meetings were so great that people had to go early to get seats, and the choir sang some pieces before the meeting proper began. Seated in the front, this man listened as again and again a text of Scripture was repeated in the song. At the tea-table he had loudly asserted that he was not an infidel, that he believed in a great-first-cause, but beyond that—nothing. But the choir did more than it knew that evening when it raised the hymn :

Come, let us all unite and sing,  
God is love, God is love.

The text smote him in the face as they sang line after line :

Let heaven and earth their praises bring,  
God is love, God is love.

He was transfixed, and each word drove the arrow deeper :

Let every soul from sin awake,  
Each in his heart sweet music make,  
And sing with us for Jesus' sake,  
God is love, God is love.

There seemed to be nothing in the after-service that touched him, but he could not get away from that simplest and profoundest of Gospel truths—God is love. With that clue in his hand he went on until he knew the love of God in Jesus magnified in the Cross and manifested in his own heart by the Holy Spirit. He was never other than angular, but he was always enthusiastic for Christ, and he has now gone to the full revelation of the love which that day first flashed on his soul.

Another incident deserves a place. This time it was in the Midlands. At a morning prayer meeting a Christian lady, who had come with a downcast spirit, heard God's voice, and gently whispered to her Saviour, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" She felt impelled to purchase some tracts on her way home, and, meeting three men just leaving their work, she gave them a kindly word and offered them one of her tracts. Two of them pointed to the third, and said,

"He will not read it; he's an infidel."

The man assented and said, "I have been an infidel for forty years, but I will read your tract, lady"; and she, still eager to do some little service, got the man's address, and the next day, when she visited his house, found his home to be the very picture of misery. He said to his visitor that his story was too bad for the likes of a lady to listen to, but afterwards to me he

admitted that he had been guilty of everything but murder, and that it was not his fault he had not committed that.

"I have spent most of my life abroad, sir," he said; and I knew what he meant. It was a triumph when his visitor got him to the meeting, and the first sign of blessing was when my comrade sang what I think was his finest solo, "Rock of Ages."

This was the hymn the infidel's mother had loved to sing, and the tears started as he listened. When, without knowing anything about the man in the crowd, I asked prayer for one who had been an infidel for many years, Pym (for that was his name) started, and, turning to one of his mates who had come with him, said,

"Why, James, it's me; I am the infidel he means."

Like the mists of the morning before the rising of the sun, his infidelity melted away. He became an ardent, though untutored, follower of the Lord Jesus, and never once turned back. In the court where he lived he used to get a lot of his companions together in a room while he read to them. At subsequent missions he was ever in the front as a worker. He induced scores of men to sign the pledge. He refused at another time to go to a public-house when his companions offered to give him a benefit night there, and always, until he died, years afterwards, he kept on declaring "that God will save anybody, since He's saved the likes of me."

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SIXTH

### SIGNS FOLLOWING FAITH

No joy is greater than to watch the progress of the life of Christ in a soul, to observe the path of the just, which is as the dawn shining more and more unto the perfect day. It is in the pastoral oversight of a church that this can be chiefly witnessed, but in the evangelistic sphere there come sometimes, as in lightning flashes, startling indications of the beginning of the new life, or evidences of its advance, which are an unspeakable delight.

Could there be imagined, for instance, a scene more human in its surroundings or pathetic in its suggestion than when, after a prolonged mission in a circus, there came to us the night of the closing meeting the grey-haired caretaker? During the weeks he had had great responsibility thrown upon him owing to the pressure of the crowds, and, listening to the Gospel as he sat night after night in one of the stables of the circus, he had rejoiced to discover that he, too, had a place in the heart of God. He now confessed Christ, and, with tears in his eyes, said, "I am only an old circus man, but I am going with you to heaven." That single conversion seemed to us worth the whole mission: it was so evidently God's work, and went down to the very roots of being.



There was also a drama of real and intense life, though under very different circumstances, one day in a northern church, at the close of a mission, as we sat from morning till night to help any inquirers that might visit us. About mid-day, a lady, intelligent and educated, but almost desperate, without rest of heart, and almost without hope of betterment, came to hazard her salvation on the result of the interview. She announced that this was the final effort. For years she had wandered from country to country, and from church to church, seeking peace. The pendulum had swung from the Brethren to the Roman Catholics, and her weary spirit had sought peace all over Europe. There was little we could tell her that she did not know; but after we had pointed her simply to Christ, and prayed with her, she asked if she could be alone for a while, and in a side room she fell on her knees at a chair, and there she remained for an hour or more. Once or twice we stole to the door to see whether she had gone, but she was oblivious of any other presence.

When at length she did rise, there was a look of heaven on her face, and a light of God in her eyes, as she thanked us for our help, and quietly said, "I shall never be lonely again." There was no more than that, but if we could have realized all of past yearning, and of new-found satisfaction in Christ that lay behind that sentence, I think we should have sung for very joy.

Again, what could be more actual and decisive than the experience of a young lady, a music teacher, at a southern watering place, who, having received Christ as her Saviour one night, was unconsciously the means of bringing another lady to the Lord the next day?

She had said nothing, and, as far as she knew, she had done nothing; but Christ was living in her, and, as in the days of old, He could not be hid. She had gone, as usual, to a home to give music lessons to children, whose mother had seen her rise to testify to her conversion the previous night, and had said to herself, "Well, I will just see whether it makes any difference to-morrow." The governess, whose nerves were very highly strung, had frequently lost her temper before with her very provoking pupils, but this morning she bore patiently with their mistakes, gently tried to correct them, and went away with an unruffled heart. That was what did it. The mother of the children, who herself was greatly longing for peace, was convinced that this girl had learnt the secret, and that night she sought and found it too. It is not without deep meaning that saints are called companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.

I knew a lady who, once in affluent circumstances, was brought to penury by the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank. Want stared her in the face, and the only thing she could do was to take lodgers in her beautiful home. She had a hard struggle to bring herself to do it. I remember how she told me that the worst was when she, who had been waited on all her life, had to wait on other people. When it came to the point she felt she could not do it. In desperation she knelt down and sought for grace, and her Master came to her side, so that she almost thought she could touch Him, and He whispered: "I am among you as He that serveth." I cannot forget the look of triumph on her face as she told how she rose from her knees and went

to wait at table, went willingly and without self-consciousness, because she realized that the Lord was at her side all the while.

Amongst some old papers I have found a scrap containing some pencilled words, written I know not when or where, and preserved I know not why, unless it was to remind me of an illustration that once was used with effect. The words on the slip of paper are :

“ Will you in prayer give Christ thanks for lives newly consecrated and narrowed down from the harmless amusements of the world. I am a woman, and afraid of my own voice.”

The illustration, which I remember perfectly, was used to drive home the fact that if we would have a deep life, we must often be content to cut off many of the things of the world which might else be considered legitimate, the question not being whether the thing is right or wrong, but whether it is helpful or harmful.

For many years great difficulty was experienced in navigating the mouth of the Mississippi ; the silt made the water so shallow that not even a Mississippi steamboat could cross the bar. Dredging had only a temporary effect, and at length, almost in despair, the responsible authorities made it known that a large reward awaited any one who could suggest a remedy. The problem that baffled the engineers was solved by a sailor, Captain Eades. He declared that if he were given the contract, he would permanently deepen the river. And he did it. His simple plan was to build a stone pier, stretching out into the river from one bank, and on the opposite side another pier. The river itself did the rest. The same volume of water having to pour

out in the same time through the narrower channel, itself deepened the bed.

So, in the ordering of Christian conduct, we may, if we choose, allow many things, and spread our life over a large area, but the inevitable result will be lack of depth and lack of traffic. If, on the contrary, we desire to be serviceable, while none of us would desire a narrow life for its own sake, yet to secure depth we shall, because of our souls' poverty, deliberately choose it. It is the straitened life that runs swiftly and deeply, and carries freighted blessing to the world. He that loveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth it shall keep it to life eternal. The woman who was afraid of her own voice was brave enough to narrow her life down, and give praise because of it. Swift and true her heart flowed to God.

Of another case I have been recently reminded by a visit from the lady chiefly interested. As the result of the mission in her town, several members of her family, of two generations, were led to Christ, amongst them her husband. During a subsequent visit I had occasion to refer to the text, "Having no part dark," and I used as an illustration the experience of a lighthouse-keeper on the Florida coast. One wild night a pane of glass in his lantern was broken, and, not having another to replace it, he substituted for the glass a sheet of tin. That night they say a ship was beating up for harbour, and it went ashore with the loss of the ship and of human lives besides. Why? The light was not extinguished, the light did not burn dim, but there was one part dark.

As this man listened intently it came to him that

there was one thing in his life where the light did not shine—he was a tobacco smoker. I had said nothing about the habit, for, though I am myself a non-smoker, I always feel that I must yield to every one full liberty where the New Testament contains no prohibition, and I do it without reserve. But when a man is convicted in his heart that a thing is wrong, it can never be right for him ; no sacrifice is too great to gain peace of conscience and from his subsequent action this brother received a blessing which abides with him still.

In his household it was his custom to lay the fire overnight that his wife was to light in the morning. That night he took his tobacco and the paraphernalia connected with it, and then, though it cost him a pang, he took also a beautiful tobacco pouch that had been embroidered for him by his sister, and given to him on his birthday, and he put them all into the heart of the grate.

He said nothing about it, and in the morning his wife, of course, was astonished to see the unusual fuel that had been provided for the fire. The whole family, indeed, gathered round the fireplace, and after a debate it seemed as if at least the tobacco pouch might be rescued.

But this did not satisfy his little daughter, who came forward, and said, “ No, father ; let it be a whole burnt-offering.”

That was the word that kindled resolve, so the match was applied to the fire, and a greater flame than that which rose in the grate was lighted in the hearts of that family. The whole life was to be full of light, having no part dark.

The next instance of signs following faith has a

humorous touch, as well as a serious suggestion. After a meeting in a Yorkshire town a good man came to me, and asked if I remembered many years ago conducting a mission held in another place. I remembered. Then he gave me his testimony, and, while I could not forbear smiling at some of the things he said, I recognized the reality and depth of the change that had come to him.

Evidently in the years of his sin he had also been inclined to foppishness. When I said I remembered the mission, he grasped my hand until it hurt, and said, "Before I came into that meeting there was nobody that hated God more than I did, and before I went out there was nobody that loved God more than I did"; and then, calculating the years that had elapsed, he added, "Since that time I have never drunk a glass of beer, nor smoked a pipe, nor worn a pair of kid gloves, nor had a flower in my button-hole!" His conversion ranged over the whole gamut of his past experience; he had made no compromise, and if he denied himself things that others desired in all holiness, his sacrifice, I am sure, was pleasing in God's sight.

The last incident is pathetic in its realism—touched too, with the charm of poetry. Manton Smith one summer joined his friend J. S. Smithson, of Dublin, at Carnlough, and though it was holiday time, some meetings were arranged in that little Irish watering-place. On the morning when he was to depart to drive round the coast, an old woman came up to the house, and asked to see him. Already dressed for the road, he came to see her, and after she had apologized for troubling him, she said,

"Och, indeed, sir, I'm real glad to be in time, just

to spake with ye before ye leave us altogether. I've been reading in my Bible about them ten lepers that were cleansed, and how only one of them turned back to give thanks ; and, indeed, sir, I'm that one, if ye please."

She told of the joy that had come into her old heart at the sound of the Gospel, and then she hesitated. There was evidently something still to come, and, drawing a little packet from beneath her shawl, she added :

"I've been thinking I should like to make you a present for all the good you've done me. But, you see, sir, I'm a very poor woman, and I can't afford much ; but I've done my best, and I've brought you a hap'orth o' cherries."

When she had gone, his enthusiastic host said, "Man, dear, it's grand ; I would never eat them ; they are worth a hundred pounds." But, as an expression of a grateful heart, they were worth much more than that.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SEVENTH

### THE PREACHER AS A SHARPSHOOTER

WHEN a sportsman fires at a covey of partridges, and hits several of them, he has no such satisfaction as comes to him when a solitary bird rises on the wing, and with a single shot he brings it down. Something like that is the experience of the soul-seeker when, with a well-directed aim, he reaches the mark. While the preacher treasures the thought that no word of God is void of power, and is often content to wait for the results in the future, or gather them promiscuously in the present, it is a delight beyond expression when he finds that his message has been definitely used in some distinctive manner as the vehicle for the Spirit's urgent plea. The Spirit still speaketh expressly.

No minister of the Gospel, mindful of the courtesy of his calling and of the dignity of the pulpit, will ever preach *at* people ; but if he is conscious of the solemnity of his office, he will never be content with merely preaching *before* them without any regard to their needs ; the Word must always be preached *to* them. Sometimes, in view of special circumstances, he may prepare a special message, and nothing is more heartbreaking in such a case than to find the person for whom it was suited absent from the congregation. Those who do not regularly attend public worship do not know how often



they miss the very message that would most help their life.

I remember an instance of a prepared message. In a northern city, a bright, alert, intelligent young lady, a member of a Christian family, interested in religious things, attended some meetings regularly, but because of the inconsistency of some of her acquaintances who had made a profession of faith in Christ, she stedfastly set herself against His name and service. Conscious of her state of mind, after much prayer and thought I devoted a paragraph of the sermon to her need. Disregarding all the rest of the people, I looked down to the place where she sat, and, as if there had been nobody in the building but us two, fired the prepared shot point blank, and began to discuss the folly of rejecting Christ because there were so many hypocrites. The argument was that counterfeits are the proof of realities; that because they are common, men do not take the trouble to make false paving-stones, but they manufacture false diamonds because they are precious; that the existence of bad sovereigns means the existence of good ones; that it is not necessary to fling away real jewels because there are paste gems. It was evident that we were getting to close grips, especially when I continued to urge that we are not trying to make people hypocrites because there are enough of them already. We agree in our hatred of hypocrisy, and wish to escape from them, but the only way of escape is to receive Christ, for at last outside the gates amongst the fearful and unbelieving will be all the hypocrites, and if unbelieving, you will be with them for ever. The tension relaxed; then and there

the work was done. I knew it, and she knew that I knew it. There was no need of further inquiry or direction; at the end of the service there was but a greeting and a bright sentence, "I have yielded." That was years ago; that lady has herself addressed thousands of people since, and that yielded life has brought help and blessing to many more.

There is still another class of incidents when for a sudden opportunity guidance so special is given that it is proved to be the very word that cometh from the mouth of God. One of the most touching of such occasions in which I ever had any share happened in a Yorkshire town, after an early Sunday meeting. I was going out of the church when I saw a young man standing at the door, taking the offerings of the people. It occurred to me that possibly he was not a believer, and I paused on my step to ask him. He said that he was not, but greatly desired to be a Christian. It was not over reverent, perhaps, yet I have never been sorry it happened.

Standing by his side, with the box between us, I said, "Why not give yourself to the Lord now?" Almost before I knew, he had closed his eyes, and had begun to pray. He told the Lord Jesus that he wanted to be His disciple, and that he yielded himself then and there to His care.

As he prayed, and I looked at him in wonder, the great tears came down over his cheeks, and rolled into the box he held. The people passed, and put in their money; he put in his tears. I have often wondered since which were the more valued in God's sight, the coins or the tears. Ah! surely, the tears; their price

was above rubies, for were they not the index of a broken heart, and is it not out of the broken heart that come all the joys of salvation, just as out of the broken cloud there comes the blessed rain, and out of the broken clod the bountiful harvest? "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

Another incident of a similar character has remained vividly with me, because of the singularity of the circumstances. A mission was being held in London, where almost immediately opposite there is a railway station. One evening there rushed, rather than walked, a man into the vestry, and hurriedly said to me, "I have three minutes to catch my train; I am a soldier; can you tell me how I can be a Christian?" There he stood, a great tall fellow, eager and evidently sincere, and with half a prayer for guidance I simply said to him, "If you want to be a Christian you must surrender to Christ."

Almost before the word was uttered, he turned on his heel and was gone. That was all. Some unconscious flash of understanding must have passed between us, for I could not forget him, and the next night he returned, with face radiant, and declared that on his way to barracks the night before he had discovered the secret. He knew what it was to surrender, and he had surrendered to Christ. He knew that up to the moment of submission a man who surrenders has been opposing the side to which he is about to yield, but at length overwhelmed, he knows that further resistance is useless; in fact, he does not desire to resist; he grounds his arms, and puts himself at the absolute disposal of the commander who till now was his enemy. That was

what he had done to Christ, and the Lord, who might have put His foot on his neck, had drawn him to His heart for ever. Since that time I have heard of him, as he has exchanged into more than one regiment, and he consistently bears his testimony that those who desire to be Christians must surrender to Christ, moreover he reports that the message that was blessed to him has been blessed to others too.

Sharpshooting need not be confined to the pulpit. If the gun is always loaded there will come many opportunities in daily life to speed a bullet to its goal. Sometimes, when we know that others are interested, we need not stay to pick up the wounded soul: the highest wisdom is but to fire the shot, and pass on; at other times we can bring our trophy home. There was a careless man who had often been visited by an earnest lady, but had long resisted her appeals. His little child was stricken with illness, and as he lay on his bed in his delirium, he always called out when his father came near, "Go away; go away."

My friend, by the guidance of God, called when the child lay in his coffin, and the father was at home. The strong man wept as he spoke of his loss, and added,

"The worst of all is to remember that he did not want me near him; he kept saying, 'Go away; go away.'"

Alert to seize the opportunity, his visitor turned on him swiftly, and said, "Yes, I know how it must grieve you, but you know you have kept on saying to God, 'Go away; go away.' Think how it must grieve Him."

The man was startled into submission. He declared

he had never thought God had felt it like that, and beside his child's coffin he knelt, and welcomed the love that had sought him so long in vain, and had been so often repelled.

One other incident. After a service in a large church, when there were so many inquirers that they had to be dealt with in the church building itself, I remember being called to speak to a young man sitting in one of the side pews, who had baffled all the attempts of others to reach him. He baffled mine, too, roundly declaring that he had lived so good a life that he was conscious of no sin. His attitude was, "All these have I observed from my youth up, neither transgressed I Thy commandments at any time." Well-read, respectable, evidently making his way in the world, and just as evidently with a heart unrested, argument was useless, and so, with a prayer for guidance, I took an arrow from God's quiver, and at short range fired it at his heart. After a pause, I said,

"Do you know that you have committed the greatest sin in the world?"

"Impossible," he cried. "What is that?"

"Why," I replied, "you are calling God a liar. See this"; and I directed his attention to 1 John v. 10. The arrow had gone true. As it is written on this page, the whole thing seems almost absurdly simple, but on the instant the face of that man blanched almost chalk-white, certainly as white as the wall behind him; the proud spirit was broken, the heart was bent; and he who had boasted that he had never committed any sin confessed that he had committed the greatest sin in the world, and fled to Jesus for refuge.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-EIGHTH

### TRACKING FUGITIVE SOULS

IN addition to results associated with crowded and awed assemblies, such as have been chronicled, it not unfrequently happens that the interest aroused by the meeting has to be followed up afterwards in order to gain the soul. Indeed, I am not sure whether the best results do not remain to be garnered in some quiet moment, when the soul is alone. Impressionable people come easiest into the inquiry room, and, alas! are often the soonest offended at Christ, while souls delicately poised shrink from publicity, and spirits that will be steadfast are cautious ere they make the great confession. Those whose heart goes out most ardently to the Lord are, like other lovers, often very shy.

Many years ago a letter came to me from a lady who had attended some of the earlier meetings of a mission, but who had been taken suddenly ill, and found herself unable to leave her room. She wrote saying that she was deeply concerned about her spiritual welfare, and very anxious to be a Christian, and she would be most grateful if I could call and speak to her. Willingly I went. To everything I said she had but one answer,

“It is all very beautiful, but I feel that I cannot believe.”

Practically the same response came about a dozen times with weary iteration. I told her of the value of Christ's death, of His willingness to receive her, of the simplicity of trust, of the assurance of the promise, but the answer was always the same, "I cannot believe."

At length I saw there was little to be gained by continuing in the strain in which we had begun, so I suddenly changed the subject, and said,

"We are going to London on Monday." She expressed surprise, but I only answered,

"We are going to London on Monday." She said she thought the mission was to be continued a little longer, and I gave the same answer. She wished that she had got a blessing before the services were over; again I answered her as before. I could be as monotonous as she. She strained her politeness to reply, and at last, to make an end, she said that she was very sorry.

Then I quickly asked her, "Why?" Remember, I was much younger in those days—young and self-confident. With a laugh she said she was sorry because we were going to London on Monday.

"But you surely do not believe it?" I said, in an incredulous manner.

"Of course I do," she answered.

"Then you believe the first sentence of an almost entire stranger," I said, "and yet you tell me you cannot believe Christ."

Never shall I forget her startled and surprised look as she ejaculated, "Must I, then, believe Him in just the same way as I believe you?"

And to her eager question all I could say was, "Must you believe God as you believe me! How else could

you believe Him? If you tried from now till the end of eternity, you could not believe Him any other way."

Difficulties vanished. She sank back in her chair. "Is that it?" she murmured, as a look of peace came into her face. "Is that it? I am to believe God as I believe you? I can do that."

We went to London on Monday, but before that my friend had a new song put in her mouth. I saw her again, and the simplicity of it was her wonder. By the help of the Spirit, she simply rested her soul on the word and on the work of the Lord Jesus, and she was able to give a reason for the hope that was in her as she gave witness to His grace.

Another illustration of a flank attack lingers in my memory. It occurred in connection with a mission in a London suburb, where there was an exceptionally good choir. We were specially told of one of the members, a young lady, worldly and thoughtless, who nevertheless loved to sing hymns. But though she had joined the choir, she had determined to resent anything in the nature of a personal appeal. I think she expected and almost hoped to be spoken to, in order to be able to give some sharp retort.

But my comrade and I were warned, and, of course, we determined to say nothing to her of a spiritual sort; and so the days passed on without any effort being made, as far as she could see, to influence her for Christ, or to engage her attention about her soul. She was somewhat astonished, I was afterwards told, at what she thought was a neglected opportunity.

A fortnight went by with nothing but the most casual remarks on current topics, and at last, under the general



influence of the meetings, seeing that nobody had spoken to her about the great matters which were the burden of the testimony of the mission, she became rather anxious to speak to somebody. We had been waiting for her to begin.

Well do I remember the Easter Monday when she came up to the house where I was staying, and asked to speak to me. We walked round and round the garden, debating the matter, and she opened up her difficulty, which was that she had such a bias toward the world that she was sure she could not maintain a Christian life, even if she then began.

It so happened that that very morning my own Bible portion had been in the fourteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans in the Revised Version, and I had been very struck with the opening verses, so I passed on to her the word that had been helpful to me. The passage begins, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye."

Now, the question arises, and I put it to her, what will happen to him who is received while yet weak in the faith; will he not fall away, and disgrace his profession and dishonour Christ? Surely we ought to wait until a man is strong in the faith before receiving him? But as we went on to the fourth verse we read something very different from that. If we think that such a man cannot be expected to be stedfast, we shall be surprised to find it written, "Yea, he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand."

That verse was God's message to that soul. There on the gravel path, on that bright morning, that young girl ventured out on Christ, in the assurance that, with all her liability to stumble, and all her tendency toward

the world, she, one of the weak ones, should stand, because the Lord would make her stand. Afterwards, in order that she might the better remember the gracious promises on which she trusted, she had the text illuminated and hung at the foot of her bed, so that every fresh morning as she woke, before the world had time to make its appeal, she should be reminded of the Lord's care for her, and His power engaged on her behalf.

It must not be supposed that such instances are peculiar to mission work. The pastor of a church is often called to deal with the maladies of the soul, and this, perhaps, is often more frequently in the visitation of the sick than at any other time. Some years ago, in Leicester, I had an urgent message to call on a woman who was dying of consumption, that malady which, however deadly its peril, never robs the patient of hope. In this case, while her friends were in the room, the invalid was somewhat reticent, but I could see she was not satisfied, so when they left for a moment I said to her,

“ There is something troubling you, is there not ? ”

Then she opened up her mind, and said, “ Yes, there is one thing I should like to know ; I believe in Christ to-day, and I am saved, but if I sin to-morrow, and I am always sinning, will He take away from me the pardon He has given me to-day ? ”

On the spur of the moment, I gave her an answer which, to my surprise, thrilled her with delight.

In a very ecstasy of emotion, she cried, “ Oh, I never saw that before ! Is it possible ? Why is it that we must be brought low to learn these things ? I should like to get better, that I might tell somebody that ” ; and then she began rapturously to praise God.

Yet it was a very simple thing that had brought her release. She had wondered whether the sins of to-morrow would annul the pardon of to-day, and I had said to her, "When Christ died for your sins that were all future, He died for all your future sins." She lingered some time after this, but her testimony never wavered, nor was her spirit ever troubled again. She had grasped the fact of the Gospel of Christ, that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." This is not making it easy to sin in the future; it puts Christ equally between us and past sin, between us and future sin, between us and all that sin entails of guilt and power. Such is the Great Word of the Cross.

## CHAPTER THE TWENTY-NINTH

### BOWS DRAWN AT A VENTURE

WHILE it is interesting to recount the success of straight shooting towards a mark, it is, perhaps, even more confirming to faith, and less likely to minister to self-congratulation, to notice how frequently the arrow shot at a venture finds its way between the joints of the harness.

Again and again people have come to me demanding how I dared to publish their personal history, and on more than one occasion I have had trouble to prove to these convicted souls that I knew nothing whatever about them. This is an experience common to most preachers who deal with vital things amongst crowds. The details would be of no interest. The interesting fact is that the Spirit of God can so use one man's utterances as to force the conviction on another human heart that every detail of its life is known; perhaps this throws a side-light on the experience of the ancient prophets, when their own spirits searched what or what manner of things the Spirit of God within them did signify. The word of the man yielded up to God is frequently fraught with greater meaning than his own brain recognizes, and God, who chiefly desires to use him as a conscious agent, will sometimes also use him as an instrument, to speak more and do better than he knows.

In my early Christian life, so greatly was the potential power of short messages impressed upon my heart that again and again I have gone, in company with a little band of workers, down streets and alleys, just quoting a passage of Scripture and passing on. Sometimes, too, in walking along a crowded thoroughfare with a companion we have spoken together in loud tones discussing the matters of salvation, not for our own sakes, but that the passers-by might, perhaps, catch the message. I am not sure how far such simulation was pleasing in God's sight, but the intention was praiseworthy. Like Boaz, we dropped in the field handfuls of purpose for the gleaners.

Vividly I remember the dawn of the first day I spent in Cambridge, because I myself was the subject of an experience of this sort. Afterwards I came to know the quaint and determined man who felt it laid upon him to cry out against the people. I was startled out of my sleep by his voice calling in the street, "Prepare to meet thy God." On and on the good man went, like Jonah going through the streets of Nineveh, repeating his message, and calling on the people to repent.

The Scripture itself, apart from any words beside, often shows proof of its living force by probing the hearts of men and women. The first case of the kind that occurred in my experience was in quite the early days, at a meeting in Islington. The subject of the discourse happened to be the narrative of the woman of Samaria, and, without any knowledge of the facts, it appeared that I looked full into the face of a member of the congregation as I read the sentence "He whom thou now hast is not thine husband." Instantly that

woman's heart smote her, and though she remembered nothing more of the service, that single sentence led to the reformation of two homes. Truly, the word of God is quick and powerful.

Another instance of the haunting persistence of a single Scripture may be noted. In a church where I have often preached, there are, behind the pulpit, some stained glass windows representing Scripture scenes, with a descriptive text beneath each. One of the panels shows our Lord reaching out His hand to Peter as He walked on the water, and the text beneath is, "Wherefore didst thou doubt?" To enhance the artistic effect, the last word is written "dovbt." Some workmen were once employed in the building, and one of them, looking at the window, asked his companion what was the meaning of the word "dovbt." "Why," he answered, "that is the old English way of spelling doubt," and then, looking him in the face, he added, "You have been an unbeliever a long time, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Nothing more was said, but the arrow had gone home, the man began seriously to ask himself what reason he had for doubting, and ultimately he was led to faith in Christ.

A case still more singular occurs to me in connection with a man who was an organist at one of our missions, and is, indeed, a composer of no mean merit. When he was a lad he was stricken down in his father's house with typhoid fever, and though every care was taken of him, at last both doctor and nurse renounced hope of his recovery. In great distress, the father went apart to pour out his heart before God, and, as he prayed, the words came to him, as distinctly as they had been

uttered by the Saviour to the centurion in the olden time, "Thy son liveth."

At the same instant it occurred to him that he ought to give his boy a spoonful of raspberry jam. Full of faith, he descended to the sick room, announced that his son would live, gave him the jam, and went forth. Sure enough, whether it was by means of the faith or by means of the jam, God healed the boy.

Years afterwards Canon W. Hay M. H. Aitken was conducting a mission in the Abbey of his city, and this son, still unconverted, came late to one of the services. He knew the text that had been associated with his recovery from death, and judge of his astonishment when pressing his way into the crowded building he found himself just in time to see the preacher rise and to hear him announce his text, "Thy son liveth."

By the very strangeness of it, he was arrested, enthralled, conscious of the hand of God upon him, and ere he left the service became a partaker of eternal life. No wonder he considers that text the great text in his Bible; to him, both for body and spirit, it was the vehicle of grace. We might call this a remarkable coincidence if we were not convinced it was the plan of God.

One summer on the Swiss mountains the second verse of the 107th Psalm came home to me with power, and on my return to Leicester my first sermon was on the text, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." The whole point of the message was that our doubts would flee, and the redemption would become a more assured fact in our experience if, trusting in Christ, we said so. Since that time the thought has travelled widely, and I have seen the text often used on motto cards; but

its first use, as far as I am aware, was in the heart of a member of my congregation. The words kept sounding in her heart, "Say so," "Say so," and she could get no rest until she obeyed the exhortation. Then she found that obedience brought rest. Confession precipitated the faith that was in solution, and crystallized her dissolving hope.

On another occasion—it was, indeed, the evening of Palm Sunday—I preached in Melbourne Hall from the text, "Intending after Easter." Unknown to me, there sat in the congregation a young man who had been deliberately postponing his decision for Christ until Easter was over. Both text and sermon were such a revelation of his inmost thoughts that the decision for Christ could not be avoided, and as he sat in the pew the Easter of his heart came a week earlier than the festival of the Church. Since that time he has gone to be with the Lord, whom that day he received as his Saviour, and on his deathbed he kept praising God that he had not postponed his decision until after Easter, lest he might have postponed it for ever.

Singular texts have often the power of arresting attention. In this connection, I remember a lady who for many years had been a member of our congregation, and while profiting somewhat under my ministry, was never quite satisfied, because she looked back with such regretful longing to the time of the first pastor, to his methods, and to her joy in them. One Sunday evening my text was, "Noah removed the covering of the ark," and while emphasizing the need of remembering all God's past goodness, I laid stress on the fact that in a growing life and an advancing faith there comes



a time when it is necessary to get away from all expedients and experiences, which, however sacred at a previous time, had served their purpose, and are now useless, That evening that lady dismantled her ark, and while not less grateful for the early days, she began to live in the present, and found that though there is but one Gospel, God had other means for the blessing of His people than those He used long ago.

Perhaps I may close this chapter with an incident which my immediate predecessor at Melbourne Hall relates of his ministry at his previous church. Two persons, a man and his wife, had been attending the services for some time, and one Sunday morning, when he was able to greet the husband, he felt led to ask him whether he was a Christian. The man replied in the negative, and then Mr. Sawday, almost as much to his own astonishment as to the stranger's, bluntly said, "What a fool you are!" Instantly a sense of his apparent rudeness came to him, and when he met some of his deacons in the vestry afterwards, he said, "So-and-so will never come again; I cannot think what possessed me, but I am afraid I have insulted him." And then he related the incident.

The man went home, and said to his wife, "Do you know what the preacher said to me this morning?" As she waited, expectant, he also related the incident, and his wife expressed her indignation.

"Ah! but wife," he said, "I have been thinking it over on the way home, and it is true. I have heard the Gospel for years, and I have wanted to be a Christian, and yet I am not a Christian. It is quite true; I am a fool."

The wife, subdued by his earnestness, answered, "If you are a fool, then I must be a fool too," and that evening, instead of being driven away from the church, they both came to consult its minister, to thank him for what seemed the rudeness of the morning, to receive the word that is able to make them wise unto salvation, and to confess Christ as their Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. So one rough shaft transfixed two souls.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTIETH

### ILLUSTRATIVE EPISODES

DURING the years in which I have travelled over the country there were many by-products of experience which yielded valuable material for evangelistic ministry. For instance, during the progress of a mission in Annan, Thomas Carlyle died, and on the day of his funeral my colleague and I were amongst the little company which stood round his grave in the churchyard of Ecclefechan, not only to pay our unspoken tribute to his genius, but also to contrast his burial, with never a word of eternal hope spoken at his graveside, with the triumphal home-going of many an inconspicuous saint of God. At such a moment it was not difficult to render a verdict on life's values.

Of a very different character was an experience in the midst of a four months' mission at Sheffield in the early 'eighties, when we shared in the great Sunday School Festival on Whit Monday. It was said that there were gathered in the Norfolk Park thirty thousand children and forty thousand onlookers. Of course, it was impossible to speak to such a crowd with any hope of being heard; but, in addition to the set programme, Manton Smith climbed the great dais in the centre, and led the people in a hymn.

Just before the proceedings began a mother came to

the park with her child. She saw some friends at a distance whom she wished to greet, and as they were disappearing she hurriedly put her child down on the grass while she ran to speak to them. She thought, of course, that it would be quite easy to run back and pick her child up again, never dreaming that any ill would come of it. But the people were pouring into the park, and the crowd rapidly grew in size and density ; they swarmed over the place where the child had been left, until presently the little girl was among their feet.

When the mother returned she looked for the child outside the limits of the people. She was sure she had placed her child in the spot she indicated, but there was no child there. What had become of the little one ? Nobody could say, and as everybody was eager for a place, they paid scant attention to her inquiries.

Meanwhile, the kindly folk who gathered round the spot picked the child up lest she should be trampled under foot, and turned to those round about her to discover the mother. It soon became quite evident to them that here was a lost child. What could be done ? Amidst the surge it was impossible for a human voice to penetrate any appreciable distance, and no one was ready to lift up the strong voice even had it been possible. They did better than that.

Over the heads of the people they passed the child to the centre, and then up from stage to stage they passed the child to the conductor of the singing, high on his dais. Not even his voice could carry ; but there is a language of the heart as well as of the lip. He took the child and held it up before the crowd, and

the crowd answered with an involuntary drawing of the breath ; a great sigh of sound went over the people.

Meanwhile, the mother was distracted. She was quite sure she had put her child down here, though really she had put the child down there. Just then she heard the exclamation of the crowd, and, looking up, caught sight of the little girl held up in the hands of the singer. What did she do ? She saw that her child was safe. Did she comfort herself with that thought and quietly wait through the proceedings and calmly go home to have an early cup of tea ? Did she say, " They have got my child ; it's all right ? "

Your mother's and father's hearts answer, " No." Though the people were wedged tightly together, she pressed her way from the outskirts of the crowds to the centre ; she did what even the strongest man would have failed to do—her mother's love helped her to use her elbows, and the good-natured people, seeing the state of the case, made way for her where they could. She was not satisfied until she had reached the place where her child was, and clasped her darling in her arms and folded her to her bosom. Then the child was not only safe, but mother and child were comforted.

In subsequent days this incident often furnished an illustration of the way those may be saved who, although they know they are lost, find confession falter on their lips, or feel their hearts too full of despair to pray. They have but to hold up their soul to Jesus. He has a passion greater than a mother's love, and a purpose stronger than her instinct, and if we cannot cross the surging crowd of sins and obstacles that separate us

from Him, He can easily cross them to come to us, and take us in His arms of power and tenderness.

Years afterwards, in a church near London, it happened that this story of the lost child at Sheffield was used, practically as I have set it forth, as an illustration of the lost soul and the seeking Saviour, and after the service a young lady from the choir came and said to us, "I was so glad you told the story of the little girl who was lost in Sheffield. I was that child ; my mother has often told me about it." Quick came the question, "Has Jesus found you too ?" Quicker still the response, "Oh, yes ; He is my Saviour."

Another incident which has been most useful in illuminating the Gospel arose from a newspaper paragraph that recorded that two men, one named Fullerton and the other named Smith, were drowned. It occasioned great anxiety to many of our friends ; indeed, one of them wrote to my companion saying that she heard that he was drowned, and she could not rest satisfied until he had sent her a letter saying whether it was true !

I was vividly reminded of the incident a few years ago when on a visit to the Shetland Islands I climbed the Witch's Hill at Scalloway, from the summit of which one of the most picturesque panoramas of the world may be seen. It was a calm and sunlit day. Beneath us lay the quaint little town ; before us, stretching away in the distance, the islands of Hildasay, Havna, Tronda, Burra, Papa and Oxna, while grass-covered holms and rocky skerries interspersed among the islands lent a charm to the wonderful picture. It was on a wild night before Christmas that two men, who were

compelled to be in Lerwick the following morning, started in an open boat to sail from Oxna to Scalloway, and near Papa Skerry they were overtaken by a snow squall, and both of them were drowned. In Scalloway I was able to discover a photograph of Fullerton, and the good woman, who was herself a Christian, said she hoped he knew the Lord Jesus, but about Smith I could glean no information.

When the paragraph appeared in the newspaper, I looked up and asked my colleague whether if there had been a verse in the New Testament declaring that Fullerton and Smith were to be saved, he would have been quite sure it referred to us two. He answered in the affirmative, and then I pushed the newspaper over to him, and said, "It might perhaps have been those other two." He often used this illustration afterwards, emphasizing the fact that even if he found his own name in the Bible he could not be certain it referred to him and not to somebody else of the same name, but that the great word "whosoever" included all.

Another interesting episode, we sometimes used to illustrate the exquisite words of our risen Lord when to those who hear Him knocking and open the door, He promises to come in and sup with them and they with Him. Having a few days to spare after a mission in Galashiels, it was arranged that we should go over to Selkirk for a brief series of meetings, returning to our hotel in Galashiels each evening.

The good friends there, determined to show their appreciation of the work, organized a surprise party, after the American model, on the last night of our visit, and when we returned late at night, anxious for rest,

we found that our room in the hotel had been invaded, and a score or more people were sitting round a long table, furnished with all sorts of good things which they themselves had brought, two chairs being left for us. A right happy time we spent together.

It was difficult to say which was the host and which the guest : the room was ours, the feast was theirs ; they provided and we presided ; in fact, they supped with us, and we supped with them. And so when Christ comes into a human life He brings the feast with Him : the house is ours, but the grace is His. Our hearts are all too bare and poor for His entertainment did not He Himself furnish and garnish them, and though in His exquisite condescension He says, " I will sup with him," we know that the final truth is in His word of grace about even the humblest believer, " he with Me."



## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FIRST

### COMPASSIONS THAT FAIL NOT

OUR Lord Himself gives us the warrant for interpreting God's love by our own. He assures us not only by the promise that God has a father's heart that will give good gifts to His children, but by the parable that the father's love will seek and welcome those that are lost. Three illuminative instances of compassion, human and Divine, the love of mother, father, wife, almost make the ink bubble as I write.

Some years ago I was entertained in the hospitable home of my friends Mr. and Mrs. Parker while we conducted a mission in their Church. Both of our friends are still alive, and in previous years they had their home in America. One early evening as the twilight fell, our hostess related an incident of her own experience, which seems to me to be the best illustration of the love of God in seeking His erring children that is to be found outside the Bible.

At the time of the event she was living in a village forty-two miles west of Chicago, and she had as her neighbours a family on whom one day a great sorrow fell. The eldest son of the home failed to appear at breakfast, and when his sister was sent to call him she returned with the news that he had not slept in his bed overnight ; the family knelt in prayer that morning with

broken hearts, and their cry went up to God for the wandering boy.

In spite of all the inquiries that were set afoot, in the city and in the country, no trace of the lad could be found. Questions were asked of every passing stranger ; notices offering a reward were placed on the trees along the roads for miles, but there was no sign of the truant. Days drew into weeks, and weeks into months, and yet they did not know whether their son was alive or dead. The neighbours thought he was dead ; but the mother's instinct refused to give him up, and one day she went into a neighbouring shop, where ready-made clothing was for sale, and asked for a suit of clothes. The shop-keeper, in eager surprise, said, " Has Taylor come home ? " The mother answered, " No, but he is sure to come home some day, and he must have grown since he has been away, so I want to have a suit of clothes that will fit him now ; it shall never be said that he came home and that his mother was not ready for him."

The new suit of clothes was placed on a chair beside the bed in his room, which the mother's love kept sacred for his return. But he did not return. Again the next year another suit of clothes was bought and placed at the bedside ready for him. No news came of him, yet the mother refused to believe that he was dead. Interpret the story of God's love as we proceed, and let the mother's heart say that He, too, is always ready to receive the wanderer home.

At length, one evening in autumn, some one who had been to the great city, returned and said that he believed he had seen the missing son. The devoted mother ran to my hostess, and said, " I have heard of my boy at

last. You must come with me to-morrow to fetch him home. I dare not trust myself alone amongst strangers." Does not the mother-love that went out to seek her boy mirror the truth of God's eagerness to save us ?

The earliest train carried them to the city, and the two ladies found their way to the home of one whom they thought would be able to direct them. He heard their story, and said, "You must go to a magistrate and get a warrant, so that you may have the right to bring your boy back." But the speedy and indignant answer came, "A warrant ! A warrant ! Do you not know I am his mother ? He will not be able to withstand his mother's tears." Surely we may rejoice that God will never mock our want with a warrant ; He will not force us home.

But when they arrived at the house where they expected to find the boy, they were disappointed to hear that he had suddenly disappeared the day before ; possibly he had recognized the man who had recognized him. Her friend suggested that the search should be given up for the time being, but with yearning that would not be denied, the mother answered, "Never. We will get a span of horses and follow my boy across the wildest prairie, but we will not go home till we find him." So they set out, and told the driver to go with all speed to the Dutch settlement on the prairies. "Oh," answered the sceptical coachman, "I reckon he won't be there ; what then ?" To which the mother answered, "Why we must drive on until the horses drop, but you must find my boy." As you read, do not the words, "Until He find," echo strangely in your heart ?

After about three hours' journey, the driver said,

"I see a shanty a little further on," and eagerly they told him to drive to it. As her friend could speak Dutch, the mother urged her to inquire, and now my hostess, as she told the story, became quite excited—she seemed to recreate the scene, and said, "Before I reached the door a youth of about fourteen years of age came out, bearing two pails of swill. He was dressed in an old suit of a Dutch pattern, and of colour so faded that it was partly green and partly drab. Having been made for a bigger man, it hung loosely on the slender figure of the boy, whose thin face and long hair contrasted vividly with the rough clothes and the big shoes that he wore."

There sat the mother in the carriage richly dressed! Here stood her son in rags and filth! Scarcely was there time to speak a word before the mother's quick eye had caught sight of her boy. She knew him in spite of the disguise, and she jumped from the carriage, ran past her friend, and, notwithstanding the fine clothes she wore, forgetful of them indeed, she clasped her son in her arms, and covered his face with kisses, while the boy, dropping his swill pails, looked up and said, referring to some sensational paper that had poisoned his mind, "Mother, I will never read it again." There was no reproach for the past on her part, but the instant the mother's arms touched him the swill pails were dropped, and everything represented by the swill pails. And that is the way God, by the expulsive power of a new affection, saves us from sins.

By this time the Dutch woman, who lived in the little house, had become aware that something strange was happening, and wanted an explanation. They asked

her if the lad owed anything, and she answered, "Him no owe me anything; you no take him away; him good help." But when she understood that this was the boy's mother, her mother's heart responded too. She climbed some stairs, saying, "Him shall have him's clothes"; but the mother, willing to receive her boy in spite of the rags, did not mean to take his old clothes home. And God, who will receive the sinner in his sins, will not have him back to live in his sins. So in triumph they took to his home the son that was lost and found again. There he found the signs of his mother's unfailing love, the new clothes were ready for him, the feast was spread, and the past wiped out for ever.

The second incident transports us to Oxford, where one day I shared in the unveiling of a monument by the riverside to Edgar, the son of my friend George Wilson, a young man twenty-one years of age who, going back to business one day, heard a cry of distress from two little boys who had been fishing and had fallen into the water. Although he was not a good swimmer, he plunged into the river at once, and was able to save both the boys, only, however, to find himself in peril. A student in a boat near by threw his sculls to him, but he failed to grasp them, and was drowned. It was found afterwards that the fishing lines were twisted four times round his body, and the hooks caught in his clothing, so that he was unable to save himself. The event moved the whole city. At the funeral the two little boys placed a wreath on the coffin in honour of their deliverer, and as they did it the bereaved father, who has a big heart, embraced them both, kissed them, and invoked God's blessing on their future life.

That evening a preacher, who had witnessed the scene, during his sermon said, "I saw to-day something that I shall never forget; I saw a man kiss two lads, strangers to him, who had caused the death of his son." One of his congregation, a notable sinner, who somehow was present, was arrested by the sentence, and still more when the preacher continued, "and that is just how God the Father will welcome you, if you come to Him, even though you have caused the death of His Son." Scarcely able to wait until the close of the service, the man came up to the preacher, and with deep emotion eagerly asked the question, "Will God kiss me like that?" And when he was assured of a love greater than the greatest of earth, because it is the source of all love, he surrendered himself to God. So a third life was saved by the sacrifice.

Perhaps I may be excused if I recall here, as the final incident, a piece of family history which, used as an illustration, has occasionally hastened laggard hearts in decision. It concerned my father's sister and her husband. They returned from Australia for a visit to the Old Country, and on the day appointed for sailing back again found themselves at Liverpool, and went on board the boat. It was many years ago, and conditions were different from what they are now. My uncle was informed that the ship would not sail until the next tide, and, wishing to see some friends in Liverpool, he went ashore. A little while after, the captain of the vessel came on board, and started the ship down the Mersey.

The husband's consternation may be imagined when he returned and found that the ship was gone and his

wife with it. He hired a tug-boat and followed down the Channel, but in vain. There was nothing left but to wait for the next boat, which, I think, was a fortnight afterwards. His wife on board the ocean steamer was overwhelmed with grief, and with the unreason of sorrow somehow hoped that at each stopping-place her husband would be waiting for her. When she arrived in Australia they told her that he could not come until the arrival of the next steamer ; but in spite of that, each morning she went down to look for him, and each day went back disappointed. She knew he could not come, but it quieted her heart to look for him.

At length the steamer was signalled, and hope beat high. It arrived, the passengers disembarked, and still her husband did not come. One of the officers took her to the captain ; evidently something was amiss ; and she who had waited with such longing for her husband was told that he had died and been buried at sea ! She had waited and watched in vain. Only on rare occasions have I ventured to use this incident in urging the people to meet their loved ones who have gone before, and only with great reserve have I suggested the possible sorrow of friends in Heaven if those whom they are expecting to follow them should fail to come. When reason is convinced and conscience aroused, it is quite legitimate to reinforce the appeal by stirring the emotions, and when these occasional appeals were followed by the singing of Marianne Farningham's hymn, "Waiting and Watching for Me," not infrequently some who had made promises to follow their holy dead were aroused to start on the voyage which leads to the blessed country, being assured that those who set out surely arrive.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-SECOND

### MY COMRADE'S STORIES

MANTON SMITH had the rare art of telling an incident so that it lived before the people, and there were some stories which he was very fond of repeating again and again; no matter how often he told them he always enjoyed them himself, and so as a matter of course others appreciated them, too. In his three books he had left a good many of these stories on record, though no writing can reproduce the story as he told it, or convey an adequate impression of the clear voice, the rare smile, and the altogether natural manner. In spite of the coldness of print, I will venture to reproduce three of his narratives. The hero in each case was, I believe, his former colleague, Alfred J. Clarke.

On one occasion he went down to a country place to hold services in a barn, and by way of preparation his hostess took him to visit some cottagers in a neighbouring village. In one house there sat an old man in an arm-chair, contentedly smoking his pipe. Both husband and wife were deaf, and it was a very difficult thing to make either hear, and they were as ignorant as they were deaf. The man seemed never to have heard the story of the Crucifixion, and was filled with wonder when it was told to him. When he discovered that it was to be the subject at the meeting he eagerly promised to come,



and was invited for the afternoon, so that he might be ready for the evening.

The hostess said to the preacher, "If you can make the plan of salvation clear to that man, you may be quite sure it will be clear to all the rest;" so to find out what the old man really knew, after tea the preacher took a seat by his side, and said, "Do you know what redemption means?" Finding that the old man did not comprehend him, in desperation he asked, "Do you know what a pop-shop is?" "Yes," said the old man, smiling, "I know what a pop-shop is." "Well, when you put your things in pawn you get them out again, don't you?" "Not allus," replied the old man, with a grin. "But when you do get them out they won't let you have them without paying the money, will they?" "You trust 'em," he ejaculated. "And if you had the money and took them out again, what would you call it?" "Oh," he said, glad at last to lay hold of something, "I would call it redeeming my pledge." "Just so," said the preacher, equally glad to get a foothold, "that is it. You will remember that redeeming means buying back. Now, that is just what Jesus Christ did for us; when He died He bought us back." But the old man gave an answer that was as unexpected as it was whimsical, showing the difficulty of making the Gospel clear to his mind. "Oh," said he; "Sir, I didn't know we were in pop afore." "Well" said the preacher, avoiding other explanations, "you understand now what redemption means, and if, when I am speaking, you cannot hear me, raise your hand, and I will speak louder."

The meeting had been begun but a little while when

the hand was lifted, and the old man exclaimed, "You can go on, sir, I hear all you say." But it was quite plain that, although he heard, he did not understand, and the preacher was determined that he should get something clear to his heart.

Breaking off his discourse, he said, "Suppose there is an old man in this place who owes ten pounds. He cannot pay it, and is to be sent to prison for debt; but my friend here (pointing to the owner of the barn) does not like the old man to go to gaol, and so he says to the shopkeeper, 'If you will let the old man off, I'll pay half of it.' 'No,' says the creditor, 'I must have it all.' 'Well,' says the farmer, 'I will give you six pounds if you will let him off.' 'No, I must have ten pounds, or he must go to gaol.' 'I will give you eight pounds.' 'No, it must be ten pounds or nothing.' 'Then I will pay you £9 19s. 11½d. if you will let him off,' says the farmer." The illustration was on the old man's level; he had followed it keenly, and now, with great excitement, unable to contain himself longer, he said "He'll take that, or he ought to go without." But the supposed shopkeeper was obdurate, he would have ten pounds or nothing, and the preacher pictured his getting it. "And now, how much does he owe?" he exclaimed, and the old man answered still more excitedly, "Nothing." Then there came the application that the Lord Jesus had not paid part, but all of the debt of sin we owed.

The thought entered into the dull mind, and the old man, who had never understood the Gospel before, was so gladdened with the good news that after the meeting he said, "I don't care if I don't get home till morning;

I am so happy. The man said He paid it all," and though he never attended another meeting, after that he used to tell the wonderful news as he sat in his chimney corner, finishing up with what had now become his creed—surely an efficient creed for a guilty sinner—"The man says He paid it all!"

Another story my colleague used to tell with inimitable grace. The preacher was in a Wiltshire village, and wishing to call on an old neighbour, he opened, by mistake, the door of an aged woman's house, and blundered into it before he knew of his error. To cover his confusion he said, "Well, mother, how are you this morning?" and when she raised her head, he saw she was blind. She had a blind heart, too, for when she spoke she said, "I don't know who you be, my lad, but I was just a-thinkin' as you came in, that I have lived in this world over seventy-five years, and if I was to die to-night I don't know whatever would become of me." He told her that she might know, and that she might go to Heaven, and she made answer, "I would give all the world to be sure of that." Then he told her the news that has helped many besides, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "Lackaday," said the old woman, "do just read it again, my lad." When it was read a second time, she said, "Read it again," and again a fourth time, and then she clapped her hands, and said, "I never saw that afore." "What didn't you see?" he asked. "Why, if the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all, He must have laid mine on Him," she cried.

The following morning, on his way to the railway station,

he called to see how she was going on, and the old woman invited him in, and said she had something very particular to tell him. He protested that he was in a hurry, and could not sit down, but when he tried to hasten the old woman's tale, she asked him not to interrupt her, she must tell her story in her own way. "Well, my lad," she said, "I went to bed last night, and soon after that I thought I heard a noise." The visitor thought an old wife's tale was coming, and tried to cut it short, but it was no use. "Well, my lad, as I was saying," she continued, "I went to bed last night thinking over what you told me about the Lord having laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all, and soon after that I heard a noise, and I called out to my boy (who, by the way, was a man of some forty-eight summers), 'Willie, my boy, how late you are coming to bed to-night.' But he said, 'No, mother, I'm just getting up.' 'Now, my boy,' I said, 'don't tease your old mother, it can't be mornin'.' 'Indeed, mother, it is; it is just six o'clock, and I am off to work.' Don't you see, my lad," she continued, "I laid me down last night thinking over that text, 'the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all,' and I slept all night, and didn't know it."

He was now thoroughly interested, praised God with her, and before he left, the old blind woman, who was getting parish relief, said, "I don't know how you are off, my lad, but if ever you run short, and are in want of a shillin', write to me, and I'll send you one"!

Still another story. On the eve of a mission at another place they told the preacher of an old man in the village, a shoemaker, and they said that if they could only get him to the meetings it would be worth the whole effort.

"Well," said the missionary, "if you are prepared to pay the price we shall see him at our mission before the week is over." When they asked him what they were to do, he said that he wanted a dozen ladies to volunteer to do exactly what he told them for six successive days. Trusting his judgment, twelve ladies volunteered. "Now," he said, "the old man sits in his front room. You must go and call on him every hour to-morrow." Pointing to each lady in turn, he said, "You go at seven o'clock; you at eight; you at nine, and so on till meeting time, and keep it up every day till he comes." On Monday morning the first lady called at seven o'clock; the second at eight; the third at nine; at ten o'clock the fourth put in an appearance; at eleven the fifth; at twelve the sixth; and as the clock struck one the seventh lady walked into his room. This was too much for the old man; he put up his hands, and said, "Are there any more of you to come?" "Oh, yes," said the lady, "there are a lot yet." "Stop 'em," he shouted. "Stop 'em, and I'll promise I'll come to your meeting to-night; I don't want any more women folk coming bothering me. I shall do no work to-day unless you stop 'em." There was no need for the others to call. Punctually the old shoemaker entered the meeting that evening, and, better still, Christ met with him.

The change in his life from that night was wonderful. Some months after, when the preacher paid another visit to the village, he went by a short cut across the field, and coming to the back of the shoemaker's house, he heard the old man talking. He had been setting some cabbages, and when he had finished he stood and said, "Oh, Lord, I have been and stuck them in. I can't do

no more ; if You please, I want You to make them grow for me ; and I want some big 'uns, too ; and, oh, Lord, I want you to make me grow, too, for Jesus Christ's sake." And to that quaint prayer the preacher added his "Amen."

## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-THIRD

### OPENING WINDOWS TO THE LIGHT

THE only way to dispel the darkness is to let the light pour in, and, however many philosophies there may be as to the best method of gaining entrance for the sunshine, science is a surer guide. The plan that works proves itself to be in the line of God's will, whether in the natural or in the spiritual sphere. An ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory, and he who would understand the working of the human soul must put aside his preconceived ideas as to how it ought to work, and be content to learn by experiment. Before all the windows of the soul are opened to the light there must, of course, be the arousing of desire ; but when people are eagerly wishing to know the truth in Christ, and to find avenues to assurance of faith, there is usually needed just one final touch which will draw back the shutters or roll up the blinds. Here are set forth some of the methods approved by experience.

The first I learnt many years ago from Henry Moorhouse, but I have probably used it more than he did, and I have passed it on to quite a number of my friends, who have found it equally effective in leading to personal apprehension of the sacrifice of Christ. Both with individuals and congregations it has proved most effective.

I remember a typical case of a man who came declaring his belief in the Atonement, but who was unable to gain any comfort from it. Opening the Bible at Isaiah liii. 5, I said to him, "Now, we will read this verse clause by clause, but instead of the plural pronouns we will use the singular and personal, and you shall say it after me, if you will." So I read, "He was wounded for my transgressions," and he read, "He was wounded for my transgressions." Then I asked him if it was true: "Was Christ really wounded for your transgressions?" and as he answered quite clearly, "Yes," I begged him to join me in prayer as I said, "Lord, we thank Thee for that." Going on to the next clause, I said, "He was bruised for my iniquities," and he added, "He was bruised for my iniquities." "And is that true?" I asked. He responded again in the affirmative, and again half closing the book, we joined in prayer while I said, "Lord, we praise Thee for that." Once more opening the Bible, I said, "The chastisement of my peace was upon Him," and he said, "The chastisement of my peace was upon Him"; and when he affirmed that that was true, again, with his consent, we looked up to God, and said, "Lord, we adore Thee for that." Finally, I said, "With His stripes I am healed"; and he said, "With His stripes—no, I cannot say that." But why not? He was as unable to answer as he was to finish the text. So we began again, and, clause by clause, I said it first and he followed. "He was wounded for my transgressions; He was bruised for my iniquities; the chastisement of my peace was upon Him"; and when we had said it three or four times, he tremblingly, but trustingly added, "With His stripes I am healed."



And he had a perfect right to add it, for if the first clause is true, the last clause is true ; and if the last is not true, the first is not true. We cannot clip God's Word in twain.

This is only a sample of other cases (having written the word "cases," I pause to say I dislike it very much ; it is a trick of officialism to think of a soul as a case ; but let the phrase stand), and many times, at the close of an appeal, I have used the incident in the great congregation, and have asked the people, if they were able to do so, unitedly and audibly to join in the great confession, clause by clause, until at the close we have risen into a great triumphant testimony, personal, and yet general, "With His stripes I am healed." *Healed ! Perfectly healed. I am healed !* Individual apprehension of the fact. *I am healed !* Not a hope, but a present experience. No if, no but, no peradventure, no perhaps, no doubt, no contingency. On the one side, "He was wounded" ; on the other side, "I am healed" ; and what God hath joined together let no man put asunder.

Another use of an Isaiah Scripture, almost equally direct, I learnt from Marcus Rainsford. He tells the story of an old invalid whom he was only allowed to visit on condition that he did not speak to her about religion : she was supposed not to be able to bear it. She lay on her bed in a room which opened by a French window on to a verandah, and one day, walking up and down outside, he quoted the words of Isaiah xliii. 21-26, in the hope that she would hear them : "This people have I formed for Myself ; they shall show forth My praise. But thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob ; but thou hast been weary of Me, O Israel. Thou hast

not brought Me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings ; neither hast thou honoured Me with thy sacrifices : I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled Me with the fat of thy sacrifices : but thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put Me in remembrance : let us plead together."

Again, walking up and down, he said the same words, half to himself and half for her, and the invalid responded, "Say it again." So yet a third time he repeated, "Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled Me with the fat of thy sacrifices : but thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put Me in remembrance : let us plead together." He waited and prayed, and there came a voice from the sick chamber, as the invalid screamed, rather than said, "In the name of God, what am I to put Him in remembrance of?" Entering the room, he answered, "Put Him in remembrance of this : 'I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.'" That was the light that streamed into the dark soul, and ever afterwards she greeted God's servant as the man who had opened the shutters for her.

Another method which has been most extensively used I was taught by Mr. Barton, of Dundalk, in the

years of long ago. I am glad to have been able to pass it on to other more eloquent evangelists and teachers who have found it a very effective instrument for window opening. After a meeting one evening a lady came to him and said that she had been asking God for so many years to give her Christ, and He had never yet given Him to her. The preacher made little reply at the moment, but he was going to her house, and when he sat down to the table he said, "Please, will you give me a cup of tea?" She assented, and began to prepare it; but he said, even more emphatically, "I am very thirsty; will you give me a cup of tea?" She poured it out, and again he asked for it. She offered it to him, and again he said, "Will you not give me a cup of tea?"

She pressed it on him, only to be met by the same appeal; he was thirsty, and would be so glad to have a cup of tea, until at length, in consternation, she asked him what was the matter. "You want a cup of tea, and I am offering it to you. Why do you not take it?" Of course, he replied that there was just the same thing the matter with him as with her; she had been asking God to give her Christ, and all the while God had been holding out Christ for her acceptance. Why did she not take Him? I do not know whether the tea was ever finished, but in that half-humorous way the casement of the heart was thrown open, and she received the eternal life which all the while, like waves of light, had been surging without, waiting for entrance. She found, as through the relation of the incident many another has found, that there comes a time when, instead of waiting for God to answer our prayer, we are

called upon to answer God's prayer, to receive what He gives, rather than to wait for Him to give it.

A fourth plan of enforcing the actuality of the offer of Christ to the heart came to me one Christmas morning, which happened to be a Sunday. My text was, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift"; and when I had expounded the Scripture, and explained the subject, I appealed to the people to turn the text into a collect, and to say with united voice, on the day sacred to the memory of God's great donation to the world, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." One young man, who afterwards became a preacher, told me that he began the text half doubting, but, before he had finished, it came with overwhelming power to his heart that he had received the gift which had been given, and he was able joyfully to thank the Giver. In many other places, and at other times, I have asked the congregation to join in this general thanksgiving with the happiest results.

To Major Whittle I owe thanks for still another instrument which has been largely used, especially near the close of a mission. His hymn with the chorus, "I will, I will, God helping me, I will, O Lord, be Thine; Thy precious blood was shed to pardon me, I will be wholly Thine," must have led thousands of people to the great decision for Christ. When my glorified colleague was with me, he would at the critical moment sing the first verse and the chorus, and then I would ask those who had said "I will" to Christ to rise and sing the chorus after the second verse, and frequently there would be a great response; then, after the third verse, and after the other verses, those who had hesitated,

but yet wished to be Christ's. So many yearnings of life in such spiritual intensity have been focussed by those lines that I might be accused of exaggeration if I tried to estimate the number. The former companion of P. P. Bliss was himself a great evangelist, as great in his humility and his devotion as in his gifts; but I question if at the end that simple chorus of his, which is so far from being poetry that it is almost prose, and yet wedded to its music is somehow instinct with the Spirit of God, may not be found to have been his greatest gift to the kingdom of Christ.

## CHAPTER THE THIRTY-FOURTH

### THE GREAT YEAR OF THE WORLD

SINCE I have been in the Mission House in Furnival Street in the City of London I have daily looked out through the window of my room to a little patch of sky that shows between the houses opposite—all of the heavens that I can see. It is crossed and re-crossed in all directions by telegraph and telephone wires radiating from a standard on a house-top in full view. So, while my sight is strained vertically, my imagination is caught in the way and carried horizontally to the end of the earth. In this it follows my heart, for it was because I had the vision of the world that I came hither. And as I turn from the window to my desk, to my correspondence and to my guests, the vision abides.

For by these nerves of wire, and its sinews of railway metal, by its ships that move like shuttles across the web, and by its pulsing waves of ether over seas and continents, the whole world is bound together, never to be separated any more. There are no longer even two hemispheres, for America has come to understand that it cannot stand apart from Europe, any more than Europe can stand apart from Asia or Africa. The oceans divide but to unite. For good or for ill, down to Gehenna or up to the Throne, the world will go together. The great war does not negative this statement in the

least ; it confirms it. For the struggle is only as to which way it shall go ; whether it shall be dominated by the brutal strength of Middle Europe, or find some way in which it can pursue its course in peace. There is such a way, but we need a Leader to find it. At the beginning of the war I ventured to suggest that the Conflict was between "The Mailed hand, and the Nailed Hand," a phrase which has approved itself as describing the true issue then, as it describes the ultimate issue now, and it is that Nailed Hand which, wounded afresh even in the house of its friends, will open the way to peace.

We may hope that peace may come in 1917 : that alone will make it the great year of the world ; and should peace be delayed, the year will be scarcely less great, for it is sure to witness the climax of the struggle. Those who believe in Christ can have no doubt as to the result : the world can only go one way. Though it may seem to be spinning down into the abyss, the prayers of the centuries that the will of the Father—*our* Father—may be done on earth as it is in heaven, stand between us and the enthronement of the devil's trinity, Force and Fraud and Fate. Perhaps some August day in this year will be as memorable as that August day in 64 when the martyr era began : the world's martyrdom may be over and the golden years begun.

Thirty-one years ago I was the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Grattan Guinness at Harley House. As families we have long been friends ; Harry Guinness was best man at my wedding, and I have been the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Whitfield Guinness at Kaifengfu in China. The

occasion of my visit to the East End was the opening mission which Manton Smith and I were to conduct at Mr. Charrington's great Assembly Hall. The senior Guinnesses were at the time collaborating in the production of one of their remarkable prophetic books. There was some doubt as to the title; authors will know that it is often easier to write the book than to decide what it is to be named. I well remember the breakfast when the matter had to be finally settled, and it was put to the vote. The choice was "Light for the Last Days."

Every morning the discussion was on the subject that was engrossing the thoughts of our host and hostess far into the night, and even then, over thirty years ago, this year was marked as epochal. I recall how Dr. Guinness in his own seraphic way spoke of the time of Gentile domination which began with Nebuchadnezzar in 604 B.C. and would run for 2,520 years, ending in 1917 (remember that it is necessary to add a year for the change from B.C. to A.D.); while Mrs. Guinness, with her practical insight, was no less glad that the Mohammedan menace beginning with the Hegira in A.D. 622 would in 1,335 lunar years also finish in 1917. These suggestions are not to be lightly brushed aside, especially in view of the announcement that the Turkish year 1335 is now to be renounced in order to bring their reckoning into harmony with the rest of Europe. It is true that prophetic times, like the vision of the glory God granted to Moses, are best understood when they are past, but, like Mary, we may ponder these things in our hearts, and with new interest turn again to the last verse in Daniel and read "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."



The impressions of my East End visit were deepened by the visits which my wife and I paid immediately thereafter to the Holy Land. It was before the advent of railways on the sacred soil, so we rode and camped all over the country. It is impossible to see the land without having a deep longing that God's ancient people might again inhabit it; and the thought that British soldiers have now made both a roadway and a railway from Egypt to Palestine, and are, in fact, in the Holy Land itself to-day, makes us look out and lift up our heads in the hope that the redemption, not of the Jews only, but of the whole world draweth nigh.

Who can say what is to follow the events of to-day? Certainly not the end of the world, about which the Bible is altogether silent, but just as certainly the end of the old age and the inauguration of a new. Like those in the Apostolic time we are at "the ends of the ages," the terminal point of one and the germinal point of the other. But as all the past ages overlapped and interpenetrated the new beginning before the old had spent its force, we need not expect any sharp dividing line between the ages now. Yet, as in past ages the early stage of each era was marked by some signal event—the Flood, the Thunder of Sinai, the Exile, the Cross—we may surely expect the Eternal to break through in some arresting way to this generation. What if it be in the glorious Epiphany of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ?

Sixty years is a short time in the life of a man, but a long time in the life of a nation (gentle reader, I have made no mistake in that sentence). As I think of the changes in my own lifetime, and remember the increasing

speed of events, there seems to be no horizon to the future. I was born at the time of the Indian Mutiny, when it seemed as if the East had determined to break away from the West: now the Indian Cavalry wait in France to join in the great advance, and Indian delegates are coming to share in the Council of Empire.

Before the war I dared to say on several occasions that in ten years' time, in all lands, the heralds of the Cross would be found preaching the Gospel with such power as the world has never known, and I still believe that God will grant us such times of refreshing from His Presence. If I were young again, it would be my ambition to be one of those heralds, and I find it in my heart to envy the men and women who are now setting out in life. They are born for the time, if they will but see and seize the glorious opportunity that will come to them.

What forms the new evangelization will take nobody can say. The Y.M.C.A. will no doubt be one of the great forces of the future. There may be soldier missionaries who will count it as great an adventure to go into the world for Christ as they have counted it an honour to serve their country. At home we shall perhaps be able to use the soldiers to reach the soldiers, the young officers to guide the churches. In the halcyon days of the Christian Endeavour Movement, for three years in succession at Melbourne Hall we had a mission of young people to young people, and nothing more satisfactory was ever attempted; the influence on those who put forth the effort was as valuable as the result in the winning of recruits. I but stood by and guided the energy of others. It may be that in some similar way it may be possible for the men who are

Christ's, on their return, to appeal to their fellows, and all of us to begin anew.

We wait in faith and hope. None know what the future holds of rapture or surprise ; but we know that God guides and that grace governs : that Christ lives and that the Holy Spirit remains amongst us. As I stand at the sixtieth milestone I look forward, and beyond the dark storm-cloud I see the rosy dawn of a new morning, and between the salvos of the cannon, as I listen, I hear the songs of birds.