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THE LIFE OF  
GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH



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PRESENTED TO THE REV. WILLIAM BOOTH WHILE LABOURING AS AN EVANGELIST IN THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION, BY HIS FRIENDS IN SHEFFIELD, IN AFFECTIONATE APPRECIATION OF HIS ARDUOUS, ZEALOUS AND SUCCESSFUL LABOURS THERE AND IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY. PRESENTED NOVEMBER 26, 1856. AT A LARGE MEETING ASSEMBLED IN THE TEMPERANCE HALL, REV H. WATTS, PRESIDENT OF CONFERENCE, CHAIRMAN.



# THE LIFE OF GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH

THE FOUNDER OF  
THE SALVATION ARMY

BY  
HAROLD BEGBIE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

IN TWO VOLUMES  
VOL. I

"Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen."—MILTON

New York  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1920

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## PREFACE

WILLIAM BOOTH is likely to remain for many centuries one of the most signal figures in human history. Therefore, to paint his portrait faithfully for the eyes of those who come after us — a great duty and a severe responsibility — has been my cardinal consideration in preparing these pages. Only when circumstances insisted have I turned from my attempt at portraiture to examine documents which will one day be employed by the historian of the Salvation Army.

If I have succeeded in my work, posterity will be able to feel something of the power of William Booth's personality, and to understand how it was his spirit could touch the human heart in so many lands and in almost all the varied circumstances of mortal life. If I have failed, it may be possible, I hope, because of the sincerity of my ambition, for a better painter in another age to discern on my fading canvas at least two or three colours useful for a more living likeness.

I desire to add that in my difficult task I have received valuable help from Bramwell Booth, the son of William, and the present General of the Salvation Army. But for good or for evil the book is mine, and I alone stand at the judgment bar. I have written as I wished to write, said what I wished to say, and the book is my honest idea of the truth.

H. B.

LONDON,  
*28th March, 1919.*

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*They shall mount up with wings as eagles*



# THE LIFE OF GENERAL BOOTH

## CHAPTER I

THE TIMES INTO WHICH OUR HERO WAS BORN

1829

FROM a study of the *Nottingham Date Book* it would seem that the unchronicled occurrence of William Booth's birth in 1829 was preceded and accompanied by events almost as horrible and alarming as any that ever intimidated the decent inhabitants of a civilized English town.

Nature at that time showed her most ferocious face to the midland capital; and man, who is said to begin where nature ends, seems to have had no difficulty in exceeding these excesses of environment.

It was a period of tremendous storms and of horrible brutality: of thunder, lightning, and devastating rains: of hideous crimes and outrageous destitution. Nine months before the birth of William Booth the town was swept and flooded by the most angry tempest within living memory; three days after his birth immense masses of rock gave way both in the centre of the city and in the then neighbouring hamlet of Sneinton, plunging down in many hundreds of tons upon the houses beneath. A more or less formal revival in the religious life of the city which marked the year of the great rivalist's birth may have been due in no small part to these alarming occurrences. Many churches and chapels in 1829 were restored, repaired, or reopened for public worship, the local dignitaries taking a ceremonial part in some of the celebrations which marked these efforts either to appease the heavens or to Christianize the people.

Two years before, the town had been deeply shocked by the discovery of a gang of resurrection men in its midst who went about at night "despoiling the sanctuaries of the dead." So sharply did this disclosure agitate and excite

the minds of Nottingham people that, when the murders committed by Burke and Hare in Edinburgh became known in 1829, the whole town was thrown into a condition of panic which necessitated action by the magistrates. Burke and Hare were "connected with the murder by suffocation of thirty or forty persons, for the sake of the money arising from the sale of their bodies for the purposes of dissection"; and so alarmed were the inhabitants of Nottingham by these dreadful disclosures that "timid people dared not to venture out after dark, and all sorts of alarming reports were in circulation." Little was talked of, we are told, "but rumours of pitch-plasters being placed on people's mouths, and of others being missing and *burked*." The magistrates of Nottingham were obliged, so general was the panic, to issue a notice declaring that there was no foundation for the alarm.

Murders, highway robberies, mysterious stabbings of women in the streets at night, crimes of every kind, public executions and a public whipping witnessed by enormous crowds of people, escapes from the county gaol in Narrow Marsh, riots and insurrections of a most demoniacal character, devastating fires, destructive floods, and thunderstorms fatal to man and beast — these dire and dreadful things continued to agitate the life of Nottingham throughout the boyhood of William Booth. We may allow ourselves the conjecture that the child was influenced in no small measure by the continual excitement provoked by these events, particularly when we remember the isolation of provincial cities at that time and the general narrowness of the outlook upon life. He would have heard on every side of him breathless tales of murder and garottings, descriptions of surging drunken crowds watching the hanging of criminals; he would have seen the maddened rioters when they tore down the iron railings in front of his father's house to use them as weapons against the soldiers and special constables; he did see, and on many occasions, bodies of men and women charging through the streets to sack bakers' shops, returning with their arms full of loaves; he was the witness again and again of such misery and destitution, such haggard want and infuriating depriva-



tion, as filled the streets with angry mobs shouting for food, compelled the authorities to read the Riot Act, and drove thousands of people to seek the relief of the rates.

Children in the poor streets of great cities hear nothing of political events; they are uninfluenced by the philosophy of the period. But their minds, in that region which psychologists name the unconscious, are influenced, and powerfully influenced, by all the sights and all the sounds of their environment. They take a passive part in the life of their own immediate world, but their minds are unconsciously active, and their characters are permanently affected by the most transitory excitement of their time.

It is doubtful whether William Booth heard any discussions touching Catholic Emancipation, the Reform Bill, Newman's work at Oxford, Negro Emancipation, and the stubborn conservatism of that "unmanageable naval officer," his sovereign lord, King William the Fourth. But it is quite certain that he heard a number of stories of the dreadful murder that was followed by the last execution on Gallows Hill; of the funeral by night, without religious ceremony, of a young butcher who had committed suicide in so deliberate a fashion that the jury was forced to bring in a verdict of *felo de se*; of the great riot which led among other things to the gutting of Nottingham Castle by incendiaries; of the public execution of some of the rioters; of the frightful desolation wrought in the town by Asiatic cholera; of the fight between two young men on Mapperley Plains for the love of a girl who had promised to marry the winner, one of the men being killed in the contest; of more than one execution of men for atrocious offences committed against young women; of people transported for life on trivial charges; of the last public flogging to take place in Nottingham; of many a disastrous fire that swept through the city; and of the crashing down of rock in Sneinton Hermitage, close to his own home, with a noise that seemed like the thunders of Judgment Day.

Gossip of this kind must have been general in the town, particularly among children, and we know that it made a dark impression on the mind of William Booth. "When but a mere child," he says in his preface to *In Darkest England*,

published in 1890, "the degradation and helpless misery of the poor stockingers of my native town, wandering gaunt and hunger-stricken through the streets, droning out their melancholy ditties, crowding the union or toiling like galley slaves on relief works for a bare subsistence, kindled in my heart yearnings to help the poor which have continued to this day, and which have had a powerful influence on my whole life." He spoke on one occasion of his troubled childhood, saying with some bitterness, which the reader will readily understand, "From the earliest days I was thrown into close association with poverty in its lowest depths." His mind, before it was penetrated by religious illumination, must have been depressed by the gossip of Nottingham back-streets and by the sights of misery and want which confronted him at every turn.

In 1837, the year which witnessed Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, there was distress in Nottingham of a most grievous and heartbreaking description. William Booth, though only eight years of age, was powerfully impressed by the horrors of that year. A public meeting was held in the Exchange at which five thousand pounds was subscribed for "the relief of the widely-spread distress amongst the operative classes, arising from an utter prostration of the manufacturing interest." The number of persons thrown for subsistence upon the poor rates was greater than ever before known. "The enumeration was as follows: — Within the walls of the house, 971. Two hundred men on the roads, with families of four on an average, 1,000. Fed twice a day in a temporary erection on Back Commons, 258. Children fed and educated, 200. Aged, infirm, sick, etc., receiving outdoor relief, 1,200. Total relieved from the rates weekly, 3,629; or about one in fourteen of the entire population of the union." An entry in the *Nottingham Date Book* shows that the local wages, although shamefully inadequate, were higher than those of the stockingers (4s. 6d. a week) mentioned in the *Life of Thomas Cooper*.

The year 1838 was famous for a severe winter and the freezing of the river Trent. The first stone of the new church at Sneinton, where William Booth had been baptized,

was laid by Lord Manvers. Grace Darling's heroic exertions to save the lives of people on board the wrecked *Forfarshire* thrilled the whole country, and in Nottingham, because a Mr. Churchill of the town was among those who had perished, made a deep impression; a monument was set up in the General Cemetery.

In 1839 the new church at Sneinton was opened by the Bishop of Lincoln, and we may take it as fully certain that William Booth was present at this elaborate ceremonial. Worse distress than ever occurred among the operatives, lasting from that autumn to the spring of 1840. Three thousand four hundred and eighty-one people received relief. A riot was anticipated, and the troops in the town were kept under arms.

In 1842 there was an attempt "to promote a general strike, or cessation from labour, until the document known as the People's Charter became the law of the land." I believe this is the first mention of a general strike, and it seems as if Nottingham gave birth to the idea. Now and again William Booth hung on the outskirts of the large crowds that gathered to hear the Chartist orators.

In 1844 the whole town was staggered by a calamity which could not fail to leave an impression on the mind of young Booth. A labourer named William Saville, aged 29, who had been married at Sneinton Church, murdered his wife and three children. He was executed on August 8, and an immense crowd gathered to witness the spectacle. "Eight was the hour of execution, but every available space was occupied long before it arrived. Occasionally, there came a cry from the surging mass that some one was fainting or being crushed to death, and if the sufferer were fortunate enough not to be entirely bereft of strength, he or she was lifted up, and permitted to walk to the extremity of the crowd on the shoulders of the people. Saville was led forth, and at three minutes past eight, the drop descended. Almost immediately after the mighty crowd broke, as it were, in the middle. The anxiety, deep and general, to witness the spectacle, was succeeded by an equally general and still deeper desire to get away from the overpowering and suffocating pressure. The result was positively awful.

The greater portion of the house doors along the Pavement were closed, and those who were crushed against the walls by the terrific, resistless tide had no means of escape. Twelve persons were killed, and more than a hundred received serious injuries; and of the latter, the deaths of five, after lingering illnesses, were clearly traceable to the same catastrophe."

William Booth had already started his life as a preacher when in 1847 the curate of his old church at Sneinton committed suicide in the grounds of Nottingham Castle, shooting himself on the refusal of a vicar in the town to accept him as the lover of his daughter, a girl of seventeen years of age.

These few events, however briefly related, will afford some idea to the reader, not only of certain local influences surrounding the childhood of William Booth, but of the spirit of the age in which he was born. How different was that period from our own may perhaps be better seen in one single occurrence, half grotesque and half scandalous, which is recorded in the *Nottingham Date Book* as late as 1852:

*April 28.*—About twelve o'clock, a female about 38 years of age, accompanied by her husband and two of his companions stood in the Market Place, near the sheep pens. The female was the wife of Edward Stevenson, rag merchant, Millstone Lane, and he had come to the determination, with her consent, to dispose of her by auction. A new rope, value sixpence, was round her neck. Stevenson, with his wife unabashed by his side, held the rope, and exclaimed, "Here is my wife for sale: I shall put her up for two shillings and sixpence." A man named John Burrows, apparently a navvy, proffered a shilling for the lot, and after some haggling she was knocked off at that price, and they all went to The Spread Eagle to sign articles of agreement, the lady being the only party able to sign her name.

One cannot now imagine such an occurrence as this in any civilized town, and the remembrance of it, kept in mind during that part of our narrative which deals with the childhood and youth of William Booth, will enable the reader to enter more closely into the thoughts and feelings of the young evangelist. He was not only born in Notting-

ham at the beginning of the nineteenth century, he was shaped by the Nottingham of that period. And if he breathed the excited spirit of reform which filled the air of the town at that time, as certainly did he take into his soul the dark and squalid colour of his environment. He not only saw suffering, he experienced it. He not only witnessed the destructive force of sin, he was aware in himself of its power. From his earliest years he was thrown into close association with poverty in its lowest depths; and on the mountains he remembered the pit from which he was dug. In few instances of great and remarkable men is it more possible to trace throughout the years of their lives, up to the very last, so clear and deep a mark of the earliest influences upon their character.

That there was some effort to reach the people of Nottingham with a more pressing sense of the claims of religion than was offered at that time by the established churches and chapels, may be gathered from the fact that an evangelist from Yorkshire visited the town, and preached the gospel of conversion with a fair measure of success. No mention is made of this John Smith in the *Nottingham Date Book*, but it is quite clear from other sources that his visit was memorable in the religious history of the town. Nottingham was dear to the heart of Wesley, and that great man has left behind him an affectionate tribute to the honesty and kindness of its generous people. He visited the town on several occasions. His preaching brought about numerous conversions and led to the establishment of a strong and enduring Methodism. But the zeal of the founder, the fire and passion which inspired his teaching as an evangelist, was cooling, and towards the middle of the nineteenth century, Methodism in Nottingham, as well as elsewhere throughout England, was becoming a somewhat formal school of religion. It was beginning to forget the poor.

The visit of John Smith wrought a change, and it is fair to regard him as a precursor of David Greenbury, James Caughey, and William Booth; although he is not to be reckoned one of the immortals among revivalists. He had neither the scholarly sweetness of Wesley, nor the deep



humanity of William Booth; he believed in conversion, but people had to come to his chapel to experience it; he desired the salvation of sinners, but he did not seek them where they were to be found; whether he felt for the wrongs of the people we do not know, but he is certainly not conspicuous as a champion of their rights.

John Smith, we are told, "was exceedingly wild and wicked as a youth, but, getting converted in a revival at his native village in 1812, he became a local preacher." One who knew him tells me that he had the habit of praying at public meetings with his eyes tight squeezed, his arms outspread, his hands wide open, and with his fingers working rapidly — a fashion which was imitated by others. One of his phrases was, "God will stand to His engagements; His work must go on." Typical of his method is a "remarkable incident" which occurred at a love feast<sup>1</sup> over which Mr. Smith presided in the Halifax Place Chapel:

A local preacher rose and said that "he had once enjoyed the blessing of entire sanctification, but through unwatchfulness had in this respect suffered loss." With much feeling he added that he was now earnestly longing and waiting for the restoration of this great privilege. Mr. Smith instantly started from his seat in the pulpit, and cried, "The all-cleansing power is on you now!" For a moment he hesitated, it was but a moment, and he then exclaimed, while the whole of his body quivered with emotion, "It is; I feel it in my heart!" The congregation then united in thanksgiving and prayer; in a short time the windows of heaven were opened, and there was a rush of holy influence, such as by the majority of that vast assembly was never before experienced. It seemed like a stream of lightning passing through every spirit. At one time, twenty persons obtained the blessing of perfect love, and rose up rapidly one after another, in an ecstasy of praise, to declare that God had then cleansed their heart from all sin.

David Greenbury, who exercised no small influence on William Booth, also came to Nottingham from Yorkshire. He seems to have been a different type from John Smith in many respects. He is described as looking like a country

<sup>1</sup> The Love Feast was at this time a form of religious service peculiar to the Methodist communities. It was a meeting for public testimony, generally accompanied by partaking of bread and water as a sign of unity, mutual confidence, and good-will.



squire — a tall, bearded man, not unlike the General Booth of later life. One of his favourite hymns, it is remembered, contained the lines —

Though in the flesh I feel the thorn,  
I bless the day that I was born.

He rejoiced in life, and found a deep pleasure in his work. It is said that he was the first man to encourage William Booth to continue his public speaking. One of his converts became the talk of Nottingham, and the story must have given an impulse to the spirit of young Booth — perhaps the first impulse of that kind. A notorious rascal called “Besom Jack,” whose wife and children starved while he went from tavern to tavern — a lady is still living in Nottingham who remembers how his wife would come to her mother’s back door begging for old tea-leaves — was converted at one of David Greenbury’s meetings and became a sensible, good, honest man, a glad and cheerful Christian, who testified wherever he went to the blessings and the miracle of conversion.

But the greatest influence upon William Booth was exercised, beyond all question, by the American evangelist James Caughey, a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This man attracted enormous crowds to Wesley Chapel, and brought about an undoubted revival of religion in the town. He was a tall, thin, smooth-shaven, cadaverous person with dark hair. One who often saw him and well remembers him tells me that he wore a voluminous black cloak folded about him in a Byronic manner; his voice was subdued, he gave no sign of an excitable disposition, his preaching warmed slowly into heat and passion which communicated themselves with magnetic instantaneousness to his audiences.

It will give the reader a faithful idea of this preacher and his method, and also a general idea of the prevalent religious feeling, if I quote at this point a rather striking description of one of his religious meetings which I was fortunate enough to discover in an ancient Nottingham newspaper. The reporter, it would seem, was unlucky

in being born before the advent of the sensational press :

The preaching of Mr. Caughey creates a very great sensation in the town ; the chapel is crowded even in the aisles during every service, and at its conclusion numbers of penitents make their way to the communion-rails, near the pulpit, to seek, under the terrors of guilty consciences, benefit there. It was announced on Wednesday evening, that two hundred persons had given in their names as having received conversion under Mr. Caughey's ministry since he came to Nottingham, and we believe his visit will not soon be forgotten. There is nothing in the manner in which the reverend gentleman commences the service to lead the reader to expect what is to follow. He gives out the hymn in a calm, easy, unappreciating style, and in a tone so conversational, that persons sitting in a distant part of the chapel find it impossible to gather the purport of his words. It is more with the air and tone of a man reading a paragraph from a newspaper to a select party than that of a preacher proclaiming an important message to a large congregation.

In his prayer, too, very few indications are given of the astonishing power he possesses over the mind ; though it is not without its peculiarities. He lifts his hands towards heaven, and keeps them in that posture during the whole of his supplication, like Moses, when Israel fought in Rephidim ; and once or twice, perhaps, at some point of deeper feeling clasps his palms together, and then re-elevates them into the same poetic attitude. But, generally speaking, his prayers have rather the tone of calm disquisition than address to the Deity ; and nothing at all in them expressive of power, except when a gush of deep affectionate feeling makes its way through the mild tranquillity, or at rarer intervals flashes out for an instant the lightning which has been so calmly folded in its mantle of quiet cloud.

His reading of Scripture betrays even less of power than his prayer ; it is not performed without a certain subdued feeling ; but there is a peculiar off-hand style with it, and a certain tone of dramatic appreciation, without any great apparent solemnity or reverence in the delivery. It is not till he prepares to name his text, that any extraordinary power is manifested ; he generally prefaces it with some observation on what he has felt during the day, or since he entered the pulpit ; or with an appeal to a certain character whom he prophesies to be in the congregation. Then, indeed, it becomes plain, however the prejudiced visitor may have doubted it before, that the man is in earnest — terribly in earnest ; and that every word he says he both feels and believes.

On Tuesday night, when the preliminary parts of the service had been gone through, and the Bible lay open before him,

instead of taking his text, as it was natural to expect he would, he startled the congregation by a searching appeal to some backslider, whom he individualized as present among them; and in his manner of doing this showed great knowledge of human nature, and an intimate acquaintance with the subtleties of the mind. Such a character, if present in the place, unless his heart were triple brass, must have been struck as with a thunderbolt. Of the heart indeed his dissections are masterly; he is evidently well versed in its anatomy. As he represented a certain character, a backslider perhaps, or a defrauder, or a profane person, many eyes seemed fraught with the anxious inquiry, "Is it I?" until at length, as the lineaments of the portrait became clearer and more distinctly defined, the shrinking look and trembling frame declared in unmistakable language, "It is I!"

In his manner of looking at a text there is something original; ingenious and unexpected terms are given to the different parts of it; and as each is illustrated, it tells with surprising power upon the congregation. This effect is heightened by a certain abruptness of delivery, which, scorning all preface and apology, rushes instantly to its point, and takes possession of his hearers by storm. His eloquence, too, is not an even, uninterrupted flow of words, but his speech is forced out in jerks of great intensity, with an interval between each burst. It must be allowed that his style is highly poetical; not that he indulges in fine, unusual words and strings of epithets; there is no attempt at display of this kind; simple and plain, his style is yet remarkable for its poetic effectiveness; and to this he owes a considerable portion of the influence he exerts over his hearers.

On Tuesday night, the force with which he imaged a fold of sheep, to illustrate the conduct of the newly converted mind, was singular; it was not only quite evident that every word he said he saw visibly before him, but he made his hearers see it too; the swine prowling about the fold and leering at the flock, manifesting no desire to be numbered among the sheep, was forcibly contrasted with the lamb which went bleating around to spy an entrance, and at last, when the door was opened by the shepherd, darted in. The effect of such passages as these was very much increased by the minister's appropriate attitudes and gestures; not his mouth only, but his eyes and hands and his whole person combining to give utterance to his eloquent thought. Every scene he drew was visibly before the eyes of the congregation; where he pointed with his hand, they looked; and the vacant air in front of the pulpit which he chose as the canvas on which to paint his vivid designs, was evidently no longer a vacancy to his hearers, as was quite manifest from the fixed stare with which they gazed into it. When he spoke of angels as hovering over the people, and occupying the ring enclosed by the gallery of the chapel, and invented conversations

which he said they might be then holding with respect to certain individuals in the place, the silence that prevailed among the people was profound; they scarcely dared to breathe, and seemed as if they really were hearing the rustling and flapping of the invisible wings. But as this picture was allowed to fade away, and an appeal to the feelings of the people followed; and when the solicitude of the souls of the departed after the eternal welfare of their friends below was dwelt upon, a universal sob burst from the assembly, and even the faces of the rugged and weather-beaten men were illuminated by the reflection of the lamps in the water upon their cheeks. At times this emotion assumed a more frantic character, shouts, groans, and all manner of pious ejaculations rising from all parts of the house, until the preacher's voice became inaudible, and the whole place resounded with the wailings and cries.

The arrangements were extremely well ordered and efficient; during the prayer-meeting which succeeded the service, numbers of persons were observed in all parts of the chapel, who had been appointed to lead up to the communion-rails those who were desirous of being publicly prayed for; and as they obtained assurance of what they sought, led them out orderly at the vestry door.

The Rev. Isaac Page, who was a boy at the time of Caughey's visit, remembers seeing crowds of people clambering over the iron railings in front of Wesley Chapel an hour or more before the meeting opened. The chapel, which seated eighteen hundred people, was densely thronged in every part, and numbers were unable to enter at the crowded doors. People remember seeing the tall figure of Caughey standing up to preach in a breathless silence, and being startled by the suddenness with which he thrust out an arm, pointing upwards with a straight accusing finger, and exclaiming, "There is a young man in the gallery who had an awful dream last night; he thought the Day of Judgment had come!" A hymn introduced by James Caughey was sung all over Nottingham, as seventy or eighty years afterwards the "Glory Song," introduced by another American evangelist, was sung all over London. Caughey's hymn contained these verses:

O Thou God of my salvation  
My Redeemer from all sin,  
Moved by Thy divine compassion,  
Who hast died my soul to win:

Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory!  
Glory! Glory! God is Love!  
Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory!  
Hallelujah! God is Love!

This has set my soul on fire,  
Strongly glows the flame of love,  
Higher mounts my soul and higher,  
Longing for the rest above:  
Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory!  
Glory! Glory! God is Love!  
Glory! Glory! Glory! Glory!  
Hallelujah! God is Love!

The Wesleyan Methodist Society, in one of those years, increased, I am told, by 30,000 members.

The visit of this American evangelist, though it did nothing to associate religion with humanitarian idealism, and little to create a social conscience, nevertheless revived the flames of Wesleyan Methodism and breathed some sense of greatness into the sordid air of a much troubled manufacturing town. It exercised a profound influence upon William Booth's astonishing career, and in the shout of "Glory! Glory! Glory!" one may trace the dawn of Booth's great central preaching, that religion is not imposed as a difficult and laborious thing by an exacting God, but given as a blessing and deliverance to poor sorrowful creatures punished and afflicted by their own wrong-doing.

As regards the orthodox religious life of the town, it would seem that Nottingham did not suffer so greatly as other parts of the country from disreputable or sporting clergymen. Parson Wyatt, for instance, the vicar of Sneinton Church, was a Puseyite, and is remembered by many Nonconformists as a good, earnest, and zealous man. But, on the whole, the churches of the town seem to have been conducted on the principle that those who wanted religion would come and ask for it, and those who stayed away had deliberately elected for evil. There was no missionary spirit. Men's minds were taken up with political and industrial questions. Christianity was distinctly in shadow. It may be said with a fair degree of truth that throughout the length and breadth of the land Anglican clergymen



were Tories before everything else, and dissenting ministers, as they were then called, in spite of a subdued interest in revivalism, were in large measure concerned with Liberal politics.

## CHAPTER II

HIS PARENTAGE, A TALE OF THE HOUSE IN WHICH HE WAS  
BORN, AND THE CHARACTER OF HIS ENVIRONMENTS

1828-1838

It is an interesting coincidence that the father of Herbert Spencer came from Derby into the neighbourhood of Nottingham at about the same time that the father of William Booth migrated from Belper to a Nottingham suburb. Both men speculated with their savings, moved by the same hope of fortune from the extraordinary prosperity of lace manufacture by machinery, and both were disappointed in this ambition. The father of Herbert Spencer withdrew before he was quite ruined; the father of William Booth clung stubbornly and avariciously to his speculations, finally dragging down his wife and family into a condition of penury.

In Herbert Spencer's *Autobiography* an amusing anecdote is recorded which shows that his father had something of the same spirit which animated William Booth. "If he saw boys quarrelling he stopped to expostulate; and he could never pass a man who was ill-treating his horse without trying to make him behave better." This incident is recorded: "While he was travelling (between Derby and Nottingham, I think) there got on the coach a man who was half intoxicated. My father entered into conversation with him, and sought to reform his habits, by pointing out the evil resulting from it (*sic*). After listening good-temperedly for a time the man replied, 'Well, y' see, master, there mun be sum o' all sorts, and I'm o' that sort.'"

If heredity were an exact science one might expect William Booth to be a son of George Spencer, and Herbert Spencer to be a son of Samuel Booth.

According to Mr. Phillimore, the author of *County*

*Pedigrees*, distinct evidence runs back through the local register "associating the Booths with Belper at least as early as the reign of Elizabeth." Whether the family distinguished itself in any way we do not know, but before the days of Elizabeth the fifty-first Archbishop of York was a William Booth, who had his favourite residence at Southwell, which is close to Nottingham, and where the William Booth of our present history spent a part of his childhood. A brother of this older William Booth, Lawrence, became fifty-third Archbishop of York, and also made Southwell his chief residence. He was a grievous failure as Lord Chancellor, but it is written that he took no bribes. In private life, we are told, he was "an amiable and benevolent man, expending large sums of money on educational and charitable objects."

There seems to be no doubt that the family of General Booth is connected by marriage with that family of Gregory which gave in the person of Robert Gregory, a contemporary of General Booth, a popular and picturesque Dean to St. Paul's Cathedral. A William Booth of Belper, apparently the great-grandfather of the evangelist, was married in 1742 to Elizabeth Gregory; the bondsman at the first marriage of Samuel Booth in 1797 was Robert Gregory; and the evangelist, on being told late in life of this coincidence, said that he remembered being taken as a child to see an old lady who was always spoken of as "Aunt Gregory."

Samuel Booth, father of the evangelist, was born at Belper in 1775. It was in the town of Belper that Primitive Methodists were first called *Ranters*; and since Samuel Booth was nominally a Churchman, and a hard, taciturn, unemotional man, it may be assumed that he shared in this local contempt for the new sect. He appears to have been a nail manufacturer, for on the occasion of his marriage in 1797 to one Sarah Lockett he described himself in the register as a *nailer*. Later he added to this business the trade of builder and the profession of architect, earning a fortune which enabled him to live in a fine house at Colston Bassett and to describe himself sometimes as a "gentleman," sometimes as a "yeoman." One child was born of this first marriage, a son named William, who died of con-



sumption at the age of twenty-four, five years after his mother's death in 1819.

Mary Moss, the second wife of Samuel Booth, and mother of the evangelist, was born in 1791, six years before the first marriage of her husband. Like Samuel Booth, she came of Derbyshire stock, probably, as the name suggests and her wonderfully handsome face corroborates, of Jewish origin. She was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer. Her mother died when she was quite young, and she went to live with relations, the second marriage of her father not being conducive to a happy family life. She encountered Samuel Booth at Ashby-de-le-Zouch, whither he had gone to drink the waters as a cure for rheumatism. On his first proposal she refused him. He left the town indignant, but returned, and renewed his proposal, leaving her no peace till she accepted him. Of this marriage there were five children. The eldest son, a boy named Henry, died in his third year; the second child was a daughter, Ann, destined to exercise some little influence on the evangelist in his early years; the third child was the evangelist himself, named William after the son of the first marriage, who had died five years previously: and the two remaining children were girls — Emma, a lifelong invalid who died unmarried, aged forty, and Mary, who became Mrs. Newell, and died at the age of sixty-nine. William Booth, therefore, grew up the only son of the family, with an elder sister and two younger sisters.

Samuel Booth did not come to Nottingham until he had more or less impoverished himself by speculation, and in leaving Colston Bassett it is quite certain that he not merely hoped to retrieve his fortunes, but was positively obliged by his altered circumstances to seek a very much humbler way of living.

In those days Nottingham was just beginning to lose its ancient charm of a beautiful and pleasant market-town distinguished by a romantic history. Deering had boasted in 1750 that the town, "adorned with many stately new buildings, the castle on the left, and Sneinton and Wolwick Hills on the right, presents the traveller coming from the south with a surprisingly grand and magnificent prospect,

in the framing of which it is hard to say whether Art or Nature has the greatest share; a prospect which puts even a person the most acquainted with all parts of England, to stand, to name its equal."

But a later writer had to paint a more sombre picture. He exclaims:

Could the worthy Doctor rise from the graveyard of St. Peter's with his flowing surtout, his powdered wig, three-cornered hat, high-heeled shoes, and silver buckles, and be placed in the Meadows, his surprise would be, that so fine a view should have been so woefully damaged; and those modern architectural embellishments, the chimney-stalks, the low and dingy habitations, wharf buildings, and other graceful erections, which so greatly mar the prospect, would doubtless provoke an expression of indignant disapproval.

The extraordinary prosperity of the lace industry, which attracted thousands of workmen and speculators into the town in 1823, suffered a check in 1825, and soon afterwards spent itself, plunging a large population into poverty, distress, and ruin. But the effect of the fever, or, as Spencer called it, "the mania," was horribly and permanently to disfigure the town. Herbert Spencer's father came to Nottingham as a lace manufacturer; William Booth's father came as a builder; and an entry in the *Date Book* in April, 1825, will give the reader some notion of how the speculative builders, even when they lost their money, succeeded in changing the character of the town:

The only feature in connection with the fever that remains for notice was the extraordinary difficulty in finding house accommodation for the amazing influx of population. Thousands of houses were erected by greedy speculators, who studied, not the convenience and health of those obliged to take them, but how they might best secure 20 per cent per annum for their outlay. Many more would have been built had not the prices of land and materials been extravagantly enhanced. Bricks, for example, rose from 30s. to £3 per thousand; and a plot of land on Gillflower Hill, not quite an acre in extent, was sold by auction for £4,000. No sooner was a row of dwellings roofed and glazed, than the kitchen fires began to smoke and the rentals to commence. The inquiry was not so much, "What is the rent?" as, "Will you let me a house?" In one instance, a butcher, who had been exhibiting from town to town

a "wonderful pig," in a common showman's caravan, ousted the porkine tenant and stationing the vehicle in his garden at the back of York Street, actually let it as a dwelling-place for 2s. 3d. per week.

In spite of all this, it must not be supposed that the Nottingham of the present day resembles the Nottingham of William Booth's boyhood. There were certainly in his days "chimney-stalks," low and dingy habitations, wharf buildings, and those other "modern architectural embellishments," against which the chronicler in 1850 brought his sorrowful and quite ineffectual accusation. But one who knew William Booth's family in the forties, and who was brought up in Sneinton, visited the town with me in 1913, going over as much of the old ground as was possible, and from beginning to end of our journey he expressed amazement at the obliterating effects of recent development and the pervasive change, infinitely for the worse, which has taken place quite lately in the town's aspect.

In the time of William Booth's boyhood the streets of Nottingham ended where the Midland Station now stands. The area between that and the river Trent was known as the Meadows, which in spring were blue with crocuses. Paths led to Wilford Ferry, with Clifton Woods beyond. The whole character of the scenery was tender and endearing. To William Booth the fields, the woods, and the river were full of pleasure, and to the end of his days he never spoke of these scenes without an instant lapse into gentleness and reverie.

Mary Howitt describes the Meadows in her *Autobiography*:

The greatest beauty in the landscape was one peculiar to our meadows — our inimitable crocus-beds. It is impossible for any who do not see them to conceive their extraordinary beauty, shining out clear and bright in many places to the extent of twenty acres, one entire bed of lilac flowers. Not a faint tint of colouring, but as bright as the young green grass, with which they so charmingly contrast. . . . There is another charm attached to these flowers besides their beauty, and it is the pleasure they afford to children. You see them flocking down, as if to a fair, all day long, rich and poor carrying their little baskets full, and their hands and pinafores full, gathering their

thousands, and leaving tens of thousands behind them; for every day brings up a fresh supply.

Sneinton, which must be pronounced *Snenton*, was in the days of William Booth's boyhood a suburb of Nottingham; but with its windmills, wooded hills, generous views over a gentle valley, and fields that were yet unblackened by factory smoke, it preserved something of the character of a hamlet. It was, however, a crowded place in certain parts; and the house to which Samuel Booth moved on his coming into the district was closed in at the back by houses in the occupation of stockingers. William Booth could very easily escape to the fields and the woods; but in his home, from the first years of his infancy, he was in close contact with the noise and crowding of industrialism. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind, as we have already said, that both the Sneinton and the Nottingham of those days were very different from the vast wilderness of ugly houses and dreary streets, of enormous factories and towering workshops, of roaring markets and incessant traffic, which now characterize the bigger, uglier, although more flourishing, modern town.

The house in which William Booth was born is still standing, and is still known by its former designation, 12 Nottintone Place, Sneinton. It stands in a tree-shaded *cul-de-sac*, one of a small terrace of red-bricked villas sloping slowly up to a modest knoll crowned by a substantial house which blocks the end of the street. The houses of this terrace are built back from the road, and are guarded by tall railings rising from a low brick wall. No. 12 is one of three houses which share a single gate in these railings, the path diverging inside the walls to the three separate front doors.

The interior of this dwelling deserves description. The front door opens straight into the parlour, without passage or lobby of any kind. An inner door, directly facing the front door, admits to a small square hall in the centre of the house, which is dimly lighted by a lantern in the roof invisible from below. A door in this tiny hall, opposite to the parlour door, gives entrance to a fair-sized scullery-



WILLIAM BOOTH'S BIRTHPLACE  
(Nottingham)





kitchen at the back; a staircase on the left descends to a dark basement and ascends to the two floors above.

On each floor there are two rooms, one in front and one at the back, the whole house being of an exceedingly narrow description. The parlour is some twelve feet by ten, and the room in which it is most probable William Booth was born is of like dimensions. From the outside, the house has a somewhat dignified appearance, and not at first does one realize that only three windows, one above another, belong to the front door, which has the three similar windows of the next house on its other side, after the manner of a double-fronted house.

When I visited 12 Nottintone Place in the early months of 1913, making bold to ask if I might see the interior of No. 12, I found several pictures of General Booth hanging on the parlour walls. I inquired of the occupant, who was kind enough to let me see the house, whether she belonged to the Salvation Army. "Oh, yes," she replied with some warmth; "why, we owe everything to the Army!" Later she told me her story, and I think that never was tale so extraordinarily apt told in the birthplace of a great man.

Her husband had been a cashier for some years, she related, in the house of a Newcastle firm. He fell ill, seriously ill, and was unable to work. His employer kept his place open for eight months, and then felt himself obliged to make an end of the engagement. (He died, by the way, not long ago leaving over £400,000.) The clerk, his wife, and their six little children, in order to husband their slender resources and also to get back to health as soon as possible, removed to a village. The clerk grew slowly better in health, but his efforts to find employment were unavailing. Their money became exhausted. No one in the place knew anything about them. They were too sensitive to ask for help. They began to sell their furniture. Bit by bit everything went, till the family possessed nothing on this earth and no hope of anything beyond five pillows. They starved. The eyes of the poor woman filled with tears as she told me of that awful time. "I shall never forget those days," she exclaimed; "never, never! We had just five pillows, that was all, and our little ones were crying for bread."

One day the husband happened to pick up a copy of perhaps the most impudent and unworthy journal published in London. The copy contained a violent attack upon General Booth, charging him, among other things, with gross hypocrisy, and asserting that he did not spend upon the poor and needy the money he received for their assistance. The clerk, struck by this article, spent his last two coppers on two stamps, and wrote one letter to General Booth and another to the proprietor of this paper, telling his story and asking for help.

“By return of post,” said the woman, “we got a letter from General Booth — such a kind letter! — saying it was shameful that a man with references such as my husband’s should be out of work, and telling him that an officer would call and inquire into his case the next day. We never heard from the paper at all! But next day an officer of the Army called; and the Army took charge of my children, they gave my husband work, and they carried me off to one of their nursing homes, where they wouldn’t let me do a stroke of work, though I begged them to; they said that I must be nursed back to health and strength. It was wonderful. I never experienced such love in my life. Oh, how kind they were! Fancy, not letting me do any work, not a stroke! Ah, I learnt much in that Home. And, wasn’t it a funny thing? — soon after they sent us to Nottingham this house fell vacant, and nothing would content my husband, who had also been converted in the Army, until we had taken it. So here we are, living by chance in the very birthplace of the dear General, all Salvationists, and my husband working heart and soul for the Army,— we who must have died of starvation but for General Booth!”

In this house, then, William Booth, the greatest religious force of modern days and one of the most picturesque and heroic figures of the nineteenth century, was born on the 10th of April, 1829 — the birthday of Grotius and William Hazlitt. Nineteen years afterwards, in connection with a Chartist insurrection, the name of this day became a phrase, “almost the only one applied in England, in the manner of our French neighbours, as a denomination for an event”;



but happily, as the chronicle records, "the *Tenth of April* remained only a memory of an apprehended danger judiciously met and averted."

Two days after William Booth's birth, no time being lost at that period to secure either immediate regeneration or a Christian burial in case of death, the infant was baptized at Sneinton Church. The entry in the parish register reads as follows:

William, son of Samuel Booth, Nottintone Place, gentleman, and Mary his wife. Ceremony performed by George Wilkins, D.D., Perpetual Curate, Vicar of St. Mary's; baptized 12th April, 1829.

Samuel Booth is described by one who knew him as "tall and fine-looking." He was noticeable for dressing in the fashion of the Quakers, wearing a drab-cloth suit, a cut-away coat, and knee-breeches. Very little is known about him, and what is known only tends to deepen the mystery which appears to have surrounded him in life, even to his own children. On meeting a Sneinton contemporary in his extreme old age, the first greeting of General Booth was a question concerning his father. "Tell me something," he said, taking his friend's two hands in his and holding them vigorously in his own, "about my father; I want to know about him." From a paper he left behind, as we shall see, it is quite evident that he had no clear notions in this matter. He spoke often, and eloquently, of his mother; seldom of his father, and then with a note of uncertainty — sometimes with unwilling harshness, sometimes with a too evident effort to discover a virtue. "Criminal instincts?" he exclaimed to me once in a discussion on heredity; "why, we have all got them. I have got them. My father was a Grab, a Get. He had been born in poverty. He determined to grow rich; and he did. He grew very rich, because he lived without God and simply worked for money; and when he lost it all, his heart broke with it, and he died miserably. I have inherited the Grab from him. I want to get." And his arm shot forward, the hand clawing at the air, to signify that he wanted to "grab" souls and get for them the treasure of eternal life. But there were other

occasions when he sought to show his father in a kinder light, though his honesty always forced him at the last to emphasize the avariciousness and worldliness which had embittered his own childhood and brought his mother to suffering and poverty.

From the papers and memoranda left behind by the son, it would be quite possible to present two entirely different portraits of this father, the one almost pleasing, the other almost forbidding; and I think it is significant of William Booth's character, an index indeed to his whole life, that there should be this perplexing contradiction in his very earliest memories, in his very latest judgments. For William Booth was always struggling against the two antithetical qualities of his nature — a loving, warm-hearted, generous sympathy, and a rigorous, unsparing, religious honesty. At one moment he hungered to see only the good in human nature; at the next, he was stung to a passionate indignation by its badness — its deadness to God. In his generous moods he would speak with a broad and embracing charity, a large and kindly tolerance of mankind; in his moods of realism and intellectual honesty he could not find words sharp and piercing enough for the evil of the world.

It is also necessary to keep in mind, not only as touching his memories of his father and mother, but also in many other matters where his statements are under review, that William Booth belonged to a period when phrases were adopted without analysis and language was often used with an uncritical liberty. I have been over many of the religious magazines of the period, and studied numerous sermons by preachers of some standing at that time, and in numerous instances I have been struck, occasionally shocked, by the intellectual poverty, the rhetorical bombast, and the disagreeable sanctimoniousness which characterized much of the religious writing and preaching of that generation. William Booth never used a cant phraseology; he was one of the most honest, downright, and straightforward men that ever lived; but in his impatience to be at work saving the lost and rescuing the sorrowful, he did permit himself to use whatever language came quickest to his service, and

seldom, I think, possibly never, set himself to acquire a nice carefulness in his terms, a judicious and a critical handling of the current phraseology.

"My father," he says in one place, "appears to have been a man of considerable force of character — of a high spirit, and a noble sense of truth and honour, combined with a strong desire to get on in the world." In another place he says that his father "knew no greater gain or end than money . . . used to task my patience to the utmost capacity by making me read to him . . . early part of his life spent in making money, latter part in losing it . . . a very unsatisfactory life." And speaking of his own childhood he says that he never received any help from his father, and declares that his early days were "blighted and made more or less wretched" by the ruinous condition of his father's affairs.

When he said that his father possessed "a noble sense of truth and honour," he was no doubt thinking of how Samuel Booth "became a bondsman, for a considerable amount, for a tradesman, who afterwards became bankrupt, and left him to pay the money, which he did, every farthing." "The punctual discharge of this liability," says William Booth, "precipitated the breakdown of his fortune. It was the last feather." In recalling this act, evidently at a generous moment, he seized the opportunity to speak of his father in such a manner as clouded out the sadder qualities.

On the other hand, in moments of strict and courageous honesty, eager to impress upon men the danger of a life devoted to money-getting, he forgot the act which he could praise, and thrust forward, chiefly as a warning to others, only those miseries and deprivations which his father's avarice had inflicted upon his mother, his sisters, and himself.

One judges from these statements, when they are brought into relation with the impression made upon other people by those early days in the Booth family, that Samuel Booth was a man of business, honest where the law was concerned, just in his dealings, but with little conscience in his speculations; a man rather silent, selfish, and unfriendly; in his

later years not kind to children, not interested in his family; dead to culture, indifferent to society, careless of religion.

William Booth's notes about his father suggest other qualities. I find, for instance, these disjointed memoranda:

Incident to show his enterprise. The purpose of his life to get money. Character. Perseverance. Enterprise. Schemes: Enlisting militia in the large towns. Shipping crockery to Holland. Advice to me against partnership. No scholar. His schooling very short. Expelled the school because on some occasion put his schoolmaster to shame by reckoning faster with his head than he, the schoolmaster, did with his slate. This capacity was remarkably developed. Religiously blind. Never remember him in a place of worship. Insisted on our regular attendance at church. No concern until his last illness.

Elsewhere he says:

He began his acquisitive career when but a child, and in many ways, and for many years persevered in it, until he succeeded in getting together a considerable fortune, which he invested mostly in tenement house property. By this he reckoned on having done a good thing for his family. When I was born he was looked upon as a gentleman and was spoken of by that designation by the people about him. But about the date of my birth, bad times set in, heavy losses followed one on the heels of the other, making in early days a season of mortification and misery.

There is very much the same difficulty when we come to his remembrance of his mother. At one moment he speaks of her in a manner that contradicts the memory of one who remembers her in his childhood, and would almost persuade one to think that Mary Booth had been to him the most gracious, helpful, and perfect mother. In this case, we think, the contradiction arises not only from William Booth's natural anxiety, in his most generous moments, to dwell upon only the good and beautiful side of his mother, but from his seeing in the Mary Booth of later life the Mary Booth of his tragic childhood.

It appears to me quite evident that William Booth's childhood was unhappy. I think he got no help at all from his father, and very little encouragement from his mother. Mary Booth appears to have been absorbed during the whole of her married life in the anxieties and disasters of her husband's speculations. She seems to have felt her poverty

acutely, and to have shrunk from the world in consequence. She worked for her children, she nursed her husband in his last illness, she did all she could to avert the final catastrophe of ruin; but she was a sombre, sad, silent, and tragic figure in that threatened home. William Booth says that he got no help, as regards school work, in his home. He says that no one told him anything about religion. He speaks of his early days as "a season of mortification and misery." He makes it clear that his childhood was dark and unhappy.

But when he comes, later in life, to write of his mother, it is as if he were describing an angel:

I had a good mother. So good she has ever appeared to me that I have often said that all I know of her life seemed a striking contradiction of the doctrine of human depravity. In my youth I fully accepted that doctrine, and I do not deny it now; but my patient, self-sacrificing mother always appeared to be an exception to the rule. I loved my mother. From infancy to manhood I lived in her. Home was not home to me without her. I do not remember any single act of wilful disobedience to her wishes. When my father died I was so passionately attached to my mother that I can recollect that, deeply though I felt his loss, my grief was all but forbidden by the thought that it was not my mother who had been taken from me. And yet one of the regrets that has followed me to the present hour is that I did not sufficiently value the treasure while I possessed it, and that I did not with sufficient tenderness and assiduity, at the time, attempt the impossible task of repaying the immeasurable debt I owed to that mother's love.

It is plain that the Mary Booth who overawed her daughter's only friend — as we shall see presently — who shrank from the world, who invited nobody to her house, who was silent and frightening, and "like a duchess," did not become the Mary Booth of her son's glowing tribute until after the death of her husband, when the end was reached of the long and dreadful tension wrought by impending calamity which had ruined her married life. She was, doubtless, kind to her children, but in their earliest years she was clearly not a mother who watched over their education, sought their innermost confidence, and deepened their sense of religion. "She had no time to attend to me," is one of William Booth's confessions. Afterwards, no doubt, when



the crisis was over and the ruin had come, she came out from the cloud, and shone upon their lives with a beauty and a warmth and a solicitude which wakened her son's gratitude. But it is clear from the evidence, and important to remember, that William Booth's earliest years were dark and sorrowful, and that in spite of a kind mother he went hungry and thirsty for something that was never given.

Ann Booth's only girl friend was a Miss Sarah Butler, now Mrs. Osborne, who is still living at a great age — she was two years older than General Booth — and happily for herself, and this history, with all her faculties unimpaired. She tells me that there was always a mystery about Samuel Booth. Mystery, she says, pervaded the whole house. Ann was sent to the best ladies' school in Nottingham, but she made no friends there except Sarah Butler, and Sarah Butler tells me that on no occasion when she visited the family did she encounter another visitor. "They gave me the impression, even as a girl," she says, "of a very proud and very reserved family who felt their position acutely, and wished to keep to themselves. Ann sometimes spoke to me of her parents' former home near Colston Bassett, giving me to understand from her mother's description of it that it was a 'very beautiful place.' She never mentioned her father. I scarcely ever saw him, but I know that he made no friends in the town."

Mary Booth, the mother of the evangelist, is described by Ann's friend as "a tall, proud woman — very proud and austere." She was handsome, dignified, and splendid; some one describing her as "like a duchess." Her eyes are said to have been very remarkable, and her portrait even in old age confirms this memory. "She had the most wonderful eyes," says Ann's friend, "the most piercing eyes I ever saw. *You could tell when she was looking at you!*" But she, too, appears to have been reserved and silent. "I never remember her speaking to me all the years I knew her and called at her house," says this one remaining friend of the family. "Very often when I went to call for Ann she would open the door to me; and she would stand aside for me to enter, close the door, and then pointing to a chair in the parlour, say, 'Sit down, my dear,' quite kindly but

without any friendliness or any attempt at intimacy, going out to send Ann to me, and not returning to bid me good-bye. She was not so great a mystery to me as Ann's father, but I was always in dread of her, and felt that she was different from other people. I am quite certain that Ann felt the same thing about her. She never liked to talk about either of them. There was something about the family which puzzled me, and puzzles me still."

This effect produced upon the child's mind seems to have had no other origin than in the reserve natural to many people who come down in the world. The Booths had been well off; they were now reduced to poverty; they desired that as few people as possible should know of their condition.

Ann Booth, according to the same authority, was a very sweet, amiable, and gentle creature. But she was shy and never made friends at school. She took after her mother and was good-looking. She always had a smile in her eyes, and spoke in a gentle voice, rather timorously. She adored her brother William, as did the other sisters, and in his youth exercised some control over him, but she was not in any way a favourite sister. That William Booth returned this love of his sisters, and never forgot their devotion, is attested by the fact that on calling to see Mrs. Osborne in his old age he quite begged her to go and see his married sister, Mrs. Newell, making this request almost the object of his visit, saying that it was the one favour he had to ask her. "She is lonely," he said; "she is sometimes sad; it will be a great kindness if you go and see her." It is interesting to know that at one time people in the neighbourhood thought that William Booth would marry a sister of Sarah Butler, who shared his religious enthusiasms, was sometimes consulted by him, and to whom he showed more attention than was his custom to the other devotees who attended his earliest meetings.

At the back of the house in Nottintone Place, as we have already said, and pressing close up to the backyard, were dwellings occupied by framework knitters. These houses are standing at the present day, and throughout the modern streets of Sneinton and Nottingham similar houses are still

to be seen. They are two-storied, red-bricked dwelling houses, topped by a working story which gives them their peculiar character and makes them easily recognizable. Instead of the ordinary square or oblong windows of the two lower floors, the windows of this upper story are of greater breadth than height, and are usually glazed with more or less opaque glass. Behind these windows William Booth would have seen from his earliest years the dim spectral figures of stockingers at their frames and have heard all day long the noise of the machines — *hockety — hockety — shee, hockety — hockety — shee*. On one side of his house were the decent, pleasant, and somewhat pretentious villas of a suburban terrace — very quiet, sleepy, uneventful; at the back, those dismal, noisy tenements of the workers, who so often starved and so frequently filled the streets with the clamour of incipient revolution. It was indeed a case in this house of a “Queen Anne front and a Mary Ann back.”

When the family lost money, they moved to a broader street but a poorer neighbourhood. Opposite to the new home in Sneinton Road, the site of which is now occupied by a picture palace, was a smallware shop, kept by a remarkable old man called Grandfather Page, and on one side of this shop was a narrow entry leading to a backyard which contained a slaughter-house. At every turn there were dingy habitations occupied by weavers; traffic passed continually to and from the market-place; numerous public-houses hung their signs over the uneven pavements; in every way it was a move for the worse, another come-down in the world.

Some way up this road, and not far from Nottintone Place, was The Paul Pry Inn, which still swings its sign, bearing the legend *I hope I don't intrude*. A young lover, after parting from his sweetheart late one night, was in so fervorous a mood of happiness that soon after passing this inn, all shuttered and asleep, he threw his stick into the air and accidentally broke one of the upper windows in the private house next door — the noise causing a momentary panic. His apologies, however, were accepted, and his excuse was considered more than adequate; but the story spread throughout the district and caused a good deal of



amusement at the cost of emotionalism. Another and more tragic incident occurred close to the second house of William Booth. A number of boys were playing in the streets with oyster shells, and one of them flinging a shell harder than he intended struck a man in the face, cutting out his right eye.

William Booth, from the very first, was a ringleader and a captain among his fellows. "Wilful Will" was his nickname, and a very old lady, who perfectly remembers him at this time, said to me with considerable decision, "Billy was always rather forward — not aggressive, not violent, you understand, but forward; — yes, Billy was a forward lad." He was noticeable in appearance by reason of his long legs and his long nose. His friends spoke of his nose as "the Wellington." In the game of soldiers, a game which he played in his childhood more than any other, he was usually "the captain" — an omen, perhaps, of his after life. In spite of physical delicacy — he was outgrowing his strength — he appears to have been a leader in games and a boy of remarkable spirit.

Grandfather Page, who kept the smallware shop in Sneinton Road, remembered Samuel Booth striding into his premises one day demanding a cane. "I'm going," he announced, "to give my son the best hiding he ever had in his life." Grandfather Page, who exercised a wonderful religious influence in the neighbourhood, and who seems to have been a most amiable and gracious person, replied to this announcement: "Mr. Booth, you must not strike your son while you are in this temper. You are in no fit mood to punish a child. You must wait till your anger is gone." Samuel Booth bridled his rage, returned to his house, and said to William, "You may go and thank old Mr. Page for saving you from a good hiding." What the offence of William had been we do not know; but one perceives that he had spirit enough to aggravate and perhaps to withstand a father who inspired almost everybody with a sense of awe and who was choleric in his bouts of rheumatism.

It is interesting to know that the old man who saved William Booth from a flogging, and whose influence on his life is nowhere recorded, had already in those days started a system of religious services in the slums. This Mr. Page

had been a rich man, a racing man, and a lover of wrestling. On his conversion he surrendered his business to his sons, and lived with great simplicity, devoting all his time to religious work. But, to the surprise of every one, quite late in life he fell in love with a young girl in his Sunday school and married her. In order to support the new family that came to him, the old man took a humble smallware shop in Sneinton, and there made his home. He had a garden far away from the house, being a great lover of flowers, and in this garden was a summer-house where he made tea for himself and sat meditating on religion. Later in life one of his rich sons by the first marriage sent a carriage to the smallware shop every afternoon, and the old man would drive up to his garden. When he became blind a rope was slung across the garden path, and he would walk to and fro among the flowers he could no longer see, singing hymns, and guiding himself by a sliding hand-support on the rope. He used to say, "I have been walking by faith for over forty years, and have not known what it is to have a gloomy hour." He worked among "the neglected, the sick, and the sorrowful," started a ragged school in the slums, and prayer-meetings in the cottages of the poor. During race-meetings he stood at the roadside distributing tracts.

William Booth, although he makes no mention of Grandfather Page, was perhaps influenced by that gentle and unselfish life, for the old man was regarded as a character, and lived exactly opposite the Booths' house in Sneinton Road. When William Booth crossed the road to thank this old man for saving him from chastisement, there was probably a conversation, or a few words, which may have left some impression. In any case it is certain that William Booth must often have heard in boyhood of the strange work which Grandfather Page was doing so effectually in the slums of Nottingham.

He played hockey in the streets with a wooden nog, much to the annoyance of the village constable, who was a cobbler; he entered into the fun of Plough Mondays, when men dressed up in ox-skins with horns on their heads went about the town thrusting their faces into doorways and windows

demanding money — very much after the fashion of Mussulmen during the feast of Mohurram. Later he took to reading the poetry of Kirke White, to devouring three-volume novels, and to fishing — some one remembering how he once exploded with rage at the breaking of his rod. He may have seen the prize-fighter Bendigo — who was the brother of a well-known optician in the town — walking about the streets; a son of Grandfather Page, who once spoke to Bendigo when the mighty man was fishing in the Trent, became in consequence a hero among his mates. One may be quite certain that “Wilful Will” shared in all the games and excitements of Sneinton boys, and that he spent as much time as any of them in the market, in the fields, and on the riverside, having little love for the home which was dark with misery and oppressive with the sense of ruin. His ardent, passionate, and impulsive nature made him a leader among his companions, and looking back on those days, when there was no religious influence on his character, no restraining hand upon his tendencies, and no attempt of any kind to shape him nobly, he exclaimed, “I have often wondered I did not go straight to hell.”

But his faults were evidently of no very serious nature, for he was able to declare with a good conscience, “I have heard my mother say that I never caused her an hour’s real anxiety in her life.” It would seem that his chief deprivation lay in the absence from his childhood of any high and gracious influence, with the consequent danger that he might drift into a dull and useless manhood, if not into actual wickedness.

Here was a child of fiery temper and impetuous will growing up without definite guidance, forming his own opinions from the chaos of ideas which presented themselves without explanation to his mind, seeking adventure with the most spirited boys of his acquaintance, taking the lead in every game and every device for killing time which these companions could hit upon, and hating more than anything else on earth the black, unmoving cloud that darkened the dullness of his home. What could come of such a childhood?

What could the Nottingham of that epoch make of this young citizen? One does not see the necessity for going "straight to hell"; but very devious, obscure, and improbable at present is the path to glory.

## CHAPTER III

WHICH TELLS OF A DIFFICULT ROAD LEADING UP  
TO A YOUTHFUL CONVERSION

1838-1844

“Ce qu'on dit de soi,” says Renan, “est toujours poésie.” He would have us believe that a man only writes of “such things”—his childhood and the least details of his private life—in order to transmit to others his theory of the universe. He applauds Goethe for having chosen as the title of his memoirs, *Vérité et Poésie*; for, according to his thesis, autobiography, like biography, must of necessity partake of both truth and imagination.

William Booth, a less reflective and infinitely more active man than Renan, had no ambition to write the story of his life. He was entirely innocent of that miserable conceit—*mesquine vanité*—of which Renan complains. He was urged by others at the extremity of his age to set his memories on paper, and with much annoyance and a great deal of grunting half-humorous disapproval, the old, worn, weary, and near-blind prophet, bowed down by the business of the world, essayed this most difficult task—a task only possible of success, perhaps, in the case of an exact thinker, like Stuart Mill or Herbert Spencer, or a morbid and brilliant egoist, like Rousseau.

The result is deplorable, more deplorable even than “the dim, disastrous details” contained in the famous Paper Bags of Professor Teufelsdröckh. Confusion is everywhere, and not only the confusion justly attributable to the fact that these attempts at autobiography had been used by other people before they came into the hands of the present writer. One encounters at the outset a scornful indifference to chronology; unbridgeable voids of silence at those very junctures where meticulous narrative is essential; a welter of propagandist eloquence and octogenarian reflection where

a single incident or one clear, natural phrase would be invaluable; and throughout this dismembered and amorphous scrap-book of memory there is a spirit of revolt, the writer struggling to escape from himself to the work that was more to him than life.

Unfortunately, because he could not think himself out of the language of religious fervour, he exemplifies the truth of Renan's epigram, that what a man says of himself is always poetry. In his case there was no patient stooping of the ear to catch from the deepest fathoms of his heart trembling vibrations from the sea-buried city of his childhood — the bells of those faery churches still calling to worship the faithful who could no longer hear them. Rather was he a much busied man of affairs, practical and impatient, hard-headed and beset with a thousand troubles, who in a hurried moment seized upon his past with a violence which at once scared and scattered delicate memories to the four winds of heaven, and began at once to expound his theory of the universe from the cradle to the satchel, and from the satchel to the shop-counter.

It would seem, though I can find no confirmation elsewhere, that during William Booth's infancy the family removed for a time to Bleasby, where Samuel Booth apparently attempted to make money at "fancy farming." William Booth says that he learned his letters at the village school, and was presently sent to a boarding-school at Southwell, the favourite residence of his namesake the fifty-first Archbishop of York. At six years of age the family returned to Nottingham, and the boy, who was encouraged to believe that he had a gentleman's prospect before him, was sent to a good school kept by a Mr. Biddulph. Ann, it will be remembered, was learning to be a young lady at the best ladies' school in Nottingham.

William Booth has nothing good to say of Biddulph's School. "No stimulus," is his laconic judgment. But his father had determined that he should be a gentleman; Biddulph's School was the select academy of Nottingham, and to Biddulph's School therefore he had to go. He complains, "Mr. Biddulph never fairly woke up my ambition to learn until the year before leaving." He records a break-



down in his health with the explanation, "school hours too long."

He remembers signing the pledge at six or seven years of age. He kept it—"no teetotal friend near me"—until he was thirteen, when his mother, who believed, in common with nearly everybody else who passed at that time for a sensible person, in the health-giving virtue of beer, insisted upon her delicate son taking alcohol as "medicine."

During his schooldays there was a serious crisis in his father's affairs. Mrs. Booth had to take a journey to Derby and Ashbourne to see some mysterious gentleman, probably to gain assistance for her husband. She took William on this journey; and he writes of that event: "Walk to Ashbourne. Coach gone. Walk of eleven miles. Last mile an hour. Gentleman not to be moved." A dismal journey for a young child, the memory ineffaceable at eighty years.

There was no religious atmosphere in his home at this time, but the children were sent on Sunday to the parish church of Sneinton. William Booth was not attracted by the services; they gave him little notion of religion and its relation to the soul. But he remembers the clergyman, who was something of a character, and perhaps, in the social sense of the word, the only gentleman in the neighbourhood.

Parson Wyatt was a tall, dark-haired, solemn-visaged, ruminative man, who jerked his head as he walked, and moved about his parish, chin to breast, lost in remote reflection. He was thought to be a Puseyite, and there was opposition in the parish to his innovations. But a certain Wesleyan minister remembers him as a sincere and a good man, one who was friendly with the dissenters of his day, and a clergyman who truly and earnestly sought to do his duty. William Booth himself says that this Mr. Wyatt was "no doubt a good man according to his light," adding, however, the characteristic judgment:

But his rueful countenance and icy manner all seemed to say that his performances meant—"Do as I advise, or not; be what the prayers have asked that you might be, or not; do what the Scriptures have said, or not—it does not matter very

much whether you comply with these requirements or not." He may have felt a great deal more than this, but it did not make any very great impression upon my boyish mind, and, so far as I can remember, I do not think that the bulk of the congregation were ever carried very much further by what he said.

It is of course extremely doubtful whether the boy felt any more need for religious instruction than the schoolboy of Anatole France who invented sins in order to satisfy his confessor:—"The first difficulty is to find them. You may perhaps believe me when I tell you that, when I was ten, I did not possess the gift of self-analysis in a sufficiently marked degree to enable me to make a thorough examination of my inner consciousness." William Booth was no doubt perfectly satisfied with the ministrations of Parson Wyatt at the time, using the church railings for thrusting his head through—the game consisting in getting it back again—playing in the churchyard, looking about him during the services, and only voting it a considerable bore that he had to attend these religious services at all. It was not, perhaps, until much later in his life that he became aware of Parson Wyatt's deficiencies.

But he did become aware, even as a child, of something lacking in his own life. His first religious impressions came from one of his cousins, a Methodist named Gregory, who was a humble shoemaker. William Booth was struck by this man's "separate and spiritual life." On one occasion Gregory said to him, "Willie Booth, do you know that religion is something that comes to you from outside of you?" This idea haunted the boy, and repeating it later on to his minister, he was told that he would soon be teaching in the Sunday school! He remembers, too, that a great impression was made upon his mind by the singing in Sunday school of the hymn, *Here we suffer grief and pain*; the idea oppressed him and gave a new turn to his thoughts. His cousin's persistent religiousness made him later on "a sort of teacher"; and this, he says, was "an altogether new influence." But he complains, even after this beginning, that no one ever spoke to him about the spiritual life. "I do not remember," he says, "a direct word about my soul—the necessity and possibility of my being converted—or of



encouragement being spoken to me up to the date of my conversion, and very few afterwards."

His father, he says, was "religiously blind"; his mother's moral instruction in those years was, "Be good, William, and all will be well." Parson Wyatt never spoke a direct word to him; no one, not even Cousin Gregory in the Sunday school, ever attempted to get at the innermost privacy of his soul. The first faint beginning of that revolution in his personality which was to have so wide and wonderful an effect for mankind was simply a feeling in his childish consciousness that Cousin Gregory lived a separate and spiritual life. He does not go back for his first religious impressions to a prayer learned at his mother's knee, but to an indefinable, incommunicable reverence in his mind arising from contact with a humble shoemaker who, though he said little to the boy in a personal or direct way, conveyed a feeling to the child's soul of respect for the spiritual life. "Religion is something that comes to you from outside of you."

This feeling, however, was destined to fade; and the hymn and its tune, *Here we suffer grief and pain*, ceased to haunt his mind. He says he grew "utterly regardless with respect to religion," that he "altogether settled down in the uttermost indifference," that *thoughtlessness* would be the best term to describe his state at that time. But he avers that he can remember "an inward dissatisfaction with his condition." "My heart," he says, "was a blank."

He acknowledges that he was wilful, headstrong, passionate. He was allowed to have his own way. Mischief he underlines in the *disjecta membra* of his reminiscences as the spirit of his boyhood. He would do anything for fun. Among his playfellows he was a lord of misrule. Nevertheless this devotion to mischief of every kind went hand in hand with a love of reading. He was affected by poetry—the *Night Thoughts* of Young, and the poems of Kirke White. He also read many novels, as we have already said, and he gives us a hint that his favourite authors were Walter Scott and Fenimore Cooper. He complains of that period, "There was no one to direct me." He considered on reflection that he was saved from ruin in boyhood by the

financial sorrows of his family. "Doubtless the trials of my early days caused by my father's failing fortunes had a beneficial effect on my character. I felt them most keenly; it is not too much to say that they embittered the early years of my boyish life." Always there is the shadow of the father on his childhood. He might play mischievously in the churchyard, go gratefully to fish in the Trent, bury himself in poetry and novels, dream of greatness in manhood — for he was decidedly ambitious — but always his thoughts, his hopes, his headstrong audacity, and his cheerful games were darkened by the shadow of that silent and unlovable father going steadily down to ruin.

A strange incident occurred while he was still at school. A lady and gentleman passing William Booth while he played in the streets would turn so often to look at him that at last he became aware of their interest. He would look up at them as they appeared, and watch them as they passed on, wondering what it was that caused them to regard him so affectionately. One day they stopped and spoke to him, the gentleman asking how he was getting on at school. The lady then made it clear why they were interested in him. Her eyes filled with tears, as she told the boy that he greatly resembled their son whom they had lost by death.

After this a friendship sprang up between the old people and the boy. They asked him to their house, treated him with the greatest kindness, and would even have adopted him. They were Wesleyans, and, with his parents' permission, occasionally took him to chapel. This was his first introduction to Methodism. "My religious training," he says, "was *nil*"; and he adds that attendance at this chapel made some slight impressions upon him, but nothing more.

Then came an event that did away with every thought about religion. The calling in of a mortgage precipitated his father's ruin. The family was plunged into poverty. "The purpose of making me a gentleman," says William Booth, "was defeated." He was taken away from school and sent into business. He was thirteen years of age.

To the end of his days William Booth could seldom bring himself to speak freely of his first acquaintance with business life. There is no doubt that the memory was a sad one.

He shunned it. In all his writings I can find no direct reference to the nature of this employment. He speaks always of "a business," or of "a trade," never once can he force himself to say outright that the business to which his father apprenticed him was a pawnbroker's. And yet there cannot be any doubt at all that it was the associations of this business which had a determining effect upon his after life. He became deeply acquainted with the misery of other people. There had been misery enough in his own childhood, but it was a form of misery which isolated him from the world. He felt his position, and knew that his parents endeavoured to hide their poverty from their neighbours, as though all the neighbours were respectable and prosperous, they alone poor and struggling. But now he learned that many other people were fighting against poverty, and grew to know that suffering and sorrow, deprivation and shame, positive penury and positive want, drag their net in a wide sea of human misery.

Furthermore, it is also certain that the subsequent shame which he felt for his work deepened in his soul a longing for a life more beautiful and more satisfying, embittering his bitterness still further, agitating his unrest still more violently, and driving him more and more outwards from himself, outwards from that centre of his consciousness where all was dark, unhappy, and without peace.

Why did his father choose this particular business? "Because," says William Booth, "he knew no greater gain or end than money."

The boy had been trained to regard himself as a gentleman's son. He had been told that his father intended to make a gentleman of him. He was adored by his sisters. He was the leader of his playfellows. He had been sent to a good school. He was in every way something of a hero. And now, at the age of thirteen, he was told that he must go and work for his living, and learned that he was to serve in a small pawnbroker's shop situated in the poorest part of Nottingham.

His father had a talk with him. He held forth to the boy the allurements of money. He told him it was a business that paid well, a business by which fortunes were not

only easily but quickly made. He counselled his son to give all his attention to the work, and to keep ever before him the prospect of setting up for himself, avoiding partnerships.

William Booth was only a boy. The business promised freedom from school. He liked the idea of earning money. "I went into it," he says, "with a will." Then he adds the characteristic notes: "My after hatred of the trade. A proper estimate of the business. The use and abuse of it." He also remarks that this work "continued my association with the poorest and lowest."

He was too honest a man not to perceive that pawn-brokers has a good side — a side, indeed, which is of distinct benefit to the poor. His full dislike of the trade came to him after his actual experience of the business. He himself had enormously developed when he perceived the deadening effect it is apt to exercise on the highest sympathies of human nature. He disliked it, there is no doubt, more in his old age than in his youth; in his youth it was an interruption of his spiritual life, a disagreeable, dislikable employment, but not a thing of loathing or disgust.

At this time he made companionships whose influence, he says, was anything but beneficial. "I went downhill morally, and the consequences might have been serious, if not eternally disastrous, but that the hand of God was on me in a very remarkable manner." One must bear in mind that this memory was written many years afterwards, and one may be forgiven the doubt if the boy of thirteen had really gone very far down the hill that leads to moral disaster. It is more probable that the phrase means carelessness in ideas, frivolity in conduct, and indifference to religion.

He had not been a year in this shop when he was hurriedly summoned from his bed one night and told to come quickly, for his father was dying. This was in September, 1842. Samuel Booth had manifested spiritual concern in this last illness, chiefly through the persistent appeals of "Cousin Gregory." He was at last willing, he at last had time, to attend to religion. "Very sincerely,"

the son believed, "he turned his heart away from the world that he thought had used him so badly."

The Sacrament was administered. The group round the bed sang *Rock of Ages*. Samuel Booth committed his wife and children to the care of God, and died in peace. "So ended," wrote his son, "his career — devoted to money-getting." It was a death-bed repentance. "Though this skin-of-the-teeth sort of business of getting to heaven is to be in no ways recommended, yet because he impressed me and all else who knew him as such a real honest-hearted man according to his light, and seeing that the transaction was in keeping with his character, and therefore a reality, it is a ground of hope concerning my meeting him again where fortunes made shall be lost no more."

He says in another place, as we recorded before, "Deeply though I felt his loss, my grief was all but forbidden by the thought that it was not my mother who had been taken from me."

No doubt the death of his father made a deeper impression upon his young mind than he remembered in his old age. One does not think that any child, but particularly a child of this temperament, could be called suddenly at night to the death-bed of his father, could witness and share in the spontaneous service at the bedside, and finally behold, in the wavering and ghostly candle-light, the solemn almost terrifying mystery of death, without thinking of his own soul and the life beyond death as it touched him in his innermost thought.

Certain it is that with no other change in his circumstances, with no help or guidance from any other creature, William Booth began from this time to be more interested in religion. He had almost parted company with the Church of England, and was now a frequent attendant at Wesley Chapel. He formed more reasonable friendships. His life began to be coloured by the religion of other people. Among these friends was one who outlived him, a Mr. Newbold, who remembers William Booth, and recalls how he met him one day, "near to Broad Street," and asked him to become a member of "Brother Carey's Class." William



Booth consented, and joined this class in the Chapel, which was "led," as the Wesleyans say, by a Mr. Henry Carey — a very good and upright man of considerable position, whose wife took some share in his ministrations.

In the notes which he left behind him of this period, after remarking that he got nothing but impressions from the services in Wesley Chapel, and making two strokes after the full stop as if to indicate an emphatic termination to this part of the story, he sets down the name, *Isaac Marsden*. But nowhere else in these *ricordi* does he again mention the name, and one would be left to conjecture whether Isaac Marsden definitely began the new chapter in his life, or was only a ghost haunting the dim horizon of his oblivious past, but for a reference to the matter in a book called *Isaac Marsden of Doncaster*, where the author quotes William Booth as saying:

I shall never forget the words I first heard from Mr. Isaac Marsden. I was walking out one evening with two friends at Nottingham, when I was fourteen years of age. Mr. Marsden was conducting special services at a Wesleyan Chapel, and at that time no one could hear him who had any belief in the great truths of the Bible without being deeply impressed and stimulated.

We entered the Chapel late — in the dusk. I could hardly see the speaker; but just at that moment he was saying, "*A soul dies every minute.*" . . . I have little doubt that, but for my two friends, I should have stayed that very night and given my heart to God.

Inquiry leads one to surmise that Isaac Marsden gave to William Booth his great intelligent notion of a vital religion. It is credible that Isaac Marsden's influence not only led to the conversion of William Booth, but sowed in the boy's mind the seed which was destined to grow into a great tree overspreading the whole world. For Isaac Marsden was half a John Wesley and half a General Booth.

He is described to me by one who remembers him as a somewhat eccentric lay preacher whose head and mouth gave him a noticeable likeness to John Bright. He was "very strong mentally, a great saver of souls. A man of originality and power from the first; rough and wild before his con-

version, a very lion in courageous faith ever after." Mr. Isaac Page has written an account of Marsden:

He preached on Sunday when I heard him, and followed up the work during the week. Each night an old-fashioned revival service was held — a fervid sermon, strong appeals, a rousing prayer-meeting, many penitents, and shouts of praise to God. In those days nothing was said about closing the meetings at nine o'clock. They continued as long as there were souls seeking salvation, sometimes till a very late hour. Not infrequently groups of happy people proceeded homewards at midnight, making the stillness lively with their songs of praise.

He used to hold an early Sunday morning prayer-meeting, says Mr. Page, "and if, as he returned, he saw a servant girl washing the door-steps, he would speak a word or two, and then down on his knees in the street to pray for her salvation."

He would speak to men in his walks, or in houses or shops where he called, in such fashion that they were fain to go and hear him preach. One day, as he went along the street, he saw a woman hanging out clothes. His eyes glanced along the line of garments, and he said, "I say, missus, if your heart is not washed cleaner than those clothes, you'll never get to heaven."

He was devoted to children, and carried sweets in his pockets when he went to give a Sunday school address. He would teach them a little prayer to say daily: "Lord, make me good, and keep me good; and bless Isaac Marsden."

Such a man must have had some fascination for William Booth. Nevertheless, when he came to look back on those far-off days, William Booth could recall no penetrating word addressed to his soul, no arresting hand laid upon his throbbing pulses. He could see nothing of human agency in the new birth which was then shaping in his soul. One thinks, however, that a more rigorous examination of his memory, with the name of Isaac Marsden as a clue, might have led at least to some modification of this opinion.

"Although the change that came over me was sudden," he says, "it was nevertheless reached by stages. There was the realized superiority of the religious life over the purely worldly form of existence which I had lived so long." (The

reader will remember with a kindly smile that the worldly form of existence had extended to fourteen completed years of troubled childhood.) "Although my heart was very largely unaffected by the form of service in which I joined, my mind was nevertheless convinced of the rightness, and dignity, and profitableness of the service of God that was set before my eyes. I realized its satisfying nature, and, consequently, I gradually became convinced of its superiority, and, more than this, a hunger sprang up for its realisation. Whatever the circumstances that may have led to my conversion, that conversion was a definite and decisive event in my history. I was utterly without any experience of religion; in fact, wholly given up to a life of self-indulgence."

The reader will remember the caution I ventured to express in the last chapter concerning William Booth's memories of the past and also concerning his phraseology. It is surely misuse of language to speak of his boyhood as "a life of self-indulgence," and to say that he was living a "purely worldly form of existence." This is self-evident. And it is also very probable that his other recollections of this important period of his life are saturated with the *Aberglaube* of later years. One cannot think that a boy between thirteen and fourteen years of age was "convinced of the rightness, and dignity, and profitableness of the service of God," or that he "realised its satisfying nature, and *consequently* . . . became convinced of its superiority." Boys do not argue. This is the language of the old man, the old man so used to that language of his maturity that he cannot quite think himself back into the moods of his childhood, moods destitute of a vocabulary.

It is plain that nothing more took place at this time in the boy's mind than a gradual pressure of its former unhappiness. He was unhappy, and he knew that he was unhappy. In chapel and in class he heard about the religious life which is said to take away unhappiness. He desired that life, because he was unhappy. He says, and there is no doubt a profound truth in the remembrance, "I wanted to be right with God. I wanted to be right in myself. I



wanted a life spent in putting other people right." Yes; but all this was cloudlike, inexpressible, and vague in the boy's soul.

Almost immediately he adds: "How I came to this notion of religion, when I saw so little of its character manifested around me, sometimes puzzles me." It was of course — save only the humanitarian impulse which probably came later — a not uncommon experience of childhood. Children, as well as adults, are "tortured by divine things." They have a consciousness of unrest, a longing for satisfaction, a feeling towards and a longing after some mysterious beautiful and rapturous embrace which they feel is coming towards them from the invisible kingdom of dreams. They are inarticulate, they cannot express what they feel, and their longing is confused by a thousand influences from fairy-tale, legend, and belief in magic and witchcraft; but it is there, torturing their souls, a disbelief in the material world, a hatred of all dullness and mechanical exercise, a longing for romance, a repetition of the miracle.

One thing is certain. Throughout his childhood William Booth was overshadowed by a feeling of the nearness of God. He never knew the isolation of even a transitory atheism. Whether he was mischievous or good, whether he was "worldly" or unselfish, he believed in God. He was by no means in love with this faith, the sense of God by no means contributed to his happiness. But he was perfectly certain of God's existence. He speaks of "that instinctive belief in God which, in common with my fellow-creatures, I had brought into the world with me." Oppressed by this faith, and with no guidance from any one, the boy whose whole childhood had been darkened and embittered, the boy whose nature was passionate, headstrong, impulsive, and charged with the spirit of leadership, came at last to long for escape from himself, determined to make a fight for his own peace of mind.

While this pressure of unhappiness and this sense of God's reality were deepening in his soul, he was devoting himself with natural zeal to the interests of his employer. He was quick, he was thorough, he was energetic, he was

orderly and trustworthy. There was no thought in his mind of forsaking this business. He was ambitious, and he meant to get on in the world. Side by side in his soul were these two equal forces—one driving him to religious safety, the other urging him to material prosperity. Nothing of the mystic showed in his nature. No violent change in personality was manifest in these early stirrings of his spirit.

Soon after the father's death Mary Booth was obliged to leave the humble house in Sneinton Road. She was robbed right and left, says her son, by those who had the handling of her husband's ruined estate. It became necessary not only for her to leave the house in Sneinton Road, but to earn money for her children. She took a very small shop in one of the poor quarters of Nottingham.

A strange incident, of which William Booth never heard, occurred at this time. Opposite to the house in Sneinton Road, as we have said, was the smallware shop of Grandfather Page, and one of his sons, Isaac, now a retired Wesleyan minister, was a little boy when Mrs. Booth and her children moved from the neighbourhood. He said to me, "The first knowledge I had of the Booths' removal came in an odd way. I woke up one morning, went to the window of my bedroom, and looked out. I noticed something moving against the upper window of the house opposite, and calling my brother we both saw quite distinctly that a big white bird, like a swan or a stork, was beating its wings against the glass, jumping up and down as though struggling to get out. Then we observed that the curtains of all the other windows had gone, and knew that the house was empty. This was our first knowledge that the Booths had gone. And we never solved the mystery of the white bird at the window." This is one of those weird and gratefully mysterious stories of which no wise man will ask an explanation. But Mr. Page refuses to see in it a supernatural significance. "I have no doubt," he says, "that some travelling showman had taken advantage of the empty house to place the creature there for the night." Fortunately, no child will be satisfied by this interpretation of a mystery.

William Booth's wages as an apprentice were so meagre that he could do little to help his mother. Her establishment was a smallware shop, where she sold toys, needles, tape, cotton, and similar necessities of a good housewife — a very humble business with few customers and small profits. It is significant that even in these altered circumstances Ann Booth's friend, Sarah Butler, a young lady of some social distinction, still remained a visitor to the family, and that the first friends of William Booth were young men of position who had known him in the days of Nottintone Place. The family still remained "proud and austere," as Sarah Butler says; but there was evidently a deeper warmth and an entirely new feeling of freedom in the spirit of the household. Ruin had come; a definite poverty had fallen; but the shadow of the embittered man had lifted and the family drew closer together.

In this same year, 1842, there was great excitement in Nottingham over a Parliamentary election. Mr. John Walter, of *The Times*, was opposed by a Radical reformer from Birmingham, Mr. Sturge. Feargus O'Connor descended upon the town, and the scenes in the street, the oratory of the hustings, the procession of rival clubs, and the language of the newspapers were as picturesque, violent, and grotesque as the more famous election in Eatanswill. In this case there was a very serious collision between the Chartists and the soldiers in the town; hundreds of men were arrested, and in several instances offenders were sentenced to six months, four months, and two months, with hard labour. In the same year Cobden and Bright came to Nottingham, and took part in a great Free Trade demonstration which further quickened the political feeling in the town.

William Booth was affected by this storm. He sympathized with the Chartists and attended their meetings. Mr. W. T. Stead says that he "grew up in an atmosphere of unrest, in a hot-bed of quasi-revolutionary discontent." It should be borne in mind, however, that almost everything demanded by the Chartists is now a commonplace of our constitution. William Booth was never a revolutionary, and became more conservative as he grew older.

"My father," says Bramwell Booth, "did not believe that you could make a man clean by washing his shirt." In his fourteenth year, however, he was a hot reformer. "The poverty," says Mr. Stead, "that he saw on every side filled him with a spirit of passionate revolt against constituted authority. He was but a boy of thirteen when Feargus O'Connor first visited Nottingham, but in all the thousands the great Chartist orator had no more enthusiastic disciple than William Booth. He was a Chartist — a physical force Chartist of course, being a boy, and therefore uncompromising. He went to their meetings, he cheered their speeches, he subscribed to the Charter, and, if need had arisen, he would have been disappointed if he could not have shouldered a pike or fired a musket. . . . 'The Chartists were for the poor,' so the boy reasoned, 'therefore I am for the Chartists.'"

There was now a threefold pressure on the boy's mind. He desired to succeed in business and make money for his mother and sisters; he was enthusiastic for political reform — and somewhat ambitious to play the orator; he was vaguely but hauntingly anxious to arrive at some religious understanding with his own soul. In his home he was distressingly aware of poverty; in the streets and in his shop he saw little else but poverty; and in his spirit he was conscious of another and more insistent poverty.

One can picture the boy leaving his mother's little shop early in the morning, probably rather hungry, and posting at a great pace to the pawnbroker's shop. He was tall beyond his years, exceedingly pale, with hair as black as a raven, and dark luminous eyes that flashed at the least provocation; a thin, pinched, pallid boy, who walked quickly with a raking stride, stooping at the shoulders, the arms swinging with energy. He would be one of the multitude hastening to work, pushing his way through a multitude unwillingly out of work, the noise of the frame-knitting machines in his ears, the sight of hungry children before his eyes. And one can see him walking back through the dark streets at eight o'clock at night, fagged, hungry, and tortured by his thoughts, but eager for something to happen,

willing to take part in any vigorous action, never listless or inert.

So passed two years of his "blighted childhood." Occasionally he stole away from this wretchedness and forgot the pain of the world in his favourite sport of fishing in the Trent. Occasionally he was happy in the flowering fields, which he loved with a real and poetic fervour. Occasionally he threw himself into some merry adventure with the new companions of his employment. But the three steady things in his mind were: first, the determination to get on in the world; second, the ambition to work for political change; and, third, a longing to right himself with God.

In the year 1844, with no outside human influence of any kind upon his soul, this headstrong and impulsive boy determined to make that total and mysterious surrender of personality which is a condition precedent to what we call conversion. He was unhappy, and he desired to escape from unhappiness. Without language to describe his feelings, without the faculty to analyze his sentiments, he came to the decision that he would change the whole character of his life and divert the energy of his soul into a new channel.

"I felt," he says, "that I wanted, in place of the life of self-indulgence to which I was yielding myself, a happy, conscious sense that I was pleasing God, living right, and spending all my powers to get others into such a life."

In these words William Booth justifies the definition of William James that "to be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong, inferior, and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right, superior, and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities."

From the beginning of his life to the end, in spite of much language which might seem to exhibit religion only as an escape from punishment, only as an escape from wrath, only as an escape from eternal damnation, the heart and soul of William Booth's religion was *happiness* — an uprush



of feeling from obstruction towards the central pivotal sense of unity with God, a triumphant and penetrating blessing, a victorious and suffusing solution of all sorrow, trouble, difficulty, and spiritual confusion.

He desired in his distracted boyhood "a happy conscious sense" that he was pleasing God.

"I saw," he avers, "that all this ought to be, and I decided that it should be. It is wonderful that I should have reached this decision in view of all the influences then around me." His employer, a Unitarian, "never uttered a word to indicate that he believed in anything he could not see, and many of my companions were worldly and sensual, some of them even vicious."

He speaks of his instinctive belief in God, and goes on to say, "I had no disposition to deny my instincts, which told me that if there was a God His laws ought to have my obedience and His interests my service."

Then follows a characteristic sentence: "I felt that it was better to live right than to live wrong; and as to caring for the interests of others instead of my own, the condition of the suffering people around me, people with whom I had been so long familiar, and whose agony seemed to reach its climax about this time, undoubtedly affected me very deeply."

It may puzzle some people to believe that a boy of fifteen was powerfully moved by the humanitarian spirit; and no doubt William Booth saw in the darkness of those early days, when he came to look back upon them, something of the reflected light of the great master-passion which transfigured his after existence. Indeed, this history will clearly show that he grew into humanitarianism, and that this humanitarianism was the developed fruit of his religion. Nevertheless, it is quite certain that the germ of humanitarianism was present in his soul from a very early age, and there is definite proof that he was conscious of it at the time of his conversion.

In all his papers dealing with this period of his life — and he made more than one attempt at autobiography — there is reference to the spectacle, in 1844, of children crying for bread in the streets of Nottingham. This is perhaps the

most definite of all his youthful memories, transcending, of a certainty, any influence made upon his mind by the oratory of Feargus O'Connor. He could remember not a word of the fiery speeches he had cheered till he was hoarse; he could remember not a sermon he had listened to in chapel, not an address, not "an experience" he had heard in class; but the visual memory of ragged children weeping bitterly for food in the streets of the town was a picture printed on his soul with a sharpness that could not be blurred. This he remembered; and it will be seen that after his conversion he did at least one little act of humanitarian charity typical of the work which has ever since characterized and honoured the Salvation Army.

He had now reached that point when the soul determines to act with decision. He came nearer to the great step at the services in which he took part, at the occasional Class Meetings, where he answered the questions of his Leader concerning the state of his soul; but he could not bring himself to the actual deed of a public surrender. Something held him back. It was the memory of a sin. "The inward Light revealed to me," he says, "that I must not only renounce everything I knew to be sinful, but make restitution, so far as I had the ability, for any wrong I had done to others before I could find peace with God." The boy was now tormented by a guilty conscience. He carried about with him not only a guilty conscience, but a visible and tangible possession which upbraided him with the wrath of God. It was a silver pencil-case. And this silver pencil-case, going to and from his work, and all the time he was at his work, burned like fire against his flesh. Suddenly, though the approach had been gradual and, in a sense, dilatory, the struggle ceased. The moment came one night, at eleven o'clock, in the streets of Nottingham.

"It was in the open street," he says, "that this great change passed over me, and if I could only have possessed the flagstone on which I stood at that happy moment, the sight of it occasionally might have been as useful to me as the stones carried up long ago from the bed of the Jordan were to the Israelites who had passed over them dry-shod."

He tells us what had hitherto held him back: "The



entrance to the Heavenly Kingdom was closed against me by an evil act of the past which required restitution. In a boyish trading affair I had managed to make a profit out of my companions, whilst giving them to suppose that what I did was all in the way of a generous fellowship. As a testimonial of their gratitude they had given me a silver pencil-case. Merely to return their gift would have been comparatively easy, but to confess the deception I had practised upon them was a humiliation to which for some days I could not bring myself.

"I remember, as if it were but yesterday," he goes on, "the spot in the corner of the room under the chapel, the hour, the resolution to end the matter, the rising up and rushing forth, the finding of the young fellow I had chiefly wronged, the acknowledgment of my sin, the return of the pencil-case — the instant rolling away from my heart of the guilty burden, the peace that came in its place, and the going forth to serve my God and my generation from that hour."

He was happy, but happy in a frame of mind which may be described as one of dead earnestness. He is careful to say that he had no experience at this time of emotional religion. He looks back and envies those who have had that experience from the first. But he was happy. "I felt . . . that I could willingly and joyfully travel to the ends of the earth for Jesus Christ, and suffer anything imaginable to help the souls of other men."

There was something thorough in the effect of this conversion, and he was troubled by no disenchantment of reaction. "One reason," he says, "for the victory I daily gained from the moment of my conversion was, no doubt, my complete and immediate separation from the godless world. I turned my back on it. I gave it up, having made up my mind beforehand that if I did go in for God I would do so with all my might."

But one must be careful of this language.

There was scarcely a "complete and immediate separation from the godless world." He remained in his employment for some years, and was a very clever and industrious assistant to his Unitarian employer, as we shall see in the next chapter. He was still obliged to rub shoulders with

his former companions of this shop, some of whom were "worldly and sensual, some of them even vicious." What he means is this, though the language is the language of a far later period, that, living in the same surroundings as before, and pursuing the same commercial goal as before, he now separated himself from the more questionable of his former companionships, abandoned all selfish amusement in his leisure moments, and was conscious in his soul of a solemn dedication of himself to high and lofty purposes. "Rather than yearning for the world's pleasures," he says, "books, games, or recreations, I found my new nature leading me to come away from it all. It had lost all charm for me. What were all the novels, even those of Sir Walter Scott or Fenimore Cooper, compared with the story of my Saviour? What were the choicest orators compared with Paul? What was the hope of money-earning, even with all my desire to help my poor mother and sisters, in comparison with the imperishable wealth of ingathered souls? I soon began to despise everything the world had to offer me."

The language is not extravagant in the light of after events, but it is probably exaggerated as a contemporary expression of those first early movements of the boy's soul. There is no doubt that he relinquished the reading of novels; no doubt that he abandoned many of his former friendships; no doubt that he ceased to envy the oratory of Feargus O'Connor; and no doubt that he ceased to feel pleasure in the diversions of his former life. But one must be careful to remember that he still continued to be the cleverest and most dependable of his employer's staff, and gave no public signs of desiring a life with greater religious opportunities. The phrase, "I soon began to despise everything the world had to offer me," is somewhat too exuberant for this phase of his experience.

But the great step was taken. Nothing is more characteristic of the man than the simple, downright, blunt, almost horrisonant statement in which he declares that he had made up his mind, "if I did go in for God," to do so with all his might. To William Booth at that time, and to William Booth at the last stage of his long journey, the choice lay for all mankind between God and Devil. He believed

emphatically in both. He could see no escape from belief in both. And he knew already, had known it throughout his "blighted childhood," that men definitely or indefinitely, consciously or unconsciously, by all their thoughts and by all their actions, with consequences visible here, and direr consequences unimaginable hereafter, serve the One or the other. To "go in for God," however the phrase may strike upon the ear, meant with him a rational decision for the Best, a whole-hearted loyalty to the Highest, and a life of logical self-sacrifice devoted to Righteousness. He had inherited from his father a commercial mind; the imagination of his mother's ancestry gave warmth and fervour to his disposition; the hard, vigorous, uncompromising spirit of the north inspired his soul. Such a youth could speak about *going in for God* without offence, and in speaking about it he would mean it with an iron logic and a fixed determination. His instincts told him "that if there were a God His laws ought to have my obedience"; and "one feeling specially forced itself upon me, and I can recollect it as distinctly as though it had transpired only yesterday, and that was the sense of the folly of spending my life in doing things for which I knew I must either repent or be punished in the days to come."

There was something of a bargain in his decision. Consciously or unconsciously, logic was at work in his soul. But chiefly he came to religion as an escape from the unhappiness, the unrest, and the dissatisfaction of his troubled heart; came to it, too, almost unhelped, unencouraged, and unbefriended. The child who had grown up with the idea that he was "to be made a gentleman"; who had seen the shadow of poverty deepening every day upon the shabbying walls of his unhappy home; who had been left to form his own friendships and find his own amusements in the playing-fields of a manufacturing town; who had been thrust into a very exacting and dispiriting employment at the age of thirteen; who had seen his father die, and helped his mother while he was yet a boy to move into a humble shop and begin life over again; who had witnessed the utmost miseries and depressions of a commercial reaction which spread ruin on every side; who had listened with enthusiasm to the

oratory of so-called revolutionary politicians — this boy came of his own choice, so far as we can judge, to the religion which makes a supreme demand and confers an exclusive benefit. He came to it for release. He came to it, one may say, selfishly. And it is certain that he realized neither the demand it was to make of him, nor dreamed of the triumph to which it was destined to carry him.

In the year 1844 William Booth was a very youthful shop-assistant who had decided to live a religious life, and who was working exceedingly hard to improve his material prospects. Happiness had come to him, and he had escaped from the wretchedness of unrest by confessing to a sin that haunted his conscience, and by deciding to live henceforth in the knowledge and service of God.

No conversion could be simpler, less dramatic, and more natural; few in the long history of Christianity have brought a richer harvest to the whole world.

*in for God - 30 in 20  
all right*

## CHAPTER IV

### BEGINNINGS OF THE NEW LIFE AND THE FIRST SERMON EVER PREACHED BY WILLIAM BOOTH

1845

“DIRECTLY after I was converted I had a bad attack of fever. I was brought down to the edge of the River.”

This emphatic statement, occurring abruptly in the *dissecta membra* of autobiography, might lead the reader to suppose that conversion had been approached in a morbid and unhealthy manner, that the great submission had been made in a feverish or hysterical frame of mind. But, fortunately for the truth, the statement is typical of William Booth's indifference to chronology. The attack of fever did not come till nearly two years after his conversion, when he was seventeen years of age, and at the threshold of his extraordinary career. Conversion was followed, unfortunately for our present purpose, by about two years of autobiographical silence.

Three things alone are known with any degree of definiteness concerning these important years. We know that the chief friendship of his youth was deepened by his new religious experience; we know that the humanitarian instinct manifested itself in at least one act of touching kindness; and we know that romance for the first time knocked at the heart of this young voyager, whose chart was not yet marked for boundless adventures of quite other kind.

When the friendship of William Booth and William Sansom began is not clearly known, but it was probably as early as the days of Nottintone Place, where the two boys would have been close neighbours. Will Sansom, as he is affectionately called, was the son of a well-to-do lace manufacturer. His social circumstances were superior to William Booth's, his prospects altogether of a more enviable nature. Yet from very early days, just as Ann Booth was the chosen friend of Sarah Butler, so William Booth was the



chosen friend of this fortunate young man; and in both cases, it is worthy of noticing, the friendship persisted when the Booths were reduced from a proud poverty to a staring and emphatic penury. Something there must have been in these Booths very attractive and admirable.

I asked Mrs. Osborne, the Sarah Butler of those days, if William Booth was at all violent in the first enthusiasm of his preaching. "Not in the least," she replied; adding, "if he had been, Will Sansom would have curbed him." This answer not only exhibits Sansom as a refined and gentle nature; it shows that he exercised a decided influence over William Booth.

Will Sansom is described as a very handsome young man, romantic-looking, and marked from boyhood by the intense and dreadful signs of consumption. He was one of those whom Maeterlinck calls the *Pre-destined*. "The men among whom they dwell become the better for the knowledge of them, and the sadder, and the more gentle." He was of the company "who look at us with an eager smile, and seem to be on the point of confessing that they know all; and then, towards their twentieth year, they leave us, hurriedly, muffling their footsteps, as though they had just discovered that they had chosen the wrong dwelling-place, and had been about to pass their lives among men whom they did not know." In this case the youth was profoundly religious. He had the deep absorbing faith of a Gratraj, the fervour of a Pascal, the hastening evangelical eagerness of a Wesley. The nearer he approached his youthful death the more passionately did he seek to spread his knowledge of the truth. But always he was refined in manner, persuasive in method, winning and ingratiating by nature.

"We were like David and Jonathan," says William Booth; and Mrs. Osborne described to me how these two young men were always together, how they walked about arm-in-arm, how they both had the same stoop, the same pallor, the same brightness of the eyes. The friendship was noticed by other people. The young men were regarded by their circle as "bosom friends."

It is not often in biography that such a friendship as

this is recorded, the deep and affectionate friendship of a young man prosperous and well-stationed with the apprenticed shop-assistant. Religion had much to do with it, but the first cause appears to have been the commanding character and extraordinary attraction of Wilful Will.

Some time after William Booth's conversion, these two youths were attracted by the friendless condition of a poor old withered beggar-woman who shuffled about the streets in horrid rags, endured the mockery of street boys, suffered the persecution of Nottingham "lambs," and slept in doorways or under hedges — a grotesque parody of womanhood. William Booth must have seen her a hundred times before his conversion, for she was a character of the streets; but it was not until after his conversion that her deplorable destitution, the infinite pity of her forlorn and friendless state, appealed to his compassion. He determined to rescue her from this state, and consulted Will Sansom as to the best way of ensuring her welfare. Then they went about among their friends, collected money, took a little cabin, furnished it, and installed the old woman within, making provision for her support. The most wretched creature, the most ridiculed and neglected of all Nottingham's mis-erables had moved the heart of William Booth to compassion, and upon such an one as this he made his first experiment in social work.

During this period in his life he imagined that his earthly happiness was bound up with the life of a girl into whose society he had been thrown for some years. She was the daughter of the old couple who had first introduced him to Methodism, the old people who loved him because he resembled their dead son. For a number of months William Booth walked about the world believing that he was in love. He probably discussed the matter with Will Sansom. He was elated by the discovery, and cherished the thought of this wonderful passion at his heart with a fervour of sentimentalism. The young lady sang well, and William Booth, who then could not sing himself, loved music very keenly. It was a great pleasure for him to sit and listen to the singing of this pretty girl, who was a little older than himself.

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But before many amorous moons had waned, the young zealot made another discovery, as startling and much more liberating than the first. He discovered that he did not love this person at all, that she was not his inamorata, and certainly should never be his wife. It was a case of "calf-love," he says, and laughs it out of his memory. His only obsession was religion.

He does not seem to have suffered at this period from any healthy or unhealthy disquiet of soul. His disposition was too headlong and impulsive, his anxieties too outward and unselfish for moonings within the depths of his own consciousness. He was no mystic, and he was no prig; but he suffered, some men may say suffered all his life, from what Arnold called Hebraism. God was the supreme concernment of his life. Everything else brought into relation with this immense interest dwindled to insignificance. He had something of Carlyle's contempt for Art. Science had no vital attraction for him. The sports and amusements of mankind filled him with contemptuous impatience. So tremendous was his sense of God that he never questioned it, rarely scrutinized it, refusing to paralyze his devotion and his senses by a moment's incredulity concerning this subjective conception of the Infinite. He had one thought, to live absolutely in accordance with God's will.

In the year 1846, when he was seventeen, came the attack of fever which brought him "to the edge of the River." He had outgrown his calf-love, he was deep in the friendship of Will Sansom, he was still keen about succeeding in business, above all other things earnest in religion.

The visit of James Caughey, of whom a description is given in the first chapter, occurred at this time. William Booth caught fire from the flame of this revivalist's oratory. He was deeply and pervasively influenced by the uncompromising realism of the American preacher. It may have been that his attack of fever was in some measure due to the excitement occasioned throughout Nottingham by this missionary. He went to all the services he could attend, he joined in the singing of some of Charles Wesley's triumphant battle-songs, he witnessed scenes of conversion which

were extraordinarily exciting, and he saw in the lives of many of his neighbours the veritable miracle of new birth. Here, at last, was religion in action, the real and living religion of his dreams. He gave himself up to it, thought of scarce anything else, and presently was laid by with a raging fever.

While he tossed on his bed, over the dim, struggling, and shabby shop in which Widow Booth sold tape and cotton, a message was brought to him from Will Sansom — a message which very probably saved his life. Sansom sent word to him that he was starting an open-air mission in the slums of Nottingham, and bade him get well quickly and come and help him. Here was medicine and vocation in one! The message rallied the spirit of the sick youth; it was like a trumpet-call to his drooping soul; and he rose from his bed as soon as he had strength to stand, and went back to his work and out, for the first time, to religious activity.

More memorable in his life than 1844 was this year of grace 1846; and, fortunately, it is from this point that the stream of biography begins to flow with strength and certainty. If his *souvenirs d'enfance* are misted with a Lethean miasma, if his memories of boyhood are little more than a *concordia discors*, from his seventeenth year onward we possess almost every detail and every fact, almost every lineament and every expression, almost every thought and shade of feeling, for the composition of a faithful portrait. The life of the man begins from 1846; and it was a life lived so frankly and honestly, so far away from the morbid centre of self-introspection, so completely at that uttermost circumference of being where self is consumed in a passionate care for others, that one can be sure of a veritable likeness. No man ever lived who kept back less of himself from the gaze of the world, or who gave more of himself to the service of humanity.

Will Sansom had not long to wait for an answer to his message. "No sooner was I able to get about than I gladly joined him." But William Booth, the leader of everything, was shy and self-conscious of speaking in the open, or of speaking at all in public. He joined in the

services, but would neither preach nor pray. Will Sansom sang, prayed, and preached. He was helped by a friend named Samuel Hovey, by Sarah Butler, and by one of her sisters who sang beautifully. William Booth contented himself with standing in the group, with singing in the hymns, with exclaiming *Amen* in the prayers, and with speaking privately to those who surrounded the company.

But the influence of David Greenbury effected a change. This evangelist from Scarborough, of whom mention has been made in the opening chapter, was the first man to realize the force and power of William Booth as a preacher. He was struck by Booth's earnestness, by the vigour of his personality, and by his remarkable appearance and emphatic manner. He urged upon the young man that it was his duty to speak, that he owed it to God to conquer his timidity, which was a form of selfishness. One of Booth's favourite hymns came to his assistance. He was haunted by the verse —

And can I yet delay  
My little all to give?  
To tear my soul from earth away  
For Jesus to receive?  
Nay, but I yield, I yield!  
I can hold out no more;  
I sink, by dying love compelled,  
And own Thee conqueror.

With the same sudden abandon that had characterized his surrender two years before to the urgency of conscience, he now not only threw himself into the work of street preaching, but became the recognized leader of the group.

"The Meetings we held," he says, "were very remarkable for those days. We used to take out a chair into the street, and one of us mounting it would give out a hymn, which we then sang with the help of, at the most, three or four people. Then I would talk to the people, and invite them to come with us to a Meeting in one of the houses." Of Will Sansom he says, "He had a fine appearance, was a beautiful singer, and possessed a wonderful gift in prayer. After I had spoken in our Open-Air Meeting he would kneel down and wrestle with God until it seemed as though

he would move the very stones on which he knelt, as well as the hearts of the people who heard him."

At this period in his life there was nothing of that humorous spirit which characterized so much of his later work. Sarah Butler says that his nature was rather "morose and melancholy." He was "tremendously in earnest."

There is still living in Nottingham a very old woman who knew the Booths in Sneinton, and remembers the first sermon preached by William Booth. She gave me an account of that sermon, and described the meetings in the cottages, her dim eyes shining with pleasure through their thick spectacles, her face illuminated by a deep joy.

"The first sermon he ever preached," she said, "was in Kid Street. I remember it very well. The Meeting was held in a small cottage. It was at eight o'clock at night, and he had come straight from his work. There was a box placed upside down on the table for a desk, with two candles burning, one each side of the Bible. The door stood open, and poor women came into the tiny parlour, bringing their own chairs with them. In the doorway was a group of men, afraid to come in lest they should be converted, but interested in this new way of preaching religion. They filled up the doorway, a dark little crowd that extended into the street. Will Booth's sermon — ah, how well I remember it! — was very gentle and tender, quite different from anything else I ever heard him say to the people, and so strange for a young man to preach that it almost made some of the women smile. He talked of little children learning to walk. He described how they toddled, and swayed, and came near to falling. He said how difficult a thing it was for little babes to learn the use of their legs, to trust their tiny feet, and to advance with courage. And then he asked if any mother, watching her child's first efforts to walk, would be cross with the infant's failure, would shout at it when it swayed, would sit still, unmoved, when it fell and hurt itself. Then he said that it was just as difficult to live a true Christian life, and that we should always be on the look-out for helping people, especially those who were only just beginning to live that life. He said it was wrong to

judge them when they failed, and just as wrong to sit idle when they fell. We should run, and lift them up, and help them. Hard words would not help them; sitting still would not help them; we must go and do something to make it less hard for them to walk straight."

She told me, too, that she heard one of his earliest preachings in the open street. The scene was Red Lion Square, and he was surrounded by a crowd of poor people.

"That was a very different sermon!" she exclaimed. "He called out in his great voice that all the suffering and sorrow of the world came from sin. I remember how he said, 'Friends, I want to put a few straight questions to your souls. Have any of you got a child at home without shoes to its little feet? Are your wives sitting now in dark houses waiting for you to return, without money? Are you going away from here to the public-house to spend on drink money that your wives need for food and your children for shoes?' It was all like that. And then he read out the Wesleyan hymn which has the verse:

Misers! for you His life He paid;  
Your basest crime He bore:  
Drunkards! your sins on Him were laid  
That you might sin no more.

I think there had never been such preaching in the open streets before. One of his other favourite hymns had the verse:

Outcasts of men, to you I call,  
Harlots and publicans and thieves!  
He spreads His arm to embrace you all;  
Sinners alone His grace receives:  
No need of Him the righteous have,  
He came the lost to seek and save.

I remember, too, how he was insulted, and how calmly he bore it. Once, while he was preaching in Pump Street, a man who had stopped to listen suddenly shouted out, shaking his fist at the preacher, 'You liar! you liar!' And Will Booth just looked at him, and said in a very soft, kindly voice, 'Friend, it was for you He died; stop, and be saved.' He was always like that."



There is another old body living in Nottingham who remembers those early days, a very rigid, ultra-respectable, demure, and eloquent spinster. Her brother was one of William Booth's earliest friends, one of the first to join the little group of street preachers. She spoke throughout our conversation with emphatic gravity, very plainly conscious of her importance, and maintaining an aspect of preternatural solemnity. "To begin with," she said, "Billy was rather forward." So far as my researches go, this old lady is the only person in the whole world who ever referred to William Booth as "Billy." He was sometimes called by his father in childhood "Bill," and among his associates he was known as "Will"; but no one else that I can find trace of ever ventured to speak of him with the extreme familiarity of "Billy." The lady seemed to use this name with a relish, as though it increased the prestige of her venerable position and diminished the world-wide fame of the great evangelist to a humility relatively suitable.

"You must not misunderstand me," she said; "he was not overbearing; he was not violent; he was not what you would call domineering; but he was forward, distinctly forward. Yes, he was a forward lad. You could never have kept him down. You could never have held him back. He was bound to push forward and take the lead in everything."

"Can you describe him to me?" I asked.

"Describe him? Who? Billy? Oh, yes. Well, he was what you would call nice-looking. I shouldn't say he was handsome. At any rate he was not so handsome as you, not nearly."

I protested — as well I might.

"He was too pale to be handsome," she continued critically, ignoring the protest. "He was not so handsome as you, but his legs were longer. I should describe him as a nice-looking lad. He was tall, yes, decidedly tall, and thin; remarkably so. He was clean-shaven in those days; he wore his hair long, it was the fashion then, and his hair was as black as coal; he had a stoop in his shoulders, and looked as if he had outgrown himself. I should say that he was perhaps something more than nice-looking. I should

call him strange-looking, romantic-looking. If you saw him once you would never forget him. Of course his nose was very striking-looking. We always called that 'the Wellington.' A strange face, very; so pale, so white, and with all that black hair, and those piercing eyes — yes, a romantic face — decidedly so."

Her insistence upon the romantic character of his appearance prompted me to ask a question to which I had long been anxious to get an answer.

I began by asking if he had been surrounded from the first days of his preaching by a number of young ladies.

"Well, it began with one or two," replied the demure spinster, "but the number increased."

"Now, I wonder if you can tell me," said I, as nonchalantly as the circumstances permitted, "whether there is any truth in the story that he was in love with one of those young ladies?"

As though I had made a most scandalous suggestion, the venerable lady straightened her back, regarded me coldly, and replied with a trenchant scorn, "As for that, I will only say, speaking from a long experience of life, that the number of young ladies who imagine that every young man they meet is in love with them is only equalled by the number of young men who go about the world fancying that every young lady that looks their way is in love with them. It is a pity it should be so, but so it is. As for Will Booth, I never heard that he was in love with anybody, though there was some talk that he might make a match of it one day with a very sweet young lady who sang at his meetings. But I should be at a standstill, my dear sir, I really should, if I was to try and tell you the number of young ladies who were in love with him. He was a favourite. He was worshipped, as you may say. And I think he was certainly a very romantic-looking, attractive, and interesting young man."

The "very sweet young lady who sang at his meetings" was a sister of Sarah Butler, and although no mention is made of her in William Booth's autobiographical notes, it is probable that he did look upon this follower with a somewhat more particular and personal interest than the others.



It is certain that he never spoke to her except about religion; it is certain that he did not in any way "keep company" with her; but in one way or the other his followers came to regard it as a possibility that William Booth and the sweet singer might some day make a match of it; while, many years after, when as a very old man he was reminded of this young lady, and told of the expectation which existed among the others, he smiled and made answer, "Ah, I remember there was such a person!"

It seems that after they had conducted their open-air meetings and finished their preachings in the cottages, this body of young enthusiasts would sometimes go for a walk before returning to their homes. But there was never, I am told, any mingling of the sexes on these occasions. "The men always walked together in front, and we would follow behind," says Sarah Butler. Conversation was about religion. Schemes for spreading Christianity were discussed. Particular sinners were marked down for personal appeals and private prayer.

"I remember, however," Sarah Butler told me, "one of those walks when we more or less travelled together, and conversation turned upon other things beside religion. Some one proposed that we should go and look at the new railway line that was being laid at Colwick. It was a wonderfully quiet night. The moon was shining. And it was summer-time. Well, we were very happy and elated. We loved the stillness, the fields, the woods, and the moonlight. We sang as we walked. We rejoiced in our happiness. And I think William Booth did walk with my sister for a little time, but I can't be certain. However, nothing came of the walk, or of any other meeting. I used to think they were in love with each other, but I see now it was only a fancy. William Booth had no other thought in his mind at that time than preaching to the people and saving sinners from their sin. He was the most earnest and enthusiastic man I ever knew — he was really burning, really on fire, to save souls. He used to say that we were saved to save. He could not stand people who said their souls were saved and who did nothing to save other people. If he thought of my sister at all, it was only a passing

thought. No one could make a romance out of it. I assure you he was too much in earnest about this street-preaching to think of falling in love."

We see this group of young people, preaching and praying in the streets, holding their little services in cottages, going for walks in sexual separation, whether with moon shining or not shining, meeting in chapel on Saturday, attending classes, discussing sermons and gossip of chapel life—a group of earnest young lives conscious of God, conscious of God's demand upon them, and preoccupied with business of the next world—a strange and lonely group in Nottingham, making no great stir there, incurring some local ridicule, and occasioning some distinct alarm and misgiving in the straight minds of rigid chapel orthodoxy.

It would seem that the great humanitarian spirit of the Christian religion had not yet developed in the soul of William Booth. He was a member of the Church, he attended the services of that Church, and his labours were directed to preaching his gospel of salvation in order to save people from hell and bring them into membership with his Church. The Chartist was dead in him. The Methodist was very much alive. Years were to pass before he broke free from sectarianism, before he reached Christianity as a spirit that could not be bound, and before he perceived the concurrent necessity of social betterment with spiritual welfare.

In the lives of few religious leaders is growth more evident. He was haunted now and again, as we shall see, by dogmas and theological practices which had once formed part of his religious life, but he was never deeply perturbed by these old clothes of his youth, and in his normal moods he was conscious of no need for any theology in his service to the world but that which led men to the heart of Christ. He grew wonderfully, he developed amazingly, and at the end, though a certain hard and rigorous strain endured, his spirit was one of the sweetest, tenderest, most tolerant and gentle that ever longed for spiritual perfection.

He was asked, when he was an old man, by a friend of his youth if he still insisted upon some particular doctrine

of his youth. The answer is a key to the man's soul. Tapping his friend impatiently on the breast with the back of his hand, he said, "Look here, when a fellow speaks to us like that we tell him to *go and do something*." This may have been uttered only as the expression of a mood, for he held this doctrine himself, but such utterance shows that his emphasis was upon service, not upon speculation.

But it was years before he could give such a great and splendid answer, an answer so robust with the health of true and manful religion. He himself had to grow to that answer. For years he was interested in such speculations, for years he was plagued by theology, for years he was blind to the natural and shameful causes of human misery; but, although to the end of his days he believed in such a doctrine as that of Entire Sanctification, and although he never tore up the documents of abstract theology, he certainly grew more and more impatient of egoistic introspection, more and more insistent upon *work* for God.

Nevertheless, even at this epoch in his life, there are signs of the wonders that were yet to be. One catches glimmerings of an original mind, flashes of a spirit that could revolt passionately from orthodoxy, and sparks of a soul that well might burst into flame for the salvation of unhappy people.

The respectable citizens who attended Wesley Chapel — good, solid Christians of the commercial variety, the gentlemen in broadcloth, and the ladies in bombazine, or some other notable material of the period guaranteeing moral value and financial stability — these goodly and satisfied souls were one Sunday morning astonished out of their senses by such a scuffling of broken boots, such a rustle of shoddy rags, and such a stertorous breathing of congregated misery as never before had desecrated their brick-and-mortar habitation of Wesleyanism.

William Booth had made himself an apostle to the lads of Nottingham slums; he had preached to them in the open, gathered a circle about him, and was on fire to bring them within the fold of the Methodists. If he was happy kneeling in the streets at night and praying with them, he desired to be happier still by praying with them on Sunday,

praying with these ragged roughs and toughs within the consecrated walls of Wesley Chapel. And so it came about one Sunday that he marched his first regiment of the ragged and neglected into the aisles of the most respectable Temple, conducted them into the best pews he could find, and sat among them almost quivering with satisfaction and delight. But the effect of this invasion was not what he had hoped. The young enthusiast was called before Authority, was argued with, was instructed, and was finally told that he might bring these outcasts into the chapel only if he entered by the back door (invisible behind the pulpit) and seated his converts in obscure benches reserved particularly for the impecunious and shabby.

One of the most notable Wesleyan preachers of the present time cannot think of this and other incidents connected with Nottingham Wesleyanism, presently to be described, without an angry indignation. He can see perfectly well that if Hugh Price Hughes and many another Wesleyan preacher of later times had been minister of that chapel in Nottingham, William Booth would never have been lost to the Methodists. But I think it is truer to say that Hugh Price Hughes, and men like him, both among the Methodists and the Anglican communion, owe their enthusiasm and their democratic Christianity to the Salvation Army, and that this Army was too spontaneous and original an expression of religious experience to have grown up within any of the fixed and settled Churches.

As for this particular incident, plainly enough there is much to be said for the judgment delivered by Authority. One may be indignant about it from afar off, but to sit for hours among a company of unwashed, malodorous, and possibly diseased humanity is not an experience healthful for the body nor conducive to religious concentration. It is a merit in William Booth that he saw the validity of this objection; that, young and headstrong as he was, he did not immediately abandon the work; that, hurt and chilled as surely he must have been, he yet bowed to the ruling, accepted the judgment, and obeyed his religious superiors.

But he felt more and more the call of the streets. As

soon as ever his work would allow, he was preaching to the miserables and outcasts of Nottingham, seeking sinners, interesting the indifferent, thundering the wrath of God against wickedness and transgression. He won one man who was famous in the town as a "character," the drunken, wife-beating, humorous-minded rascal, known as "Besom Jack," of whom mention has been made. This man had lived an utterly abominable life. He went about the streets selling brooms, and every penny that he gained in this manner was spent upon drink. His poor wife had to beg at the doors of her neighbours for a few used tea-leaves, which she boiled up afresh, and so lived, starving and terrified. Booth won this man, won him so completely that he became a faithful follower of the street preachers, working for them, helping them, saving the old companions of his drunken days, and devoting himself in his home to making amends for his past iniquity. His conversion created something of a sensation. It was not recognized as a miracle, but it was talked about as something either amusing or interesting, something for mockery and sneers, or for discussion and timorous questioning, according to the faith or no faith of the talkers.

"The leading men in the Church to which I belonged," says Booth, "were afraid I was going too fast, and gave me plenty of caution, quaking and fearing at every new departure, but never a word of encouragement to help me on. But I went forward all the same."

He remarks that there were many indications in those early events of the organization which he was destined to bring into existence several years afterwards. Not only was there preaching in the streets, not only was there a tracking down of particular sinners, not only was there a total insistence on the absolute necessity of a changed heart, but every opportunity was seized by the young enthusiast for striking the torpid imaginations of the people with the realities of spiritual life. One of his followers, for instance, a young girl of humble parentage, was brought to her death-bed; William Booth and his friends prayed and sang at her bedside; she died with the expectation of heaven shining in



her face, and her funeral was made an occasion for triumph and rejoicing. To the end of his days he never forgot that funeral. He remembers that it was snowing, and he tells how a procession was formed in the white streets, and how the body of the girl was borne to her grave through the snowfall between rows of watching people, and followed by his regiment of helpers singing hymns of victory and joy.

So consumed was he by the passion for saving souls that reticence and restraint to him were like ropes about the legs of a starving man seeking for food. He was working hard for daily bread, it must be remembered, from early in the morning until seven, often eight, o'clock at night; it was only for a few dark hours that his fiery soul had opportunity for seeking the welfare of his fellow-creatures; all the passion and tremendous sincerity of his impetuous spirit, pent up during the hours of uncongenial toil, burst their bonds in the brief evenings of his ministration and made him what men call a zealot and a fanatic.

It is important to observe, however, that the thought of entering the ministry, of giving up everything for the preaching of religion, had not yet even occurred to his mind. He regarded himself as a layman. He considered that one of the first charges on his life was the support of his mother and sisters. He was very much in earnest about his future, terribly distressed by the extreme difficulty of earning a living. Again and again the complaint breaks out that he was stung with bitterness by the pitiful position in which he found himself placed — a position of bound apprentice to a niggardly employer, earning but a small wage, and forced to witness, he, the only son of his mother, the calamitous poverty of that shabby smallware shop in Goose Gate.

He had been sent to the best school in Nottingham; he had been encouraged to regard himself as a gentleman; the talk of his father had been all of fortune-making and fine living; until he was thirteen years of age it had never once occurred to him that he would have to work hard, and, working hard, find himself unable to support life. His mother was a proud woman, of better family than his



father; his sisters were girls of strong character and impatient of poverty. He was galled by his helplessness, vexed with his destiny.

At the beginning of his religious zeal he was opposed by his family. His efforts to spiritualize the life of his home were met with impatience and counter-attacks upon his new-found theology. Presently he gained his elder sister, Ann; later he won his invalid sister, Emma; and later still Mary Booth, his mother, surrendered to his insistent appeals. But for some years he received scarcely any encouragement in his home, and at the beginning was definitely withstood and gainsaid.

Therefore we have the drama presented to us of a young man straining every nerve to support a family opposed to the divine interests of his innermost life, a young man committed to a form of employment extremely distasteful to his mind, who felt himself urged and driven by the Spirit of God to seek sinners and to save the lost, and who used every minute of his leisure in this work against the discouragement of his religious superiors and the opposition of his family. If those who later in his career did not scruple, but actually hastened, to attack this singular and pure-minded man, charging him, among other sins, with hypocrisy and cant and self-seeking — if they had known of these first chapters in his religious life, had known of his courageous devotion, of his intense solitude of soul, of his manful struggle against forces which crush heroism and turn enthusiasm to bitterness and despair, surely they had laid their hands upon their mouths. He experienced in those years, and for many years afterwards, a ceaseless hindrance to the clamour of his soul; and, impulsive, masterful, and wilful as he was by nature, even while he pressed forward on the path of spiritual duty, he yet loyally bowed his back to the burden of necessity and carried his load with a stout heart. He not only helped, so far as he could, to support his mother and sisters, but he looked forward to the future with this objective always before his eyes.

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT HE BELIEVED AT THIS TIME

1845

It is time to examine the theology of this seventeen-year-old youth, the theology which had changed the direction of his life and laid a powerful and constraining hand upon the impulses of his passionate nature.

At its centre this theology remained the religion of his long life, without change or modification of any kind. In the radius of its circumference there were changes — changes making for a less partial outlook on human life, and producing greater tolerance and deeper kindness in the heart of the man; but the centre was constant and unshakable.

He had been guided, he tells us, largely without human intervention, almost entirely by the Spirit of God, to perceive that the very soul of the Christian Revelation — making it a religion altogether different from every other religion and every other philosophy under heaven — is the divine miracle of conversion.<sup>1</sup> And by conversion he understood a totally changed attitude of soul. He himself had experienced this mystery, he himself had been the human means of producing it in other people; nothing in the world was of such certain and absolute reality to his brain and heart.

He became at this time impatient of political agitation, abandoned altogether his sympathy with Chartism, regarded his previous pleasures and amusements as the mere follies of childhood; nothing was of moment now but the mystery of conversion. To the drunkard and the sensualist who were striving to fight against their sins, he said, "It is useless

<sup>1</sup> A well-known psychologist has argued that conversions are known outside the Christian religion; but the conversion which makes Christianity different from every other religion is the conversion which results in a life of love to God and unbroken service to humanity, particularly to the humblest and the most sorrowful.

for you to struggle, the sin is stronger than you; nothing can come of your efforts except defeat and death; but, seek a change of heart, surrender yourself entirely to God, leave it to Him to overcome your temptations, and you will find victory is yours."

He saw that temptations which were overpoweringly seductive to natural man, which became invested with all the glamour and magic of a strong passion to souls conscious only of their bodies, and striving only with human strength to contend against them, became instantly reduced to the impotence of their true triviality in the eyes of a soul really and profoundly conscious of God and Eternity. Conversion with him was the divine focus revealing all thoughts and all things in their absolute perspective. If, by the power of Christ, he had been saved by this simple miracle of conversion, and if such a creature as Besom Jack had been saved by the same means, then surely here was medicine for all the ills of the whole world and the true path to everlasting salvation.

He held then, and held to the end of his days, that directly a soul is converted — that is to say, directly the spirit of a man looks upon earthly life with the sure and certain knowledge that a living God exists, and that by faith in Christ he is brought into harmony with that God — temptation loses its power and the soul is impelled towards holiness. Other theological doctrines, with which now we need not concern ourselves, flowed from this fixed centre of his life; but this centre, this immovable and absolute centre, was the heart and soul of his religious existence. How a man was to gain conversion — this carried him into the field of doctrine; but the dogma of his daily life, the conviction of his active soul, was the central and illuminating dogma of a New Birth.

In a sense this dogma was faithfully preached at Wesley Chapel, was indeed the very spirit of contemporary Methodism. But it was held formally and preached, if not coldly, at least without passion. Above all things it was preached mainly to the converted. Here was the secret of life, the Open Sesame of distracted and perishing mortality, hidden away in respectable chapels and kept as a treasure by those

already rich with blessings. But, outside Wesley Chapel, far and wide under the smoke of a roaring God-scorning city, stretched the slums and warrens and rookeries of Nottingham; and there men were living in sin and infamy, women going down to hell in a legion, children perishing like flies. Was no one to tell these doomed multitudes that the way to everlasting felicity was plain and straight before them? Was no one to go out into the highways and byways? Was no one to go as a physician to those who had no physician? Clearly some one must go to them; he and his friends would go; and since time was short, since the issues were of such awful importance, he and his friends would stop at nothing to rouse these miserable poor people to the glorious news of salvation. They must be told before it was too late. And yet when he went to them, at the end of his hard day's work, he found them for the most part indifferent to his good news, largely inclined to make a mock of him, in some cases definitely disposed to obstruct and molest him.

It would seem that he did not scrutinize this apathy or examine this antagonism. He was too young in years, too impetuous in temperament, too absorbed in the truth of his doctrine for calm and dispassionate reflection. Social wrongs presented themselves to his eyes, but not pressingly to his political conscience. Many years were to pass over his head before he admitted the political question to his mind and transformed it into a religious question. For the present he was a preacher of conversion, those who heard him had the power either to decide for God or to decide for the Devil — his business was to declare the truth and leave the rest with heavenly Powers.

One perceives that if he had been more strictly, rigidly, and exactly honest with himself — the rarest virtue in the world, and among headlong and impulsive natures almost impossible — he would have realized that conversion had not solved even in his own life all its difficulties and all its heartbreaking obstructions. He was very poor, in spite of incessant toil; he was rendered irritable and impatient by the blank prospect which confronted him; he was often cast down and utterly dejected by the misery of his physical

existence. Conversion had saved his soul and sent him out to save the souls of other people, but it had not eased the burden weighing on his shoulders, had not cleared the horizon of banked and minatory clouds, certainly had not as yet flooded his soul with the peace that passes understanding.

But the boy of seventeen, an age when seriousness is rare and introspection is almost unnatural, stopped on his path for none of these considerations. His soul was certain of the one mighty fact that a spiritual change of most wonderful and divine power is produced by conversion, and his burning nature, as well as an iron sense of duty, impelled him forward to declare this Gospel of God.

He believed in hell, as he believed in hell to the end of his life, but whether he deliberately and full-consciously believed that all those who heard him and rejected his message would perish everlastingly in undying flames we cannot determine. It would seem that he did not at this period of his life penetrate below the surface of dogmatic religion, or trouble himself with any of those dark and awful mysteries which his practical common sense would inform him are insoluble to human understanding. He believed in God, he believed in Satan; he believed in heaven, he believed in hell; he believed that Christ had died to save sinners, he believed that without conversion no sinner could be saved — and there his theology stopped. It was the theology of Wesley, Whitefield, and of George Fox. It was the theology of the newly-born evangelical school in the Anglican Church. It was also the theology of an impassioned boy, headstrong and wilful, who had his living to get and his soul to save from damnation. Not a whisper had found its way to his mind of a possible ascent of man through a long and blood-stained cycle of ages from a state of animalism to a condition of comparative civilization; no blinding realization of astronomical discovery had startled his soul into the conception of a universe so appallingly mechanical and so infinitely vast that the mind at first shrinks from it with physical dizziness and a kind of spiritual anguish. No discipline of literature had made him sceptical of historical records and suspicious of



words too big for human experience. No large or general acquaintance with life had brought him into knowledge of disabilities of temperament, inhibitions of heredity, the fatigues of middle age, the necessity for human happiness. No "calm and critical theology" had paralyzed his soul with doubts that are a check to enthusiasm, with compromises that are death to self-sacrifice and zeal.

To this youth, slaving for a paltry wage, with the hopes of a gentleman's life abandoned, all promise of his childhood utterly dissipated from before his eyes, the problem of human existence was simple and emphatic. This earth occupied the central place in the stellar universe; man, created in perfection, had chosen sin and had rejected God; God, in His mercy, had visited and redeemed man; man had it in his power, every man, to accept or to disdain that redemption; everlasting happiness would be the lot of those who accepted, everlasting misery the lot of those who rejected, the Divine mercy. This was his theology, the theology of his particular Church, the theology of all the Churches, the absolute and indubitable theology of the whole of Christendom. But William Booth believed in it with all the honest passion of his soul, and believing it so passionately and realistically, how could he go through life hugging to his soul the certainty of his own salvation, careless of, indifferent to, the equal certainty of damnation for all those who did not believe? He was too honest a man for that, too genuine a realist for such self-deception.

But not yet had his soul seized the fulness of the faith that was in him. He was very much set upon improving his worldly prospects; he was perfectly content that the greater part of his life should be spent in earning money for his self-support; he was satisfied if he gave his brief leisure to this work for the Kingdom of God. He differed from the great majority of his fellow-believers chiefly in this respect, that so intense was his faith in the blessing and necessity of conversion, so fixed was his conviction that a man was "saved to save," that he used every moment of his leisure to extend the knowledge of this truth. And because of this "the leading men in the Church gave him plenty of caution"—afraid that he was "going too fast."



## CHAPTER VI

### OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY COUPLED WITH THE DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE GREATNESS

1845-1848

WESLEY CHAPEL is a building typical of Victorian Methodism. A slight concession is made to architecture in the façade, which aims in stucco at a Grecian Ionic effect with fluted columns and a triangular pediment over the portico; but for the rest everything is severely ordered for useful service and downright hard work. No effort is made to lay a spell upon the senses with dim windows, branching pillars, timbered roof, and twilight aisles conducting to a holy of holies. Worshippers here are evidently expected to bring with them their own warmth and tenderness, their own passionate but invisible sense of beauty, their own mood of thanksgiving, aspiration, and worship.

Historians of the nineteenth century will probably pay some attention to this architecture of Nonconformity — this deliberate effort of the religious conscience to do without aids, this evident suspicion and dislike of beauty, this rather hard and insensible insistence on utility. What monuments exist more eloquent of the stern and pugnacious spirit which accompanied the middle classes of England from the ruins of aristocracy to the first foundations of democracy? More than a touch of the Puritan is in this early Victorian architecture of Nonconformity; one sees there, visible and proud, the firm, masterful trade-mark of a practical commercialism. Not only was a chapel intended to defy the pagan traditions of architecture, not only was there to be an entire absence of Popish ornamentation and sacramental imagery, but advantage was to be taken of every possible contrivance that bricks and mortar could give for the work of a business-like and organized religious centre. A chapel was intended to be not only a place of worship but a place of business.

It was no longer merely a humble and obscure dwelling-place for despised dissenters, but a prosperous and challenging headquarters of a conquering Church.

In some measure this spirit indicated a return to the middle ages, when churches were not kept locked and empty for six days and only dismally opened for a few lugubrious hours on the seventh, but when they were the scene of many astonishing festivities throughout the week. The Nonconformist rightfully regarded with horror the locked door of the State Church. He determined that his protesting chapel should be open from week-end to week-end, not for the wicked festivities of the dark ages, not for the vain repetition of ritual and liturgy, but for every possible function which would serve the religious life of the district.

In the case of Wesley Chapel — likely, on account of William Booth, to be a place of pilgrimage so long as it stands — one may see very perfectly this spirit of practical and business-like Nonconformity. The building is lofty and spacious, with wide galleries, a large central platform for the minister, a clear view from side to side, and no suggestion whatever of a sensuous purpose. Only behind the preacher's back are there any seats of obscurity — the free seats hidden away by the back entrance to which William Booth's ragged regiment was condemned in the late forties. But it is under the floor of the chapel, in the basement, that the spirit of the place most clearly communicates itself to the visitor. Here, in a rather bad light it is true, and with no very satisfactory supply of fresh air, are numerous classrooms, vestries, offices, and minor halls for meetings, Sunday schools, and choir practices. One feels in going from room to room of this immense basement, penetrating gloomy corridors, opening endless doors, and passing up and down flights of stone stairs with iron banisters, that one is exploring some centre of local government — a town hall or a court of justice. It is all so entirely different from the crypt of a church, that one is not in the least surprised to see men with hats on their heads, or to hear loud voices and laughter. It impresses one with the sense of a spirit which is active, thorough, economical, and practical — a spirit which has no time for celebrating a victory or keeping a

memorial, so eager is it to drill and marshal every soldier of religion for the battle of the present hour.

It was in this great cold barrack of a chapel that the soul of William Booth opened to religious influences. It was within these bare and chilling walls that he was first conscious of spiritual warmth, first felt his life kindled by the imagination of God. Untouched by the beauty of the Anglican liturgy, utterly unmoved by the innovations of the Puseyite clergyman of Sneinton Church, this dissatisfied and unruly youth, this excitable boy interested in Chartism, found himself quickened into new and most wonderful life under the whitewashed ceiling of a Methodist chapel, there discovered for the first time his possession of a soul. Something came to him in this chapel which had hitherto not come to him anywhere — neither in his home nor his church, neither in the crocus meadows of the Trent nor the stirring streets of Nottingham. And when the illumination came, the magic which transformed at the same moment his own inner life and the whole world surrounding him, he threw himself with a passionate ardour into the mechanic activities of this thriving chapel, became one of the workers, progressed till he was a street missionary, and finally found himself at the age of nineteen an accredited local preacher.

We have already seen in what manner he was converted; it is now our work to study the life of the eager boy as an orthodox and unquestioning Methodist. On the surface these years of his existence would seem the most dull and the least interesting, but in truth they are years of singular significance to the history of his life. For they witness, almost more than all the other changes in his career, to the principle of growth and development; they show us that William Booth grew gradually to be what he was, and that he was veritably forced into Salvationism by the pressure of circumstances; they reveal to us that at the threshold of manhood William Booth was a disciplined and obedient member of an organized and earnest sect, a youth only different from other youths who attended this same chapel in the capacity of his soul to grow, in the force and power of his character to increase its energies.

The minister of this chapel at that time was the Rev.

Samuel Dunn, superintendent of the circuit, a man of some scholarship, autocratic, hard, obstinate, and incurably radical. He was destined to become one of the Reformers who rent the Wesleyan body in twain, one of the famous five ministers expelled from the Wesleyan Church on a question of its government. William Booth spoke always well of this man, saying that he was kind to him, encouraged him, helped him: but it was the kindness of a headmaster to a boy in the second form, the encouragement of a general to a private soldier, the help which a bishop may stoop to give to a sacristan or a Sunday school teacher; there was nothing of warmth and generosity in this kindness; it was always cold, formal, and aloof. Nevertheless in the austerity of the minister, his unbending rigidity, and his severe earnestness, the young William Booth saw something to honour and respect, something to which he could look up, and something of which he stood always in a little awe. And in the services of the chapel conducted by this austere minister, he got all the warmth, fire, and excitement that his soul desired.

There were Love Feasts on Sunday afternoons, when men spoke freely of their religious experiences; at night the great chapel, which held at that time eighteen hundred people, was filled chiefly with working-class members, and after this service there was a prayer-meeting, free of all ritual and formality, at which men uttered their supplications with a fervour and a freedom unknown at the present time. Conversion was the central doctrine of the Methodists, and at the evening services sinners were invited to confess their sins, to elect then and there for God, and to prove the reality of their hunger for Divine mercy by coming inside the communion-rails and there giving themselves up to Christ. The oratory of James Caughey had given fresh impulse to this revival of the old Methodist teaching, and none who worshipped in that chapel was more convinced of the need for conversion than William Booth, none more earnestly proclaimed this doctrine of the miracle. Caughey had preached an unforgettable sermon on the words recorded in St. Mark, "Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive

them, and ye shall have them"—words whose meaning is only now coming home to the minds of multitudes of men with a significance scarcely glimpsed by the American revivalist. Prayer was regarded as the wrestling of a soul with God; it did not suffice the Methodists to kneel in decent propriety, listening to the recital of a printed prayer, or repeating in low and reverent voice a supplication as familiar to the mind as the alphabet. This might serve on occasion, at the fashionable morning service, for instance; but at Love Feasts, at certain of the evening services, and at the prayer-meetings, a fervent and even clamorous supplication led the way to remarkable conversions.

They believed that conversion was a distinct and instantaneous experience, and that the soul thus converted received "the Witness of the Spirit" to the forgiveness of sins and adoption into the family of God. They believed also that the converted soul may press forward to a higher experience of Grace, that known as the state of Entire Sanctification. A man decisively and instantaneously converted might of course grow cold in his faith, might fall into sin, might even lapse into the darkness of atheism; but a man, advancing from conversion and achieving through the Spirit of God the condition of Entire Sanctification could become so purified that sin had no more lure for him; he was not only saved, he was at unity with the purpose of his Creator. Therefore at these Love Feasts and prayer-meetings, not only did men pray that sinners might be converted, but that they themselves might deepen their spiritual life, and that they might enter into this blissful condition of Entire Sanctification and be free of the stain of sin for evermore.

"They like to dabble!" was one of William Booth's disdainful remarks in later life concerning those who talk on the surface of these great matters and never plunge below to the actual experience of holiness. He was emphatic from those early days to the end of his life on this doctrine of persistent faith, on this doctrine of Entire Sanctification. He never changed his mind in this respect. He could as easily have changed his skin as changed in this belief which had become the very core of his character.



The dangers of this doctrine do not concern us at this point in the narrative, nor need we defend such a man as William Booth from the charges of hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and spiritual intoxication which odious or foolish creatures have so often and disastrously associated with it in their efforts either to exalt themselves or to deceive their fellow-men. Conversion was preached in Wesley Chapel, and this conversion was the conversion that turned a radically bad man into a radically good man, a miracle visible to all, provable by all. William Booth, himself converted, believed in conversion as the only way of entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven; and he believed in Entire Sanctification as the great proof that his spirit was advancing in holiness.

It was because he found this depth of religious teaching among the Methodists that he gave himself with unquestioning loyalty to their Church. Had there been any other church in existence which more earnestly proclaimed the same doctrine, or more fervently practised the same method of religious propaganda, beyond a question his ardour would have carried him into their midst. But there was no other church, and therefore for him this was the veritable Church of Christ, and he loved it with so great a love that at the very end of his days he spoke at times of the Wesleys and the Methodists with a deep, almost wistful affection.

One might have thought that a nature so strong and imperative would have found even in youth many points of divergence in the Methodist body, would have been critical of them, impatient of his elders, scornful of any authority over him. But so far was this from being the case that William Booth was for some time a contented member of a Class "led by" an old man who acted as the chapel-keeper, one known familiarly as Sammy Statham — a genial, fat-faced, side-whiskered old man who is said to have looked like an alderman's coachman. On one occasion the minister of the chapel, Samuel Dunn, wanted a young man to do some village preaching for him, and mentioned the matter to his chapel-keeper, then holding his Class. Statham said that he knew the very man, and summoned William Booth before the minister. When he was asked if he thought he could



preach, Booth replied confidently that he had been preaching now in the streets for some time. And to this the great Dr. Dunn made answer, "By whose authority? Have I given you leave?" Instead of revolt William Booth bowed his head and accepted the rebuke.

He was so far from being a rebel that he hesitated before the dignity of becoming a regular minister of this Church. There is no doubt whatever that he regarded his preaching in the streets and his labour among the sinners of Nottingham slums as religious duties of his leisure time; that he considered it the first necessity of his life to earn money, provide for his mother, and make his own way in the world. He was tremendously in earnest about his religious work, inordinately earnest perhaps; but this great earnestness was only the earnestness of a good layman. He was poor; he suffered the deprivations of poverty; and life was embittered by the financial struggle to exist even in the most humble circumstances. His proud spirit, his ambitious nature, urged him away from this hateful inhibiting poverty; and if he worked for his Church, and gave almost every moment of his scant leisure to religious labours, in the busy hours of his daily life he dreamed of commercial greatness and success in the world of toiling men.

One of his companions at this time, Walter James of Sneinton Hollows, remembers walking with William Booth past Sneinton Church one day, and suddenly being asked the inconsequent question, "Have you no ambition?" James looked at him, surprised, and asked, "What do you mean?" He replied, "Because I have; I intend to be something great; I don't mean to belong to the commonalty."

This desire to accomplish something was always smouldering in the heart of the youth. He did not realize that greatness was to come to him in the religious life which as yet he loved only as one loves a favourite crotchet. He saw this greatness, to which the qualities of his nature impelled him, as victory to be wrung after immense struggle from a hard world — victory and success, wealth and power, position and honour. Always he would be a faithful Methodist, always he would be a devout and

earnest Christian, always he would be a worker for religion; but also he would be a man of position and power in the secular world.

That religion was, nevertheless, the most potent force in his life is abundantly manifest. A loss which might have quenched his ardour and driven him into privacy occurred in his nineteenth year. Will Sansom died. There were others among the chapel youths who accepted Booth's leadership, but Will Sansom was the friend of his soul and the supremest human inspiration of his missionary labours. And, as it happened, with Will Sansom's death, the chilling hand of authority was laid upon William Booth. "I had to go forward all alone," he says, "in face of an opposition which suddenly sprang up from the leading functionaries of the church." With no Jonathan at his side, and followed only by timorous youths who looked to him for leadership, the lad went on with his street preaching, his cottage prayer-meetings, and his face-to-face encounters with notorious profligates; using means which startled orthodoxy and inventing methods wholly unsanctioned by traditional authority. Moreover, he was ready to sacrifice for his religious instincts his very means of subsistence, was prepared to kick away from his feet the ladder by which his father had promised him that he should ascend to riches, and to which he now clung desperately enough for daily bread.

I have told you how intense had been the action of my conscience before my conversion. But after my conversion it was naturally ever increasingly sensitive to every question of right and wrong, with a great preponderance as to the importance of what was right over what was wrong. Ever since that day it has led me to measure my own actions, and judge my own character by the standard of truth set up in my soul by the Bible and the Holy Ghost; and it has not permitted me to allow myself in the doings of things which I have felt were wrong without great inward torture. I have always had a great horror of hypocrisy — that is, of being unreal or false, however fashionable the cursed thing might be, or whatever worldly temptation might strive to lead me on to the track. In this I was tested again and again in those early days, and at last there came a crisis.

Our business was a large one, and the assistants were none too many. On Saturdays there was always great pressure.

Work often continued into the early hours of Sunday. Now I had strong notions in my youth and long after — indeed, I entertain them now — about the great importance of keeping the Sunday, or Sabbath as we always called it, clear of unnecessary work.

For instance, I walked in my young days thousands of miles on the Sabbath, when I could for a trifling sum have ridden at ease, rather than use any compulsory labour of man or beast for the promotion of my comfort. I still think we ought to abstain from all unnecessary work ourselves, and, as far as possible, arrange for everybody about us to have one day's rest in seven. But, as I was saying, I objected to working at my business on the Sabbath, which I interpreted to mean after twelve o'clock on Saturday night. My relatives and many of my religious friends laughed at my scruples; but I paid no heed to them, and told my master I would not do it, though he replied that if it were so he would simply discharge me. I told him I was willing to begin on Monday morning as soon as the clock struck twelve, and work until the clock struck twelve on Saturday night, but that not one hour or one minute of Sunday would I work for him for all his money.

He kept his word, put me into the street, and I was laughed at by everybody as a sort of fool. But I held out, and within seven days he gave in, and thinking my scrupulous conscience might serve his turn he told me to come back again. I did so, and before another fortnight had passed he went off with his young wife to Paris, leaving the responsibilities of a business involving the income and expenditure of hundreds of pounds weekly on my young shoulders.

From this incident it will be seen that William Booth had established himself in the confidence of his employer, and was first among the assistants of the establishment, a position remarkable for a youth of nineteen.

He had now made sufficient mark as a missionary to attract the attention of his minister. Dr. Samuel Dunn sent for him, and urged him to offer himself for the ministry. William Booth hung back. He says he shrank from the responsibility. No doubt there were other causes, and in all likelihood ambition was one of the reasons for his refusal. I do not mean that he found it difficult to sacrifice any lingering ambition for worldly success, but rather that he had so accustomed himself, "with a long persistency of purpose," to shouldering the responsibilities of his domestic position that no idea of the ministry had ever presented

itself to his imagination. He had his living to get; his mother was struggling with poverty; the responsibility of providing for his mother and sisters had been present in his mind, like a torture, since his thirteenth year. Therefore, when the Superintendent of the Circuit suggested to the youth that he should become a minister of the Wesleyan Church, the thought was so foreign to the drift of his purpose that he could do nothing but refuse. He was asked for an excuse. He pleaded ill health. The minister, not to be baffled, sent him to a doctor. The doctor justified the excuse. He declared that if the young man attempted the life of a minister he would be done for in twelve months. "I remember him saying," relates William Booth, "that unless a man with a nervous system like mine was framed like a brute, and had a chest like a prize-fighter, he would break down."

So the lad continued the daily round of his former life. He was a local preacher, and went far afield to preach the gospel of conversion. He worked from early morning until late in the evening to earn a pitiful wage. He had no thought in his mind, no other purpose before his eyes, but to work for his mother and sisters, and use every hour of his leisure as a layman in the service of Christ.

His eldest sister, Ann Booth, married one of his school-fellows, then a well-off business man, and went to live in London. Mrs. Booth and the two other sisters remained in the smallware shop, working industriously to keep a roof over their heads. The son William, with the six years of his apprenticeship drawing to a close, began to look about him for a fresh start in life.

The position of the family at this period was the position of William Booth—a hard and deadly struggle to exist. The golden dreams of Samuel Booth had vanished. The former comforts and respectabilities of the household had disappeared. Definitely and decisively, it seemed, this little circle of humanity had sunk into a dark obscurity from which it was impossible that they should ever emerge. Only in the son did the determination to be "something great" persist; and the widow and her daughters saw with something like despair this last hope of their lives wasting

his strength and consuming his most precious time in a quixotic effort to convert the disreputable mob of Nottingham to the religion of Christianity.

And to William Booth himself it seemed at last that he was losing time and squandering opportunities. He saw nothing in Nottingham that offered him any hope.

At nineteen the weary years of my apprenticeship came to an end. I had done my six years' service, and was heartily glad to be free from the bitter and humiliating bondage they had proved. But I was still under the necessity to work, and a situation had to be sought. I tried hard to find some kind of labour that would give me more liberty to carry out my aggressive ideas in the way of saving the lost, but failed. For twelve months I waited. Those months were amongst the most desolate of my life. You may say, Where was the Church to which I belonged? Where were its rich business members who might surely have found employment for one who was already giving promise of a useful life? Yes: well, it was the question we asked. For no one took the slightest interest in me.

Twelve desolate months in the life of a very exceptional youth, twelve desolate months at the threshold of his manhood; and at the end of them, nothing. It was in those twelve months that his mother and sisters came nearer to him; he was cast down, dejected, humiliated, and almost crushed; it was impossible for them to look upon this tragedy of romantic youth unmoved. For there was William Booth hunting the streets of prosperous Nottingham for honourable employment, working by night in the slums, giving himself on Sunday to the work of the Chapel, seeking sinners, praying in cottages, visiting the sick and dying, reading Finney's *Sermons and Lectures*, studying the works of Whitefield and Wesley, protesting his faith at home that God would surely provide for him — and at the end of twelve months not a door had opened.

"I had to move away," he says; and, like many another adventurer with empty pockets and a fighting spirit, he set his face towards London.



## CHAPTER VII

### LONDON; THE EARLY VICTORIANS

1849

LONDON was full of great men and concerned with many matters of high importance, when William Booth arrived with his Bible during the autumn of the year 1849. This work-seeking youth, almost friendless and penniless in the multitudinous city, was presented with no immediate opportunity for setting the Thames on fire, could indeed see nowhere any provision made by which he might even earn bread enough to keep his soul in his body. If Nottingham could cheerfully do without him, London was certainly able to keep its anvil ringing with no help from his arm.

The times were serious enough. Palmerston, declaiming the false gospel of a bullying patriotism, was dragging the nation to the edge of war with France, and perhaps Russia, over the matter of a Portuguese Jew in Athens; Newman — with a brilliance and charm of style surpassed only by his indifference to history and science — was urging the Anglican Church of England towards a path which led backward and not forward; Carlyle was thundering his gospel of moral earnestness to an age which had lost respect for authority and was mindful only of commercial earnestness; the ruinous condition of Ireland had brought into existence the deadliest of all social evils — secret societies and bands of conspirators who sought to gain their ends by physical violence; and deep down among the dim and squalid millions of industrial England, the ignorant, degraded, overburdened, socially despised and politically neglected wealth-getters of this troubled England, there was unrest deeper than ocean and fiercer than flame.

It was an age in which only science held a taper into universal darkness. Everywhere else that one looked this darkness reigned and deepened. It reigned and deepened



over religion, which had lost the creative sense of joy, which was more concerned with words than life, and was here surrendering to the tyranny of tradition and there donning the vesture of the ethical philosopher. It reigned and deepened over the great art of architecture which had played the traitor to beauty and sold itself with both hands to utility and vulgar ignorance. It reigned and deepened over the whole field of politics which was saturated with corruption and surrounded on every side by the barriers of privilege. It reigned and deepened over the immense region of industry, where men who made a profession of religion, side by side with those who more honestly rejected religion, brutalized and destroyed their fellow-creatures, using up even the lives of children, in galloping efforts to lay up treasures upon earth. It reigned and deepened over the arts of the painter and musician, where a contemptible ideal of prettiness usurped the appeal of truth, beauty, and righteous passion. It reigned, too, even in the kingdom of literature where the revolt of Shelley, the mournful and despairing classicism of Keats, had yielded room to a conventional and ignoble propriety oblivious of beauty and fatal to truth. It reigned and deepened, too, over the entire field of national production and national life — visible in the ugliness of domestic furniture, in the frightful monstrosities of national monuments, in the painful conventions of respectable society, and in the appalling ignorance, destitution, and degradation of the masses.

One looks in vain, even from the giants of that age, for any recognition of this universal darkness. From the first page of his *Apologia* to the last Newman is concerned with a reconstruction of traditionalism, and says not a single word either about the progress of science or the ignorance and suffering of the common people. Macaulay, who retired into private life at this time, and had just published the first volumes of his auriferous history, never wrote one word which was in the nature of an alarm; "he did little," says Morley, "to make men better fitted to face a present of which, close as it was to him, he seems hardly to have dreamed." Tennyson began in a mild and picturesque manner to suggest the need for social reformation, but he

never wore the mantle of Shelley, and he ended as an honest obscurantist. Thackeray contented himself by sneering at the foibles of a very few rich and vulgar people. Dickens, when he became a reformer, struck his hardest blows at religious hypocrisy, and ranged himself on the side of a port-wine philanthropy, which, if it excelled the Bumbledom of his times, was nevertheless absolutely destructive of self-respect. Gladstone opposed the Factory Acts. Shaftesbury cried out that he got no help from religious people in his great work for the humanization of industry. Carlyle, with his gospel of moral earnestness, approached nearer, perhaps, than any other recognized great man of the times to the real danger of society, but he cried loudest for those very qualities and energies of the English character which were then most actively in existence and most conspicuous in stimulating an unsocial individualism. For the rest, the middle classes were committed to the gospel of energy, not to the gospel of intelligence; they were hot in pursuit of riches, perfectly self-satisfied, and only passionate when a murmur of discontent or any rumbling of threatening storm came to them in their comfortable parlours from the disreputable under-world of poverty and sin.

They liked to read (says Stopford Brooke) about pain and trouble in the past; they hated to read about it in the present. When suffering was known to be over, and made no claim on them — to read of it gave a pleasant flavour to their luxury and to their degraded peace. Therefore they accepted with a barren gratitude Mrs. Hemans, Letitia Elizabeth Landon, and others who wrote graceful, pathetic, perfumed stories, and pretty lyrics about spring and love and sorrow, and little deeds of valour, and such religion as their society could accept; religion which promised them in heaven a pleasant extension of their agreeable life on earth.

Men like Maurice and Kingsley were at work with new ideas for politics and religion; Ruskin was there, and Matthew Arnold was coming, with broader and truer notions of philosophy and art; George Eliot had a message for those who needed none; John Stuart Mill was laying the foundations of a more reasonable political economy; Cobden and Bright were fast preparing the way for a fresher and

kinder outlook on the nations of the world; but the general condition of the English people was one of frank materialism and aggressive complacency, a condition in which the "obese platitudes" of respectability were accepted as the highest wisdom and the unspeakable miseries of the poor were regarded as the judgments of God or the inevitable fruits of political economy.

It is difficult for a modern mind to conceive truly of the England of that period. Humanitarianism, which has become with us, if not a passion and a religion, at least good manners, was then regarded as the misguided hobby of a few fussy and mischief-making philanthropists who turned their backs on the stables of Augeas to plant mustard and cress on the banks of the cleansing rivers. Little concern was shown by the churches or the chapels for the bodies of men. No shame was felt for such a term as "Ragged Schools." There was no system of national education, factory legislation permitted children to work for ten hours a day, there was no real inspection of these insanitary places, no idea of housing reform, no provision for poverty but the execrable Poor-House. Few agencies existed for ministering to the physical needs of the poor, the mental needs of the uneducated, the spiritual needs of the sunken masses, the most elemental natural needs of perishing children. Politics had not even glanced at domestic legislation; the phrase *social conscience* had not been invented; men were satisfied with, accepted as a God-ordained system of human government, a state of individualism which trod millions underfoot for the enrichment of tens. Such a phrase as "Tory Democracy" would have had no meaning for Sir Robert Peel, and little meaning, if any, for the Gladstone of that day. Nearly every suggestion for bettering the condition of the poor was regarded as blasphemous republicanism and treated with a wrathful disdain. Tory and Whig desired office for the sake of patronage, and there was no difference in the blindness of the one and the other, no difference in the deadness of their imaginations to the evils of the time. Religion, politics, art, even literature, struck no blow for justice and advance.

One spirit was at work destined to exert an influence

on the world more far-reaching, and more revolutionary, than any which had preceded it; a spirit which has now overspread the whole world and still shows no sign of abating its force; a spirit which is at once responsible for infinite misery and yet carries with it almost the chief hope left to humanity—the spirit of mechanical science, the spirit of practical science applied to the physical needs of human life.

At the time when William Booth came to London railways were in their infancy, and the greatest achievement of manufacturing science was the spinning jenny. But a new door had been opened on existence. The promise of riches offered by this new field to ambitious men had thrown the whole weight of human intelligence on the side of science; nor did it need any impulse from the thesis of Darwin to urge men forward on this fresh trail to the ancient goal of material welfare. Little was now to be left to Providence, less and less as time went on; men took their own lives in their hands and pressed forward on the road of discovery, seeking everywhere for light on their path, too eager for the prize to heed voices so distant and so faint as the voices of faith and tradition.

It was a new world for the human race; and ancient precedents lost their authority when the frontier was crossed. Mechanical science is not so much an enemy to religion as a rival. Men not only give their lives but lose their hearts to this lavish employer of their brains. A Greek counted himself abased if he permitted his knowledge of science to be applied to trade; the English only reverence science when it serves a physical purpose. And the modern Englishman, surrounded on every side by the multitude of fast multiplying contrivances of physical science, finds it difficult to believe that it is not along this path of increasing wonder and more magic discovery that the generations of men are destined to travel on the way from the darkness of Ignorance to the light of Knowledge. From the mechanical toy to the bicycle, and from the bicycle to the dynamo driving light and power over hundreds of miles, science offers so potent and possessing a fascination to the question-asking mind of humanity, so constant and increas-

ing an occupation for faculties that clamour to be used, so many and so great services to a physically enfeebled generation, that the human race, weary of exertion, sceptical of tradition, dulled and exhausted by uninteresting toil, and eager for amusement, sets here its affections and gives here its loyalty and reverence.

Stronger than all the other adversaries in the path of William Booth when he arrived in London was this spirit of physical science, then beginning to diffuse itself over the nation. And as we shall presently find, it was a spirit whose value he failed to see and whose danger he rather despised than attacked. Not greatly concerned with Nature, and perhaps even less with literature and art, William Booth resolutely turned his back upon science, and, like St. Paul, determined to know nothing but Christ, and Him crucified. He came to London with the Bible, and from London he carried that Bible throughout the world.

If any man is tempted on this account to regard him only as a narrow and an intolerant Hebraist, let it be remembered that with no mean courage and after no inglorious battle did he keep his Bible in the streets of London and carry it to a world-wide victory.

He arrived in London as a seeker of work, the son of a poor and struggling mother in the provinces, with no influence, with no money, and with no friends. And at the very outset of this new adventure in his wayfaring he was met by one of those tragic disappointments of faith and affection which deject the courage of the bravest and embitter the feelings of the kindest.

In the notes made for his autobiography he set down under the title of "London" the one word "Loneliness!" This word stood for infinitely more than that sensation of solitude and depression which overwhelms a man in coming for the first time under the cold skies and into the unfriendly roar of a vast city utterly indifferent to his existence. It stood, too, for something even more than what he calls "that sickening impression" produced in the mind of "a young enthusiast for Christ" by the manifest iniquities and thousandfold degradations of a godless multitude. It stood for tragedy and bitter grief.



There was only one house in London to which he could go, the house of his eldest sister, the beautiful Ann who had been an influence for good on his boyhood, and who had stood by his side in the streets of Nottingham singing the hymns of those outdoor services. With whatever feelings he went to the house of his beloved sister, he was speedily brought face to face with disenchantment and horror. He found that her husband, one of his old school-fellows, had adopted a truculent agnosticism, was a loud-voiced and contemptuous materialist, a man who heartily despised religion, and regarded every species of piety as so much cant and make-believe. Moreover, he discovered that this disagreeable person had contracted the disease of alcoholism, and that he had not only infected his sister with his odious notions concerning religion, but also with the destroying germ of his horrible vice. Instead of welcome and encouragement, he met with ridicule and contempt. His sister was kind enough to let him argue and plead with her, but his brother-in-law had not patience enough even for this amenity. He was coldly treated, contemptuously used, and speedily dismissed. Instead of a happy and restful home, he found a household overshadowed by ruin of every kind. The rich brother-in-law, swiftly impoverishing himself, was a blacker shadow in that home than the struggling and speculating Samuel Booth had been in the darkening home of Sneinton. Signs of approaching trouble were everywhere visible, and soon both husband and wife, in spite of all the exertions of William Booth, passed from prosperity to ruin and presently from ruin to death.

This painful discovery at the first step in London threw the young venturer into a state of deep dejection. It deepened to ocean depth his sensation of solitude, and darkened his horizon with clouds blacker than night. He was now quite friendless and homeless. No agency existed to which he could go for assistance, no brotherhood or society where he could count upon kindness and welcome. He was solitary in London, solitary and poor, with nothing but his Bible for consolation. And it was necessary for him to have bread that he might live, even in dejection and poverty.



He has described his feelings at this time, not very intimately, and perhaps with the preacher uppermost, but the words afford at least some idea of the difficulties which confronted him:

The sensations of a new-comer to London from the country are always somewhat disagreeable, if he comes to work. The immensity of the city must especially strike him as he crosses it for the first time and passes through its different areas. The general turn-out into a few great thoroughfares, on Saturday nights especially, gives a sensation of enormous bulk. The manifest poverty of so many in the most populous streets must appeal to any heart. The language of the drinking crowds must needs give a rather worse than true impression of all.

The crowding pressure and activity of so many must always oppress one not accustomed to it. The number of public houses, theatres, and music-halls must give a young enthusiast for Christ a sickening impression. The enormous numbers of hawkers must also have given a rather exaggerated idea of the poverty and cupidity which nevertheless prevailed. The Churches in those days gave the very uttermost idea of spiritual death and blindness to the existing condition of things; at that time very few of them were open more than one evening per week. There were no Young Men's or Young Women's Christian Associations, no Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, no Brotherhoods, no Central Missions, no extra effort to attract the attention of the godless crowds. . . .

To any who cared to enter the places of worship, their deathly contrast with the streets was even worse. The absence of week-night services must have made any strangers despair of finding even society or diversion. A Methodist sufficiently in earnest to get inside to the "class" would find a handful of people reluctant to bear any witness to the power of God.

One is tempted to ask whether any young enthusiast for Christ ever stood before a door so fastened and close-barred as that which confronted William Booth at his first entrance into London. Certainly to few men has the future presented itself with a more hopeless promise, a more deadly indifference, than it did at this fateful juncture to this young enthusiast from Nottingham. If ever he prayed earnestly for light and guidance surely must it have been at this period, when he stood friendless, all but penniless, and with a wounded heart in the streets of London.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CALL TO PREACH

1849

AMONG the disappointments which met our young venturer in London was the impossibility of getting work outside the pawnbrokery business. He had come now to dislike the business. He was as yet by no means anhungered and athirst to be free of secular labour that he might preach the Gospel of Christ; at this time he had seen nothing of London's destitution, nothing of those black depths where multitudes of human beings perish in darkness and sin; his experience of London was largely the experience of respectable and suburban London; and with this first impression in his mind — he was twenty years of age — his idea was to preach on Sunday and work for his living during the week-day, pushing his fortunes with all his might, for the sake of his mother and sister, as well as for himself.

But there was no work for him except his old work, and accordingly into a pawnbroker's shop in Walworth he went to earn his living. A new experience in religion awaited him here:

My new master very closely resembled the old one in many respects. In one particular he differed from him very materially, and that was, he made a great profession of religion. The first master was a Unitarian, knowing nothing about even the theory of godliness. I never remember him uttering a sentence that showed that he had any saving faith in God or any sympathy with godly people during the whole six years I was with him. My second master believed in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and in the Church of which he was a member, but seemed to be utterly ignorant of either the theory or practice of experimental godliness, and as to the spiritual interests of the dead world around him, he was as indifferent to their future well-being as were the vicious crowds themselves whom he so heartily despised. All he seemed, to me, to want was to make money, and all he seemed to want me for was to help him in the sordid, selfish task. So it was work, work, work, morning,

noon, and night. I was practically a white slave, being only allowed my liberty on the Sabbath, and an hour or two one night a week, and then the rule was, home by ten o'clock, or the door will be locked against you. This law was rigidly enforced in my case, although he knew that I travelled long distances preaching the Gospel, in which he and his sanctimonious wife professed to believe. To get home in time, many a Sunday night I have had to run till out of breath, after walking long distances, and preaching twice in the day.

Some men might easily have been disgusted with religion in such a circumstance as this, particularly a young man whose heart was sore with disappointment and weighted with the difficulties which confronted him; but William Booth never lost by encountering hypocrisy; he gained by it; he never made the hypocrisy of others an excuse for relaxing his efforts, rather was he braced by it to show the true face of religion to mankind. In an age when there was almost a vogue of this odious religious hypocrisy, an hypocrisy so general that Dickens in his struggle to extirpate it flung himself into the fight with an impatient exaggeration which delighted the base and confirmed the feeble in their feebleness—in this age of deception and self-deception, of formalism, cant, smoothness, and detestable complacency, William Booth looked the distorted falsity in the face and saw only the beauty and glory of the reality. He deepened his own intense consciousness of religion by contact with the shallow pretence of a merely formal and professed religion. The less of truth he saw in others, the more hungrily he desired it in himself. To abandon religion, because of false religion in others, never so much as entered his mind.

But there were difficulties in his path :

My way was complicated, but I stuck to my faith and the preaching of it as far as I had the opportunity. It is true that here and there I made friends in my preaching excursions with whom I fraternized, as far as my little leisure afforded, enjoying occasional seasons of useful communion. But my poor heart was desolate in the extreme. It seemed as though I had got launched out on a wide and dreary ocean without a companion vessel or a friendly port in view.

Something of his state of mind at this period may be

gathered from a worn and faded document found among his papers after death, the pathetic and honest confession of a young soul conscious of its weakness and seeking strength from a solemn and secret protestation of faith. This little paper bears the date December 6, 1849, and proceeds in this manner:

#### RESOLUTIONS

I do promise — my God helping —

1st That I will rise every morning sufficiently early (say 20 minutes before seven o'clock) to wash, dress, and have a few minutes, not less than 5, in private prayer.

2ndy That I will as much as possible avoid all that babbling and idle talking in which I have lately so sinfully indulged.

3rd That I will endeavour in my conduct and deportment before the world and my fellow servants especially to conduct myself as a humble, meek, and zealous follower of the bleeding Lamb, and by serious conversion and warning endeavour to lead them to think of their immortal souls.

4thly That I will not read less than 4 chapters in God's word every day.

5thly That I will strive to live closer to God, and to seek after holiness of heart, and leave providential events with God.

6thly That I will read this over every day or at least twice a week.

God help me, enable me to cultivate a spirit of self denial and to yield myself a prisoner of love to the Redeemer of the world.

Amen & Amen

WILLIAM BOOTH.

I feel my own weakness and without God's help I shall not keep these resolutions a day. The Lord have mercy upon my guilty soul.

I claim the Blood  
Yes, oh Yes,  
Jesus died for me.

Faithfully he performed the duties entrusted to him, making himself not merely useful but almost invaluable to his slave-driving master, for into everything they do it is the nature of such men as this to put the whole force of their powers; but it was only when he was free from the shop and out in the streets of London on his business of preaching religion that he really lived, and really hoped. Weak and delicate as he was, hard and exhausting as was

his daily work, he gave himself up on Sundays and his one spare week-night to such preaching in the London chapels he visited as startled and shocked the polite congregations with the strength and fire of its rugged energy. And when the preaching was over, and he had fraternized for a few moments with the few who shared his enthusiasm, the Nottingham lad would take to his heels and run through the lamp-lighted streets of the suburbs back to the attic-bed above the shop in Walworth.

The more he saw of London the more insistent became this desire to preach the religion of Christ. So far as one can see, it was during these first months in Walworth that the suggestion made to him in Nottingham a year before by Samuel Dunn came home to his mind as a real and definite idea. The spectacle of the London streets, thronged at night by crowds of people who often appeared before his vision as godless and vicious and perishing, worked upon his imagination and quickened the idea that he should preach Christ, whatever might be the consequences to his earthly fortunes.

It must be remembered that the great temperance movement had not struck root at this period, and that the sights of London streets, particularly in the poorer quarters, were infinitely worse than they are now. Drunkenness was not only horribly common, it was every one's opportunity for hilarity. It provided the humorous incidents of transpontine melodrama in the theatres, and the only break of cheerful comedy in the sordid tragedy of the streets. Women might be breaking their hearts at home, children might be crying pitifully for food and clothing, but the sight of uproarious men rolling and lurching home from the ale-house seldom aroused anything but amusement in those who turned the head to look after them.

And, again, there was no Education Act. The worst of the narrow, grimy streets of London were thronged with ragged, barefooted, unwashed, foul-mouthed, and in many cases criminally-minded children, to save whom neither the State nor religion made scarcely an effort. The parents of these children were either the idle rascals of street-corners, or the sweated and exhausted victims of a con-



scienceless commercialism. A man could go but a little distance in London without encountering such men and women, and such helpless little children, as seem degraded out of the likeness to humanity.

To William Booth the call to preach Christ came in these London streets, not dramatically and suddenly, but with a steady and persisting tone of resolute command. He could not doubt the reality of that call, and his faith would not let him disobey it.

He has left a record of his feelings on this matter, written before he had really looked into the Stygian depths of the London abyss, and from this record one may discern how his mind was acted upon in youth by the sights he saw in suburbs that passed in those days for respectable:

How can anybody with spiritual eyesight talk of having no call, when there are such multitudes around them who never hear a word of God, and never intend to; who can never hear, indeed, without the sort of preacher who will force himself upon them? Can a man keep right in his own soul who can see all that, and yet stand waiting for a "call" to preach? Would they wait so for a "call" to help anyone to escape from a burning building, or to snatch a sinking child from a watery grave?

Does not growth in grace, or even ordinary growth of intelligence, necessarily bring with it that deepened sense of eternal truths which must intensify the conviction of duty to the perishing world?

Does not an unselfish love, the love that goes out towards the unloving, demand of a truly loving soul immediate action for the salvation of the unloved?

And are there not persons who know that they possess special gifts, such as robust health, natural eloquence, or power of voice, which specially make them responsible for doing something for souls?

And yet I do not at all forget, that above and beyond all these things, there does come to some a special and direct call, which it is peculiarly fatal to disregard, and peculiarly strengthening to enjoy and act upon.

I believe that there have been many eminently holy and useful men who never had such a call; but that does not at all prevent anyone from asking God for it, or blessing Him for His special kindness when He gives it.

The call, at any rate, had come for him. It was a call from Heaven, and from humanity as well.



## CHAPTER IX

### A CRISIS IN METHODISM

1850

IN the year 1848 dissatisfaction with the government of Wesleyan Methodism had gathered considerable force. Men felt that the Wesleyan Conference did not fairly represent the churches, that this Conference exercised unjustly a tyrannous despotism over local churches in the connection, and that salvation lay in a democratic extension of local government throughout the whole field of Wesleyan Methodism. "The real question at stake was; Connexionalism or Congregationalism — the supremacy of the Conference as the final court of appeal, or of the court of the individual church." Certain *Fly Sheets* had been freely circulated among Methodists expressing not merely dissatisfaction with Dr. Jabez Bunting, who was President of the Theological Institution, but expressing a very violent antagonism to the Conference, which was likened to a Papal despotism. These anonymous and virulent pamphlets did not halt at "libellous insinuations," and became at last so fiendishly shameful that authority was bound to interpose.

Wesleyan Methodism was travelling surely towards constitutional change, which would have been brought about in orderly fashion, had it not been for irritation caused to both sides by literary productions the spirit of which no one now defends (*A New History of Methodism*, vol. i, p. 431).

The Conference decided that every minister should be required to answer "brotherly questions" concerning the authorship of these virulent *Fly Sheets*. Three ministers, Samuel Dunn, James Everett, and William Griffith, refused to answer these questions, and were expelled. "To some people the three were martyrs to the cause of liberty; to others they were traitors to their church. There was room for endless and acrimonious disputes."

Thereupon followed "agitation and convulsion." The Reformers, as they were called, rose up to assert liberal doctrines and free the church from a "Papal autocracy." The Conservatives marshalled their legions to fight these traitors and preserve the ancient tradition of their policy.

A large number of secessions from the mother church took place, some through the breaking up of the local societies to which the seceders were attached, or in search of the quiet that could not be found in confusion and worry, others through the inconsiderate sternness with which in the emergency the regulations and the Conference were interpreted and enforced. Men who were convinced of the wisdom of important changes in administration were forced into a false position by the impossibility at the time to concede any change, and could extricate themselves only by withdrawal. On the whole, the loss of membership due directly or indirectly to this ill-conceived agitation amounted in the course of a few years to not less than a hundred thousand. . . . Others associated themselves with the expelled ministers, and formed the church of the Wesleyan Reformers, which afterwards by amalgamation helped to constitute the United Methodist Free Churches . . . (*ibid.*, vol. i, pp. 438-9).

Thus a dispute concerning the government of a church, because of the unlovely spirit in which it had been conducted — "stubbornness, that was neither free from malice nor wise in its choice of weapons, awakened resentment, and human nature, being what it is, led inevitably to retaliation"—broadened into one of those heresy-hunting expeditions upon which no church can enter without exhaustion and disaster. The simple matter of dispute, as Sir Thomas Browne has warned all disputants to expect, wandered at once from the particular to the general; and, in this case, was "soon obscured by the publication of a series of slanders in which little respect was shown for age or long service or purity of motive." In the end, exhausted by this pitiful conflict, and rent by schism, the Methodists set themselves to recover the simple faith of their origin — belief in conversion, and a methodical attention to religious duties.

The Reformers, rightly or wrongly, announced themselves as the true children of Methodism, proclaiming the wisdom of revivals and seeking as the supreme object of

their existence the salvation of sinful and erring men by the divine miracle of conversion. The orthodox party, rightly or wrongly, claimed to be the faithful guardians of Methodism, and kept a watchful eye upon revivals, ordering the services of the church with a far more rigid overlordship than existed in the Anglican Communion. Men tended to one camp or the other according to their temperaments, and for many years the separation was so deep and so wide that few dreamed it could ever be bridged.

Such was the nature of this agitation, and such the condition of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, in the year 1850, when William Booth, slaving hard to earn daily bread in London, was an obscure and discouraged lay preacher in its ranks, of whom neither the pontifical Dr. Bunting nor the rebellious and expelled Samuel Dunn — who had been his own minister in Nottingham — took the least account.

## CHAPTER X

TELLS HOW WILLIAM BOOTH BECAME A PASTOR, AND INTRODUCES THE READER TO CATHERINE MUMFORD

1850-1851

THE storm of this disputation raged with violence. But it does not seem to have driven William Booth from his path or to have drawn him to the one side or the other. "Mr. Booth," says W. T. Stead, "kept apart from the controversy. His sympathies were then, as always, on the side of authority."

This statement, which may surprise many people, is a true statement. William Booth was antipathetic to violent change, hated rebellion, suspected "reform," and cherished discipline and obedience as cardinal virtues. His story for the next twenty years is the tragic Odyssey of a strong and original soul labouring to follow his star along the beaten track of authority, struggling to get the new wine of his unquenchable zeal into the shrunken skins of tradition, striving to move his church along with him out of the slough of a stagnant formalism. And the irony of it is, that the churches which expelled him and literally drove him into the wilderness, which during the most difficult years of his existence opposed him, censured him, maligned him, not only came to adopt his methods and follow his example, but, when it was too late, made overtures for his reception into their midst.

In his old age William Booth was received by King Edward the Seventh. "Tell me, General," asked the Sovereign, "how do you get on now with the Churches? What is their attitude towards you?"

The old man looked shrewdly at the King, his eyes twinkled, and he made answer, "Sir, they imitate me." At which the King laughed with a good understanding.

At the age of twenty-one he was conservative and on the side of authority. He knew very well what dissension

existed in the Wesleyan body, but he endeavoured to stop his ears against the unprofitable sounds of discord.

What was in his mind, seething and burning there, at this momentous epoch of his life? Happily a letter exists, the oldest known of his letters, which answers that question with a fulness invaluable to this narrative. The letter is dated October 30, 1849, and is addressed to John Savage in Nottingham, one of the young men who had served as a disciple in the streets and slums of that city:

How are you going on? I know you are happy. I know you are living to God, and working for Jesus. Grasp still firmer the standard. Unfold still wider the battle-flag! Press still closer on the ranks of the enemy, and mark your pathway still more distinctly with trophies of Emmanuel's grace, and with enduring monuments of Jesus' power! The trumpet has given the signal for the conflict! Your General assures of success and a glorious reward; your crown is already held out. Then why delay? Why doubt? Onward! Onward! Onward! *Christ for me!* Be that your motto . . . be that your battle-cry . . . be that your war-note . . . be that your consolation . . . be that your plea when asking the mercy of God — your end when offering it to man . . . your hope when encircled by darkness . . . your triumph and victory when attacked and overcome by death! *Christ for me!* Tell it to men who are living and dying in sin! Tell it to Jesus, that you have chosen Him to be your Saviour and your God. Tell it to devils, and bid them cease to harass, since you are determined to die for the truth!

I preached on Sabbath last — a respectable but dull and lifeless congregation. Notwithstanding I had liberty both praying and preaching, I had not the assistance of a single "Amen" or "Hallelujah" the whole of the service! It is hard work to labour for an hour and a half in the pulpit and then come down and do the work of the prayer-meeting as well! I want some Savages, and Proctors, and Frosts, and Hoveys, and Robinsons, here with me in the prayer-meetings, and glory to God we would carry all before us! Praise God for living at Nottingham every hour you are in it! Oh, to live Christ on earth, and to meet you once more, never to part, in a better world.

In spite of a phraseology which may slightly disturb a later refinement, this letter has a ring of truth which is worth an infinite amount of prettiness and decorous restraint. It is the letter of a true man, the authentic cry of a soul desperately earnest. One can no more doubt this utterance than one can doubt the Psalms of David. Narrow

and limited may have been the youth's outlook upon the world, wild and strange his language, panting and overheated his zeal, but never yet did a charlatan so utter his soul to a friend.

With such a temperament he was destined to suffer the dark reactions of ecstasy and boundless confidence. There were moments when his soul was plunged into dejection, moments when he doubted his call, moments when he was thrown into despair merely by contact with a shallow culture or a little theological pomposity.

But again and again the youth threw off the oppression of this scepticism, felt within himself strong and indubitable the call of God. The young man's tragedy was this, that he felt at his highest moments of ecstasy so boundless and so utter a gratitude to God for bliss of such incomparable rapture that he could not doubt in those moments of ravishment his power to save mankind by lifting them up with him into this same region of faith. But when ecstasy had passed, when the soul had returned to its poor troubled and shabby tenement of clay, then came the natural reaction which all idealists experience — the feeling of exhaustion, the haunting fear that never can one lift humanity to God, that one is not scholar enough to enter into controversy with the least of the devils. Was he truly called? Had God indeed got a work for him to do? Was he not perhaps dangerously inflated with conceit in this feeling that he could do something for the Kingdom of Christ?

Concerning my pulpit efforts, I am more than ever discouraged. Upon becoming acquainted with my congregations, I am surprised at the amount of intellect which I have endeavoured to address. I am waking up as it were from a dream, and discover that my hopes are vanity, and that I literally know nothing.

I preached yesterday at Norwood — a dear people. In the morning "Oh, Lord, revive thy work" was accompanied with blessings, and in the evening "Jesus weeping over Jerusalem," though not attended by pleasurable feelings by myself, yet I hope went home to some hearts. I saw *nothing done*!

Afterwards I had some conversation with one of our local preachers respecting the subject with regard to which my heart



is still burning — I mean the full work. He advises me by all means to offer myself next March, and leave it in the hands of God and the Church. What say you? You are my friend, the chosen of my companions, the man after my own heart. What say you? I want to be a devoted, simple, and sincere follower of the Bleeding Lamb. I do not desire the pastor's crust without having most distinctly received the pastor's call. And yet my inmost spirit is panting for the delightful enjoyment of telling from morn till eve, from eve till midnight, the glad tidings that mercy is free.

Mercy! Have you heard the word? Have you felt its power? Mercy! Can you describe its hidden, unfathomable meaning? Mercy! Let the sound be borne on every breeze! Mercy! Shout it to the world around until there is not a sin-unpardon'd, a pollution-spotted, a hell-marked spirit unwashed, unsanctified! Until there is not a sign of the curse in existence, not a sorrow unsoothed! not a tear unwiped away! until the world is flooded with salvation and all men are bathing in its life-giving streams!

In April, 1850, he writes to this same friend in Nottingham:

But you ask "What is your plan?" Why, go out to Australia as Chaplain on board a convict ship. To face the storm and the billow, and the tempest's rolling wave, and to preach to the very worst of men Christ's Salvation.

The idea of breaking away from his monotonous toil and throwing himself into some hard and heroic work lasted until November of the same year, when we find him writing to the same friend:

I am thinking of offering for the general work abroad or at home, where the Church will send me, or where the world hath need of me. What say you? You know I would prefer the home work, but the difficulties are so numerous, my ability is not equal to the task. It is evident, my Superintendent told me so, that preachers are not wanted.

An incident occurred at this juncture, however, destined to influence the whole course of his after life. Among the people who listened to his preaching was an enthusiastic Wesleyan layman of no very lovable and agreeable type, but nevertheless a man of some character, and one who knew a great man when he saw him. This Wesleyan lay-

man was a Mr. E. J. Rabbits, a boot manufacturer in the Borough, who rose from small things to the position of a very large and prosperous employer of labour.

In his autobiographical notes, William Booth has left this epitome of his first patron: "Self-made man. His beginning: borrowed half-a-crown. My last interview with him: he had just invested £60,000 in good building estate, the anxieties connected with which, I should think, helped to hurry him away. 'The care of riches!'" In that epitaph one has, perhaps, all the biography one needs of good Mr. Rabbits.

This man, strangely enough, for he was altogether and utterly unlike William Booth, was the means which led the Nottingham lad to abandon a commercial career for the life of a minister. William Booth — one of the most expansive, generous, tender-hearted, and affectionate of men — yielded to the persuasions of this earnest if somewhat narrow-minded dissenter, and through him came not only into the ministry of the Christian religion, but into touch with that gracious and remarkable woman who blessed his life, stimulated his courage, and mothered the infancy of the Salvation Army.

Mr. Rabbits is not an imposing figure in this narrative, but one does not know how the rest of the story would have run but for his sudden and transitory appearance on its stage. To those who believe that a Divinity shapes our ends, he must certainly seem an instrument in the hand of Providence; and niggardly and half-heartedly as he performed the office assigned to him, he does at least deserve the recognition, and perhaps the gratitude, if not the love, of that vast company better for the life of William Booth.

Mr. Rabbits was among the Reformers. "He had been dissatisfied," says Commissioner Booth-Tucker, "for some time with what he considered to be the growing coldness and worldliness of the Orthodox party, and had, therefore, hailed the present [Reform] movement with satisfaction, believing that it would lead to a revival of the old life and fire. He had been present at the first sermon delivered by Mr. Booth in the Walworth Road Wesleyan Chapel. The latter had launched out in his usual unconventional, earnest

manner, strikingly in contrast with the ordinary ministerial style. Some of those present responded heartily, and the ordinary monotony of the service was disturbed by quite a brisk fusillade of 'Amens.' Mr. Rabbits was delighted. He met the preacher at the foot of the stairs, congratulated him warmly on his sermon, and took him home to dinner. . . ."

William Booth at this time, it must be remembered, was weary of his daily work, and more and more inclined to act upon the suggestion first made to him, as we have seen, by Samuel Dunn. He had now proved to himself that he had power as a preacher; he never walked through a London street without feeling an impulse towards the pulpit; and he could conceive of no life for himself more consonant with the will of God than that of a Methodist minister.

Mr. Rabbits, in June, 1851, persuaded him to work among the Reformers, and later on proceeded to settle the business of his entrance into the ministry. The story of that negotiation, as typical perhaps of the persuader as of the persuaded, is told by William Booth in the following narration:

Mr. Rabbits said to me one day, "You must leave business, and wholly devote yourself to preaching the Gospel."

"Impossible," I answered. "There is no way for me. Nobody wants me."

"Yes," said he, "the people with whom you have allied yourself want an evangelist."

"They cannot support me," I replied, "and I cannot live on air."

"That is true, no doubt," was his answer. "How much can you live on?"

I reckoned up carefully. I knew I should have to provide my own quarters and to pay for my cooking: and as to the living itself, I did not understand in those days how this could be managed in as cheap a fashion as I do now. After a careful calculation, I told him that I did not see how I could get along with less than twelve shillings a week.

"Nonsense," he said, "you cannot do with less than twenty shillings a week, I am sure."

"All right," I said, "have it your own way, if you will; but where is the twenty shillings to come from?"

"I will supply it," he said, "for the first three months at least."

"Very good," I answered. And the bargain was struck then and there.

I at once gave notice to my master, who was very angry and said, "If it is money you want, that need not part us." I told him that money had nothing to do with the question, that all I wanted was the opportunity to spend my life and powers publishing the Saviour to a lost world. And so I packed my portmanteau and went out to begin a new life.

My first need was some place to lay my head. After a little time spent in the search, I found quarters in the Walworth district, where I expected to work, and took two rooms in the house of a widow at five shillings a week, with attendance. This I reckoned at the time was a pretty good bargain. I then went to a furniture shop and bought some chairs and a bed, and a few other necessities. I felt quite set up, and fully prepared to settle quietly down to my work. . . .

Three things marked the day that followed the one on which I shook hands with my cold-hearted master and said Good-bye. One of which proved itself of no little importance, both to myself and the world at large in the years that followed.

1. The first day of my freedom was Good Friday.
2. It was also my birthday, the 10th of April.
3. The third, and most important of all, was that on that day I fell over head and ears in love with the precious woman who afterwards became my Wife.

In this episode we have a characteristic example of William Booth's honesty and impetuous enthusiasm, as well as a moment's insight into the mind of a business-like dissenter. Booth was willing to maintain himself as a preacher of the Gospel for twelve shillings a week. The astute and practical Rabbits would not hear of such a sacrifice, and increased the weekly wage to twenty shillings. William Booth abandoned his daily work, threw himself into the arms of the future, and trusted blindly to God. Mr. Rabbits made himself responsible for a wage of twenty shillings a week, limited to a period of three months. For a sum of twelve pounds, then, the founder of the Salvation Army disposed of his genius and his enthusiasm, and with no other provision than this for the next three months, and no provision at all beyond that period, entered the ministry as a revivalist preacher.

There were certainly few preachers among the Methodists or any other body of Christians more perilously situated

just then than William Booth. One can imagine this tall, gaunt, clean-shaven youth, with his long raven-coloured hair and his stooping shoulders, entering upon his five-shilling room "with attendance," looking upon his furniture, and feeling "quite set up," fully prepared, as he says, to settle quietly down to his work. But there was to be no quiet for this wayfarer then or afterwards. On the very first day of his freedom he was to suffer the commotion of love, was to realize that twenty shillings a week goes but a little way in domestic housekeeping, and that an assurance of board and lodging for three months is no cheerful primrose prospect for a young man who is "over head and ears in love." Work there was to be for him in this world, such work as no other man in his generation could perform, but no peace, no quiet. From that day onwards, even to the last hour of his life, he was to be opposed by the enemy of peace and the adversary of quiet, was to face confusion and darkness, was to stagger under buffetings of misfortune, was to be stricken to his knees by agony and tragedy, was to know the piercing anxiety, the bitter distress of a poverty that increased with his victories and intensified with his opportunities for serving mankind; these things he was to know, this burden he was to carry, this work he was to do in the world, but quiet was never to come near his heart. He was marked out for suffering, he was chosen for battle and tempest. But he was to know the love of a "precious woman."

Bitter as was to be his first experience of the Christian ministry, it was coloured by romance, though one may question whether this hopeless passion of his heart was not at the time the chief of his woes.

Among the people to whom Mr. Rabbits introduced William Booth was a family named Mumford, living in Brixton — at that time a somewhat picturesque suburb of London, more or less fashionable among rich City merchants. A daughter of this house, for whose opinion Mr. Rabbits entertained a great respect, had expressed admiration of a sermon preached by William Booth as a layman in Binfield Hall, a small chapel in the neighbouring suburb of Clapham, situated close to the Swan Tavern of Stock-



well, where the famous racehorse of that name had been trained. Mr. Rabbits had reported this admiration to the young preacher, and had arranged that he should make acquaintance with the Mumfords. From their first meeting, both William Booth and Catherine Mumford were conscious of a strong liking for each other; but it was not until he had entered upon the period of study and preparation for ministry among the Reformers, and on the first day of his freedom from a secular life, that he fell head over ears in love with this remarkable woman.

Before we tell the story of that love, it is necessary to say something of the Mumford family.

Mrs. Mumford, for whom William Booth cherished a deep affection and a reverence that reacted on his own character, was a woman whose history, if it could be told with fulness, would read like a novel written in collaboration by Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot. She was in many ways a figure of the epoch. From an adventure in love, full of passion and tragedy, she had passed to a sedate marriage, and deepened her spiritual life to such a depth of piety as one finds in *Adam Bede*. Something of her love story, told in a style very appropriate to the popular romances of the period, is to be found in Commissioner Booth-Tucker's *Life of Catherine Booth*. He tells us how she became engaged in youth to a man in her own social position, who was approved of by her father, Mr. Milward, and who appeared to be in every respect a desirable husband.

Her mother had died some years previously. Her father was one who felt that his duty to his daughter had ended in supplying her temporal needs. The aunt, who kept house for him, was a being of harsh and unsympathetic material. No doubt these loveless surroundings helped Miss Milward to think the more of her choice, and she fancied herself upon the eve of life-long felicity. To her friends the match seemed a desirable one, and had met with unhesitating approbation. The prospects were brilliant, and the wedding-day had been fixed, when, on the very eve of her marriage, certain circumstances came to her knowledge which proved conclusively that her lover was not the high-souled, noble character that she had supposed him to be; indeed that he was unworthy of the womanly love and con-



fidence that she had reposed in him. With the same promptness and decision which afterwards characterized her daughter, Miss Milward's mind was made up, and the engagement was immediately broken off.

It was in vain that day after day her lover called at the house, in the hope that he might persuade her to relent. She dared not trust herself even to see him, lest she should fall beneath the still keenly realized temptation, and lest her heart should get the better of her judgment. At length, seized with despair, he turned his horse's head from the door and galloped away, he knew not, cared not, whither — galloped till his horse was covered with foam — galloped till it staggered and fell, dying, beneath him, while he rose to his feet a hopeless maniac! The anxiety had been too much for his brain; and the next news that Miss Milward received was that he had been taken to an asylum, where he would probably spend the rest of his days.

The narrative proceeds with an account of Miss Milward's prostration after this terrible experience, the failure of doctors to revive her interests in life, the coming of a Methodist preacher into her neighbourhood, her conversion and restoration to health, her subsequent engagement to a lay preacher named Mumford, and her marriage to this gentleman in defiance of her father's command, who turned her penniless out of his house and forbade her ever to enter his doors again.

Catherine Mumford was the only daughter of this marriage in a family of five children. She was a singularly intellectual and forceful child, responding with heart and soul to the rigorous and puritanical training of her mother, disliking novels, delighting in history, expressing vigorous judgments on such famous characters as Napoleon Bonaparte — whose brutal and selfish victories she would compare with the more humane conquests of Julius Cæsar — and revealing on every side of her character an unmistakable predilection for serious things. There was no element of submission in her response to Mrs. Mumford's training; nothing in her nature needed to be crushed and distorted into the semblance of puritanism; she herself was a born puritan to whom the true and genuine gospel of puritanism made unequivocal appeal.

One trait in the childhood of this precocious girl deserves a particular attention. It might be thought that a nature

thus stern and sensible would be proof against those little tendernesses of affection which make childhood so exquisite and adorable. But Catherine Mumford had to a singular degree one of the most amiable of these tender susceptibilities. She was quite passionately devoted to dumb animals, and could not bear either to see or to hear about the sufferings of these little brothers and sisters of humanity. It might also seem that the ineffaceable impression made upon her mother's mind by the horse that was flogged and spurred to its death by her madman lover had been transmitted to Catherine Mumford in the form of this singular sensitiveness to animal suffering. She was, in fact, as the following incidents narrated by Commissioner Booth-Tucker will show, in spite of the rigour of her mother's training, in spite of her own temperamental devotion to practical common sense, a child who not merely shuddered at pain, but whose heart was deeply pierced and earnestly moved by suffering of any kind.

One day, Commissioner Booth-Tucker says, she saw a prisoner being dragged to the lock-up by a constable.

A jeering mob was hooting the unfortunate culprit. His utter loneliness appealed powerfully to her. It seemed that he had not a friend in the world. Quick as lightning Catherine sprang to his side, and marched down the street with him, determined that he should feel that there was at least one heart that sympathized with him, whether it might be for his fault or his misfortune that he was suffering. . . .

She could not endure to see animals ill-treated without expostulating and doing her utmost to stop the cruelty. Many a time she would run out into the street, heedless of every personal risk, to plead with or threaten the perpetrator of some cruel act. On one occasion, when but a little girl, the sight of the cruel goading of some sheep so filled her soul with indignation and anguish, that she rushed home and threw herself on the sofa in a speechless paroxysm of grief.

"My childish heart," she tells us, "rejoiced greatly in the speculations of Wesley and Butler with regard to the possibility of a future life for animals, in which God might make up to them for the suffering and pain inflicted on them here. . . ."

Like her other benevolences, Mrs. Booth's kindness to animals took a practical turn. "If I were you," she would say to the donkey-boys at the seaside resorts, where in later years she went to lecture, "I should like to feel, when I went to sleep

at night, that I had done my very best for my donkey. I would like to know that I had been kind to it, and had given it the best food I could afford; in fact, that it had as jolly a day as though I had been the donkey, and the donkey *me*." And she would enforce the argument with a threepenny or a sixpenny bit, which helped to make it palatable.

Then, turning to her children, she would press the lesson home by saying, "That is how I should like to see my children spend their pennies, in encouraging the boys to be kind to their donkeys."

If, in her walks or drives, Mrs. Booth happened to notice any horses left out to graze that looked overworked and ill-fed, she would send round to the dealers for a bushel of corn, stowing it away in some part of the house. Then, when evening fell, she would sally forth with a child or servant carrying a supply of food to the field in which the poor creatures had been marked, watching with the utmost satisfaction while they had a "real good tuck in." It is not to be wondered at that the horses were soon able to recognize her, and would run along the hedge whenever their benefactress passed by, craning their necks and snorting their thanks, to the surprise and perplexity of those who were not in the secret.

Again and again has Mrs. Booth rushed to the window, flung up the heavy sash, and called out to some tradesman who was ill-treating his animal, not resting till she had compelled him to desist.

"Life is such a puzzle," she used to say, "but we must leave it, leave it with God. I have suffered so much over what appeared to be the needless and inexplicable sorrows and pains of the animal creation, as well as over those of the rest of the world, that if I had not come to know God by a personal revelation of Him to my own soul, and to trust Him because I knew Him, I can hardly say into what scepticism I might not have fallen."

On one occasion, when driving out with a friend, Mrs. Booth saw a boy with a donkey a little way ahead of them. She noticed him pick up something out of the cart and hit the donkey with it. In the distance it appeared like a short stick, but to her horror she perceived, as they drove past, that it was a heavy-headed hammer, and that already a dreadful wound had been made in the poor creature's back. She called to the coachman to stop; but before it was possible for him to do so, or for those in the carriage with her to guess what was the matter, she had flung herself, at the risk of her life, into the road. Her dress caught in the step as she sprang, and had it not been torn with the force of her leap, she must have been seriously injured, if not killed. As it was, she fell on her face, and was covered with the dust of the hot and sandy road. Rising to her feet,

however, she rushed forward and seized the reins. The boy tried to drive on, but she clung persistently to the shaft, until her friends came to her assistance. After burning words of warning, followed by tender appeals of intercession, such as from even the hard heart of the donkey-driver would not easily be effaced, she at last induced him to hand over his hammer, and succeeded in obtaining his name and address. Then, overcome with excitement and exertion, she fainted away, and was with difficulty carried home.

Another story is told of how a favourite retriever of hers, named Waterford, who loved her and followed her wherever she went, hearing her cry one day, sprang to her rescue through a large glass window, thus incurring the wrath of Mr. Mumford, who had the dog shot. "For months," says Catherine Mumford, "I suffered intolerably, especially in realizing that it was in the effort to alleviate my sufferings the beautiful creature had lost its life. Days passed before I could speak to my father. . . ."

There was a love episode in the life of Catherine Mumford which she decided by a text from the Bible, *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*. The lover was a cousin from Derbyshire, "a young man of somewhat striking appearance, and with more than ordinary capacity"; and although "she was not the most ardent of the two, she could not prevent her heart responding in some measure to his love." But he was not serious enough about religion, and Catherine Mumford presently dismissed him, a step which she says cost her "a considerable effort at the time."

She was a delicate child, and for some years had suffered from a spinal complaint, making painful acquaintance in the most fervorous period of youth with mattress and sofa. But she was devotedly nursed by her mother; she pursued her studies in history and geography; she read an immense amount of contemporary theology, and acquired an enthusiasm for missionary enterprise and a passion for spiritual religion which deepened to a very striking and saint-like devotion in her wonderful after life.

When William Booth crossed her path she was an able, masterful, and brilliant young woman, who delighted in table controversies, who was somewhat proud of her logical

adroitness, and who must have been, one thinks, as great a terror to the loose thinkers and careless talkers of her little circle as William Gladstone in a more exalted sphere. It is tolerably certain that she was improved, and very deeply improved, by her intimacy with William Booth. There was something in her mind, at this period, too like the self-assertiveness of an intellect rejoicing in its own trenchant dexterity to promise sweetness and light. She was able, brilliant, daring, and righteous to a fault; but one doubts if her heart at that time had asserted its equal partnership with her brain. Something of this brilliant young person's character, and her original genius, may be seen in a letter which she sent to a minister who had preached a sermon with which she disagreed. The modesty of the approach does not minimise the force and vigour of the attack; and certainly such views in the 'fifties were unusual, and in a girl of her age remarkable enough to draw attention.

DEAR SIR — You will doubtless be surprised at the receipt of this communication, and I assure you it is with great reluctance and a feeling of profound respect that I make it. Were it not for the high estimate I entertain both for your intellect and heart, I would spare the sacrifice it costs me. But because I believe you love *truth*, of whatever kind, and would not willingly countenance or propagate erroneous views on any subject, I venture to address you.

Excuse me, my dear sir; I feel myself but a babe in comparison with you. But permit me to call your attention to a subject on which my heart has been deeply pained. In your discourse on Sunday morning, when descanting on the policy of Satan in first attacking the most assailable of our race, your remarks appeared to imply woman's intellectual and even moral inferiority to man. I cannot believe that you intended it to be so understood, at least with reference to her moral nature. But I fear the tenor of your remarks would too surely leave an impression on the minds of many of your congregation, and I for one cannot but deeply regret that a man for whom I entertain such a high veneration should appear to hold such views derogatory to my sex, and which I believe to be unscriptural and dishonouring to God.

Permit me, my dear sir, to ask whether you have ever made the subject of woman's equality as a *being* the matter of calm investigation and thought? If not, I would, with all deference,



suggest it as a subject well worth the exercise of your brain, and calculated amply to repay any research you may bestow upon it.

So far as Scriptural evidence is concerned, did I but possess ability to do justice to the subject, I dare take my stand on it against the world in defending her perfect equality. And it is because I am persuaded that no honest, unprejudiced investigation of the sacred volume can give perpetuity to the mere assumptions and false notions which have gained currency in society on this subject, that I so earnestly commend it to your attention. I have such confidence in the nobility of your nature that I feel certain neither prejudice nor custom can blind you to the truth, if you will once turn attention to the matter.

That woman is, in consequence of her inadequate education, generally inferior to man intellectually, I admit. But that she is *naturally* so, as your remarks seem to imply, I see no cause to believe. I think the disparity is as easily accounted for as the difference between woman intellectually in this country and under the degrading slavery of heathen lands. No argument, in my judgment, can be drawn from past experience on this point, because the past has been false in theory and wrong in practice. Never yet in the history of the world has woman been placed on an intellectual footing with man. Her training from babyhood, even in this highly-favoured land, has hitherto been such as to cramp and paralyse rather than to develop and strengthen her energies, and calculated to crush and wither her aspirations after mental greatness rather than to excite and stimulate them. And even where the more directly depressing influence has been withdrawn, the indirect and more powerful stimulus has been wanting.

A few months older than William Booth and his superior in intellectual force, Catherine Mumford was his junior in spiritual experience, and at that time his inferior in personality. He lacked the culture which she brought to him with a fervent admiration for his rugged, rock-hewn strength; she lacked that boundless depth of self-sacrificing love, that wide and overflowing ocean of yearning, pitying, human affection which was the gift he brought to her, and the human influence which made her in after years "the Mother of the Army." One would say that while Catherine Mumford's tendency might have been towards a central anxiety concerning the condition of her own soul, William Booth's obvious path of development was towards a central anxiety for the souls of all mankind. Catherine Mumford,



as a woman and an invalid, in spite of a genuine desire to spread her knowledge of conversion, would almost certainly have remained an interesting and powerful figure in a group of earnest sectarian Christians, but for the enfranchisement and the impulse towards humanity brought into her sheltered life by this rough-wrought son of sorrow and distress. In a certain measure William Booth came into the life of Catherine Mumford as Robert Browning came into the life of Elizabeth Barrett. In each case there was a resurrection of the woman, and a beauty added to the man.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BEGINNINGS OF A LOVE STORY

1852

WILLIAM BOOTH met Catherine Mumford for the first time when he was still a lay preacher. Mr. Rabbits gave a large party at his house one afternoon to which Mrs. and Miss Mumford were invited, and at which William Booth made a late arrival. No sooner did the young man make his appearance — a romantic appearance, one conjectures, at this respectable tea-party — than Mr. Rabbits seized upon him and insisted that he should recite a terrible American poem concerned with drunkenness. William Booth objected. He did not want to recite. He did not want to be forced into prominence. He protested that the piece was not in the key of social festivity. But the irresistible Mr. Rabbits, who had heard him recite this same piece with great effect some few days previously, would take no denial. And so William Booth occupied the central place in that crowded drawing-room, and declaimed American poetry.

The recitation had a very awkward effect. It started a controversy. The guests of Mr. Rabbits were by no means convinced of the virtue of teetotalism. They saw considerable danger in the advocacy of so stringent a gospel; they declared themselves in favour of temperance and moderation. Suddenly into the midst of this disturbing discussion came Catherine Mumford, with a downrightness of opinion, a logic unmatched in that room, and a searching analysis troublesome, one imagines, at a tea-party, and sided entirely with William Booth.

This was their first meeting, marked by an alliance in battle. He saw her again, more than once, and was increasingly impressed by her force of character, the purity of her faith, and her instinct for worship. He respected her, and no doubt she was one of those who unwittingly

discouraged his "pulpit efforts" by the extent and quality of her intellect.

On that day, the day upon which he finally relinquished his business career for the ministry, the first day of his freedom, he once more encountered Miss Mumford, and again through the intervention of Mr. Rabbits. The day was the 10th of April, 1852, Good Friday, his own birthday, and the day on which his great aspiration had come to reality.

Mr. Rabbits caught him at the moment of his starting off to pay a visit, and insisted that he should go with him to a service of the Reformers in a schoolroom situated in Cowper Street, City Road. Somewhat against his will, Booth consented, and in the schoolroom once more encountered Catherine Mumford. It was a fateful meeting. At the conclusion of the service he escorted this wonderful young creature to her home in Brixton, and on that journey both the man and the woman knew that they loved each other.

It was one of those fallings in love which are as instantaneous as they are mutual, which are neither approached nor immediately followed by any formal declaration of affection, and which manifest themselves even in the midst of conversations altogether absorbed in other matters. Suddenly William Booth knew that he loved this woman; and at the same moment the woman knew that for her there could be no other man. They compared notes afterwards, and confirmed their instinctive supposition; but at the time no word was said leading to the possibility of such a comparison of feelings.

And what follows is one of the most remarkable and charming love stories in the world — the love story of a man and a woman in whose hearts an extraordinary sense of religion had the uppermost place, to whom everything secular and human had a divine relativity, for whom God and His worship were the sovran ends of their existence. It is, in a way, a Methodist love story. Passion was there, deep and abiding, but passion restrained by duty and consecrated by devotion. An immense reverence for the woman characterized the love of the man, and a deep self-

sacrificing faith in the man and his destiny characterized the love of the woman.

On the very threshold of this great love the man was brought face to face with hard necessity. His position was insecure; his worldly prospect could not well be blacker. For, to begin with, he was only an irregular minister; his miserable wage was guaranteed to him only for three months; and the more he saw of the Reformers the less he liked them. It tortured him to decide whether he might openly and frankly confess his love for this woman who was openly and frankly his friend. Dare he take that step? Yes. But ought he to take that step? Who should decide?

He prayed, and indeed agonized, over that question. The answer was uncertain, and his action was uncertain. Without positively declaring his love, he hinted to his friend this distress which haunted his thoughts. He made it clear to her that God must have his life, but asked, pitifully enough, and with much burning eloquence, whether he might rightfully look for companionship on his troubled road.

Catherine Booth has described the difficulties of that period, from the evening when William Booth accompanied her home after the meeting in the City Road:

That little journey will never be forgotten by either of us. It is true that nothing particular occurred, except that as W. afterwards expressed it, it seemed as if God flashed simultaneously into our hearts that affection which afterwards ripened into what has proved at least to be an exceptional union of heart and purpose and life, and which none of the changing vicissitudes with which our lives have been so crowded has been able to efface.

He impressed me.

I had been introduced to him as being in delicate health, and he took the situation in at a glance. His thought for me, although such a stranger, appeared most remarkable. The conveyance shook me; he regretted it. The talking exhausted me; he saw it and forbade it. And then we struck in at once in such wonderful harmony of view and aim and feeling on varied matters that passed rapidly before us. It seemed as though we had intimately known and loved each other for years, and suddenly, after some temporary absence, had been brought together again, and before we reached my home we both sus-

pected, nay, we felt as though we had been made for each other, and that henceforth the current of our lives must flow together.

It was curious, too, that both of us had an idea of what we should require in the companion with whom we allied ourselves for life, if ever such an alliance should take place.

Singular to say, W. had formed very similar notions, and here we were thrown together in this unexpected fashion, matching these pre-conceived characters, even as though we had been made to order!

My mother invited W. to stay the night. He was, so far, without any home. He had purposed to stop at his cousin's. Instead of that he had got into this meeting, and from this meeting had come on with me. What a strange providence! It seemed so to me.

No doubt we drew each other out, and the conversation was lively and interesting, and my mother listened, and had her say, and before we parted she was nearly as interested in him as I was myself, but still nothing was said about the future. . . .

W. went away in a terrible controversy, feeling that he was wounded, and he has often told me since that he felt that for the first time he had met the woman who filled up his life's ideal of what a wife should be. He was really in love, and yet it was all contrary to the plans he had made. Had he not, only the day before, been able to get away from the business yoke that had galled him for these eight years gone by? Was there not the opportunity now for him to obtain the qualifications that he was convinced he required so grievously for the mighty work that was before him? Had he not resolved that for years to come he would neither look to the right nor to the left, but go straight forward until he had fitted himself to be a good minister of Jesus Christ? Moreover, what could he do with a wife? The little society with whom he had been commissioned to labour was only a mere handful of mostly working men that might not hold together for six months, and even if it did, might not want him beyond that time — even if they wanted him at all — of which he was not sure, knowing that, but for Mr. Rabbits, he would not have been there at all. So what business had he thinking about a wife or anything of the kind? His work seemed to be to go on and make himself a nest before he sought a mate.

And yet, there was the awkward fact staring him in the face, and although he said to himself as he walked away from that door that morning, "It cannot, must not, shall not be," it was not many hours before he found himself at that door again. We soon discovered what our mutual feelings were, and resolved that nothing should be done in haste; in short, until we were fully persuaded in our own minds.



A period was fixed during which time we were to seek Divine guidance. I had always entertained very strong views as to the sanctity of such engagements, views which W. considered very strict. I regard a betrothal as a most sacred act. That having once mutually decided on an engagement to be terminated with marriage, it was a very serious offence against God, and against the human heart, for any violation of such promises to take place.

I made W. understand what my views were, and refused what would be deemed even the most trifling familiarities between young people until he was perfectly satisfied and decided on the propriety of our future union.

This made the matter more serious still, and again he went forth to seek for advice from those who knew me, and to pray that God would show him whether in the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed it was His will that the union should take place. I said as to time I had no choice. If we never are married, very well. If circumstances never justified it, I am perfectly content that we should remain single for ever; but, single or married in body, we must be perfectly united in heart. Amongst the ways in which W. sought to obtain light was the old-fashioned one of opening the Bible and receiving the first passage on which the eye fell as the interpretation of God's pleasure, and this instance was rather curious, his eye falling upon,

"And the two sticks became one in my hand."

However, this controversy could not go on for ever with two such hearts as ours, and consequently we came to the conclusion and covenanted that come weal or woe we would sail life's stormy seas together, and on our knees we plighted our troth before the Lord.

We have heard a deal of criticism on our principles of marriage in the Salvation Army, but here was a marriage virtually contracted on the same principles, foreshadowing all that we have embodied in our S. A. form of marriage. The purpose and end of it, I am sure, was the glory of God and the highest interests of the human race. . . .

The reality of the lovers' struggle, the stern force and rigid honesty of what they describe as their "controversy," may be seen from the letters of Catherine Mumford, which were written to William Booth in those early weeks of their intimacy. This controversy, as the reader will have seen, turned on the question whether they ought to consider themselves as engaged, or whether they should rest content with a Platonic friendship.



MY DEAREST WILLIAM — The evening is beautifully serene and tranquil, according sweetly with the feelings of my soul. The whirlwind is past and the succeeding calm is in proportion to its violence. Your letter — your visit have hushed its last murmurs and stilled every vibration of my throbbing heart-strings. All is well. I feel it is right, and I praise God for the satisfying conviction.

Most gladly does my soul respond to your invitation to give myself afresh to Him, and to strive to link myself closer to you, by rising more into the image of the Lord. The nearer our assimilation to Jesus, the more perfect and heavenly our union. Our hearts are now indeed *one*, so one that division would be more bitter than death. But I am satisfied that our union may become, if not more complete, more divine, and, consequently, capable of yielding a larger amount of pure unmingled bliss.

The thought of walking through life *perfectly united*, together enjoying its sunshine and battling its storms, by softest sympathy sharing every smile and every tear, and with thorough unanimity performing all its momentous duties, is to me exquisite happiness; the highest earthly bliss I desire. And who can estimate the glory to God, and the benefit to man, accruing from a life spent in such harmonious effort to do *His will*? Such unions, alas! are so rare that we seldom see an exemplification of the divine idea of marriage.

If, indeed, we are the disciples of Christ, “in the world we shall have tribulation”; but in Him and in *each other* we may have peace. If God chastises us by affliction, in either mind, body, or circumstances, it will only be a mark of our discipleship; and if borne equally by us both, the blow shall not only be softened, but sanctified, and we shall be able to rejoice that we are permitted to drain the bitter cup *together*. Satisfied that in our souls there flows a deep undercurrent of pure affection, we will seek grace to bear with the bubbles which may rise on the surface, or wisdom so to burst them as to increase the depth, and accelerate the onward flow of the pure stream of love, till it reaches the river which proceeds out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb, and mingles in glorious harmony with the love of Heaven.

The more you lead me up to Christ in all things, the more highly shall I esteem you; and, if it be possible to love you more than I do now, the more shall I love you. You are always present in my thoughts.

MY DEAR WILLIAM — I ought to be happy after enjoying your company all the evening. But now you are gone and I am alone, I feel a regret consonant with the height of my enjoyment. How wide the difference between heavenly and earthly joys! The former satiate the soul and reproduce themselves.

The latter, after planting in our soul the seeds of future griefs and cares, take their flight and leave an aching void.

How wisely God has apportioned our cup. He does not give us all sweetness, lest we should rest satisfied with earth; nor all bitterness, lest we grow weary and disgusted with our lot. But He wisely mixes the two, so that if we drink the one, we must also taste the other. And, perhaps, a time is coming when we shall see that the proportions of this cup of human joy and sorrow are more equally adjusted than we now imagine — that souls capable of enjoyments above the vulgar crowd can also feel sorrow in comparison with which theirs is but like the passing April cloud in contrast with the long Egyptian night. . . .

But I have rambled from what I was about to write. I find that the pleasure connected with pure, holy, sanctified love forms no exception to the general rule. The very fact of loving invests the being beloved with a thousand causes of care and anxiety, which, if unloved, would never exist. At least, I find it so. You have caused me more real anxiety than any other earthly object ever did. Do you ask why? I have already supplied you with an answer! . . . *Don't sit up singing till twelve o'clock after a hard day's work.* Such things are not required by either God or man; and remember you are not your own!

My dearest love, beware how you indulge that dangerous element of character — *ambition*. Misdirected, it will be everlasting ruin to yourself and, perhaps, to me also. Oh, my love, let nothing earthly excite it, let not self-aggrandisement fire it. Fix it on the Throne of the Eternal, and let it find the realization of its loftiest aspirations in the promotion of His glory, and it shall be consummated with the richest enjoyments and brightest glories of God's own Heaven. Those that honour Him He will honour, and to them who thus seek His glory will He give to rule over the nations, and even to judge angels, who, through a *perverted ambition*, the exaltation of self instead of God, have fallen from their allegiance and overcast their eternity with the blackness of darkness for ever.

I feel your danger. I could write sheets on the subject, but my full soul shall pour out its desires to that God who has promised to supply all your need. In my estimation, faithfulness is an indispensable ingredient of all true friendship. How much more of a love like mine! You say, "Reprove — advise me as you think necessary." I have no reproofs, my dearest, but I have cautions, and I know you will consider them.

Do assure me, my own dear William, that no lack of energy or effort on your part shall hinder the improvement of those

talents God has intrusted to you, and which He holds you responsible to improve to the uttermost. Your duty to God, to His Church, to me, to yourself, demands as much. If you really see no *prospect of studying*, then, I think, in the highest interest of the future, you ought not to stay.

I have been revolving in my mind all day which will be your wisest plan under present circumstances, and it appears to me as you are to preach nearly every evening, and at places so wide apart, it will be better to do as the friends advise, and stop all night where you preach. Do not attempt to walk long distances after the meetings. With a little management and a good deal of determination, I think you might accomplish even more that way as to study than by going home each night. Do not be over-anxious about the future. *Spalding will not be your final destination*, if you make the best of your *ability*.

Catherine Mumford's Reminiscences<sup>1</sup> tell the rest of the story:

Life now to me assumed altogether another aspect. I have already intimated the very high estimate I had formed of the importance of the position to which I now seemed fairly destined. The idea of the possibility of becoming a wife and a mother filled my life with new responsibilities, but the thought of becoming a Minister's wife made the whole appear increasingly serious. I assumed in imagination all these responsibilities right away, even as though they had already come, and at once set myself, with all my might, to prepare to meet them. I added to the number of my studies, enlarged the scope of my reading, wrote notes and made comments on all the sermons and lectures that appeared at all worthy of the trouble, started to learn shorthand in order that I might more readily and fully correspond with W., and in other ways stirred up the gift that was in me to fit myself the better to serve God and my generation.

I think this would have been one of the happiest periods of my life but for the gloomy view W. was apt to take of our circumstances. In looking back on this time, I often think of the saying that I have heard W. quote in these later times, that three-fourths of the troubles that cause us the greatest suffering never happen. Or, in other words, had we more perfectly learnt the divine lesson, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," the realisation of this truth might have modified many of the gloomy forebodings which marred the beginning of our acquaintance.

I was very delicate; in fact, little better than a confirmed

<sup>1</sup> Some autobiographical notes of a more or less fragmentary nature which were never published.

invalid, and he was afraid that my strength would never stand the strain and hardship involved in such a life as I imagined that of a Preacher's wife ought to be. Moreover, his pathway seemed so hedged in and blocked up, and he could not see how he was going to reach any ministerial position which would enable him to obtain for me that care and help without which he could not see how it was possible for me to live in any degree of comfort; and over and over again he would say that he would never take me into any position in which I should be likely to be less comfortable and cared for than in my own home.

The discipline of the Reform Society was very unsatisfactory to us both, in denying the Minister what we considered was his proper authority. The tendency of human nature to go to extremes found ample illustration in this particular. From making the Minister everything, treating him with the profoundest respect, receiving his word as law, putting him almost in the place of God Himself — they went over to regard him as nothing, denying him every shadow of authority, and only allowing him to preside at their meetings when elected for this purpose, and speaking of him in public and private as their "hired" preacher.

In W.'s case it was worse than this. The leader of the local movement with which he was connected, not only denied him anything like the position of a leader, but refused to give him reasonable opportunities for preaching. They simply dealt with him as a cypher, doubtless feeling that, did they give him any sort of a position, he would earn for himself the leadership which they were determined to keep to themselves.

We both saw that these relations were too strained and unnatural to last very long; accordingly, at the end of the three months, for which Mr. R. had engaged him in the first instance, and for which he remunerated him out of his own purse, the connection was dissolved.

The lookout now was gloomy enough, not that I was any way anxious about it. I felt quite certain that God would interfere on our behalf, and that W. possessed gifts which would only have to be exercised to become known, and which being known would win for him all those opportunities for usefulness for which his soul so strongly yearned.

It was at this time, when the way to the Ministry seemed totally closed in the Methodist direction, that W.'s attention was turned to the Congregational Church. I think this was my doing; indeed, I know it was; but, until he came to this dead stop, he would never hear of it, and even now his difficulties appeared almost insurmountable. To leave Methodism seemed an impossibility. His love for it at that time amounted almost to idolatry. . . .

Although I could sympathize with all this, and had a fair



share of love for the Church to which I also owed much and in which I had experienced a great deal of blessing, still, I had nothing like his blind attachment. For one reason, I had not been actively engaged. Mine had been more the position of a spectator; and, moreover, I argued that, once settled in a Congregational pulpit, he could impart into his services and meetings all that was good and hearty and soul-saving in Methodism; at least, I thought he could, and consequently, I pressed him very strongly to seek an open door for the exercise of his Ministry among the Independents.

He was slow to accept my counsel. He had formed a very lofty notion of the intellectual and literary status of the Body, and was fearful that he was not equal in these respects to meet what would be required of him. But I was just as confident as he was fearful. I felt sure that all that was wanted by him was a sphere, and that once gained, I saw no difficulty in his being able to organize a church of workers, and make them into Methodists in spirit and practice, whether they were such in government or no.

Perhaps I was very simple in these notions; I had little or no experience at that time as to the difficulty of over-ruling the prejudices and changing the customs which had been handed down from generation to generation. However, I was young and sanguine, and already had come to have considerable faith in the enthusiastic energy and devotion of my beloved, and I thought if he could once get into the leadership anywhere, he could carry the people whithersoever he would.

With such reasonings as these, and seeing that there was no other way by which he could reach the sphere to which his soul believed God had called him, he gave in, and resolved to seek an open door for the preaching of Jesus Christ, and the bringing lost sinners to God amongst the Congregationalists.

I cannot very well remember how he went about seeking this open door. We had not, so far as I remember, a single friend who had any influence either with the Independents or with any other Christian Church as far as that goes. We at first cut ourselves off from the friendships of our youth when we left the Wesleyans, and now we had turned our backs upon the little handful with whom we had taken sides amongst the Reformers; consequently, we had no one to give us any introduction, nay, not even to give us a word of counsel.

At that time the most influential man among the Nonconformists in London was a Dr. Campbell. He was the editor of a religious newspaper which was regarded as the principal organ of the Denomination, known as *The British Banner*, together with one or two other magazines. Dr. Campbell was mighty in controversy, and his paper had achieved no little notoriety in this line.

Beyond this, we knew nothing about him.

I pushed W. up to go and see him, and after some of that hesitancy which we feel for a task when our heart is not in it, he screwed up his courage and called at the Dr.'s residence, and asked to see the great man. The Dr. received him most kindly, made him tell the story of his life, and then told him that he liked him, and would help him to the utmost of his ability. He gave him some letters of introduction, and finally brought him before the Committee for Home Mission Work, when, after various inquiries, theological, doctrinal, and otherwise, it was decided that he should be accepted and sent to the Training College which was located somewhere out of London.

In addition to W.'s difficulty in regard to Methodist Government, there rose up a still more formidable one, that of doctrine.

We knew that the basis of the Congregational theology was Calvinism. We were both saturated, as it were, with the broadest, deepest, and highest opinions as to the extent of the love of God and the benefit flowing from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We were verily extremists on this question. The idea of anything like the selection of one individual to enjoy the blessedness of the Divine favour for ever and ever, and the reprobation of another to suffer all the pains and penalties of everlasting damnation, irrespective of any choice, conduct, or character on their part, seemed to us to be an outrage on all that was fair and righteous, to say nothing about benevolent. We not only thought this, but felt it. On this, at least, we were in perfect harmony.

Now the knowledge that this doctrine was maintained by the Congregationalists in general, although we knew that it was not very generally preached, it being only here and there that we ever heard it mentioned in the popular addresses of the Congregational preachers of that day — that fading away from the public view of that doctrine, which is almost complete in our time, had already commenced — still, this phantom haunted W. continually, and one of the first questions he asked Dr. Campbell in the interview of which I have already spoken was whether he would be expected to preach any other doctrine than the universal love of God. The Dr. assured him that he would not be expected to preach any other doctrine than that which he honestly believed, saying to him most emphatically, "Now you must go to College and study over your Bible, and what you find there you must go out and preach, and that will be all that Independents will require from you."

This assurance was repeated to him again in the intercourse into which he was brought with other leading Ministers of this Church.

Judge of his surprise, after having passed his examination,



and all had been fixed up for his admission into the Institution, on being informed by Dr. George Smith as the mouthpiece of the Committee that he would be expected to conform his views on this question to the Calvinistic theory. The Dr. said, "The Committee has shown you great favour arranging for you to go into training, although not even a member of an Independent Church, and holding doctrinal views opposed to those of the Committee; but on examination at the close of the first term, the Committee will certainly expect that you will be more nearly in harmony with their opinions," at the same time recommending an immediate perusal of Booth's *Reign of Grace* and Payne's *Divine Sovereignty*.

This was a tremendous drop for W. With great searchings of heart and innumerable misgivings he had managed to get so far. His views on church government had not been based upon any particular estimate of its importance, apart from the great purpose which it was intended to serve. Even then he was not one of those who magnify the form at the expense of the substance, but was prepared to sacrifice any favoured notions he might have entertained on this subject if he could thereby have secured the one important end on which his heart was set. . . . But when it came to a change of doctrine on what was to him such a vital question, he was completely staggered. To have left him perfectly free was the only reasonable and honourable course for the Committee to have adopted; in fact, the only course that was needed on behalf of the churches they represented. Of what value could a man possibly be if, for the sake of position, he could deliberately change his views on such a vital topic as the one in question?

Moreover, a more unlikely course to have attained their ends could not possibly have been taken, especially with W. If he had been left perfectly free to decide and act accordingly, as Dr. Campbell had assured him he would be, the review of the controversy by him would have been, I have no doubt, fairly and faithfully made; . . . not that I expect it would have resulted in any change of opinion, still the subject would have been considered in all its bearings. But as it was, it was like offering a bribe, the very thought of which prevented even the most superficial consideration of the subject in question, and consequently most effectually served to defeat its own purpose.

However, W. shook hands with the Dr., bought Booth's *Reign of Grace* on his way home, sat down to read it, managed to get through some 30 or 40 pages, threw it to the other side of the room, decided that he could never bring his mind to the views therein laid down, and so closed the door to the Training Institution, and to the Independents. He then decided to write the Secretary, thanking him for all his kindness, but intimating that he had not the slightest intention of altering his doctrinal

views, or of even deliberately setting to work to prepare for doing so.

All this, any one can easily imagine, was of considerable interest to me. From the moment of our engagement we had become one, and from that hour to this I don't think there has ever been any question of importance concerning either our principles or our practice in which we have not acted in perfect harmony.

I had been made familiar with every varying phase of the question as the negotiations proceeded. The matter had been undertaken more or less as I have said at my own instigation, and I had laboured hard to strengthen W.'s hands and to pilot him through the many difficulties that barred the way, and now, all at once, my schemes were frustrated, and my hopes, in that direction at least, were at an end, and we were once again afloat.

Amongst other things, ways and means demanded that W. should do something. The little store of money with which he left business was now exhausted. The last sixpence he had in the world he had given to a poor girl dying of consumption the day before in the expectation of going to the Training College on the following morning.

Therefore it seemed desirable that some other door should open in lieu of the one that had so abruptly closed.

As far as we could see no other deliverance was in sight, and yet, dark as the outlook was, the thought of going back to some business engagement was not allowed or entertained by either one of us. "No retreat" was our motto. We must go forward.

But how? That was the question. We had not long to wait.

I have already described that as the Episcopal Church divides the country into parishes, so Wesleyan Methodism groups those places where it operates into circuits.

The Reform movement, so far as it was able to, followed this line of demarcation. In some circuits the disruption was comparatively small, and the dissatisfied party found it the greatest difficulty to maintain an existence.

In others, the Reforming party formed a considerable portion of the body. This was the case at Spalding, a small town in the south of Lincolnshire. Here the great majority of lay preachers and people sided with the expelled Ministers, and were, in course of time, by expulsion or from choice, separated from the original fold, whereupon they formed themselves into a Community consisting of Societies and lay Preachers.

These Societies were separated by considerable distances from each other, the circuit being something like 27 miles across. To travel about amongst these Societies, preaching to them on the week nights and to transact the various matters of

business which were essential to their existence and extension, and to perform the other manifold duties of a Pastor, a preacher was required. Enquiry for such an one was made by a friend in London; W. was at once suggested by the gentleman to whom the enquiry was made. As the result the invitation was forwarded and accepted, and before many days had passed he was duly installed in a position in which, notwithstanding some considerable drawbacks, his whole soul was in harmony.

To us this seemed a wonderful intervention indeed, but not more so than numberless similar instances that followed in the succeeding years. Again and again have there been Red Seas and Jordans through which we have gone in safety.

It was on . . . day of this year 1852 that W. left me for Spalding.

This parting, although a very simple matter, perhaps appearing scarcely worthy of notice, was nevertheless a very serious event to me.

I don't know that I need hesitate to say that I loved W. with all my heart. We had been thrown very much together, and though the acquaintance had only extended some 6 months, it had been a very intimate one.

Parting, to me, had always looked a very formidable sort of thing. When a little girl, I made up my mind that I could not live as the wife of a seafaring or military man, simply on the ground of separation. As a Salvationist, I have since learnt many things and amongst others to endure separations from those I love for the Kingdom's sake, and on this occasion I braced myself up. Although it meant suffering, yet I did not wish it otherwise. The sacrifice of a present good to secure a greater in the future had always appeared to me to be one of the higher forms of duty; I cheerfully embraced it on this occasion.

## CHAPTER XII

### PURITAN LOVE-LETTERS

1852

UNFORTUNATELY, the love-letters of William Booth and Catherine Mumford are difficult to arrange in time sequence, since the dates are in many cases altogether omitted or mentioned only as the day and the month on which they were written; moreover, these documents suffered in the confusion which befell other papers, owing to the migratory life of the writers, and a consecutive dialogue is not to be made of those that are available. Nevertheless, these letters which follow, like beads on a string, are all connected on the single thread of the lovers' supreme difficulty. They can be read without any bother as to dates, and one is so interested in the narrative, so amused by the quaint style of the two writers, so charmed, and in some instances so exalted, by the beauty of the romance, that one steps over each hiatus scarcely conscious that a break has occurred.

The letters are so spontaneous, so unconscious of publication, so intimate and yet so public, that they may be given in their fulness and with scarcely the interposition of a single comment. The reader will remember that Catherine Mumford's education was superior to William Booth's, and will, perhaps, perceive a somewhat exaggerated evidence of this superiority in the letters; he may also detect a stronger and a more able personality in her love-letters, a greater vigour of mind, a much keener perception, and certainly a profounder spirituality. It is important, however, to bear in mind that from the very first Catherine Mumford recognized in William Booth a man of destiny, a man of extraordinary power, and of almost matchless enthusiasm. She looked up to him as to a superior force; she realized that he was one whose character would grow with life, whose power would increase with exercise; if she is superior to him in her letters, if she advises him, reproves him, instructs

him, and even drives him, still it is always as one who merely sees further into futurity, and knows as a mother knows the strength into which her child will grow. Catherine Mumford lived to be called "the Mother of the Salvation Army"; she was also the mother of the man who married her.

Bergsonism has here a most admirable example of its thesis that the intellect is merely a weapon forged by life for its use, that life itself is superior to mental accomplishment. One must also consider that while Catherine Mumford had leisure on her hands, and rather laid herself out at this time as a letter-writer, William Booth, even in 1852, was a man incessantly and exhaustively engaged in work which seemed to him infinitely more urgent than the writing of love-letters. His love-story is only a part of his life-story, and his life-story is as much a psychological study of development along one single line of human activity as an epic of religious enthusiasm.

Here follow letters which cover the greater part of 1852, prior to William Booth's departure for Spalding, and which are chiefly concerned with the struggle of these two souls to know the will of God in their desperate situation:

*William Booth to Catherine Mumford.*

MY DEAR FRIEND — I promised you a line. I write. I know no more than I knew yesterday. I offered as you know full well then and there to make the engagement. You declined on what without doubt are good grounds, but still I cannot do more. . . . You know the inmost feelings of my heart, and I can say no more than I have not, as I could have wished, seen anything striking to intimate the will of God. If my circumstances had not been so benighted I might not have desired this, but I feel the importance of the affair, if I feel nothing else.

Now understand me. As I said yesterday, I offer now a *step in the dark*. I will promise you anything you wish *for your own dear sake*, but mind, my feelings are still the same. But the tie shall be as sacred as though made under the influence of sunnier feelings and in prospect of brighter days. You can write me your mind. I do not wish to trouble you for a long letter. Put down in a line what you think. If you decline as yesterday, I ask the favour of being allowed to keep as secret as my Bible and as full to me of inspiration, and as



sacred as my soul's inmost feelings, the notes I already have in your writing. As you wish you can keep or burn mine. I could almost trust you with the keeping of the Title Deeds of my soul's salvation, so highly do I esteem your character. Perhaps I write wildly. Excuse me. I began calm.

After this is ended, this awful controversy,<sup>1</sup> I shall call on you again. If you *accept* what I have stated, I will come Saturday. *If not*, I shall call as a friend in the course of a few days and show you how I bear the matter. If it be of man, if it be wrong, it will pass forgotten away. If it be of God He will still bring it to pass.

All I fear is your suffering and your mother's condemnation. But I cannot help it. Believe every word I have here said. If you accept, we are henceforth and for ever one. If you decline, the matter must be forgotten. I leave you in the hands of my God.—I am, Yours, etc.,

WILLIAM BOOTH.

Miss C. Mumford.

*William Booth to Catherine Mumford.*

WALWORTH.

(Undated.)

MY DEAR FRIEND — You may perhaps deem me to be taking another step in the wrong direction, but I must, after the very abrupt manner in which we parted last evening, say a word. I believe that you think me sincere, and I have only one fear, that is, that you will make yourself ill. If you do, and I hear of it, it will drive me into delirium. My mind is made up. My hopes are set on things below of the same nature as things above. My heart prays that *His* will may be done on earth as it is done in Heaven. . . .

How clear and distinct in answer to prayer did God make the path of Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher. With them it was not the impulse of passion, but the clear unmistakable teaching of Providence. I would that it should be so in our experience. Be assured that your reasoning on the subject is not forgotten. I remember your every word. But hear me again and I will be silent.

1. Such a matter never could be arranged without in some way transpiring, which would, I conceive, injure my usefulness.

2. It never could be without inducing me to occupy time, every moment of which ought to be taken up with study.

3. I have no present probability of making my circumstances such that I can ask you to share my home.

4. I should feel such a powerful earthly bond taking up my

<sup>1</sup> This is the "controversy" referred to in the previous chapter, as to whether the lovers should make a regular engagement or turn their affection into a Platonic friendship.

feelings and drawing off my heart from entire and complete devotion to God.

5. God has of late been satisfying me with Himself, and I should fear setting up or creating another god, especially seeing that He has placed me in a position that my heart has so long desired and given me every comfort I wish.

6. Moreover, when I ponder over the salvation He has been working out for me, saving me from peculiar temptations to which I have been prone — and the darkness that hangs around me, etc., I feel an involuntary shudder creep over me at the thought of an engagement. . . .

I need not say the high place your character and disposition have in my esteem. I need not say how I regret, for your sake, that I ever set foot in your home. I need not say that the high estimation your mother has for you led her, I conceive, to take a prejudicial view of my conduct and to make remarks which were unmerited and unjust, and calculated to wrong my soul.

But it is over now. I am resigned to the will of God. I shall endeavour to pursue the path of duty. . . .

In the meantime, let us give ourselves to God, fix our affections all on Christ, and seek to do His will. Your kindness to me I need not refer to. I have indeed been grateful for it, and felt indeed how undeserved it was.

May God bless and prosper you temporally and spiritually, and may He make His will known and evident so that you may see it and understand it. Whatever you do, try to save men, to bless the world, and to preach Christ. . . . With many prayers,— I remain, your sincere and affectionate friend,

WILLIAM BOOTH.

Miss Mumford.

*William Booth to Catherine Mumford.*

WALFORD.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Yours has just come to hand. My mother's note preceded it, imploring me to do nothing rashly, fearing my accustomed impetuosity, my feeling gaining the mastery over the calm teaching of reason; as a matter of course, she is aware that she cannot further than this advise me, not knowing you personally; she assures me that she has laid the matter before God as requested, and that the only impression on her mind in answer to such a prayer is, that ere such an important step be taken I should *consider long*, reminding me in conclusion that *once* a long time back she spoke *wisely* to me on the *same subject*,<sup>1</sup> but at the same time declaring that she will acquiesce in any decision at which I may

<sup>1</sup> This must refer, one thinks, to the love affair in Nottingham.

arrive; this is all I could possibly expect, all I desire at her hands. . . .

I need not recapitulate my doubts, only that every day seems to blacken them and make them more worthy of consideration; I need not say here how highly I judge of you and how high in my estimation your virtuous soul I rank; I need not say that I have deemed and still do deem every, even the minutest, of your actions and words spotless and without blemish, that is, in my eyes; I need not tell you that I mean Christ and a union in Heaven, and that my resolutions are unbroken to live and live only for the salvation of souls and the glory of God; I need not urge you to a more earnest searching out for the beauties and loveliness of the character of Jesus; I need not exhort you to entire consecration to His service and His constant hallowed communion; I would to God that my intercourse with *Him* was as *perfect* and my resemblance to *His* image was as divine as *your own*. I will to-day more earnestly than ever pray that you may find your all in all in *Him*. I say nothing decisive because I know nothing; I have neither advanced nor retrograded from the position I occupied when last we met.

I intend, all well, visiting near Binfield this afternoon. Mr. Nye preaches there, I understand, to-night. I shall not be there, or else I might, I suppose, have had the pleasure of shaking hands with you. But we have a committee at Walworth. I trust you will have a good night's rest; I am grieved to hear that you are poorly. My health is good, tolerably so. I bore the fatigue of Sunday quite as well as I could have expected.

With my love to your dear mother — that is, if you communicate this letter; I do not see why you should not. — I remain, affectionately yours in the Love of the risen, interceding, atoning, sacrificial, ever-prevailing Lamb of God,

WILLIAM BOOTH.

Miss Catherine Mumford.

*Catherine Mumford to William Booth.*

BRIXTON,

*Tuesday night, May 11, '52.*

MY DEAR FRIEND — I have been spreading your letter before the Lord and earnestly pleading for a manifestation of His will to your mind in some way or other, and now I would say a few words of comfort and encouragement. My heart feels for you far beyond what I can express. Oh that I knew how to comfort you in an indirect way.

. . . . .

You do grieve me by saying, "you fear you have blocked up every way of being a blessing to me." *I tell you it is not so;*

your kindness and character will ever give weight to your advice and teaching, and create a sympathy with your prayers which cannot fail to benefit me. If you wish to avoid giving me pain don't condemn yourself. I feel sure God does not condemn you, and if you could look into my heart you would see how far I am from such a feeling. *Don't pore over the past.* Let it all go. Your desire is to do the will of God, and He will guide you. Never mind *who* frowns, if God smiles. Though you are surrounded by a host of foes He is *able* to deliver and He *will* deliver, only trust in Him and don't be afraid; the darkness and gloom that hangs about your path shall all flee away. When you are tried you shall come forth as gold! The words gloom, melancholy, and despair lacerate my heart. Don't give way to such feelings for a moment. *God loves you.* He will sustain you. The thought that I should increase your perplexity and cause you any suffering is almost intolerable. Oh that we had never seen each other. Do try to forget me, so far as the remembrance would injure your usefulness or spoil your peace. If I have no alternative but to oppose the will of God or trample on the desolations of my own heart, my choice is made. "Thy will be done" is my constant cry. I care not for myself, but oh if I cause you to err I shall never be happy again. Don't, I beseech you, take any step without some evidence *satisfactory* to your own mind of the will of God; think nothing about me; I will resist to the uttermost. "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." I do continually pray for you; surely God must answer our prayers when He sees it is our one desire to do His will. Let us *expect* an answer; perhaps our faith is deficient. . . . — Yours affectionately,  
CATHERINE.

*Catherine Mumford to William Booth.*

BRIXTON,  
May 13, '52.

MY DEAR FRIEND — I have read and re-read your note, and I fear you did not fully understand my difficulty. It was not circumstances; I thought I had fully satisfied you on that point. I thought you felt sure that a bright prospect could not allure me nor a dark one affright me, if we are only *one* in heart. My difficulty, my only reason for wishing to defer the engagement was, that *you* might feel satisfied in your own mind that the step is right. To cause you to err would cost me far more suffering than *anything else*. I have deeply pondered over all your words at our last interview, especially the objections which you so honourably confessed had influenced your mind, and I *dare* not enter into so solemn an engagement till you can assure me that you feel I am in every way suited to make you

happy and that you are satisfied the step is not opposed to the will of God.

You say if your circumstances were not so blighted you could not desire so striking an indication of God's will. I answer if you are satisfied of *His* will irrespective of circumstances, let circumstances *go*, and let us be one, come what will; but if there is anything in me which you fear, anything you think would mar your *completest happiness*, banish the thought of an union *for ever*, and let us regard each other as true and tried friends; but if you feel satisfied on these two points — first, that the step is not opposed to the will of God, and, secondly, that I am calculated to make you happy, come on Saturday evening, and on our knees before God let us give ourselves afresh to Him and to each other for His sake, consecrate our whole selves to His service *for Him to live and die*. When this is done what have we to do with the future? — we and all our concerns are in His hands, under His all-wise and gracious providence.

I wish you could see into my heart for a moment; I cannot transfer to paper my *absorbing* desire that the *will of God may be done* in this matter. I dare no more say I decline, or I accept (except on the beforementioned grounds) than I dare take my destiny into my own hands, the cry of my *inmost soul* is, Thy will be done. If you come on Saturday I shall presume that you are satisfied on these two points, and that henceforth we are one; in the meantime I shall not cease to pray that God may guide you *aright*. May He bless you, and if He sees that I am not such an one as you need to be an helpmate for you, may He enable you to *forget me*. . . .

*William Booth to Catherine Mumford.*

WALWORTH, June 24.

(Probably 1852.)

MY OWN DEAR CATHERINE —. . . I feel uncommonly tired and weary this morning. My head aches, and I feel altogether out of order. I walked home from Greenwich last night. I ought to have ridden. I preached there with much liberty and trust some profit to the people, though the congregation was not so good as the week before, some of the leading friends having gone to some fête in the neighbourhood. . . .

Let us love Him better for the love we bear each other, and seek in all things perfect and unimpaired conformity to all His will and work. I hope when you can that you will resume your reading, and I trust in better spirits and with a firmer trust in the Hand that feeds the ravens. . . .



*William Booth to Catherine Mumford.**Monday morning.*

MY OWN LOVING KATE — It has just occurred to my mind that I did not leave you a correct address of that poor girl, and lest you should be prevented from your benevolent undertaking I post this to inform you. If you leave the omnibus at the Obelisk, at the end of the London and at the foot of the Waterloo and Blackfriars' Roads, you will be but a few yards from your destination, which is No. 3 or 4 Duke Street, next door to a Plumber and Glazier's shop; it is up two flights of stairs; take with you a smelling-bottle; a widow woman, who lives in the room as you enter from the street, if you ask her for the poor girl of the name of "Leach," will show you her room, I doubt not. Speak pointedly to all you see of the family; mention my name. . . .

My love to you, all my heart. I may or may not see you this evening. I write this on purpose that you may have the direction to that poor dying girl. Pray for me, oh to be willing to take any path which may promise most the diffusion of righteousness and the glory of God. Oh let us give ourselves afresh and entirely to *Him*; never was such a sacrifice as this needed as now; I would make my choice under the influence of deep piety and devotion, and I shall not err.

My love to your dear mother. I love not only you, but her better than ever before.

I pray for your entire consecration, and believe me, — Yours in the closest alliance of united soul, spirit, and body, for time and for eternity, for earth and for Heaven, for sorrow and for joy, for ever and for ever. Amen.

WILLIAM.

## CHAPTER XIII

WILLIAM BOOTH AS A SUCCESSFUL EVANGELIST.

CATHERINE MUMFORD AS GUARDIAN ANGEL

1852-1853

It was not until he got into Lincolnshire that William Booth felt sure of his vocation. The experiment in London had been a failure, as we have seen, and one that rather tended to diminish the young man's confidence in his calling. He has left a fragment behind him which expresses his disgust for the satisfied and sanctimonious people among whom he had attempted to labour, and alludes briefly to the now pressing crisis in his financial affairs :

But the people would have nothing to do with me. They "did not want a parson." They reckoned they were all parsons, so that at the end of the three months' engagement the weekly income came to an end; and indeed I would not have renewed the engagement on any terms. There was nothing for me to do but to sell my furniture and live on the proceeds, which did not supply me for a very long time. I declare to you that at that time I was so fixed as not to know which way to turn.

In my emergency a remarkable way opened for me to enter college and become a Congregational minister. But after long waiting, several examinations, trial sermons, and the like, I was informed that on the completion of my training I should be expected to believe and preach what is known as Calvinism. After reading a book which fully explained the doctrine, I threw it at the wall opposite me, and said I would sooner starve than preach such doctrine, one special feature of which was that only a select few could be saved.

My little stock of money was exhausted. I remember that I gave the last sixpence I had in the world to a poor woman whose daughter lay dying; but within a week I received a letter inviting me to the charge of a Methodist Circuit in Lincolnshire, and from that time my difficulties of that kind became much less serious.

He was encouraged, as we know, by the enthusiasm of Catherine Mumford during this distressing period, but it

must have been hard indeed for a young man with his foot on the threshold of a career to find the door of destiny thus shut in his face.

His reception in Spalding was the very reverse of his experience in London. He gives in his unpublished reminiscences a hurried account of this first great experience as a Methodist preacher, which we will quote in this place; but it is really in the letters of Catherine Mumford, which shall follow, that one gets a close, striking, and intimate knowledge of his mind at that period:

The Spalding people welcomed me as though I had been an angel from Heaven, providing me with every earthly blessing within their ability, and proposing that I should stay with them for ever! They wanted me to marry right away, offered to furnish me a house, provide me with a horse to enable me more readily to get about the country, and proposed other things that they thought would please me.

With them I spent the happiest eighteen months of my life. Of course my horizon was much more limited in those days than it is now, and consequently required less to fill it.

Although I was only twenty-three years of age and Lincolnshire was one of the counties that had been most privileged with able Methodist preaching for half a century, and I had to immediately follow in Spalding a somewhat renowned minister, God helped me very wonderfully to make myself at home, and become a power amongst the people.

I felt some nervousness when on my first November Sunday I was confronted by such a large congregation as greeted me. In the morning I had very little liberty; but good was done, as I afterwards learned. In the afternoon we had a Prayer- or After-meeting, at which one young woman wept bitterly. I urged her to come to the communion-rails at night. She did so, and the Lord saved her. She afterwards sent me a letter thanking me for urging her to come. In the evening I had great liberty in preaching, and fourteen men and women came to the communion-rail; many, if not all, finding the Saviour.

On the Monday I preached there again. Four came forward, three of whom professed to find Salvation. I exerted myself very much, felt very deeply, and prayed very earnestly over an old man who had been a backslider for seven years. He wept bitterly, and prayed to the Lord to save him, "if He could wash a heart as black as Hell." By exerting myself so much I made myself ill, and was confined to the house during the rest of the week. My host and hostess were very kind to me.

The next Sunday I started from home rather unwell. I had to go to Donnington, some miles away, in the morning and evening, and to Swineshead Bridge in the afternoon.

But at night God helped me to preach in such a way that many came out, and fourteen names were taken of those who really seemed satisfactory. It was indeed a melting, moving time.

I was kneeling, talking to a penitent, when some one touched me on the shoulder and said, "Here is a lady who has come to seek the Saviour, and now she has come to hear you, and she wants Salvation too." The Lord had mercy upon her, and she went away rejoicing.

At Swineshead Bridge — the name gives some idea of the utterly rural character of the population — I was to preach on three successive evenings, in the hope of promoting a Revival there. Many things seemed to be against the project, but the Lord was for us. Two people came out on the Monday evening, and God saved them both. This raised our faith and cheered our spirits, especially as we knew that several more souls were in distress.

On the Tuesday the congregation was better. The news had spread that the Lord was saving, and that seldom fails to bring a crowd wherever it may be. That evening the word was with power, and six souls cried for mercy. At the earnest solicitation of the people I decided to stay the remainder of the week, and urged them to pray earnestly, with the result that many sought and found Salvation, and the little Society was nearly doubled.

On the Saturday, just as I started home on the omnibus, a plain, unsophisticated Christian man came and said, "O sir, let me have hold of your hand." When he had seized it between both his, with tears streaming down his face, he said, "Glory be to God that ever you came here. My wife before her conversion was a cruel persecutor, and a sharp thorn in my side. She would go home from the Prayer-Meeting before me, and as full of the Devil as possible; she would oppose and revile me; but now, sir, she is just the contrary, and my house, instead of being a little Hell has become a little Paradise." This was only one of a number of cases in which husbands rejoiced over wives, and wives over husbands, for whom they had long prayed.

I shall always remember with pleasure the week I spent at Swineshead Bridge, because I prayed more and preached with more of the spirit of expectation and faith, and then saw more success than in any previous week of my life. I dwell upon it as, perhaps, the week which most effectually settled my conviction for ever, that it was God's purpose by my using the simplest means to bring souls into liberty, and to break into

the cold and formal state of things to which so many of His people only too readily settle down.

The letters which now follow are of considerable importance in the study of William Booth's development. They reveal his excitement in his work, his pleasure in his own power, the self-satisfaction of a young enthusiast conscious of growing popularity; and they also reveal his determination to adopt revival methods, his misgiving as to Catherine Mumford's feelings in this matter, his own tolerance of those who follow other ways. One may say at this juncture that while William Booth never lost faith in the rousing methods of revivalism, he never once claimed for such methods a universal adoption by the Church. He recognized from the first, and held to the last, that there are two distinct fields of religious activity — the field of aggressive evangelism and the pastoral field.

It will be seen from these letters that Catherine Mumford's influence was exerted at the very beginning of their engagement on the side of a deeper and truer spirituality that William Booth had then visualised; one of her letters, indeed, deserves to live, and probably will live, as one of the beautiful documents in the literature of mysticism; at the same time one must keep in mind that William Booth eventually carried the day with her, and won her over completely to the side of a demonstrative and aggressive propaganda, which she purified and exalted as the years went on.

*William Booth to Catherine Mumford.*

RED LION STREET, SPALDING,  
Thursday, Nov. 17.

MY DEAREST EARTHLY TREASURE — Bless you a thousand times for your very kind letter just received; it has done my heart good. I have thought about you much and very affectionately the last few days. . . . I should have written you yesterday, but was so unwell that I could not. . . . I do not doubt our future oneness with regard to revivalism and about all things. I have such faith in our powers of utterance that we shall be able to make plain to each other what we mean, and our love to each other, that when we can be brought to see truth held by the other we shall rejoice to adopt it. And although now I do not doubt I could bear with extravagancies in a preacher or a prayer-meeting which you would condemn . . . I do not blame



you, so wait until the time comes, and we shall yet, I do not doubt, see with the same eyes. . . . The great difference between a man known as a faithful preacher nowadays and one of the John Smith, Wm. Bramwell, James Caughey, David Stoner, Ralph Walter, and Richard Poole school is, I think, in this — the one deals out the plain truth as do Mr. Thomas, Mr. Gamble, Mr. Brown, Luke Tyerman, and others in nice suitable language with considerable thought, prayer, and earnestness — and faithfulness too — *but there it ends so far as you can see*; but the other school preach similar pointed truth, urging more especially salvation by faith, *just now*, and then direct calling on sinners to lay down the weapons of rebellion, and give up their hearts to God *now*, following all up with a prayer-meeting and penitent-forms, benches, or pews. . . . I do not condemn any — I leave every man to follow out the bent of his own inclination and to act up to the teaching of God's Spirit — but I know which God owns the most. I believe that with Mr. Thomas's talent, if he would follow such measures he might soon have his chapel crowded and hundreds converted to God. I do not speak censoriously. I have not the tact and the talent that thousands have, and yet under their ministry how little do we see done; what I have of head or heart or lip shall be consecrated and sacred to this service. . . .

The great plan of Salvation is, ceasing from making efforts to make unto yourself a righteous character, and sinking helpless into the arms of Christ and accepting Full Salvation, a pure heart, and all the blessings of the New Covenant by faith. I see that I have erred here. I have promised and promised, and bowed and bowed, and always failed; whereas now I go to Him and say, I am nothing, Thou art my all in all. Try this. Will you, darling? — Don't begin at the outside and aim at patching up this rent and that rent in your life, but go to Jesus and take the blessings of a pure heart at His hand, and say,

'Tis done, Thou dost this moment save,  
With full salvation bless,  
Redemption through Thy Blood I have  
And spotless love and peace.

Read one or two of John Wesley's sermons now and then. You shall have some more books when we meet again all well. May the Lord bless you. Read over again the *Life of Mrs. Fletcher*. Farewell. I want to see you very much. I have thought about you very tenderly since I have been ill. Oh how I wanted your hand on my aching head. . . .

I had to have brandy twice, was really ill, thought much of you. Got better and went and preached, and came home and made a hearty dinner of goose, etc., etc. Mr. Molesworth lives in a very nice house, built by himself, wooden, and beautifully

furnished. He is a large farmer and a man of some property, has a large family remarkably well behaved, and for whom he keeps a Governess in the house. From his house I walked on to Holbeach, where I found that I was announced to preach, and notwithstanding my weakness I had to do so; the congregation was large and respectable. I had great liberty in preaching from Christ having overcome the world. In the morning I had again to take brandy twice, and then I preached with some pleasure from Paul not being ashamed of the Gospel; afterwards was hurled away by a gentleman, by name Mr. George Brown, to Holbeach Marsh, some eight miles away; he took me in his gig. I found his home quite a nice house, a large family of very nice and apparently well-educated children, a resident Governess (a young lady who is leaving in a deep decline), and everything first rate. I made an excellent dinner, and away we went to preach; service held in a large kitchen, which was quite full, about 60 or 70 present. I suppose the Conference get about 6 or 7, so that there is little fear of our getting the chapel. I had a little liberty. Here I met Mr. Jonathan Longhatton, reported to me as the most shrewd and talented preacher and speaker in the Circuit. He gave me a hearty welcome, and assured me how glad he should be to see me at his house, and told me that, as a man of experience, I must take port wine, that he could tell by my voice and appearance that it would do me good. My health is of first importance. What do you say, dearest? After shaking hands, away we went in the gig again, and after a cold, bleak ride I reached Holbeach, took tea with Mr. Peet, and preached on "This is indeed the Christ" to a large and attentive congregation with great pleasure to myself. Supper with Mr. Peet, who is a man of property, perhaps as rich as any man in the Circuit: afterwards returned to what is my present home, Mr. Ryecroft, a local preacher of whom I have spoken to you before as being so beloved and popular.

So that by the time I reach Spalding on Friday, after being absent seven days, I shall have preached, "all well," 10 instead of 6 sermons.

But I mean on another plan to keep them to their word, at least after this week. And now, my dearest, will you contrive to get my things off this week? There are very few clothes worth sending. . . . I think, when I get some money, to write to Yorkshire and get my old friend Mr. Scholes to make and send me a piece of cloth. But if you will, get them sent off and directed to me at

Mr. Green's,

Baker,

Red Lion Street,

Spalding, Lincolnshire,

where your next letter must also be directed. I have left orders that should they get there before me they are to be paid for and taken in. . . .

Be assured of my continued affections and purest intentions, and that if your health and my circumstances would warrant it, our wedding, instead of January, '54, should be January, '53.

With my love to your dearest mother, father, and Mr. M.—I remain, my darling,—yours as ever and for ever; WILLIAM.

TO MY DEAREST LOVE — My position here is likely to be just to my own mind.

The letters of Catherine Mumford, which now follow, show how she watched the popular young preacher from afar, and how in the midst of her satisfaction at his opening success she was profoundly troubled about his ultimate destiny. These letters can be read as a single document, and fortunately they not only give one a most intimate impression of the writer, but show very clearly the manner of man to whom they were written. Some of these letters seem to me as beautiful love-letters as any in the world, reaching at times heights of religious inspiration hardly to be matched in the literature of the saints, and sounding so unmistakable a note of truth and purity of aim that they do not suffer in the least from an occasional use of the now outworn vocabulary of Methodist fervour.

LONDON,

*December 17, '52.*

MY BELOVED WILLIAM — I think your depreciatory remarks on the character of your epistles were much out of place at the commencement of the very kind and beautiful letter I received this morning. If any one who did not know me had seen me walk about the parlour dissolved in tears, after its perusal, they would have thought I had received some very distressing intelligence, but they were tears of gladness and gratitude for the goodness of God. Oh how my soul praises Him for the favourable aspect of your affairs!

I think the issue of the committee-meeting most satisfactory. I did not expect more than £65, and your position being defined so exactly according to your own views, and their not desiring so many sermons as you supposed, is over and above anything I had ever hoped; let us praise the Lord and be encouraged.

Of the kindness of the people, I cannot speak; I can only *feel* its value and pray for an hundredfold return of it to their

own bosoms. I think the status you have taken amongst them is superior to my anticipations; mind, my Love, that you sustain it, *as a man* and gentleman of manners, and kindness will not fail to do it. "As superiority of mind, or something not to be defined, first rivets the attention, so manners, decent and polite, the same we practised at first sight, must save it from declension." As a *preacher*, study will not only enable you to maintain your present status, but attain a higher. You promise me to *do what you can*; if you do that, I have no fear. You desire me to do all I can for myself. I *will*, my Love, for your dear sake, if I had no other motive my love for you would be quite sufficient to stimulate me to exertion. . . .

I am sorry to hear that Mr. Hanks did not call to see you or invite you there; I am surprised at it; it is very much unlike him; but I fear he has perhaps fallen in some way which has injured his character, and so feels ashamed for fear you should hear it; but, my Love, don't on that account shun him; try to restore him. I feel deeply for him; he is a good-hearted man, and when engaged in the service of God a zealous, consistent Christian; but he has been overtaken in a fault, and perhaps little cared for. If you act judiciously I think you may be made a blessing to him. I will not forget to pray that you may. Perhaps he fears to encounter you, anticipating some close conversation on soul matters; I am sure it is not because he is near or wanting in esteem for us; at least I think so.

You ask me, my Love, to tell you whether I *forgive* you for thinking, or rather for telling me your thoughts, about that one deficiency which spoiled your earthly paradise the other night? Will you *forgive me* if I answer that it would have required a far greater exercise of my pardoning mercy if you had asked me to forgive you for not thinking about it? I think you have acted very wisely, as well as most honourably, in letting your desires as to marrying be known; I have been thinking, if the Lord should indeed favour us with opportunity as soon as next year, I should like it to take place on my *birthday*, January 17, 1854. You will smile, and no wonder, but you know me, therefore I am not *afraid* of being misunderstood. What you say about insuring your life I highly approve, and shall estimate such act as another proof of your practical affection for myself. . . .—Yours in tenderest and most enduring affection,  
C.

December 27, '52.

MY DEAREST WILLIAM — As I did not feel in writing-tune either yesterday or on Xmas day, I will this evening give you a sketch of our Christmas enjoyments. Father dined at home, and though our number was so small we enjoyed ourselves very well. Your representation on the wall seemed to look down



on our sensual gratification with awful gravity, manifesting an indifference to the good things of this life not at all characteristic of the original.

I thought about you very much during the day. I could not but contrast my feelings with those of last year. Then my anxieties and affections were centred in objects whose love and care I had experienced through many changing years. *Then* I knew no love but that of a child, a sister, a friend, and I thought that love deep, sincere, fervent; perhaps it was, nay, *I know it was*; but since then a stranger, *unknown, unseen* till within the last short year, has strangely drawn around him the finest tendrils of my heart, and awakened a new absorbing affection which seems, as it were, to eclipse what I before deemed the intensity of love. Then my anxieties were almost confined to *home*; *now* this same stranger, like a magnet, draws them after him in all his wanderings, so that they are seldom at home. What a change in one short year; can you solve the mystery? Can you find the reason?

But I am forgetting to detail the day's pleasures, etc. After dinner we all went a walk, talked about *you*, my dear brother; the changes which have taken place in a few years; the changes which will probably take place in a few more, etc. My dear father<sup>1</sup> seemed kinder and more comfortable than usual; he is still a teetotaler and is abstaining altogether from the *pipe*; there is a change for the better in many respects; *don't forget* him, my Love, at the Throne of Grace. Help me and my dear mother to pray for him. Oh, surely the Lord will save him, surely He will not visit our unfaithfulness upon us in this way. My soul's cry is, "Lord, if thou must chastise, any way but this," *it would be bitter anguish* to mourn as they who have no hope, and yet how little I have thought about it lately. Oh for a Christ-like sympathy for souls such as I used to feel, when I have sat up half the night to pray for them. My dearest Love, *this* is the secret of success, the weapon before which the very strongholds of hell must give way. Oh let us try to get it again, let us *make up our minds* to win *souls* whatever else we leave undone.

But to return again. We spent a very pleasant evening together. I lay on the sofa working a little watch-pocket for the use of that stranger I have been speaking of, which I hope he will use for my sake even though he may be provided with one already. I hope he will [<sup>?</sup> not think I] murdered time; it did not take me long. My dear mother and myself enjoyed a good season in prayer and then retired to rest. . . .

*Wednesday night.*—My dearest Love, I received your *very*

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mumford, who was a carriage-builder, had lately lost his enthusiasm for religious work, and was inclined to abandon Methodism altogether.



*kind* and welcome letter yesterday morning, and should have written immediately only that I knew you would not be at Spalding before Friday. I have felt very anxious about your health since hearing you were so poorly. I could not sleep last night for thinking about you. I do hope you are better. I fear, my Love, you are not sufficiently careful as to diet; do exercise self-denial when such things are before you as you have any reason to fear will disagree with you. The enclosed prescription I got Mr. Davis to copy for you; it is an excellent one, given me by Mr. Franks. . . . If you are not quite recovered I hope you will get it. I have lost faith in brandy; where persons are not accustomed to it, it may act beneficially for the time, but it produces a reaction by irritation of the membrane of the stomach, whereas the mixture never fails in my case, and I have been much troubled.

You ask my opinion about your taking port wine. I need not say how willing, nay, anxious I am that you should have anything and everything which would tend to promote your *health* and happiness, but so thoroughly am I convinced that port wine would do neither, that I should hear of your taking it with unfeigned grief. You must not listen, my dear, to the advice of every one claiming to be experienced; persons really experienced and judicious in many things not infrequently entertain notions the *most fallacious* on this subject. I have had it recommended to me scores of times by such individuals, but such recommendations have always gone for nothing, because I have felt that, however much my superiors such persons might be in other respects, *on that subject* I was the best informed. I have even argued the point with Mr. Stevens, and I am sure set him completely fast for arguments to defend alcohol even as a medicine. I am fully and for ever settled on the physical side of the question; I believe you are on the moral and religious, but I have never thought you were on the physical.

Now, my dearest, it is *absolutely necessary*, in order to save you from being influenced by other people's false notions, that you should have a *settled, intelligent conviction* on the subject, and in order that you may get this I have been at the trouble almost to unpack your box, which was beautifully packed, to get out *Bachus*, in which you will find several green marks and likewise some pencillings in three or four *sections*, which I hope you will read. To read all the book would take too much time, or else it would do you good, but the chapters I have marked will give you a pretty concise view of that part of the subject you most need. I do hope you will read it if you sit up an hour later every night till you have done so — that is, when you retire at ten — and I would not advise this for anything less important. I believe the perusal will fully satisfy you; but if it

should not, send me word and I will get, if it is to be got in London, a work by Dr. Lees, admitted to be the best work ever written on the question.

It is a subject on which I am most anxious that you should be *thorough*. I abominate that hackneyed but monstrously inconsistent tale—a teetotaler in principle, but obliged to take a little for my stomach's sake. Such teetotalers aid the progress of intemperance more than all the drunkards in the land, and there are abundance of them amongst Methodist preachers. They seem a class of men the right performance of whose duties seems to require pretty liberal assistance from the bottle; the fact is notorious, and doubtless the fault is chiefly with the people, who foolishly consider it a kindness to put the bottle to their neighbour's mouth as frequently as he will receive it; but I believe my dear William will steadfastly resist such foolish advisers as Mr. L., and firmly adhere to his principles till he has some better reason to abandon them. I dare take the responsibility (and I have more reason to feel its weight than any other being) of advising you to abandon the idea of taking wine altogether. I have far more hope for your health *because* you abstain from stimulating drinks than I should have if you took them; to one of your temperament they would especially prove hurtful and destructive. Be careful to abstain from *all things* which you *know* to injure your health, and I have no doubt you will get strong. I have often heard you say this would be the case if you acted *judiciously*. Oh my Love, take every care of yourself, get everything *needful*, but flee the detestable drink as you would a serpent; be a teetotaler in principle and *practice*; and in this respect by example, by precept, train up your sons, if you have any, in the way in which they *should go*.

I am glad you feel the importance of the training of children, there is no subject on which I have felt and still feel more acutely. I have often looked on a little child and felt my whole frame affected by the consideration that it were possible for me some time to become a mother; the awful weight of responsibility wrapped up in that beautiful word has often caused my spirit to sink within me. Oh if I did not fully intend, and ardently hope, to train my own (if ever blessed with any) differently to the way in which most are trained, I would pray every day, most earnestly, that I might never have any. Oh the miserable homes that might be happy; the lacerated hearts which might bound with joy; the blighted flowers which might have bloomed on earth and expanded in heaven, but for the wretched, foolish, wicked indifference of parents. My dear, I hope you do not consider the arduous but *glorious* work of training the intellectual and moral nature of the child solely the duty of the mother. Remember the father is, and must be,

in every well-regulated family, the *head* of his household. Think for a few moments what is implied in being their *head*, their *ruler*, their *shepherd*, their *tender parent*. Oh my Love, you have need to prepare, head and heart, for the right performance of the momentous relationships you desire to realize. As soon as you can afford it, buy Abbot's *Mother at Home*, price 1s., and lend it to some of the mothers you come in contact with; never mind the silent reproof conveyed by the loan, it will do good. And, oh, if the book were made the instrument of rescuing one poor little darling from the miserable consequences of domestic misrule, it would amply repay the unpleasantness of any little pique taken at its presentation; and besides, it is as much your duty to reprove as to exhort.

Good-night, I must conclude to-morrow, when I hope to receive another letter with good news respecting your health.

*Sunday night, January 16, '53.*

MY DEAREST WILLIAM — I am now closing the last day of my 23rd year. I have been reflecting on the circumstances and experiences of my past life, on its sins, sorrows, joys, and mercies, and my soul is deeply moved by the retrospect; for though my short course has been marked by no very extraordinary outward events, I cannot but think that the discipline of *soul* through which I have passed has been peculiar and calculated to fit me for usefulness in the cause of God. I feel truly ashamed (now that clearer light seems to shine on the path in which the Lord has led me) of my continual murmurings and discontent because of the circumstances in which He has permitted me to be cast; I have spent hours in bitter grief and useless regret because of the disadvantages under which I have laboured. I have often charged God foolishly and wished I had been born with a mind *content* to feed on the empty husks in which I have seen others take so much delight, rather than be conscious of the possession of powers which must lay dormant and talents uncultivated, and desires and hopes which could never be realized. I have been ready to demand of the Lord why He made me thus, and deprived me of the means of that culture and improvement which He had so lavishly bestowed upon others who neither valued nor used them. Thus has my foolish and wicked heart often been ready to enter into judgment with the Almighty, not considering the superiority of the gifts He has bestowed to those which I coveted.

Truly I have laboured under many disadvantages and have often thought my lot on that account very hard, but now I see and acknowledge the goodness of God in having made up for them by the bestowment of that, without which all the advantages in the world would have availed me nothing, and

above all by the impartation of the light and influence of His Holy Spirit which has attended me from earliest infancy, and often excited in my childish heart thoughts, struggles, hopes, and fears of no ordinary nature; though such struggles were hid in the penetralia of my own spirit and unknown to any mortal. Showers of tears, and scores of prayers were poured out by me, when a very little girl, at the feet of Jesus, and when not more than twelve I passed through such an ordeal of fiery temptation for about the space of three months as but to reflect on makes my soul recoil within me; at that early age I frequently watered my couch with my tears, and the billows of the Almighty seemed to go over me. Many a time my whole frame has trembled under the foul attacks of the adversary, and his attacks were so subtle and of such a nature, that I could not *then*, on pain of death, have revealed them to any one; so I endured alone and unaided by any earthly friend these fearful conflicts of soul; the effects of which soon became manifest in pale cheeks and failure of health and spirits, though the true cause was unknown. But the storm passed, and my mind regained in a great measure its former vivacity, my soul found some repose in Christ, which alas! soon became disturbed and was ultimately lost, the fitfulness of childish feeling, the changes and enjoyments of youth and the absence of those helps I so much needed, induced seasons of indifference, and I frequently grieved the Holy Spirit by relapsing into sin; but the wondrous goodness of my God endured with much long-suffering my waywardness and indecision, till at length I was roused to deep and lasting concern to become in all things conformed to His will (for I regarded conformity to the will of God as true religion even from childhood). Alas! how the admission condemns me, but so it was, and I earnestly sought till I found a sense of His favour and this conformity to His blessed will; and after that happy change I have often told you how much I enjoyed His presence, and how I went on for some time from strength to strength, being more than conqueror over sin and *Satan* who continued to wage with me a distressing warfare. Oh if I had followed on in the same glorious path how different would have been my feelings to-night, but alas! I left my first love and wandered from the side of my Saviour; and you know the consequences. My soul is now like the temple deserted; bereft of the abiding manifestation of God's presence; receiving only now and then a transitory ray, a short and flickering illumination; but I am tired of living thus, my soul pants, yea even fainteth again to behold the brightness of *His* glory, to abide in the sunshine of His smile. In Him I *have* found solid peace, in Him I am resolved to find it again, and oh, glorious possibility, I *may* regain what I have lost, yea with abundant increase. . . .



The desires of a whole life to be consecrated to the service of God seem revived in my soul. I feel sometimes as though I could do or suffer anything to glorify Him who has been so wondrously merciful to me. I have besought Him most earnestly to cut short His work and hide me in the grave if He sees that my future life would not glorify Him more than the past has done. I was formed for His glory and created for "His praise," and if the *end* of my existence be not secured of what value is life?—I would rather forego its momentary joys than live any longer to dishonour my God, even if I believed death were annihilation; but I will hope in the mercy I have slighted, I will trust to the grace I have abused, for strength to love the Lord my God with all my heart and to walk in all His ordinances and statutes blameless. I have enjoyed a precious season in prayer to-night, such liberty to ask, such a melting soul I have not for a long time experienced; I did not forget you, my dearest; no, I pleaded hard and earnestly for your complete consecration to God; nothing but this, my dear William, will do for either *you* or *me*.

Others may trim and oscillate between the broad and narrow path, but for *us* there is but one straight, narrow, shining path of perfect devotedness, and if we walk *not* in it, we are undone. I hope, my Love, you are determined to be altogether a man of God, nothing less will secure your safety or usefulness. God is not glorified so much by preaching, or teaching, or anything else, as by *holy living*. You acknowledge the possibility of going round the circuit and satisfying the people, without winning souls to God, to peace, and heaven. Yes, my Love, it is awfully possible, and especially in your case; but to live a *holy life* without winning souls is just as *impossible*. Oh be determined to know nothing amongst men but Christ, seek nothing amongst them but His exaltation, His mediatorial renown; God has graciously given you the desire of your heart in opening your way to the ministry of His gospel, and that in a sphere exactly suited to your predilection and views of truth. He has given you a wide and promising vineyard to keep and water for *Him*, but remember, my Love, His eye is ever on you, He is trying your heart. He is proving you not *now* in the furnace of affliction and adversity, but in the sunshine of prosperity, in a path paved with kindness and *dangerously* slippery. Oh watch!—watch the motions of your heart, scrutinize your motives, analyse your desires and aims, and keep your eye single, get your heart filled afresh with the love of God and of souls, and aim *only* at the glory of God, and then He will honour you with abundant success; you shall not labour in vain, nor spend your strength for nought. But, my dearest, if you fail to give Him all the glory, if self be mixed up with your efforts; if an unsanctified ambition fire your heart, He *will*, because *He loves*



you, try you and prove you with another discipline, more painful, but less dangerous.

Monday, February 7, '53.

MY DEAREST LOVE — I am glad you wrote me on Saturday, for I had not received a letter *since Wednesday* till this morning, and should have felt very uneasy if it had not arrived. I dreamed the other night that you had hurt your foot in getting out of a gig, and were laid up through it, so be careful what you are about.

I want to find in you my *earthly all*; I *expect* to do so; I feel too deeply to be able to write on this subject; whenever I try my tears blind me; you think I “underestimate your love”; *why*, my dearest, do you think so? *Tell me why*. Perhaps I write too fully all my fears and thoughts and hopes about the future, but oh, I feel the importance of the relationship we are to sustain to each other, and I *do* want *us both* to be prepared to fill it with as *much happiness* to each other, and glory to God, and good to *others*, as it is possible. Be assured, my Love, I *have* confidence in you, I believe what you say, but you know, William, I shall give up my all to you, my happiness, my life, my pride, and perhaps to some extent my eternal destiny, and is it unnatural for me sometimes to express a little anxiety! But believe me, *my own dear Love*, I have confidence in your professions, and I never for one *moment* doubted the honourableness of your intentions. As to the time of our union, I am surprised you think it will be practicable so soon, and I cannot think it is in any way *necessary* in order to prevent your being unfaithful, notwithstanding all the temptations to which you are exposed. You have often told me that your love was founded on the deepest esteem of your soul, that I have the preference of your *judgment* and *soul*, and that your love for me was conceived in the entire *absence* of *passion*; this being the case, and feeling some confidence in my own ability to sustain this esteem, I am not so anxious as I otherwise should be about the temptations you meet with, though I am thankful to hear they are *no* temptation to *you*, “praise the Lord, oh my soul.” You know *my* heart, my dear William, and have formed your own estimate of my character, your choice was not made hastily nor without much rational calculation and earnest prayer, and I am persuaded your good sense and Christian principle will shield you in all circumstances; you have a right to expect *grace* where grace is needful to preserve you, because you have not run into temptation by concealing your engagement; you have acted honourably, and *God will bless you*.

Always speak when there is a *necessity*, and you will save yourself from the snare of the fowler. You need not fear your own heart because of Mr. C., your character and his are quite opposite. I believe Miss Smith has been sincere and

truthful in her statements of *all the facts*. But, notwithstanding my confidence in you, I *am* willing to come and help you as soon as all things are equal; in this I am sure, as in other things, I am ready to consider your happiness, but you must have a home before then. Whenever I come, I doubt not I shall love the people, and feel an interest in the circuit second only to yourself, and I hope to be very useful in it. I must get more religion, and then all will be well. I must get *self* destroyed, and then the Lord may trust me to do good without endangering my own soul. I am glad to hear you say you love me best when you love Jesus most; it is a good sign; such love cannot be displeasing to Him; I hope we shall be able to love Him in each other, and each other in Him, and that the nearer our assimilation to Him, the nearer will be our assimilation to each other. Glorious possibility, *it may be so*; let us both resolve that it *shall*.

I intended to write only one sheet, but somehow I cannot get into the way of writing short letters, so much crowds up to say, that I cannot help it. Write me *two* as long as you can this week. Read over my last again, and think what there is which it would give me pleasure to hear you respond to. . . . Believe me, my dearest Love, yours in "unclouded love."

(In February 16, '53.)

MY DEAREST LOVE—I have read your letter again since writing the enclosed and have opened the envelope to send you another line.

You tell me that after three months' absence your heart turns to me with more constancy than at first, and that you look forward to a union as the consummation of earthly bliss, etc., etc., and then add, "but you must believe this and rest satisfied on it." My dear, be assured I *do always* believe whatever *you say*; you seem to think me of a jealous, suspicious nature; William, I am not so. You say, "What will become of us in the future if you cannot trust and thoroughly rest on confidence in me?" My dearest, I can do so, if you do not give me *any reason* to distrust. I would never call myself by your name, if I *did not* feel this confidence; I tell you that I repose in you with all my heart; and it is only my distress when anything you write *forces* into my mind a doubt; not of your honourable intentions, I *never did feel* one doubt on that subject; not of your esteem, I never doubted that; not of your truthfulness, candour, and sincerity, I never doubted either; but of what cuts deepest of all, of your deepest and tenderest love. I never was tempted to doubt anything but this, and *that only* when I *thought* you deficient in manifesting it. Now tell me whether you acquit me of groundless, mean suspicion; and if I

have unconsciously given you pain, even though it has been to relieve *my own*, do you forgive me? and in imagination clasp me to your bosom and tell me all is well? *Tell me* on Monday whether it is so, *don't forget*.

*Catherine Mumford to William Booth.*

*Friday afternoon (February, 1853).*

MY BELOVED WILLIAM — Your very kind note rejoiced my heart exceedingly this morning. I was dressing when it was brought me, and I had just been thinking how ill I looked, but after reading it I could see a sensible improvement in my countenance; it *struck me* as I looked in the glass to complete my toilet, how true that a “glad heart maketh the face to shine.” I have been reading the Proverbs of Solomon in bed in the morning, and I never before was so struck with their practical wisdom; they will never wear out, they are applicable to all times, with very few exceptions. I wish you would read a chapter a day carefully and thoughtfully till you are through them; *do*, it will please me and do you *good*. *Bless you, my dearest*, your scrap cheered my soul and made all within me rejoice; *such* struggles and such *conquests* convince me of the reality and depth of your affection more deeply than *anything* else could possibly do. Oh, yes, *this* is an evidence of love, which I highly appreciate; self-sacrifice is the touchstone of affection, it proveth the *reality of love*. Yes, I believe now that you love me, and besides, your affection is purer and more elevated for such triumphs. Oh, bless the Lord, I do rejoice. Do not think this mere expression. Oh, I *feel* it, I do indeed rejoice in it. . . . I was thinking this morning about a few words you said when here, about marrying; I have often thought of them, I think they were spoken thoughtlessly; I think you would not *thoughtfully* utter them. Suppose, dearest, we never expected to realize any further union than we do already, would you not marry for *companionship*, social and domestic joys, communion of heart and mind, and the bliss of being loved and of loving? *Tell me* next time. I feel that these are the highest and strongest and *paramount* objects with me; I would marry for these *alone*, and so I believe you would, though you said differently, but you did not stop to think. I feel better satisfied with your letters than I ever did before, they seem *warmer* and transparent, and I think we shall both be gainers by writing *oftener*, especially if we try to enrich every letter by at least one sentiment or thought worth writing. I mean independent of news, etc., etc.

I am about the same in health as when I wrote last, the relaxation came on before I had finished that last note; but I would not say so, because I knew it would trouble you, but it

*is better* again to-day. I saw Mr. H. yesterday; he scolded me for going because it was foggy, but thought me better. I am to go on Tuesday. Let us hope in God; pray for me. I will remember two o'clock, don't *you forget it*. This is your quarterly meeting; I have been thinking much about you, and praying for direction. I do not wish you to wait four years now; since you were here I have felt convinced that your well-being forbids it; otherwise I would be willing to purchase *future certainty* and comfort at such a price; but if you could not have *less* than £60, and Mr. R.'s £10 would be £70, on which I fear not to venture for the first three or four years, and then you might get more than £60. I fear to advise you, I want you to do *right*, not that I think it would be wrong to join them,—oh, no; their Constitution, etc., etc., and your own position, would be more in unison with your views of the truth.

Sunday evening, March 20, '53.

MY OWN DEAR WILLIAM —

I had no intention to write this when I began, but it is out of the abundance of my heart. Oh, my Love, I have felt acutely about *you*, I mean *your soul*. I rejoice exceedingly to hear how the Lord is blessing your labours, but as I stand at a distance and contemplate the scene of action and all the circumstances attending it, I tremble with apprehension for the object most beloved and nearest (except, I trust, the glory of God and the honour of my Redeemer) my heart. I know how possible it is to preach and pray and sing, and even *shout*, while the heart is not right with God. I know how popularity and prosperity have a tendency to elate and exalt self, if the heart is not humble before God. I know how Satan takes advantage of these things to work out the destruction (if possible) of one whom the Lord uses to pull down the strongholds of his kingdom, and all these considerations make me tremble, and weep, and *pray* for *you*, my dearest Love, that you may be able to overcome all his devices, and having done all, *to stand*, not in your own strength but in humble dependence on Him who worketh "all in all." Allow me, dearest, to caution you against indulging *ambition* to be either a revivalist or anything else; try to get into that happy frame of mind to be *satisfied* if Christ be exalted, even if it be only by compelling you to lie at the foot of the Cross and *look* upon Him. If your happiness of soul comes to *depend* on the excitement of active service, what! if God should lay His hand upon you and give you the cup of suffering instead of labour! Nothing but a heart in unison with His, and a will perfectly subdued, can then give peace.

Watch against *mere animal excitement* in your revival



services. I don't use the term in the sense in which anti-revivalists would use it, but only in the sense which Finney himself would use it; remember Caughey's silent, soft, heavenly carriage; *he* did not shout, there was no necessity; he had a more potent weapon at command than noise. I never did like noise and confusion, only *so far* as I believed it to be the *natural* expression of deep anxiety wrought by the Holy Ghost; such as the cries of the jailor, etc., etc.; of such noise, produced by such agency, the more the better. But, my Love, I do think noise made by the *preacher* and the *Christians* in the church is productive of *evil only*. As to that Isaac Marsden, he might be sincere, but exceedingly injudicious and violent; I would not attend one of his prayer meetings on any account. I don't believe the Gospel needs such roaring and foaming to make it effective, and to some minds it would make it appear ridiculous, and bar them against its reception for ever. There was nothing of this kind in that most powerful sermon ever preached by Peter on the day of Pentecost; the noise was made by the *people* pricked to the heart, and was the *effect* of that plain, powerful, but calm and reasonable appeal to their consciences, and not of Peter's own creating. This is in my opinion the natural order of a revival. I should not have troubled you with my views on the subject (indeed I think you know them pretty fully; if not, you will find them *exactly* in Finney's *Lectures on Revivals*, which I consider the most beautiful and common-sense work on the subject I ever read), only that you have been wondering how I shall enter into it with you.

My dear, I trust, as far as I have ability and *grace*, I shall be ready to strengthen your hands in the glorious work, by taking under my care to enlighten and guard and feed the lambs brought in under your ministry. I believe in instantaneous conversion as firmly as you do; at the same time I believe that half of what is called conversion is nothing of the kind, and there is no calculating the evil results of deception in a matter so momentous. Great caution is necessary in dealing with inquirers, especially the young. My own brother was much injured through injudicious treatment in this respect. He went one Sunday evening to hear Mr. Richardson at Vauxhall. He was quite unconcerned when he went, but was much wrought upon under the sermon and *induced* to go to the communion rail, where he professed to find peace. There certainly was a change in him for a short time, but, alas! there was no foundation, and in a week or two the fair blossoms faded, and though he continued to meet in class, his conduct was far *worse* than it *had ever been* before, he was more impatient of restraint and reproof, in fact his heart was closed against conviction by the vain idea that he was converted. I only tell you this to illustrate what I mean, and not in any way to speak ill of my dear



brother. Poor boy, he was young and ignorant in spiritual things, and therefore easily deceived; I hope and pray that the Spirit of God will become his instructor, and reveal to him the true state of his heart, and the broad and deep requirements of *His* law. I have told you his case as *one* instance out of scores of a similar kind, to caution you against pressing a confession of faith in Christ *before* the mind is thoroughly enlightened and the soul fully broken down. Read Finney's directions for the treatment of penitents; they are excellent, the best part of the work; if you are not well acquainted with them be sure to read them. They are in his *Lectures on Revivals*, and *don't forget to recommend James's Anxious Enquirer* to young penitents; it is worth its weight (nay, far more than that) in gold.

I know you will rightly estimate what I have written; don't think that I consider *your* danger greater than *my own* would be if placed in your circumstances; alas, *I* of all beings should be most in danger of being vainglorious and self-sufficient, and perhaps it is because I feel this that I am so anxious about you. However, tell me, my Love, in your next all about your *soul's secret experience*; tell me whether you attend faithfully to private prayer, and how you feel when *alone with God*. This is the surest test by which to judge of your state, and you never needed it more frequently than *now*; the harass and turmoil of business might be less congenial, but depend on it, my dear, it was not more dangerous to your *soul's* true interest. It was not more necessary to watch and pray *then* than it is now. If you get yours quite right with God and keep it so, *nothing* can hinder you from being a useful man, and I believe God will signally own you as His servant; but if you keep back anything from God, if you suffer self to share the glory, He will frustrate your designs and spoil your happiness. Do, my Love, get all condemnation cleared away, and be able to look straight to the Throne for your encouragement and reward, and then all you can desire while your heart is partially carnal will *then* be given you, though not valued for its own sake; like Solomon, who, when he desired simply and singly wisdom, heavenly wisdom, gained both riches and honour and glory as an overplus. *God is so good*. If we could only see Him as He is, we should desire nothing beside Him either in earth or heaven. Oh, let us *pray* and watch to get our eyes fully opened to behold His beauty, and singly fixed on His glory. Oh, it is a glorious state to be in:

The bliss of those who *fully* dwell,  
*Fully* in Him believe,  
 Is more than angel tongues can tell,  
 Or angel minds conceive.

I know it is, and I hope yet again to experience it, "*then* will I teach transgressors His ways" (His ways of marvellous mercy, truth, love, and faithfulness towards sinful man), "I will declare His faithfulness, and sinners shall be converted to Him."

BRIXTON, *March 30, '53.*

MY DEAREST WILLIAM — Your letter came to hand about an hour since, and I can attend to nothing till I have written you a line in reply. I never was more *surprised* in my life than on reading it to find the aspect my last seemed to wear in your eyes. I am sure, dearest, the state of your *own mind* makes all the difference to your interpretation of my letters. You should not read mine as you would a stranger's, you should bear in mind what I am, and what a sentiment *means* when dictated by Love and a deep and absorbing desire that you should appear in the eyes of others as a man of God "thoroughly furnished to every good work," and in the sight of God as one pure and upright in heart seeking only His glory. I *was not* when I wrote "*dreadfully* put about and harassed in my mind," but the Spirit of God had been operating powerfully upon my heart, and I felt afresh awakened to the superiority and importance of spiritual things, and of course as I felt it for myself I felt it for you; but I think I spoke tenderly and carefully; as to *scolding*, I never felt less like it than when I wrote that letter, for my whole soul was melted into tenderness and self-abasement. *Do read it again* the first opportunity and then read yours which I have enclosed; *not*, my Love, in a spirit of retaliation, but only that you may read it now your mind is calmer. You could not possibly construe what I said as *against* revivals, or even in *depreciation* of them, when I so carefully guarded my words, and I don't know *why* you cannot understand it, I think it was plain enough. But I see you are dreadfully harassed, and most deeply do I sympathize with you; indeed, for me to be happy while I think you are not so is impossible; though I was *not unhappy* last week. I rejoiced with you in your prosperity; but at the same time I know even that was dangerous, and expressed the anxiety I felt, thinking you would rightly understand me, but I perceive you cannot bear it; well, dearest, scold me if you like, blame me or what else you will, but *faithful* as well as loving I must ever be; my conscience compels me, and the more I love you the more I feel it a duty.

As to my estimate of you, surely you don't feel a fear that it is too low, while I am willing to give my happiness to so great an extent into your keeping; then don't call it scolding or seem hurt when I give you a gentle caution and try to excite you to more heart consecration to your Father and mine,

while at the same time I confess to you my own unfaithfulness and deplore my want of love to the Saviour, and with all sincerity declare the consciousness I have of my own unfitness thus to stimulate you. When you seem to think me officious or bitter, or unnecessarily anxious, it makes it doubly painful and cuts to my very soul. As to our being *separated* in the sphere of our action in the Church, I can only say I never dreamed of such a thing. I hope for perfect unity and fellowship in *all plans*, and least of all should I think of separation in the Church of God.

Monday evening, June 13, '53.

MY OWN DEAR WILLIAM — I sincerely thank you for your kind note of Saturday, it did me good this morning. I like it better than either of last week's, there is more *soul* in it, and only one fault, viz. being too short. But I know your time is precious, and therefore will not complain. Bless you, I *am* glad you so fully reciprocate the sentiments in my last, it rejoices my soul and fills me with hope to hear you say so, but I am sorry you do not write a little more in *answer* to my letters. I do not mean, dearest, that you should notice everything; that would be a task my love would not impose; but some things I often wish you would take up and write a few words in the way of answer; you can easily guess what they are. You promised me to write a line sometimes in pencil after *retiring for the night*, or when walking by the wayside. Do sometimes, there's a dear. A stray thought, especially when tender and heavenly, will be to me a gem of great value. Do not interpret this as *finding fault*; it is *not*; it is only a gentle remembrance. I know how your time is occupied and your mind also, and *do* most fully appreciate your kindness in writing so often. The *unexpected* knock of the postman always excites feelings of the tenderest affection towards you, and causes me to bless you with increased fervency of soul, so true is Tupper's proverb, "A letter timely writ is as a rivet to the chain of affection, and a letter untimely delayed is as rust to the solder."

I was very glad to hear you got on so well at the School feast; you ask *me* for some ideas for speeches on such occasions. I am sure I can send you nothing worth having, and besides I do not know the style of speaking acceptable; I suppose the design, importance, and results of Sabbath School teaching form the principal topics, and I am sure you know far more on these subjects than I do. My soul *feels deeply enough* the vast importance of good moral culture for the youthful mind, but from the specimens I have seen of Sunday Schools, I fear they are to a great extent ineffective; but I hope I have not seen fair specimens; I don't think I have.

However, it seems to me that the Church generally wants pressing home upon its conscience the *responsibility* resting upon it with regard to the rising generation; it should be made to feel this *one* fact, that of all spheres of labour this is the most important, of all interests at home or abroad this is the most momentous; of all its efforts for the extension of Christianity and the glory of God, *this* promises the largest amount of success, *because* the present generation is passing away and will inevitably pass away without being thoroughly impregnated with Divine truth, and whether the next will come upon the stage of action either so impregnated or not, it rests with the Church to determine. Fifty years hence where will be the men and women who are now the adult population of our world? Almost without exception swept off one by one; like the flowers in Autumn, they will have ceased to live and move and think, their *influence* will have died with them, and but a few eminent names will survive the wreck; but the children who now hang upon the breast and prattle on the knee will then be the living, reasoning, influential men and women of the world, and the parents of *future* generations; destined perhaps in the providence of God to wield a mightier influence for good or evil than any which have preceded them since the ocean of human life rolled over our earth; how transcendently important then is it to train up these young beings (the fountains of so much future influence and power) in the right way, how important to impart *early* (before the storms of iniquity beat on their defenceless souls and render them impervious to holy impressions) right principles of action, light for the conscience, food for the soul, and knowledge for the mind. I feel this too deeply to express half what I feel, if I could do so I could make a speech *myself*, but my views on this subject are too large to be conveyed in words. I never look at a little child but I feel unutterable things: What *is* he? What will he become, and what might he be? What eternal destiny awaits the immortal jewel lodged in that beautiful little casket? What influences will gather round it in this life's pilgrimage? What friends will aid it? What foes try to ruin it? are questions my soul shrinks from answering even to itself.

*Wednesday evening, June, '53.*

MY BELOVED WILLIAM — . . . I am glad you, my Love, are from under their dominion. Depend upon it that is an iron rule which stifles conscience and binds the soul; poor, nay, noble Kilham had courage to resist it, but in doing so he proved its strength and endured its inflictions. Many men have not such courage, and doubtless many amongst them, even their *best* men, are bowed down in spirit and sorely oppressed, not daring to open their mouths. While such powerful, or-



ganized bodies exist with so many of the elements of pure despotism in their constitution, it may be expedient and even *necessary* for other large and more liberally constituted bodies to exist in order to compete with them and prevent their complete ascendancy if this be God's method; the amalgamation of the splits of Methodism must be desirable, but it wants deep consideration. Be cautious, my Love, let no personal benefit weigh an atom with you. First be *fully persuaded in your own mind* that such a step would be for the good of man and the glory of God, and then work for it with all the skill and caution necessary, but if not fully persuaded and yet not satisfied to remain in your present position amongst the Reformers, *then* consider whether you had better seek for *yourself alone* (leaving the movement out of the question) admission amongst them, *think over their* rules and learn as much as possible about the way in which they are *carried out*, and lay the matter continually and earnestly before God, for it is an important matter to submit yourself to a *conference* of any kind; doubtless it would be to our temporal comfort; I feel this, but that is secondary. Be fully satisfied it is *your way*, and then we can rejoice in our prosperity without any misgivings as to the path of duty.

Bless you a thousand times, I only want to see you happy and useful, and I care not where or how, provided it be according to God's will. You will excuse all this advice, etc. I did not think of writing thus, but the subject agitates my heart and so I could not but give it utterance. Those thoughtfully expressed words about preferring to go back to business to staying with the Reformers have made me feel anxious, not because I wish you to remain in your present position, *nor because* it may defer our union, *no*, only because I fear you should get wrong, though I very much question whether the movement is exactly *your* sphere. You must consider the law of your own mind. Do pray very earnestly about it, seek specially and solemnly God's guidance; search your heart before Him in secret, be determined, bring your soul to it in spite of all obstacles, and I am sure He will direct you. I have begun to pray about it regularly. As to business, I believe you may just as faithfully serve God in it as in the Ministry; whichever is your *right* place there you can best serve Him, and *He knows which is*; and more, He *can* in defiance of circumstances put you in it. Oh that He may thus graciously fix the bounds of your habitation and choose *our* inheritance for us; do not take any steps in order to marry which you would not take if you did not know me. I hope Mr. L. does not think that I am in a hurry to be married, and have unsettled your mind because you say, he thinks *we* want to get married. Much as I feel this separation and absence I



am willing, nay, desirous to endure it as long as the Lord wills, and that I feel it so much is the fault of my heart (if it is a fault) and not of my judgment.

I shall swell this to the usual length; I often think of the Frenchman's apology for a long letter, viz. "excuse the length of this, I have not *time* to make it shorter." I feel it is most appropriate to me, for to prune and digest mine would take far longer than to write them as I do.

*Thursday afternoon.*—My dearest Love, in reading over the preceding, it struck me that you might gather from it some objection on my part to your entering the New Connexion, therefore I refer to the subject again to assure you that I have not; I only wish you to act as your judgment and conscience dictate without reference to *marrying*; do not think of that otherwise than as God would approve; I mean, *do not let your desire towards it cause you to take any step your conscience does not fully approve*. Of course if you see a thing to be *right*, then there is no harm in considering its temporal advantages, but I need not attempt to instruct you, neither need I fear the integrity of your motives. I should like to see your letter to *The Times* if it is inserted. How is it signed? Send me word.

I hope you are *studying*; you do not mention it. Be determined to make the most of every moment; *do not let trifles* interrupt your study hours and attention. Do, my Love, work hard for yourself so that you may make many rich. Remember time flies, a *moment* at a time. Oh let us *use* the moments. I am doing so, and consequently am progressing, at least a little, according to my ability. I am much encouraged about the music.

*Wednesday evening, June, '53.*

MY OWN DEAR LOVE—Oh how I should like to see you to-night and hear you speak to me in tones of sweet affection and encouragement. You will be sorry to hear that I have felt very low to-day and yesterday; the principal cause of this depression is a deep and painful sense of my own unfitness to enter upon the duties and responsibilities of life; I feel my weakness and deficiencies most bitterly, and have shed some *bitter* tears because of it. I have confidence in *you* as to battling with the trials of life, or I think I should sink into despair, for I feel I am not fit for the world; but *you* will be my defence and shield, my prop and succour, will you not, dearest? You will bear with my weaknesses and faults, hush my fears, strengthen my hopes and efforts, and try to enter into the indefinable emotions of my sensitive heart. I shall at least have one being in the world able to sympathize with my *soul's* feelings and to

*understand* the peculiarities of my mind and heart. Oh how sweet! and that being holding the most endearing of relationships, bound to me by the tenderest ties; bless you, I think I need not fear the depth of your sympathy, the strength or durability of your affection; if I did fear either I should be most unhappy, but I do not; I believe you *capable* of more than I once did; I think we shall be *one* in *heart* and *soul*, and oh this is everything; in body we shall have continually and painfully to part, but in spirit we may *always* be united.

I think a great deal about your being out so much, I do hope your present unsettled and whirlabout life will not beget a distaste for pure domestic *home* bliss, and oh I do trust, that before we have a home Providence will make it possible for you to be more in it. Bless you, I feel indescribable things to-night, my soul is so full I cannot write at all collectedly. Oh, if I could but pour it into your ear; it does seem *hard just now* to be parted. I feel as though I could fly to you, my whole soul is drawn towards you, if I could explain *what* I feel, and *how* I feel, and *why* I feel, and *all* I feel, I am sure you would sympathize with me and clasp me more tenderly to your heart than ever you did before. I say this because I know, that although perhaps I feel too deeply, and too keenly, yet the class of feelings and their causes and objects are pleasing to God, they are not selfish but purest benevolence, but oh, they are painful in the extreme.

*Pray for me.* I will not write thus, perhaps it grieves you, though I hope not. Do not call it sentimentalism, dearest, it is the only reality of life; what are all the so-called realities of this world when compared with one pure affection, one refined emotion of one human soul? Their reality fades like the bubble on the wave; soul, and spiritual things are the only realities we have to do with, and all relating to them are to us of paramount importance. Let us estimate everything according to its influence on each other's *mind* and *heart*; to inflict bodily suffering were a kindness compared with distress of mind and those who can feel deepest themselves will be most chary of the feelings of those they love. May the Lord give us grace to *study each other*, and love as He has enjoined. I often wonder whether others feel on these subjects as I do; if they did, surely there would be more happy unions. I scarce ever realize the happiness, for thinking of the duties and responsibilities of married life; I am so anxious to be a *good* wife and mother, and cannot think of the joy of being either. Never mind, dearest, my heart will not be the less sensible of the joy *when it comes*, and perhaps better prepared for it. Oh for grace to do my duty to *you* in all respects, and to those whom God may give us, and to the Church, and to the world, and to myself, and thus doing it in all the relations of life to

serve my God in serving His chosen ones, the service He Himself has required.

*Monday night, June, '53.*

MY OWN DEAR WILLIAM — How I should like to see you to-night and tell you lots of feelings, thoughts, hopes, and fears which would take too much time and patience to write; patience is a thing I am very deficient in. Oh for more of it. I have felt exceedingly irritable to-day, the music has tried me almost beyond endurance. I could freely abandon it and never touch it more. I fear the result will never repay the *time* and labour. Once to-day I raised my eyes from the music and through some bitter tears looked at your likeness, and said to myself, "William, I do this for thee." Yes, all the other motives would fail to urge me forward; for no other being *could* I endure the drudgery, but *you* like it, it will make *home* a happier place to you, it will help to raise our souls to heaven, so I will persevere in my arduous undertaking; it is an arduous one, everybody considers it so. Miss . . . never knew any one begin to learn after they were grown up, but I will for your dear sake go on. *Measure* my love for you by *this* standard; think of three and four hours a day, self-denying toil, especially trying to one whose nerves have been shattered and whose powers of application and endurance weakened by long and wearing pain, and then say whether the love that prompts it is a trifle; but I know you estimate my affection. I am quite happy on that subject *now*. *Bless you*. I do hope we shall be dear to each other as the apple of an eye. If I thought that you *soberly think* what you say about my having no faults and infirmities to bear with, I should indeed be unhappy, and begin to think I had unintentionally given you a false view of my character. *Believe me*, dearest (and I know myself better than any one else knows me), I have as many as will require a great deal of grace, deep affection and much patience to endure, so set about cultivating these virtues as quickly and effectually as possible.

*Tuesday afternoon.*— Thank you, *darling*, for the kind words contained in yours this morning; I had been thinking that I had written too passionately last night and that I ought to restrain the tide of feeling more than I do in writing to you; but no, now *you* write so affectionately I will let it root on and push out, just as it will, without seeking to cool or restrain it, so that you may know of what I am made. Bless you, you have no reason to fear about true conjugal bliss if *your love* is only deep and fervent; I think I have a soul capable of enjoying and yielding as much as most; but remember I have its almost invariable failings, capable of deepest feeling on one subject as well as another, therefore liable to anger as well as love. But

I told you enough of this last night, and though I have no new thoughts to send you would feel disappointed on Wednesday morning if there was no letter, and perhaps anxious about the fate of your Saturday's note.

July 18, '53.

You ask me about Miss M. She is a simple-hearted, pretty, pleasant girl; I *suppose* well educated; can play very *nicely*. I like her *very much* as far as she goes; I appreciate true simplicity and sincerity of character wherever I find it, and I think she possesses it. She is not in the least intellectual, quite ordinary in capacity and not very ladylike in manners, though she has been at school four years; but character is everything. I like her character far, far better than Mr. Hale's sisters who are more polished. *You* will not misunderstand me when I say that I never yet met with a female friend able to understand or appreciate my views and feelings on the great subjects which appear to me the only realities of life; all whom I know seem to live in a different world; they look not at the future, they seem to be shut up in the present little paltry things of everyday life; I am grieved that it is so; the *mothers of humanity* want different training; surely the day is dawning; I believe it is; may it rapidly progress. I often have wished I had one able to sympathize with my views and reciprocate them, but now I have *you* I do not mind so much.

*I am delighted; it makes me happy* to hear you speak as you do about *home*. Yes, if you will *seek home, love home*, be happy at home, I will spend my energies in trying to make it a more than ordinary one; it *shall*, if my ability can do it, be a spot sunny and bright, pure and calm, refined and tender, a fit school in which to train immortal spirits for a holy and glorious heaven; a fit resting-place for a spirit pressed and anxious about public duties; but Oh, I know it is easy to talk, I feel how liable I am to fall short; but it is well to *purpose right, to aim high*, to hope much; yes, we will make home to *each other* the brightest spot on earth, we will be tender, *thoughtful*, loving, and *forbearing*, will we not? yes, *we will*.

Tuesday night, August 2, '53.

MY OWN DEAR LOVE — I wept tears of gratitude and joy this morning over your kind note. Oh how my soul praised God for His preserving mercy; bless you, how I should like to nurse you, and press your poor bruised face to mine. These accidents make me feel very anxious; surely, surely, they are not going to be frequent occurrences. You were not to blame this time, as you had no warning beforehand, but my Love, never venture behind that horse again; it is wonderful if you



have escaped *serious injury*, but I *hardly* feel *satisfied* on that subject; I *do hope* you have been to a *doctor*. After such a violent shaking you ought to have some suitable medicine. Now if you have not been to one, *be sure and do so*. I hope you will rest till you are well, it tries me sadly to think of you taking your appointments in that state; I think the local preachers must be rather inhuman if they are not willing to supply for you in such a case, and you really are imprudent if you do not let them, if they are willing; but I trust you are better quite, by this time. I should have written to-day if I had not posted one yesterday. I mistook Thursday for Tuesday in Saturday's letter, and thought you would be home on Tuesday. I hope the letter came before you left home this morning. I have felt very tenderly about you all day. Oh what a mercy you were not killed or some of your limbs broken; if you had been killed as scores have been in a similar way, how would it have been with your *soul*? I have thought much about the temptation you mentioned in the scrap on Saturday, about the *reality* of spiritual things, you said it was something *more* than temptation, *No! it is not*, neither is it peculiar to *you*; it is common to *all*. I have had it presented, as almost every other which Satan has in his hellish treasury, but I think he has plied that with as little effect as any.

I always find it best to appeal at once to my *consciousness*; I *know* the religion of Jesus is a *reality* just as I know I live, and breathe, and think, because my consciousness testifies it, and that is a more powerful thing than Satan's intellect or logic; it disarms him at once; on other subjects reasoning with him has been my bane, but on *this* I *never* reason, I refer him to times and things gone by and my conscience says *that* was *real*; if not let me have over again the blissful delusion; but I *know* it *was* real, for it bore me up on the threshold of eternity, and made death my friend, there is nothing like the light of *eternity* to show us *what* is real and what is not. Now, my dear, how did you feel when that accident seemed to poise you between life and death, time and eternity? Where did Satan hide himself just then? Did he come with his foul suggestions about the delusion or *mystery* of godliness? I think not, he would take care to keep out of that track when your consciousness was fully awake. Oh, my Love, *watch!* Satan is a subtle foe, he knows just the temptations most suited to hinder your usefulness, and he knows that just in proportion to your *own personal* faith *in*, and experience of, the glorious gospel, will be your success in preaching it to others; he knows (none better) that it is the preacher who can say "I testify that which I *do know* and have *seen* and handled of the word of life," which is mighty through God to the pulling down of his strongholds. It is such men he fears and hates, and pur-



sues; but it is such whom his Vanquisher loves, *trusts*, and upholds.

Oh, dearest, be *you* one of them, be the champion of real godliness, cost what it may, *know* in your own soul the mighty power of the grace of God, and then you will preach it with *awful* influence, and abundant success; *it is real*, more real than all beside, the mightiest power in this wonderful universe; true, the mystery of godliness is *great*, but it is given to the real followers of Jesus "to *know* the mysteries of the Kingdom" as far as is needful for them; but Satan makes so much ado about the mysteries of *grace*, as though mystery were peculiar to *it*, when all nature is enveloped in mystery; and what can be more mysterious than "*thought*,"—what is thought, memory, emotion? How does thought arise? How does memory store up, and hide, and years after pour forth its awful or pleasing treasures? Who can *explain* these common operations of the mind, and what in the Bible is more mysterious?—and yet I am as conscious that I *think* and remember as that I live and breathe. All is mystery around me, above me, below me, within me, before me, but yet I believe, act, plan, live, according to what I *can* understand, and must be content to wait the solution of these mysteries at some future enlargement and enlightenment of my faculties.

All men do this, as to the natural world; they acknowledge their ignorance, but yet believe in it and act upon it, as though they perfectly understood every law and operation and tendency; then if mystery is so common in this material world, how absurd of Satan to urge *it* as an objection to the reality of a system which professes for its object the perfecting of what is confessedly in *itself* the most mysterious of all mysteries, viz. the human soul? If the gospel were less mysterious, it would lack one of the characters of the Divine signature; if it were less simple and comprehensible it would lack adaptation to its great object. Oh then, let us hug it to our bosoms, and exult in its glorious simplicity in dealing with *us*; and reverence and bow down before its profundity in all that relates to its infinite Author; let us, my Love, experience what it holds forth, and though Satan may gnash upon us with his teeth he cannot hurt us. Let us get a firmer footing upon *this* rock, and we shall have a *real* foundation to stand upon when all that is unreal is passing away.

But I forget to whom I write; you know all this better than I do; you are not ignorant of Satan's devices, nor of the armour best adapted to meet him in; nevertheless, what *I* say may help you by way of "stirring up your mind." May the Lord own it to this end, if it be not beneath His notice. I should not have said that. Nothing is too insignificant for His attention and blessing if prompted by a pure motive, bless His holy

name! He loves to use weak instruments to baffle the designs of His *proud* foe, and perhaps He may deign to use this; whether or not, I had no idea of writing thus when I began; I have been quite led off, and all I intended to say is left unsaid.

*Friday noon, August 5, '53.*

MY OWN DEAR WILLIAM — You will be surprised to receive a great budget like this, after receiving two letters this week long enough for a fortnight's epistles; well, I cannot refrain from sending you the enclosed pamphlet though I know you could get one in your book parcel for less than the postage will cost, but I cannot bear to let you remain a *day* without it. Allow me to introduce the subject of it, whom I have *heard* and seen, and for raising up of whom my soul magnifies the Lord. First then, read the little handbill enclosed containing a letter from Mr. Gough's pastor, read it every word, and believe me it falls far short of the reality; when you have read it, turn to the last three pages, or rather the 44th page of the pamphlet, and read the pen and ink sketch of him, and depend upon it, it is below the reality — as a description. When you have read it begin the sketch of his life and I know you cannot help reading it all, be sure to read it at once — and then *lend it*, and when you have your book parcel *order some to sell*. I never read anything with such intense interest in my life, *it is true*; its subject is a *living man* and a Christian, and I have heard him for myself.

I was at the Hall last night, and although it was the third oration the body of the Hall was *very full*, and the platform above half full, at 2s. 6d. a ticket. I did not intend going again, but I really cannot stay away, so I am going, all well, to-night to the Whittington Club; talk of eloquence and oratory! I never heard any before in comparison with this. I thought I must have come out, it almost overpowered me. I have witnessed much enthusiasm in that Hall, but nothing to equal it last night, kept up through the whole address.

Oh in some parts it was *awful*; my father sat next to me, he kept turning so pale and his hands and the muscles of his face were in most sensible emotion; his description of the *gradual* process of intemperance could only have been given by one who had experienced it; it was truly awful, but oh *splendid* in the extreme and *true*, as God is true. His eloquence is irresistible; the people seemed spellbound while his graphic passages lasted, and then one, loud, prolonged shout and cheer gave him breathing time. He spoke most powerfully on the mighty influence of woman, and told some telling anecdotes on the subject, he appealed to the young ladies present with earnestness which I trust sank into many hearts, and what he said to young men is beyond *eulogium*, nay, I will give over; I

am mortified that I cannot give you any idea of it, and oh it is all accompanied by such genuine self-abasement and Christian feeling that no one could help being electrified; but it is useless me writing, I am so excited. I have been to three or four places this morning to get persons to go to-night who I know are going down to destruction through drink. Praise the Lord, all have received me kindly and three are going. One of them is the poor man I told you about, he has just been here for a ticket I bought him last night, and is going! Praise the Lord with me; he tells me that he has not tasted a drop since I first spoke to him, and that he begins to feel better, and indeed his parched lips and palsied limbs begin to assume a more healthful appearance, but oh the struggle is fearful. Mr. Gough described it last night, as next to hell itself, but the Lord is able to keep him from falling, and I have confidence in Him, and I intend to work *more* in this good cause.

Oh how I praised God last night for raising up this man; I believe his visit will be a blessed epoch in the history of the cause in this country. The Secretary said the committee were determined to keep him longer than his intention; if so, he will most likely visit the principal towns, if he stays much longer I do hope *you will hear him*. Oh I praised God for giving me to see the importance of abstaining from the *accursed* stuff, and I praised Him too for enabling me to keep my *early resolution* to give my affections to *no man* who was not of the same mind; bless the Lord that we both see alike *here*, and I shall be able to train up our children perfect Samsons. Oh do all you can in this cause, speak to moderate drinking professors; those clogs on the wheel of the temperance chariot destined to triumph in its march round our world in spite of their indifference and opposition. Get some copies of this pamphlet and distribute them either with or without being paid; if the people will not buy them, lend them or give them away, make them read it.

And now, how are you? Do not think that in this excitement I have felt no concern about you. I *have* very much. Even last night in the Hall, I felt anxious about your poor bruised body and I do hope you are quite restored. Oh I did wish you were with me last night, you would have been enraptured; if he stays in London you *must* come.

P.S.—Read every word of the pamphlet.

*Monday afternoon, 15.8.'53.*

MY LOVE—Your very kind note did not come to hand till after one o'clock. You make me smile about your dreams; and did you really feel so bad at the thoughts of losing me? Well, I do not think you have any reason to fear losing me in any way which would imply dishonour or breach of faith on my part, and I suppose it must have been some such phantom

to be worse than death. Dreams are strange things; I often have some very exhausting and unpleasant ones, and especially since I have been so unwell. But I am not superstitious about dreams; they are generally the effect of physical derangement, I think. However, supposing Satan had power to terrify the imagination during sleep, he cannot harm us by dreams, and I defy him to separate thee and me by any such means; while you are pure and *true*, according to my standard of truth and purity, *nothing*, nor any *being* can come between us. Oh, it does me good to hear how you used Saturday. Well, *go on* and you will reap a rich reward. The knowledge of such effort will make me happier than thousands of gold and silver. I want you to be a *man* and a *Christian*, and then I am satisfied, but short of that I never could be. I might hide my discontent, but it would eat out the vitals of my affection and leave me either to make you miserable or die in the attempt to act a false part. I have such views of what you *should* be, and I have always had such views of what the man must be to whom I gave myself, that it would be bitterer than gall to find myself bound to one in mind and head manifestly unworthy. Oh, I always prayed against it, and I believe the Lord will guide me. Bless you, I have confidence in you, I *will* have confidence, and I will be thoroughly happy about you, and then my health will improve, I trust.

. . . . .

We now have as significant a letter as any in the series, a letter of Catherine Mumford's, breathing the deepest spirituality and revealing the mystical element in her nature — that element which beautified and sanctified her revivalism, and rendered her one of the great figures in religious history. If throughout all her other letters one can see the mother in her heart bending with solicitude over the life of her lover, in this letter one can hear the very beating of the wings of his guardian angel.

*Thursday afternoon, December 1, '53.*

MY OWN DEAR WILLIAM — I experienced great pleasure in the perusal of your Saturday's letter, especially as you referred to my remarks about my thoughts respecting our future oneness of sympathy and feeling; *you* cannot appreciate the pleasure it gives me after writing a sheet or two out of the fulness of my heart, to receive a *response* to the *particular* subject on which I write. I never *knew* that you loved me because of my capacity for deep feeling; on the contrary, I have often felt discouraged from writing all I felt by the idea that



you would count it extravagant enthusiasm, or wild sentimentalism. . . .

Your Tuesday's notes arrived safe, and I was rejoiced by both to hear of the continued prosperity of the work, though sorry you were so worn out; I fear the effect of all this excitement and exertion upon your health, and though I would not hinder your usefulness, I would caution you against an injudicious prodigality of your strength.

Remember a long life of steady, consistent, holy labour will produce twice as much fruit as one shortened and destroyed by spasmodic and extravagant exertions; be careful and sparing of your strength when and where exertion is *unnecessary*.

I have thought much about the New Connexion, and I am *sorry* you propose being decided by what the quarterly meeting may do, because I do not see what that has to do with the future. . . .

I think, dearest, if you would sit down deliberately and take both sides of the question into consideration, and in the fear of God *decide* according to your best judgment, you would save yourself much unnecessary anxiety and vacillation. Decide independent of the quarterly meeting; it is for the *future* you are to think and act, not for the present; then decide for the future, uninfluenced by the present, trusting in God to clear the way and *fit you* for the position, if the step be agreeable to His will. If our prospects fail here, our path being blocked up, and the interests of *our family* demand it, I will brave all the trials of the voyage and the climate and *cheerfully* accompany you across the Atlantic, because then I should feel "Well, we tried the only path conscientiously open to us in our native land and it failed; therefore if evil befall us we shall be sustained by the belief that it is in the path of duty and in the order of Providence"; whereas if we fail to try this door and our prospects darken, I shall always think we missed our way.

I was truly sorry to hear of the ground which Satan has chosen from which to attack you; I appreciate your confidence in opening your heart to me as I *know* you would not to another in the world, and as a "faithful friend is the medicine of life, and he who fears the Lord shall find one," I must try to help you to search your heart and encourage you to look for the victory over self which your Saviour has promised you.

You ask if such feelings as you refer to are not evidences of a bad heart. I answer, they are evidences of a partially unsanctified one; and, my Love, just in proportion to your satisfaction in the *simple* fact of God being glorified and souls being saved, by *any instrument whatsoever, just so far* is your eye single and your motive pure in your own individual efforts. Try yourself, dearest, by this standard rather than by your feelings in the excitement of a prayer meeting when *you* are the



principal agent. I speak with all tenderness, and as the beloved of my soul I tell you, that I *see* ambition to be your chief mental besetment, *not a besetment* if rightly directed and sanctified, but which unsanctified and "warped to an idol object" will make your life a martyrdom, a lingering self-crucifixion. Ambition even to save souls may not be sanctified; but ambition *simply* to glorify God, the soul sunk down, rather *risen up*, to the one sublime idea of glorifying God, *must* be sanctified. A mind fastened on this one object will take pleasure in infirmities even (such as want of talent, etc., etc.), that the power of Christ may rest upon it, "being willing to be thought a fool" if by such means the *wisdom* of Christ may be manifested and glorified. *This*, dearest, is, in my opinion, full consecration to God, *this* is being *like* Christ, and religion in all its stages, I see more than ever to be, assimilation to *Him*, more or less perfect.

Look at the life of Christ, analyze His conversations with the Jews, and what object does He ever seem to keep uppermost, what was His *chief* aim, but to "glorify His Father," and so I conceive the bliss of Heaven consists in the realization of that one object, the glory of God. . . . Try, dearest, to get the ambition of your soul fixed on the glory of your God, and it will bear you up to one of Heaven's high thrones, and enrich your brow with one of its unfading crowns; get low at the foot of the cross, and lie there till God's glory becomes all and in all to your soul; tell the Lord you want to feel *willing* to crawl as it were, behind every other Christian, so far as the estimation of man goes, if by this means you can best promote His glory; tell Him that you don't want talent and popularity if you can *glorify Him* better without them. Tell Him your *will* and desire is to be *holy*, leaving Him to choose your employment and position, and ask Him for the inward baptism of the Holy Ghost, that what you already desire may become the actual delight of your life. . . .

Oh my dear William, depend upon it, it is not talent or learning (however estimable as instruments), nor might nor power, but "*My Spirit*, saith the Lord." It is a soul spending itself simply for this one end which God will honour and which He *always has* honoured since He first spoke to man; and just in proportion as other motives operate will He cause disappointment and vexation of spirit. The present state of the Church proves this; the Church has got machinery enough, *talent of the first order*, numbers, organizations, money, etc., etc., etc., and God seems to be standing aloof looking on and saying "You are trying to do My work in your own strength and in your own way, trying to build up systems and teach men's intellects, and please your own fancies, instead of ever remembering My word '*without Me ye can do nothing,*'

and taking hold of the strength and grace I hold out to you and going forth for *My glory only* to save mankind." This appears to me to be exactly the present position of the Church, God's glory is lost sight of, and *man* is set up in His place and worshipped; surely, then, God is *just* and true in withholding His Spirit till His Church learns her own weakness.

I believe it is with *ministers* a revival must begin, their self-sufficiency must be destroyed before God *can* use them, their motives must be *pure* before He will honour them. An unholy ministry is the greatest curse of the Church; I don't mean an immoral or outwardly unrighteous ministry, but one unholy in *soul*, polluted in *motive*. Talk of a stiff formal people, a cold do-nothing people, a worldly, proud people; where there is a devoted, faithful, *holy* minister, I don't believe it; there never was such an anomaly lasted long. On the other hand, call up a faithful, devoted, holy man who seeks only God's glory, and be he talented or not, there you find a prosperous, active, *living* Church. When I heard Baptist Noel I was much disappointed as to *talent*, but not for a moment at a loss for the secret of his universal popularity and extensive usefulness; the Spirit of Jesus beamed through every feature of his countenance, and vibrated in every tone of his voice. *Anybody* who had read the life of Christ, converted or not, could not but feel that the man who spake was a "follower, for his speech betrayed him"; there stood an *embodiment* of the religion of Jesus Christ, and as it always has been and always will be, *everybody* felt its power. There was no oratory, no eloquence, and but little originality; so that considering my disappointment, having heard so much about him and not *knowing* the secret I should have *wondered why* I *felt* so much, such a sense of solemnity and tenderness, as though God were nearer than usual, if I had not understood something of the meaning of that word "if a man *love Me*, I will love him, and My Father and I will come to him, and we will make our *abode with him*."

Oh, my Love, this is it; get these Heavenly Guests, and they will do *their own work*, their very presence will constitute your strength and ability to every good and holy work. God *can* use such men as these without giving His glory to another, people can see as it were through the man's own self, right to the embodied Jesus in his heart; and hence God gets the glory of His own work, and His strength is made manifest in weakness. Oh, I feel that if God should ask me — What shall I do for thee? I would answer without a moment's delay, "Give me grace to cry in all life's conflicts and changes and temptations and in death's final struggle as my Saviour did, 'Father, glorify *Thyself*,'" though He knew that to do so would expose Him to contempt, and shame, and suffering, such as had never

been conceived, except by His own omniscient mind. Oh, I shall never forget one season in my life when the Divine glory eclipsed my spiritual vision and seemed to enrapture my soul with its lustre. Oh how truly dignified did *any* employments appear which could glorify God. I saw how rapidly the highest Archangel would dart from his starry throne down to this mean earth to remove a stone out of the pathway of a little child if such an act would *glorify God*, and oh I felt it the highest privilege of my being to be *able* to do it. I wish I could make you feel just as I then felt; but Jesus can, and He *will* if you ask Him. It was in secret communion with Him I realized the glorious vision, and if you wait for it, and cry as Moses did "show *me* Thy glory" He will come, and oh the comfort and the light which such a vision *leaves*, truly it lasts *many days*; even in the darkest moments of my subsequent experience I have traced its glimmer, and I believe Hell itself could not obliterate the views then given me on this subject. But oh how it tortures me to think it was given in vain, or nearly so. In vain! No, perhaps not, I still live, and bless God it may yet prove "not in vain."

Pray for me, *pray for me*, and let us give ourselves to the promotion of God's glory, and let us ever remember that God is glorified in the full consecration of *what we have*, be it *small* or *great*; He desires not the increase of five talents for the loan of one, but a full, perfect consecration of that one to His own honour, and whoever renders this, He pronounced as hearty a Well done upon, as upon him who has received ten. I have often erred here, I will try to remember in future that *all I have* is all He wants; you remember it too, dearest, and be not anxious because you have not as much talent as this or that man, but only to have what you have fully sanctified, and you will realize the end of your existence as fully and glorify God as much in your sphere as Gabriel does in his; begin and pray for grace to "glory in tribulation and in weakness," that "the power and the excellency may be *seen* to be of God." Be willing to endure the thorn of *felt* insufficiency, and even inferiority to others, if His grace be only sufficient to make you *useful* in His vineyard. I believe it matters little whether we are employed in gathering the sheaves, or gleaning the straggling ears after the reaper; it is the *state of the soul* which fixes the value of the employment, not the employment itself; to glorify God is enough, in small or great things, according as the measure of ability and opportunity is ours. Let us try to fix our eye on this and aim at it alone.

But I have dwelt too long on this subject. I hope what I have said will be made a blessing to you, if so *tell me* for I have written it in great weakness, *at intervals* during the last two or three days, sitting in my easy chair with a dreadful

cough tearing me almost to pieces, but I find to write takes off the restlessness and weariness always attendant on recovery from severe illness. Read it *sometimes during the week*, and may God own even this weak instrumentality dedicated to *His glory*.

There are one or two more points in your last week's letters but I must leave them, except what you say about Mr. and Mrs. Shadford's kindness making it most difficult to leave. Certainly it must make it more painful to leave *them* as friends, but it must not operate as a servile feeling of obligation to interfere with your obedience to the dictates of judgment and reason; such an effect would make you unworthy of such friendship; for I cannot for a moment think that such an effect was *sought*; if so, that altogether alters the character of the *act*, the *motive* being double; but no, I believe it was an expression of pure friendship, and as such you must regard it and not allow a sense of obligation to shackle you. But I need not mention such a thing, I trust it is as far beneath you as *me*.

It is impossible to read this letter without admiration and without a feeling of deep reverence for the young and delicate woman who wrote it; but the chief impression it makes is concerned rather with the man to whom it was written. One perceives that an influence of the sweetest, purest, and most mystical character is at work, with all the quiet confidence of spiritual strength, on a nature primitive, headstrong, unruly, self-satisfied, and yet self-tortured by doubts — a nature capable of greatness but susceptible also of ruin and failure. One sees that the mothering of William Booth has begun; that the embrace of a milder and a purer spirit is beginning to enfold itself about his life; that he is conscious of an inferiority which she supplies, and she in him of a superiority which she studies to enhance.

Something of the storm through which he himself was passing at this period of his life may be seen in the letters which compose the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIV

WILLIAM BOOTH TO CATHERINE MUMFORD

1853-1854

THE reader has already been warned to expect in the letters of William Booth a marked inferiority to the letters of Catherine Mumford. It is probably the greatest tribute to his character, particularly at the time with which we are dealing, that he was loved so earnestly and so beautifully by Catherine Mumford, that she deemed him worthy of the letters which she addressed to him. One must be careful to remember that he was a great man in the making, and that even a great man may be an indifferent letter-writer. Moreover, as Sainte-Beuve has warned us, things said in conversation become congealed in the process of writing, for *paper cannot smile, paper is brutish*; and his letters are largely an effort to express himself conversationally. One realizes, too, that in Catherine Mumford's hands these letters of the young preacher were warm with the man's life-blood, were instinct with his attractive character, were living with the magic of his presence; the paper was not brutish, for his hand had pressed it; the paper did actually smile, for his eyes had rested upon it. To her these troubled and often untidied letters were the utterance of a very real soul — the greatest soul she had encountered — and their feebleness was but the awkward gesture of a giant who has put down his club to make a love-bow of a withy.

She wrote to him on one occasion:

Do I remember? Yes, I remember *all* that has bound us together. . . . Your words, your looks, your actions, even the most trivial and incidental, come up before me as fresh as life.

The main interest of these letters is the revelation they afford, however crudely, of a man's struggle with his own soul. William Booth was not born a saint, any more than St. Augustine or St. Francis. He had faults; he had weakness; he had the roots of sin. One discovers in these letters,



even when the writer flies off to the religious phraseology of the day for a release from pitiless self-analysis, that he was fighting a very great, a very terrible battle for his soul's existence. They do not give one so easily and so movingly the same sense of conflict which one finds in the letters and very honest autobiography of Father Tyrrell; they are entirely devoid of literary charm; they do not deal with the niceties of scholasticism, nor mount into the empyrean of philosophy; nevertheless to one who reads with sympathy, remembering the distance which separated the one from the other, there is something of the same spiritual struggle, the same spiritual agony, in these rough letters of William Booth as flames like a living fire in the writings of Tyrrell.

It will probably come as a revelation to those accustomed to think of William Booth as the white-haired, gentle, and patriarchal head of the Salvation Army, that he had to fight for his faith, that he was often cast down into an abyss of despondency, that his heart cried out from the depths of an exceeding bitterness for the sympathies and consolations and domestic kindness of humanity. And yet reflection should surely convince us that so deep and boundless a love for mankind as that which characterised his life's work could only have emerged from tempest and peril of shipwreck, could only have come from agony of the heart and through blindness of tears.

That which must chiefly interest the student of this man's extraordinary career is the immense influence exerted on his spiritual development by the woman he loved; so great and high indeed in this influence, that one may even doubt if his name had ever risen above the level of ordinary preachers but for the constant pressure and the never-lifted consecration of Catherine Mumford's beautiful spirit. For the reader of these letters will perceive that not only was William Booth lacking in many graces of the soul, but that he was positively swayed at this time towards dangerous paths.

There was that in his surroundings, if not actually in himself, which tended to make him the mere popular preacher, the practised orator of unctuous phraseology, the seeker of notoriety. He was young, he was romantic-looking, he was poor. To be married to the woman he loved —

so that she might talk over his sermons with him, among other things — was a great temptation. Further, his health was extremely bad, physical effort was sometimes a torture to him, the discomfort of lodgings weighed him down and depressed him in body and soul. He longed for a regular income, however small, for a settled home, however modest. He thought that the unrest of his soul would cease, and that religious quiet would possess his heart, if he could be decently settled in life. But again and again, all through these most difficult, most crucial, and most formative years of his life, he felt the call of the Spirit, and knew that there was something ahead of him, something beyond a home and domestic comfort, something beyond the affection of friends and the popularity of the Methodist Church, to which he must struggle on, for which he must be prepared to make a sacrifice of every human wish.

His conflict was not of the intellect, but of the very life. He was not troubled about the schools, but about God and his soul. He did not have to wrestle in spirit for a ground on which he might stand firmly and utter a more or less compromising *Credo*; his conflict was to destroy in himself everything that warred against the will of God. To him there was nothing clearer than the injunction to sell all and forsake all for Christ's sake; but really to sell all, really to forsake all, this was the cross which pressed him to the ground. And sometimes when he cried to the heavens for light on his path, the darkness deepened. His hands knocked and beat upon the door, but it was not opened. He asked and asked again, crying out from the depths of his soul, but no answer was vouchsafed. Through all that time the way was not clear before his feet, and the ground on which he stood was as shifting sand.

Catherine Mumford also experienced these seasons of darkness and silence; but she was living a solitary life, and could patiently wait for the light to shine and the voice from heaven to speak in her heart. William Booth, on the other hand, was preaching to increasing congregations of people, he was declaring the good news, he was offering salvation, he was proclaiming the Kingdom. To him these periods of darkness and silence were infinitely more hard to bear than

they could possibly be to Catherine Mumford; and for him the temptation must have been a very terrible one, not to strive any longer, not to expect the extraordinary thing to happen, but to become the popular preacher of a countryside, content with a traditional phraseology, and satisfied with the compliments of the saved. Catherine Mumford's influence was the supreme human power that moulded his life; but it is evident, I think, from these poor, simple, crude, and sometimes irritating letters that there was a huge strength, rock-like and original, in the soul of William Booth which could never have fitted into any niche of convenience nor have been shaped into any semblance of smug complacency.

I need not burden the reader's mind with dreary details of the sectarian conflict to which reference is constantly made throughout the correspondence. It suffices to explain that William Booth at this time was a Minister of the Methodist Reformers in Lincolnshire; that the people to whom he ministered were anxious to keep him, and were ready to provide him with a house, a horse and gig, and a salary sufficient for marriage; that Catherine Mumford disapproved of this step, and pressed her young lover to join the New Connexion of Methodists — a body much better organized and far more widely distributed than the Reformers; and, finally, that while William Booth was drawn very powerfully towards the New Connexion, which promised him a much wider sphere of useful service and a settled career as an ordained minister, his affection for the people in Lincolnshire and his desire for union with Catherine Mumford tempted him sorely to remain among the Reformers.

*William Booth to Catherine Mumford.*

1853. (Undated.) 1 o'clock.

MY DEAR DARLING KATE — What would I not give to see you this afternoon, to sit by your side, and tell you my heart's feelings! Bless you! We shall yet together, I trust in Providence, be spared many precious and happy hours.

*Home.* This word sounds sweetly to me now. I think I shall rightly prize one when I get it; at home with you; to have a home! and it is your presence and your presence only

that can make it home to me. Well, then, to some extent you reciprocate these feelings. You cannot entertain them to the same extent that I do. You have a sweet home now, and its quietude and solitude you enjoy and speak lovingly of. I have no home. Mine is a lodging, a study, that is all. I come into it tired and weary, and except there be some letters or news about my yet having a home, it seems a dreary and melancholy place. Well, we will yet make home brighter to each other and I will try and kiss every tear away, and enhance the enjoyment of every smile and make you as happy as I can.

I have more confidence in the people among whom I am labouring. I believe they will do all they possibly can to make us happy, and I hope to spend a year or two longer here. I have given up hope of our people generally throughout the country amalgamating, and our Circuit seems determined to hang to the whole body, and so I don't take so desirable an event into my calculations. We must leave our future in the Hands of God. Do not you? Only let us both do the best we can for ourselves and for God and His Church. . . .

RED LION STREET, SPALDING.

MY OWN DEAR KATE — With feelings of very great pleasure I snatch up my pen to write you a line — bless you, I would that I could see you and that I could rest me for a season by your side and tell you all my heart. I think much about you; your eye is ever looking down upon me and beaming into my inmost soul. You are mine and you have my heart, and surely all this ought to constitute rich enjoyment for us both; but I have ever missed the present happiness in seeking and grasping the future.

I want you, your company, your comforting and consoling converse. I want you to hear me, to criticise me, to urge me on. I feel such a desperate sense of loneliness, so oppressive to my spirit. I speak and preach and act, and it is passed over; there is no one with whom I can talk over my *performance*; to others I cannot mention it for fear of being thought egotistic or seeking for praise, and for some reasons others say little or nothing of it to me; I hear only of it by *hints* and *innuendoes*. I want you, too, to help you, to make you happy, to bring you flowers, to show you my friends, for you to enjoy the sunshine with me and the landscape, and the Sabbath and sweet days; bless you, I was never made to enjoy anything *alone*. Oh that we could meet only for a time — but we *must wait*. I shall not write again until after Quarter Day, which is on Monday. Thursday is Spalding Union School-Feast. A great day here. I would that you were going to be here. The children of all the dissenting schools meet in the Baptist Chapel, where an address is delivered;

they then walk to fields where large tents, etc., are erected; they have their plum-pudding and beef, and afterwards play, etc.; then comes the tea and public meeting; the shops close and the whole town and country for miles round turns out, and thus give a public verdict in favour of Sabbath schools.

I spoke at St. Catherine's School-Feast, although the morning was wet and cloudy. The meeting was a triumphant one, Mr. Shadford in the chair. 150 took tea, besides the children, the people came through rain for *miles*. After tea, the speaking. Mr. Rycroft spoke well; he has a delightful way of speaking. I followed him, and succeeded to *my satisfaction*. Here is the outline of my speech. Introduced by the anecdote of Galileo, who when tortured by the Inquisition for declaring that the world goes *round*, denied it when on the rack, but when set at liberty, stamped his foot and said, *It does go round, it does move*. Well, 1st, that the world moves, progress the sign of the times, 1st on its physical surface — Agriculture, produce, flowers, animals, all improving *Arts* and *Sciences*. Stage-coaches *gone* — now the age of engines, telegraphs, etc. It moves,—morally, socially, and politically. Benevolent Institutions are rapidly rising, although the Pope is still in Rome and Napoleon 3rd in Paris and the slave-driver still cracks his infernal whip, yet liberty is abroad, men are thinking. Hungarian mother is instilling into her babe's mind hatred to Austria, etc., etc. *Uncle Tom* has been written and is being read everywhere, and though they, the tyrants of the earth, are shutting off the steam and fastening down the escape-valve and sitting on it to keep it down, yet the boiler may, nay will, burst and they will be caught up to meet one another in the air! You remember the last idea is stolen from *Uncle Tom*. The world moves. Spiritually, men are marching, etc. The Italians are calling for Bibles. A revolution fraught with the most glorious prospects to Christianity is proceeding in China, etc., etc.

2nd proposition. That all progress past, present, and future — the result of *education*. Men have educated, cultivated the land, the wheat, the flower, the animals — men have educated brass, iron, steel, etc., until they have made engines to grind, to carry, to draw, etc., etc. Mind has been *educated*, or we should have been Druids at this day, etc., etc.

Spiritually likewise — Martyrs, etc. Are we to stay here? No, a thousand angel forms are beckoning us onwards. Our work, the regeneration of our world, and therefore the world must be *educated*. And to be educated the world must have a *teacher*; who is it to be?

3rd proposition. Is England, the Anglo-Saxon mind, the schoolmaster for the world, for this adapted? I embrace all who are English, America of course to some extent. She has



lessons of freedom to teach the slave-driver; of the Kingship of Christ and the supremacy of the Bible to teach Popes, priests, and Cardinals; of political liberty to teach the spoilers of Hungary and Poland and Italy; lessons of the cross of salvation by faith in Christ alone to teach Universal *Man*.

For this work England adapted by her power, her fame, and her commercial relations, and to thoroughly qualify her she must be thoroughly *educated*. Not merely mentally, not merely morally, but religiously educated; and she cannot be religiously educated but by the instrumentality of Sunday *Schools*, etc. But I am filling up my letter with what will interest you little; however, it went *well*. That is, as I thought.

I do hope you understood me to say in my last, bless you, that should I find in you any irritability more than I have *discovered* as yet, that I *will* bear with it and love you none the less; bless you; do not say any more on such subjects. I am more than ever satisfied with you—mentally, morally, and spiritually. Oh it is that I am irritable and will want bearing with, but, bless you, I will be *all, all, all, all* you wish. Bless you, I love you dearly. My soul loves *you*. Cling to the music. Music, oh it will move me to almost anything. It can either calm or arouse me. You shall have all my temporal endowments can procure to make you happy.

CAULDON PLACE, HANLEY, STAFFORDSHIRE.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS SWEET—With very great pleasure I sit down to write to you. I am expecting to hear from you to-morrow, and I trust I shall hear very good news as it respects your health and happiness. I think I am better in health than I was when I came down here—I have commenced washing my chest well with cold water every morning and then rubbing well, and I fancy I have benefited much by this course. I hope to persevere with it. The friends manifest much anxiety about my health, not too much, I do not think. I have taken two raw eggs in my tea of a morning and two in my tea at evening, and I think this, with milk and oat-meal in an evening, has likewise been beneficial. As a set-off against this I have worked very hard; we had the chapel very full last night, the largest congregation by far I have ever preached to. We did not leave until 20 minutes to 12, took down 50 names, making upwards of 200 during the 9 days. I stayed in Longton; I am now at Hanley resting for two days. I commence on Sunday in this chapel, famous for its size and its New Connexion reminiscences. . . .

You will be surprised when I tell you that my stay down here is very likely to be prolonged until March, perhaps until Conference. It is proposed to send a preacher in my place to London—and a correspondence is being carried on with

Messrs. Bates, Gillon, Rabbits, and Cooke to that effect — I do not know how it will terminate — I trust in all these things we shall be guided by the Lord. Certainly the work at Longton was very great and the influence very mighty, and if I could have stayed we cannot tell where it would have stayed. I do hope you are well, my dearest. My expenses to Longton were about £1:5:0; they gave me £5:0:0. I have had to purchase some things in consequence of my longer stay, etc. I wish you were here; I have just spoken to Mr. Mills relative to our marriage after next Conference and I do not anticipate any difficulty; in fact, I shall very impatiently hear of any, if I hear at all — but there will be none. I hope you are doing what you can at the music, and likewise at your books. Bless you, I often think about you and the future and our home and our *family*, if God should spare us and trust us with any. I hope we shall have grace to say in all things and in all circumstances, Thy will be done.

I hope to get two thorough good nights' rest and to be strong and well by Sunday. Remember me kindly to mother and father. Write me a long loving letter; you have plenty of time. Pray for me and I will pray that you may have in your soul and around your path every blessing. And that in my arms you may find your earthly heaven. I am anxious that it should be so — nay, it shall be so. — With my heart's fondest and truest love. . . .

*P.S.* — I want to make a sermon on "The Flood"; if anything strikes you on the subject, note it down. . . .

RED LION STREET, SPALDING,  
*Saturday, 9 o'clock.*

MY OWN DEAR KATE — Yours has just come to hand. Thank you for all your kind sweet counsellings, but I cannot for a moment only, much more for 4 years, think of consenting to such an arrangement. No, my present expectations are these. I stay with this Circuit, and should it intend to amalgamate, I *marry*. Then it, viz. the Circuit, will recommend me to the Conference as a travelling preacher and stipulate as one of the conditions of the union, which amalgamation will be highly advantageous to them, that I be received into full Connexion at once. That will be the plan, I have no doubt, *should* this Circuit agree to unite. If not, we must wait and then decide on a course of action. I tell you *honestly* that I do not intend anything of the kind as going 4 years' probationist with them; I have been probationing long enough. If they had a Training Institution it would be a different thing. I differ in opinion with you respecting *probation*. I believe it to be an excellent rule. That is in the abstract. But you see it applies and is intended to apply to young men of 18, 19, 20, and 21.

I am, to my shame I tell it, *24*. However, I have told you enough, I hope, to quiet every fear, every feeling of pain or anxiety in your bosom. Be at peace with yourself and with God's providential hand.

Of course, as a young man, if I go I must go as a young man, and submit to the rules of young men. But even now if I were married it does not follow as a necessary result that I should be refused. So that we have everything to hope and nothing to fear. . . .

I am very *poorly*. My face is swelled and hard. Some ladies were joking me last night, sending me home for my wife to make me some gruel, etc. If you were here to tell me it was bad and would soon be better, etc., etc., it would not be half so painful; it makes me *peevish*. Kate, I am very impatient. I hear you say, "Ah, William, I know that very well!" *I love you. I want to see you*, etc., etc.

My love to your Mother. I hope she is better. Keep your spirits up; mine are good for the future. Praise God for opening this door. Remember, although I have declined this invitation of Mr. Cooke's, I have not shut the door. *Four years, only think*. I hope Heaven has much happiness, sweet, united, *shared* happiness in store for us before four years have fled away. Not but that if there were some College or great advantages I would think of it; but there are not. . . .

RED LION STREET, SPALDING,  
*Thursday.*

MY OWN SWEET CATHERINE — I have felt very sweetly towards you, my dearest, ever since I received your last kind letter. That letter did me real good, and yet I know not that it was more kind than usual; at all events it was more cheerful and cheering, and it breathed a spirit of confidence that did me good and, depend upon it, I have felt brighter and more tenderly towards you ever since it came to hand. I am very anxious to hear from and about you.

We have had several very bad cases of cholera down here near Holbeach, and I hear from the papers that it is worse again in London, and I do hope that you are taking all the care of yourself you can. I am pretty well in health. I am careful with fruit, indeed I am not tempted to eat any but pears, and although a lady sent me a basket the other night I never eat above 3 or 4 at a time, and I should not think they would hurt me. I hope you continue improving in your health; send me exact word. I am doing a little at study, but not so much as I should like to do. I should almost like to get away by myself for a time so as to be able to devote all my time to close reading and thinking. I know not what to do about leaving. I cannot tell you whether or not it would be wise. We shall

see. Give my very kind love to your dear Mother and also remember me to Miss Smith, if she has returned. I hope she will recover both her health and her spirits. I hope indeed that she will be able to forget that fellow who deceived her so painfully; may the Lord forgive him, it is hard work for me to do so. . . .

I have received yours this morning; the above I wrote last night. I am pleased with your letter. But as undecided as ever with regard to leaving here. If I do leave at Christmas I should very much like to have the intervening six months to myself and go to Cotton End or into the house with some minister. I am gaining a little more love for study and feeling daily my own deficiency. But I know not what to do. If I thought the New Connexion was prosperous it would alter the matter; but I am afraid not. I know all that Mr. R. says, and I have weighed it well, but I should think they have not one sphere of usefulness anything like the one I occupy in its adaptability to suit me. I tell you I know I am very superficial; you *know I am* — at least *I know it*; no one can make me think otherwise, because it is the truth, and here I have opportunities of getting matter that I should not among them, coming not so often before one congregation, but that is not all. However, I cannot argue the matter any further; we must leave it awhile. I am one hour all but decided to go, and then when I think again I am decided the opposite. I am very pleased you went to see Mr. R., I hope you will go again. The next seven months make no difference to my ministerial status, so that it does not matter whether I go or not till June. I am sorry you took cold; I do hope you take care of yourself. It gives me great pain to hear of your continued delicate state of health.

HOLBEACH,

*Monday morning.*

MY OWN DEAR CATHERINE — I have expected a line from you, but have not received one. I expected it because I think you promised it in your last, not because I wish you to send me more than one letter a week, but I do want to hear you say you are thoroughly happy, that you are satisfied with the pianoforte, and that you are well. . . .

I am thinking that the next ten years, if we are spared, ought to be the brightest, best, freest from care and most useful of our lives. Oh, shall they not be so? I am trying. I know I am doing more than before, but I am not doing what I ought to do. Oh that I had acquired habits years back that would then have been easily formed and that now are difficult to acquire.

I had a pretty good day yesterday — preached from “Be not deceived” at night. It seemed to go pretty well, I thought



— I have heard no opinion. *I* was much pleased with it. Although I worked hard yesterday and retired at 11.0, much tired, I rose this morning at 6.0 and have been studying and intend continuing through the day. . . .

Praise God, the sun shines. My heart feels freer. My conscience and my will are living in sweeter harmony. My prospects are brighter. My confidence in you, in your good heart, and in your large soul and in your thoughtfulness, is very strong. My faith in my own affection for you is firmer and more unswerving. Why should we not both sing and rejoice and praise the Lord? . . .

I can plainly see, my dearest, that our influence over each other will be immense. I tremble when I think how much apparently during my last visit, I exercised over you. Oh, my heart must be thoroughly Christ's. . . .

I have a speech to make for a Stone-laying and I must do it. Mr. Jonathan Rowbotham lays the Stone, and I am expecting to follow with a speech. I am sure I don't know what it is yet to be. It will be one source of my great pleasure and profit when we can talk over our feelings about truths and subjects, and doubtless it will be to you also. Remember, you promised to try and write something for the Magazine. I will be contented when you have tried, whether you succeed or not. *I do not fear your succeeding.*

HOLBEACH,

*Monday morning.*

MY OWN DEAR KATE — Somewhat tired I sit me down to write you my Monday's epistle. I preached at Holbeach yesterday twice, and at Holbeach Hurn in the afternoon. Good congregations all the day. In the afternoon I went with a local preacher planned to be at the Hurn. He was unwell, so I took compassion on him and preached for him. His brother lent us his gig, and I drove him and his brother's daughter there for the night.

At night I preached from "The harvest is past and the summer is ended," etc. A hard time, for though I had some little liberty in talking there was a hard feeling. In the prayer-meeting, no visible good was done. I have heard that Mr. Molesworth's governess, for whom I told you I felt concerned, has got salvation. I hope it is true. . . .

I am still whirling about the country. To-night I go back to Spalding. Tuesday to Pinchbeck. Wednesday to Suttleton. Thursday a special sermon at Boston. May the Lord save and bless the people! Oh, my dear Kate, let us live to God. I wish all this writing was at an end, and that you were here, mine, in my arms. And yet I cannot help having fears and doubts about the future. How I wish the Reformers would



amalgamate with the New Connexion or with the Association and that all this agitation were ended.

But I know what I want. I know what I must have. But I don't know how — at least it seems as though I don't know how — to get it. I want more inward power and life in my own soul. I fully believe if I had this I should prosper in my work. I might do so much more by the fireside (of the people) if I were living closer to God, but my best efforts and desires — I fear my motives — are not so pure as they ought to be. Oh, that God may save and bless me. . . .

But I am always running before to find doubts and fears; mine has always been a restless and dissatisfied life, and I am fearful that it will continue so until I get safe into heaven.

Believe me, Your dearest friend, and that nearest my heart you dwell.

RED LION STREET, SPALDING.

MY DEAREST KATE — I did not write yesterday because full of anxiety and care, and I am not much better to-day. I hope you are well and happy in the love of Jesus, God's well-beloved Son. Although cast down and low-spirited I must say that God has been blessing me of late and watering my soul from on high. I am determined to get more religion, to cleave to Christ, and to conquer through Him all temptation. I had a glorious triumph on Friday and it has been better with me ever since.

Mr. Poole, the revivalist, is with us, and I like him much. He is rather dark and heavy, I should think, in his preaching; but he arouses the people; he has aroused me, and that is just what we want. In this respect I care not what people say about "alarming preachers." God has blessed my intercourse with him, hearing him tell about salvation has been a blessing to my soul. I am living near to the Throne of Grace. Help me to watch and pray. And let us seek His *present, full, and free salvation*.

Mr. Poole is dissatisfied with things as they are and meditates going to America and joining the Methodist Episcopal Church, and I should almost like to go with him; he gives a deplorable account of the deadness, stiffness, and formality of the New Connexion, although not exactly indisposed to join it if he could be taken into full Connexion, having a wife and five children. He is a very valuable man, just fitted to stir up a slumbering church. However, I think of offering myself to the New Connexion. Ought I to do it now or wait a few months? If they are low and yet *right*, we ought to go and try to raise them. I hope Poole *will go*. He is a blessed man, and yet it is more his peculiar ability and fire than his sanctified *soul*; here is a great difference between him and Caughey. But he prayed magnificently and with mighty power last night at the School Meeting.

Bless you, be happy. We must live to God. He will guide us. I am afraid of doing *wrong*, and acting hastily. It puts me past study and everything else.

I love you very much and I am sure very tenderly. Take care of yourself; if I leave at Christmas I shall come up and see you. They tell me here I am going from a rising prosperous church to a sinking one; it is not out yet; I know what the people will say when they hear; but I care not for that. I must do right.

Oh that God would in mercy gain your father.

SPALDING,

September, 1853.

MY DARLING CATHERINE—Your very affectionate letter with all its counselling and interrogatories has just come to hand and I have read it over with very great care. I assure you my heart dictates this with much affection for you and the tenderest concern for your interests.

I am very sorry you do not like Mr. Rabbits' style of sermon. I am afraid that you will often have to mourn in the future for your dear Mr. Thomas.

I should like very much to see you. I do not know what you would think of Mr. Poole. He is very extravagant, but very powerful. His great theme is salvation by faith, present, free, and full. I yearn to see good done. I rather imagine that our ideas may not be alike upon revival matters. Many precious souls have professed to find the Lord this week under Mr. Poole's preaching. . . .

*I am seeking purity of heart.* Seek it with me. You believe in it, that Jesus' Blood can cleanse and keep clean, and it is by faith. Oh, God is striving with my soul. I do want to give myself up to Him. *Lord help me.*

Mr. Smith is going to Cotton End. I am sorry. Lord save him from deadness and formality. I wish you would get *Finney's Lectures*, the *Lives of Bramwell, Stoner*, and *John Smith*. I do not now wonder whether I ought to have gone to Cotton End. I have very little sympathy with the spirit of Congregationalism. . . .

The great doubt I have and which has staggered me for some time with regard to joining the New Connexion, is my being so superficial, but I must work harder. Be happy; I love you dearly. Praise God with me that He is saving me. You have often prayed for it, now believe for yourself also and God will purify your heart by faith. . . .

My health continues good. My spirits are better, and if I have a good week next week in my ministrations, I shall be on the mountain top; but whether up there in the region of rejoicing or not, a settled peace is my birthright. He bought it

for me. He has proposed it to me, offers it only on one simple condition — believing faith. Lord, I do believe.

'Tis done. Thou dost this moment save,  
Redemption through Thy Blood I have,  
And spotless love and peace.

Whether we eat or drink, we will do it to the glory of God.

MY DEAREST KATE — I am exceedingly full of business this morning, just snatch a moment to add another word or two to the scrap I wrote yesterday. I intend using some of the leading ideas you gave me in your last at a school-feast to-night, that is if I can get the outline filled up. Bless you, I do hope your health is *better*. You must get *well*. I do hope and trust that Dr. Franks knows what he is doing. I am resting pretty quietly about the future. Not that I have any more confidence in the future. No. But I have more confidence in this Circuit and the hold I have got on its affections. And I am hoping that it will amalgamate and take *me*, take *us*, along with it. The weather is beautiful and the country charming. I am comforting myself with the idea that it is the last summer we shall spend apart. I do trust that God in His good pleasure will bring or allow this to be brought about.

Several sudden deaths have occurred lately; they make me feel solemn. You must this time excuse me scrawling so and I will learn better. I love you, my dearest; my heart is and has been of late very full of tender affection for you. Oh for perfect unitedness; I think if we are allowed by Heaven to be united outwardly, we shall be united inwardly. Oh I am sure I shall count it my highest enjoyment to see you happy. . . .

RED LION STREET, SPALDING.

(Undated.)

MY DEAREST LOVE — Yours is just to hand. I am thankful you received the money safely. I am sorry, very sorry, to hear of your continued ill health. Of course it is very painful, while I feel tolerably well myself, while everyone around me makes merry and looks well, that you continue prostrate. And yet for some reason I do not feel your symptoms are anything like *serious*, that is, I have no fear of your recovery. I will pray that it may be speedy. Oh, that I may be enabled to say from my heart, God's will be done.

Now to answer your letter. In the first place, I must tell you that the sermon on Sunday morning did execution. No sermon of mine has attracted such notice here. But unfortunately the weather was most stormy, so that I had but half a congregation. At night I preached from the "Water of Life," John iv. 14. A precious time I had and felt the greatest liberty.

Last night, fair night. I preached from "Unto you which believe He is precious." Many said I should have no people, it being Fair time, but I had the place full and a sweet time. It was precious to my own soul.

Yesterday I should have written but was so occupied. I really had not the time.

Mr. Shadford disapproved of my having laid out so much money on that piano. He says he wants to see me do well and does not want to see me in poverty all the way through life, and he thinks a comfortable position is only to be gained as he has gained his, by strict economy. *I have my own views.* Your happiness, your well-being, and the getting all the comfort you can out of money, those are my mottoes at present. How can I make the money go the furthest to promote your blessedness and thereby my own — ours, ours? Give my love to your dear mother and thank her for me for her kindness to you.

RED LION STREET.

MY OWN DARLING KATIE — Oh how I wished yesterday evening that I had wings to fly to you to hide my head in your bosom and listen to your sweet comforting voice. I am sure I scarce have ever yearned for your presence more than last night. But I am always wanting by night and by day. And the time, I suppose, will come *all well* when I shall have my desire and have you *always with me*.

The District Meeting yesterday was a poor affair. Got myself a little *insulted*; a large Meeting yesterday, it is true, at *night*. Spoke with some considerable liberty and was well received. Came home more than ever out of love with the Movement generally, and more in love than ever with my own Circuit, and half resolved to write off directly and offer myself to the New Connexion. But I must learn to wait. Mr. Stafford, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Brown, and others from our Circuit strongly pressed a motion in favour of amalgamation with the New Connexion, but it was lost. I supported it of course very warmly. I am thankful our people are so unanimous on the matter. It is a good sign for the future and augurs success for my plans and schemes. There were men there, and there are many Gazes and Hazledines and Burts and others whom the New Connexion would do better without than with. But, however, no more on that score. You will post your letter to me on *Thursday*. You will not forget a few ideas for a school-speech. I have *one* on Friday at Holbeach, a public meeting at Suttleton on Monday. Hanks and his wife were at Boston last night. I believe he is a *new* man; he has given over *smoking*. He is very anxious about the *cause*. They intend building a chapel directly. I wish them well.

And now, my better angel, I hope you are well and happy.

Bless you, I looked over a heap of music at the booksellers this morning to try and find something to send you but could not find anything I liked. I reciprocate all the sweet feelings you gave expression to in your last, and I do most earnestly hope to be able to enter into your feelings and to help in every sense of the word to make you happy. Give my love to your dear mother. Whatever you do, take care of your health. . . .

The alternation of high spirits and dejection in these letters is characteristic of the writer's temperament, but it may in great measure be explained by the alternation of health and sickness. William Booth suffered throughout his life from an extreme form of dyspepsia, so extreme, indeed, that he was obliged at last to study every morsel of food that entered his body. The seeds of this exhausting and irritating complaint were sown in youth, when he starved himself, worked like a slave, and devoted every hour of his leisure to the excitements of street-preaching; during the early years of his ministry as a Methodist preacher the complaint manifested itself so unmistakably that only zeal and courage of an unusual order could have supported him in his work.

The following fragment of a letter is interesting and surprising. In boyhood William Booth had loved fishing; after conversion he had regarded that sport as a form of wickedness; but here he is, as a Methodist preacher, indulging in the more muscular and, as some people would say, the much more cruel sport of shooting. Not only this, but the Old Adam is so strong in him that he takes pride in recounting his prowess to the woman he loves. Unhappily no reply to this letter from Catherine Mumford is to be found. One thinks that she smiled on reading it, and then sat down to write a very solemn sermon to her youthful lover.

HOLBEACH.

I received your kind note this morning. I have seen *The Times*; there is nothing in it respecting either the amalgamation or the letter. I am going on to St. Catherine's this afternoon. My face is a little better. Go to the Concert by all means; I should be angry if you did not. The day is very fine but exceedingly hot. My head aches a little and I still continue, as the effects of my last week's cold, stiff and weary.

I did last Monday (yesterday week) what I never did before



—ventured to fire off a gun! The first three or four shots were failures; afterwards I was declared to be quite a marksman. Yesterday again I went out for an hour or two's shooting. And they pronounced me a dead shot! Now do not go and scold me about it, and thus frighten my conscience until I cannot enjoy it. I am pleased you liked my letter. I hope it will do you good. You shall hear from me again.

*P.S.*—Heaven bless you.

The letters which follow were written at the beginning of 1854, and show that William Booth has at last made up his mind to leave Lincolnshire and return to London.

RED LION STREET,  
*New Year's Eve.*

MY DEAREST PRECIOUS CATHERINE — Your very sweet letter — almost the most cheering and blessed you have ever sent me — came safe to hand this morning; after a long walk, right welcome it was, and be assured that it shall for once be answered, though not to-night — it is 8 o'clock and I have to be at Chapel by 10. But while writing other letters I must just drop a line to you, and yours shall be responded to on Monday all well. . . .

Be assured I am pleased much, very much, with your revived and soul-cheering experience. May your path in this matter be as that of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day. My heart reciprocates all you say about our future. Nay, I am thankful, if you will allow me to say so, that we are not to be married yet, as I wish to make myself more worthy and more adapted to you — and better fitted to make you happy before the consummation takes place. I cannot quite so confidently as you rejoice in my proposed new step; there is a dark cloud . . . but I have good hopes of its dispersion. It is so many and so very kind friends I am leaving — forsaking of my own choice, and a sphere which is so adapted *for me*, in which God has so owned and blessed me, and for one so different, so cold, so cramped, of which I am assured on every hand, on authority which I cannot dispute, that makes me sad and thoughtful, if not fearful, lest the step should be wrong. You see, my dearest love, you sit thoroughly on the outside, you are not acquainted with the practised working of the thing — you study the theory — I have long since been satisfied with the theoretical part of the new Connexion, but the practical working of it is another matter; and when a number of grey-headed men who tell me that they are fearful for my own sake, that they say so because they love me, that they fear I am stepping out of the *order of Providence*, I cannot but listen. . . .

But I did not intend to touch this subject — I must go and risk everything — I just wanted to send you a waft of love and pure and ardent affection, and to kiss this sheet and envelope and send them to meet your lips on Monday morning. . . .  
1854.

RED LION STREET, HOLBEACH.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS KATE — I write you a line in great haste. I am at a distance from the post office and have many doubts as to whether I shall be able to post this in time before I go away this evening. I hope you received mine this morning posted on Saturday evening. I accidentally spied the ribbon at Mr. Handy's and thought it would make you a nice pair of strings to your black velvet bonnet; it just suited my taste and I thought you should see for once what my taste was.

I received a note on Saturday from Mr. Rabbits, stating that it was agreed that I should go and live with Mr. Cooke, according to my request. I know you will be pleased with this arrangement; of course I shall, for bringing me within reach of you, and we must have fixed rules, etc., etc.— I do hope the Lord will bless my coming up to town.

We had a very good day at Holbeach on Sunday, 9 or 10 souls found the Lord at night — some very interesting cases. Last night at Holbeach Hurn we had two come to seek the Lord and had a very good meeting — and I hope we shall have more to-night. To God be all the praise. I will bring that extract from the *Public Good* with me when I come; I think it meets my views — I still have to contend with much argument and many regrets; all the people look upon me as one madly leaving the path of Providence with my eyes wide open. Truly, if my way is not plain and my ministry successful when I reach my new sphere, there is bitter misery and very painful regrets for me.

But we will hope for the best. I hope much. Be happy; I talk about you and think about you. The friends consider you have a hand in the matter; I am very vexed and sorry that they do; it is my work, and I had rather they thought me capable of doing it myself. Do not trouble yourself about the money for the piano, I shall manage until I come up for money and they will pay then — *sell the table, if you can*. However, I would not trouble about that — never mind it, on second thoughts. It is probable I shall be in London about the third day of February, and being as I am coming so near you, and as we shall have abundant opportunities for communication and counsel, I had better name that time to Mr. Cooke, had I not? Send me word. I hope you are happy and that your health is rapidly improving. You must get better every day now and that as quickly as possible. I do hope the step is right and it

will be owned of the Lord. Oh for a nearer assumption to Christian character — I must thoroughly commence life anew.

Give my love to your dear mother. I sighed out your name in Spalding pulpit just as the clock struck the hour of midnight — and prayed for your happiness and prosperity during the coming year. Write me a line directed home to reach there on Friday. Bless you, I have strong faith that we shall yet be very happy. Oh I know I love you, highly esteem and love you, and I know you love me. Oh we will try and make each other happy. . . .

RED LION STREET, SPALDING,

*Jan. 6, '54.*

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS KATE — It does indeed seem a long time since I had the pleasure of hearing from you. I do not desire you to write oftener than once a week; at the same time your letters are always very welcome. I am sure I long very much for your company, for your society, and your help. I have felt very much the unpleasantness of being compelled to wait so long before we could be united since we parted. But however the step is taken and it must be endured with as good a grace as possible. You will be pleased to hear that I have written to Mr. Cooke asking to come up to London and to live and study with him until Conference, and that I have received a letter this morning stating that he will see Mr. Rabbits and the other friends and endeavour to make arrangements for my doing so. It will be very pleasant and we must make it profitable our being so near one another once more. If it can be brought about! I am very anxious to get away from here now as quickly as possible — some whom I deemed my fastest friends are very displeased and vexed with me, and my position becomes daily to my feelings more painful. I hope it is for the best. I think it is. My mind is much more composed about it than it was, and I hope, if I come to London, to spend a very profitable six months.

NEW NORTH ROAD, LONDON.

(Undated. Probably one of the first letters after joining the New Connexion.)

MY DEAREST CATHERINE — (After references to meetings) — And now I want to tell you:

1. That you must write to me oftener than once a week. You have nothing to do and I am overwhelmed with business and care, and I cannot exist now on one letter per week.

2. I am well in health and have no fear or feeling about cholera. When I say I am well, I mean I am very much better. My appetite is good and my digestion is improved.

3. Why did you not send me Mr. Macland's address? I

have found him an apartment. They are keeping it and cannot find him.

It was foolish of your mother to send the letter and address to Burnham. . . .

I should like much to see you. I have wanted you this last day or two much. I am for Bristol on Saturday and the following week. You will get down about the same time. In my Monday's note I said that the "Bridal Waltz" was 4s. Shall I buy it? I have no notion of giving so much for *the Devil's music*, but your will shall be done.

I had a good night on Sunday, and am expecting great things at Bristol. The friends are very kind and Mr. Bates is in excellent spirits about things and quite in favour now of my views. In fact, we have some very encouraging facts before us.

Believe me, my dearest, to be — Your affectionate, constant,  
and tender  
WILLIAM.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE EVANGELIST TROUBLED ABOUT MANY THINGS

1854-1855

A STRANGE step had been taken. William Booth, the fiery preacher of revivalism in Lincolnshire, became all at once a humble student in Regent's Park, surrendering himself to the domination of a Rev. Dr. William Cooke, theologian. From excited prayer-meetings, from furious preachings, and from the popularity and hero-worship of tea-parties, this lion of Lincolnshire suddenly abased himself to the school-room, and opened Greek and Latin grammars with a valorous effort to acquire the habitual meekness of a divinity scholar.

But till the last moment he hesitated, and almost at the last moment he threw himself off in a clean contrary direction. In January, 1854, he wrote to Catherine Mumford from Holbeach:

The plot thickens, and I hesitate not to tell you that I fear, and fear much, that I am going wrong. (He speaks of a fresh offer made to him by the Reformers, and then proceeds.) My present intention is to tear myself away from all and everything, and persevere in the path I have chosen. They reckon it down here the maddest, wildest, most premature and hasty step that ever they knew a saved man to take.

To this and another similar letter Catherine Mumford replied in wise and quieting fashion:

I am very sorry to find that you are still perplexed and harassed about the change. I did think that there were conditions weighty enough to satisfy your own mind as to the propriety of the step, and if not I begged you not to act. Even now it is not too late. Stay at Spalding, and risk all. Pray be satisfied in your own mind. Rather lose anything than make yourself miserable. You reasoned and suffered just so about leaving the Conference, and yet you see it was right now. I never suffered an hour about it, after I once decided, except in



the breaking of some tender associations. Nor do I ever expect to suffer. I reasoned the thing out and came to a conclusion, and all the Conference battering I met never caused me a ten minutes' qualm.

You mistake me if you think I do not estimate the trial it must be to you, and the influences, and the circumstances and persons around you. But remember, dearest, they do not alter realities, and the Reform movement is no home or sphere for you; whereas the principles of the Connexion you love in your very soul. I believe you will be satisfied, when once from under the influence of your Spalding friends.

Anyway, don't let the controversy hurt your soul. Live near to God by prayer.

That she herself was in no fixed and unshadowed state of peace at this time may be seen from the following letter, which she wrote to him, so far as one can judge, a week or two before his return to London:

Bless you, my precious one, how I long to see you to-night. I have not been at all well since Friday evening, and the weather being very wet and foggy to-day I have not been out. However I have not spent an unprofitable or useless day. I lay in bed till nearly 12 o'clock reading the blessed Bible, and some portions of the Magazine, and praying for *thee*, with special reference to the subject of thy last letter. No doubt, the exercises you mention were the result of temptation. I only wonder Satan does not harass you more in this way, seeing what you are doing with his Kingdom. When I used to try and serve God most faithfully and *do most* I used to suffer untold misery through what I believe now was pure temptation. Oh the agonies I sometimes endured — since I have been more indifferent Satan has let me alone (*comparatively*), but I intend to provoke him again to open warfare if God spares me, yea, I *have* begun. I trust the Lord has delivered thee, and that this has been a day of peace and success. Only mind that the people *understand* what religion *is*, and thou need not fear their being excited — there is the most glorious precedent for such results. I *believe* in revivalism with *all my soul*. I believe that it is God's idea of the success of the gospel. Of course you know what I mean by revivalism, the genuine work of the Spirit, and I believe *these are such; go on, do all thy duty* and leave results with God.

I do wish I could see you to-night; I feel tired and prostrate and my spirit very, very tender; thy sympathizing voice would be sweet indeed, and though tired I could welcome thee home with a smile, and lay my hand on thy head and sympathize with *thee* in thy weariness. Well, it will soon be if God per-

mits, and we shall indeed be *one, one in love*. Oh blessed lot and hallowed even as the joy of angels where godliness and love unite two hearts in one. Good-night dearest, I sleep with thy loving letter in my bosom and sometimes dream about thee. God bless thee. I often think about that night thou wast so late home from the meeting at Mr. Rabbits; thy tenderness of manner to me when thou first came in has never passed away, and my mind seems to go back to it as to a green spot in our intercourse.

The meeting of the long-separated lovers in February, 1854, is not described, but from an autobiographical fragment, written many years afterwards by Catherine Mumford, one gathers that happiness co-existed with fresh difficulties in this reunion which was not destined to be of long duration:

The return of W. to London was to me of course a cause of extreme gratification. We were once more within reach of each other. Personal communion is so much more satisfactory for the interchange of thought and counsel than correspondence. We met at regular intervals.

One of the first things I insisted upon, after our engagement was that stated times should be fixed for our meetings. It was always a point of conscience with me, not in any way to allow any service rendered me to hinder either W. or any one else in the discharge of any higher duty.

We could now compare notes also as to our mutual studies and tasks — the varied plans that we formed for future usefulness. It was no little gratification to me also to know that W. was once more devoting his time to mental development. I had always estimated the College failure as a calamity. Perhaps I over-estimated those literary and intellectual opportunities which college supplied — I think I did, in view of what I have learnt since then. Still those were my notions at that time, and I regarded this present arrangement by which W. was once more set down to a regular course of study as a sort of modified compensation. Taking all things into consideration, therefore, I was wonderfully well satisfied with the present position of affairs, and was very grateful to God for having so far as I could see led us into the path which had every likelihood of terminating in a sphere of as great usefulness and happiness as I could have ever deemed possible.

Still W. was not satisfied. To tell the truth, he was really unhappy, almost as unsettled as ever. The first part of his Spalding life was in some senses the happiest portion of his early career. He was contented, and having known nothing

higher, his present position, with its immediate prospects, would have been as Paradise to him compared even with that, but he had tasted of something which in his estimation presented a superior opportunity of usefulness than either this or that. To be fully understood, I must go back a little.

Towards the latter part of his stay in Spalding, he had fallen into a condition of great mental and spiritual depression. The Devil buffeted him sorely. He was a prey to constant temptations, temptations that made his life more or less a misery.

Then the direct results in the shape of conversions that followed his ministry were very small in comparison with what he felt was his privilege to see. He had come in the past to be more or less content with this state of things, but varied circumstances and influences woke him up out of his slumber, and he upbraided himself continually that his work was not more productive.

About this time a very useful preacher<sup>1</sup> visited the Circuit. W. had heard many stories of the results that followed this man's ministrations. He was by repute a plain, simple preacher, but his word was attended by a power that was very remarkable, sinners by scores being brought to God in connection with it.

The visit of this preacher was looked forward to by W. with considerable interest, he reckoning that he might be able to learn something from him, and resolved to watch him accordingly.

The service arranged for came, and the Preacher, and W. was there to learn what he could from the example. And he did learn; and I have often heard him say that he derived a lesson that made a mark upon his own after life. In this man of God three things were made strikingly apparent in this one service, and they were —

1st. Directness of aim. Every word and movement indicating that he was determined to bring that audience, young and old, into harmony with God, and this was to be done that very night before he parted with them if it was possible.

2nd. Simplicity of method, the simplest words, the plainest illustrations, the most homely and striking facts being used throughout the discourse.

3rd. The most direct dependence upon God for the result.

W. went home that night a wiser man and in his chamber gave himself up afresh, promising God never to be satisfied in any sermon he preached to sinners without seeing some souls at least yield themselves up to the service of God.

That William Booth did not make a good theological

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Richard Poole.

student goes without saying. Into the speculations of philosophy he never entered, and for the laborious study of theology it is quite certain that he could never have had a fruitful inclination. "He might often have been found," says Commissioner Booth-Tucker, "on his face in an agony of prayer when he ought to have been mastering Greek verbs." Yet he was conscious in himself of a need for knowledge, and agonized more often than was good for his health over intellectual deficiencies.

Monday — Visited the British Museum. Walked up and down there praying that God would enable me to acquire knowledge to increase my power of usefulness.

The call to active work interrupted his studies: the thought that men and women were perishing of iniquity while he turned the pages of text-books was like a madness in his brain; he spent more hours than was wise for a student in preaching religion to the people of London. On the very day of his arrival he preached in Brunswick Street Chapel, "when fifteen souls sought salvation." A month afterwards he was conducting services in Wapping, probably his first acquaintance with East London. He felt, he says in his diary, "much sympathy for the poor, neglected inhabitants of Wapping and its neighbourhood, as I walked down the filthy streets and beheld the wickedness and idleness of its people." One conjectures that those poor, neglected inhabitants of Wapping made a more poignant appeal to his soul than the dignity of a theological degree.

In spite of these continued preachings, however, the studies of William Booth progressed satisfactorily. He made a very marked impression on his tutor, whose daughter was converted at a public service conducted by the young student. Whether it was his advance in theological science, or his striking power as a preacher that impressed the tutor, certain it is that Dr. Cooke decided to propose him at the very next Conference as Superintendent of a circuit in London. This amazing proposition staggered William Booth, and he uttered a heartfelt and most earnest *nolo episcopari!* He felt himself unfitted for the work of superintending other ministers; he considered himself, and one

thinks rightly, far too young for such delicate work; further, his inclinations led him towards more direct and more active fields.

A compromise was accepted. By William Booth's desire another and an older man was to be proposed as Superintendent, and he himself was to act as that other man's assistant. This appointment was ratified by the Conference, which also granted the young minister an unusual privilege in permitting him to marry at the end of twelve months. Ministers of the New Connexion, it must be explained, worked "on probation" for four years, and as a rule no probationer was allowed to marry till the expiration of this testing period. In the case of William Booth, so sure was the Conference of his ability, that this unusual privilege was granted in a welcome that was described as "hearty and unanimous."

In making this announcement to Catherine Mumford, William Booth wrote that "for some unaccountable reason" he felt no gratitude, adding that the news did not elate him. Catherine Mumford, on the other hand, was full of enthusiasm.

Your letter this morning filled my heart with gratitude and my mouth with praise. I am thankful beyond measure for the favourable reception and kind consideration you have met with from the Conference, and I can only account for your ingratitude on the ground you once gave me, namely, that blessings in *possession* seem to lose half their value. This is an unfortunate circumstance, but I think in this matter you ought to be grateful, when you look at the past and contemplate the future. However, I am. This comes to me as the answer of too many prayers, the result of too much self-sacrifice, the end of too much anxiety, and the crowning of too many hopes, not to be appreciated; and my soul does praise God. You may think me enthusiastic. But your position is now fixed as a minister of Christ, and your only concern will be to labour for God and souls.

I saw that in all probability you might have to toil the best part of your life and then, after all, have to turn to business for your support. But now, for life you are to be a teacher of Christ's glorious gospel, and I am sure the uppermost desire of your soul is that you may be a holy and successful one. May God afresh baptize you with His love, and make you indeed a minister of the Spirit!



Happiness came to William Booth in the almost immediate call to fresh efforts at reviving religious life. He worked industriously in London as assistant pastor with the Rev. P. T. Gilton, but it was only when he was free to lead special services that the whole force of his personality was behind the work. He described Mr. Gilton as "stiff, hard, and cold; making up, in part, for the want of heart and thought in his public performances by what sounded like a sanctimonious wail." To William Booth *want of heart* was the great infidelity, but he held nothing in more abhorrence than a hollow sanctimoniousness. To such a man, therefore, it must have been purgatory to work with Mr. Gilton, and like a holiday to escape from him into the crusading battles of a fighting religion.

One of the calls came from Lincolnshire, and away he raced to that familiar county with all the enthusiasm of his nature to fan the flames of this hopeful fire, and grateful to be unyoked from the measured paces of the cold Superintendent. He wrote to Catherine Mumford with fresh ardour and new conviction of his manifold successes:

My reception has been exceedingly pleasing. Even the children laugh and dance and sing at my coming, and eyes sparkle and tongues falter in uttering my welcome. Yesterday I had heavy work. Chapel crowded. Enthusiasm ran very high. Feeling overpowering, and yet not the crash we expected. My prospects for usefulness seem unbounded. But God knows best, and where He wants me, there He can send me. The people love me to distraction, and are ready to tear me to pieces to have me at their homes. A large party was invited to meet me.

And again:

Yesterday I preached to crowded congregations, and we had a crushing prayer meeting. Some splendid cases. I am more than ever attached to the people. They are thorough-going folks. *Just my sort*. I love them dearly, and shall stand by them and help them when I can.

I have just taken hold of that sketch you sent me on "Be not deceived," and am about to make a full sermon upon it. I like it much. It is admirable. I want you to write some short articles for our magazine. Begin one and get it done by

the time I come up. It will do you a world of good. I am sure you can do it. I will look them over and send them to the editor.

I want a sermon on the Flood, one on Jonah, and one on the Judgment. Send me some bare thoughts; some clear startling outlines. Nothing moves the people like the terrific. They must have hell-fire flashed before their faces, or they will not *move*. Last night I preached a sermon on Christ weeping over sinners, and only one came forward, although several confessed to much holy feeling and influence. When I preached about the harvest and the wicked being turned away, numbers came. We must have that kind of truth which will move sinners.

I have written by this post to Dr. Cooke. I tell him that I am in love *with no half measures*, and I am determined to seek success. I am doing better in my soul. Am resolved to live nearer God, and put confidence in Him. Let us live for Heaven!

To these triumphant letters Catherine Mumford replied with a like enthusiasm:

Bless you! Bless you! Your note has, like joy's seraphic fingers, touched the deepest chords in my heart, and what I write is but like the trembling echoes of a distant harp. If you were here, I would pour out the full strain into your bosom and press you to my heart. God is too good! I feel happier than I have done for months. You will think me extravagant. Well, bless God. *He* made me so. Yes, we shall, I believe it, be very happy.

Do I remember? Yes, I remember all that has bound us together. All the bright and happy as well as the clouded and sorrowful of our fellowship. Nothing relating to you, can time or place erase from my memory. Your words, your looks, your actions, even the most trivial and incidental, come up before me as fresh as life. If I meet a child called William, I am more interested in him than in any other. Bless you! Keep your spirits up and hope much for the future. God lives and loves us, and we shall be one in Him, loving each other as Christ has loved us.

Thus by communion our delight shall grow!

Thus streams of mingled bliss swell higher as they flow!

Thus angels mix their flames and more divinely glow!

The success of William Booth as a preacher was now so definitely established that the Church to which he had allied himself could not with decency forbid his acceptance

of the invitations which began to pour in from many parts of the country. There were those among the authorities who disliked the method of revivalism; a conservative and orthodox spirit existed in the New Connexion which was distinctly antagonistic to the furious crusades of their young recruit; nevertheless, so importunate were the calls, so manifest the triumph of the revivalist, and so cold and dead and formal was the general life of the Church, that active opposition held its hand, and even criticism bated its breath.

After the visit to Lincolnshire William Booth returned to London, but was soon called to a series of services in Bristol. From Bristol he went to Guernsey, where his efforts seem to have reached a remarkable degree of success. "Last night," he writes from there in October, 1854, "I preached my first sermon. The congregation was middling; very respectable, stiff, and quiet. I let off a few heavy guns at the lazy formality so prevalent, and with some effect. They opened their eyes at some of the things I said." Three days later he says: "My preaching is highly spoken of. The Lord is working. I trust that to-morrow we shall have a crash — a glorious breakdown." Still later: "To-night many went away unable to get into the chapel. The aisles were crowded, and up to eleven o'clock it was almost an impossibility to get them up to the communion-rail, owing to the crush."

When he departed from Guernsey numbers of people came down to the pier to wave their adieux to him.

That he was modest and diffident in spite of his popularity as a preacher is clear from his refusal to undertake a visit to the Potteries. The invitation came from the President of the Connexion, who was quartered at Hanley, and whose chapel was said to be "the largest dissenting place of worship in the world." Despite his signal success in Guernsey, William Booth declined this call to Staffordshire. He argued that "he was too young, and that he had but recently entered the denomination, that his circuit would suffer by his prolonged absence, and that these irregular services would hinder him in preparing himself for the ordinary pastoral duties of the future." In spite

of the cogency of these arguments, and their sincerity, he was finally prevailed upon by the urgent pressure of the President and many leading men in London to undertake this fresh labour — a step destined to affect his whole after career.

In the letters which follow the reader will obtain not only a very faithful account of this revival in the Midlands, but a most remarkable insight into the character of the revivalist. The change in him since his going to Spalding is obvious in every letter, and although he still expresses himself roughly, often without grace of any kind, one is aware of a deeper sincerity, a quieter judgment, and a more exacting conscience. He is so honest a man that in the midst of a triumphant service of weeping penitents he questions these fervent methods with a self-detachment that is almost intolerable, and writes to Catherine Mumford telling her so. At one moment he is swept away by a feeling of passionate anxiety to reach and save perishing humanity, at the next he is cast down in his own soul, and cries out that he is the very prodigal of Christ. To his betrothed he shows himself with amazing candour in every word that surges through his mind; he never poses before her; he never pretends; he never acts; whatever his state of soul — there it is for her to see — the man of God seeking for God, the preacher of righteousness himself thirsting for righteousness, the popular and pious young minister imploring the woman he loves to pray for him and help him to dedicate himself anew to the service of Christ.

And with all these cries of a soul not yet set upon its true course, there is a simple, a childlike, and sometimes a most quaint humanity in these letters which make them a veritable autobiography. He discovers that it is his birthday only by writing the date to a letter; clerical collars annoy him; he asks his fiancée to order renewals for his wardrobe; he tells her that cotton buttons get spoilt by washerwomen; he describes how a cabman was not content with half-a-crown, but blustered for three shillings; he narrates his experiences with “globules” and the cold-water cure; he offers to buy his fiancée a silk dress *with flounces*, and refuses to buy the silk unless she has the

flounces; he tells how his linen is wearing out; he describes the fine houses and the fine people with whom he stays; he confesses that he has only fifteen shillings in the world; he tells how he wanted to knock down a young gentleman of seventeen who was rude to his mother. All these confessions make the man more real and human to the reader; his little controversies with Catherine Mumford incline us to think that on such occasions at least his common sense was wiser than her intellectual sharpness; his gentleness with her under repeated admonishment — particularly when one remembers that he was a dyspeptic — endears him to the reader as a large-hearted and tolerant man. But most of all these letters are interesting, deeply and searchingly interesting, as the revelation of a man's struggle for spiritual perfection. They are above everything else the letters of a perfectly moral and a perfectly honest follower of the ideal Christ, who feels in himself the lack of some completing harmony, and who cannot find rest for his soul until his whole spirit is merged and lost in the Divine approval.

BRIDGE STREET, LONGTON,  
STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES.

MY DEAREST KATIE — Here I am safe lodged amid as many comforts as I can well desire. I had rather a dreary and tedious journey, and when I arrived at Stoke the last train had gone to Longton, so I had 3 miles' walk through the wind and I have not yet got my bag and things from the Stoke station where I left them. I am staying at the Robinsons', he is Mr. Proctor's brother. Mr. Boycot the super. was awaiting my arrival. I anticipate much real assistance, pleasure, and profit from his co-operation. He appears a very nice man. I thought much about you in the rail — I hope you are well and very happy. I do trust that a future is before us, just such a one as you *desire*; I am *anxious* that it should be so. Bless you, my affection for you, I trust, has a good influence on my heart, I think it helps to make me a purer and a better man; I thought so in the carriage yesterday.

I have once more started afresh for the Kingdom of God. I am desirous of making a good impression here and I feel that much may be done out of the pulpit, and I am determined that it shall. I am pretty well in health, and hope to continue so. . . . I commence work to-night; a good deal of expectation is abroad, large posting bills are all over the town and neighbourhood. I trust much good will be done; I know you will



pray for me; I shall be very anxious till to-night. Indeed I have had a very restless night and am very nervous this morning.

I do trust that you will, my dearest, be very happy; take great care of your health this damp weather, and do not on any account be venturesome; always wrap up well when you go out—I will comply with these counsels myself. It is a desolate morning and the most desolate-looking place I think I ever saw, but all will be well and the place will be lovely in my eyes if sinners are converted and Jesus' grace is made manifest.

Now, my own Kate, do give up your heart entirely to the Lord and let us seek to make our intercourse a means of mutual religious benefit when our love is sanctified and hallowed.

Do not write a long letter to Miss Mackleed; you have not time. Do not write long letters to any one but me; it is not well. It rains very fast and seems to bid fair for a thorough wet day; if so it will injure our congregation much to-night. You may expect a long letter from me with the first news I have to send. Direct to me at J. L. Robinson, Esq., Solicitor, Longton, Staffordshire Potteries. I cannot write, do as I will. So I will conclude, remaining your dear and affectionate

WILLIAM.

LONGTON, *Jany. 5th*, 1855.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS KATE—I expected a line from you this morning and felt somewhat disappointed at its non-arrival, but I anticipate this pleasure to-morrow. I hope you are very well and *very, very* happy. Bless you, I am more so than for some time of late for one or two reasons, first our union is more perfect—our feelings more reciprocal and hearty, and my love for you more calm and *tender*. My thoughts stray to you much when alone, and after times of excitement and effort I fall back upon you in thought and imagination as I shall do in reality in the future, for repose and peace and happiness.

This is the most dreary and unsightly place I ever was in; the weather being gloomy and rainy does not at all add to its pleasing effect. The work of God at present is heavy, very heavy. I did not preach with pleasure to myself nor with much influence last evening, as I thought; the congregations are very good, the chapel is very large, we have had 8 penitents, none very important, altho' some I trust satisfactory cases. We must pray on—our dependence is upon God.

I forgot to say that a second source of joy to me was that I feel that I have begun to live afresh. You will rejoice my dearest in this and you will join me in the like consecration.

Oh, how much we owe to *Him!* — shall we not render up the entire service of heart and life?

If anything strikes you in the course of your reading or meditation likely to be useful to me put it down on paper kept on purpose and then tell me of it when we meet.

LONGTON, *Monday, Jany. 8th.*

MY DEAREST AND PRECIOUS LOVE — I have been out until just now, 4 o'clock, with the preachers — I must find out some plan to avoid going out except for service, tho' it be at the risk of giving offence. I refuse many invitations — I am desirous of standing well with the preachers and have therefore been to see them. I snatch a moment for you, and will send you a long letter at my first opportunity. Yesterday was a grand day — at night I suppose 50 or 60 penitents. Large congregations and deep interest. Mr. Ridgeway came over in the afternoon to see me. He is a fine man; quite the gentleman and Christian. I am to stay with him and to be according to his promise "as happy as a prince." They are making great preparations at the Hanley Chapel and expecting great things. I trust a good work has begun; but will send you more particulars in my next.

I trust my dearest that your cold is much better, I am very sorry for you. I often think about you, and think about you as you wish. Pray for me — I do for you. Oh to live better, more to the purpose!

*P.S.*— This note is only an excuse, you shall have if possible a letter to-morrow. Love to *your dear mother*. Take plenty of Cayenne for your *throat*.

LONGTON, *Jany. 10, 1855.*

MY DEAREST LOVE — Your very kind and affectionate letter came to hand this morning — I should have written yesterday had I had time. I am glad your throat is better altho' I have more faith in the Cayenne than in the globules. I think you should have persevered with the former, but as *you will*; only do what you can to prevent as well as to cure. I think my health continues as good as when I left London — I am taking all possible care of myself. The friends are very kind and anxious to promote my well-being in every way they can. I hope you are very happy; bless you; I think much about you and should much like your presence and society here. I care less perhaps than ever about other company and prefer quietness and solitude, or yourself, to visiting or talking to others. I am determined to carry this idea out in practice if possible in the future.

The revival is progressing with mighty power and influence.

Several very interesting cases have transpired — and some important persons have been converted. We are working more by rule and with more order than I have ever attempted before. We had two persons in the vestry, one a grey-headed old member and the other a young man converted on Sunday, a clerk of Mr. Robinson's; these take the names of the persons who find salvation in a book ruled on purpose in columns headed, "Name" "Address." Whether a member before, if so of what class or church? Whether they will meet in society with us, if so in what class? Whether they prefer any other church, if so which? Whether married or single, and other remarks. Then one or two persons are stationed around the communion rail who take the persons into the vestry, and thus you see we are doing what we can and as well as we can. We have taken down about 140 names and a great number of persons are under deep conviction. The congregation last night was very large and we are expecting the chapel crowded to-night. I am very sorry that many of the more respectable of the seat-holders keep aloof — it is an important matter when the head of a family not only refuses to come but exerts his influence to keep others away likewise. It is so with many, I fear, here. Mr. Boycot came to see me last night and told me of one family in the chapel all of whom, father, mother, sons, and daughters (young men and young women) were under deep conviction. But they went away resisting, at least undecided, I hope to come back again and find mercy. . . .

CAULDON HALL, STAFFORDSHIRE,  
*Jan. 13th, 1855.*

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS CATHERINE — I have just received something like certain information that my destination is to be the Staffordshire district for the next month at least, very probably up to Conference. I hasten to apprise you of this. Letters have been received from Messrs. Bates and Rabbits consenting to this arrangement. Mr. Downs, a very popular man among the Reformers, has recently joined our Ministry, and he is coming to supply for me this month. He has been described to me as being very efficient and therefore I trust my London friends will be satisfied; there can be no question but my Superintendent will be content if not rejoiced.

Now I shall want you, dearest, in the course of next week to go over to Mr. Jones, look over the room and put away all my papers. I will send you my key and you must send me the manuscripts I mention. . . .

*Monday morning.*— Yours came to hand and was read with great pleasure; I am pleased you are better and that you are getting on comfortably. Do not, my own dear Love, in any way pine about my absence; I am grieved that you should.

I think that, all things considered, it will be as well if I am away a little longer. And we shall soon meet, all well, on different terms.

Yesterday I took the pulpit in this immense chapel — the congregation this morning was very good, probably 1,500 people; at night the place was full, over 2,500 were present. It was an imposing sight when all rose up to sing. What a responsibility to have to preach to them. The Lord helped me to say a few words. In preaching both morning and evening I was much blessed. At night we took the names of 24 persons who professed to find peace; it was not so great a number as I had hoped for — but I trust the success will increase as the work advances.

I am middling in health; quite as well, if not better, than when I left London. I will put some salt in my water before I sponge. I am living right, and I want to do so, God help me. Pray for me. My continuance away from London will only be, as you intimate, just as the work of God needs it; for instance, if a good work progresses I shall stay in Hanley a fortnight and then go back to Longton for a little time — with a little rest *between*.

If you go to the Tea Meeting, stay all night at Mr. Love's and in the morning you can clear away all the papers and wrap the cap in a *parcel*, and stow them away somewhere. Wrap up Thomas's books; you will find them in a cupboard under the other books; I should like to keep them *clean*, etc.

I will send you word if I want anything. I am in need of shirts the worst of anything. But we shall see.

Now, my own sweet Kate, do be *happy*. I shall see you again very soon, a month or 5 weeks at the farthest, because I shall come up at the opening of the Haliwell Mount Chapel — 40 reformers with 100 Sunday scholars offered to join us and worship in it. Farewell. Heaven bless you with every mercy and all the grace you need. . . .

Enclosure :

*From "The Staffordshire Sentinel."*

"Zion Chapel, Longton. A series of revival services have been held in the above-named place of worship. On Wednesday 3rd the Rev. Wm. Booth of London preached and continued the services each evening until 10th. The effect of the Revd. gentleman's preaching was truly astonishing; his view of the Christian religion was clear, his delivery powerful, melting his audience to tears; a hallowed influence pervaded the assemblies congregated to hear him during his stay in Longton. The effect of his eloquence tells amazingly. He reminds his hearers of J. B. Gough; with every argument he

carries conviction to the heart. His glowing language, his startling incidents, his appeals to the judgment of his hearers are of no ordinary character, and the impression made upon his auditory will not be readily effaced and the happy results of his labours is an accession of about 150 members to the church."

*P.S.*—Do not show or read this to any one except your mother — of course I do not believe or assent for one minute to the truthfulness of these remarks made by an unknown friend — I should think from the inaccuracy of the date and number some outside hearer or member of another Church wrote it.

CAULDON PLACE, SHELTON, STAFFORDSHIRE,  
*Jany. 16th, '55.*

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS KATIE — The work is progressing most satisfactorily; last night I had, Mr. Ridgeway says, 2,000 persons to hear me preach, and the Lord helped me to preach and afterwards we took down 40 names — I have a *splendid* band of assistants. Some of the finest working men I ever met with in a prayer meeting in my life. The Revd. A. Lyn, the father of Mr. Lyn who was with me at Mr. Cooke's has just been in; he is a blessed man, a second Charles Richardson; he has come over to spend a night or two. Mr. Lyn's son likewise came in this morning to stay over to-night, so we shall have plenty of help. You must pray for me, my dearest, and God grant you may yourself be refreshed and blessed. I thought about you much last night. After the toil and anxiety and excitement of the day is over, I generally go to sleep thinking about you and calling your image up to my recollections. Bless you, I hope to have a letter from you to-morrow. The work is proceeding with mighty power at Longton, about 40 have been converted since I left, and they are expecting my return, and I have no doubt if I do a very glorious work will be the result.

CAULDON PLACE, SHELTON, STAFFORDSHIRE,  
*Jany. 17, 1855.*

MY OWN SWEET CATHERINE — So you are not very well, or you were too busy going to this tea meeting, or you had some other very good and very sufficient and very satisfactory excuse for not writing to your own dear William yesterday. Well, a note will come to-morrow and be very welcome.

The congregation was very glorious last night and, although I did not preach with my usual pleasure, and as I thought power, a good influence pervaded the meeting and we finished up with the best prayer meeting we have yet had and swelled the numbers up to about 110 on the three nights. Mr. Lyn and his father were with us; were much pleased and worked very



hard. We had about the average Sunday night congregation and if the weather clears up we shall have more to-night, but it is now snowing very fast. I am still, through the boundless mercy of God, very well in health, better than I have been for some time.

I send you, my dear Kate, a despatch pretty often because I know you are interested in the campaign. This is certainly a great work and of sufficient importance to stop the mouth of all gainsayers. Praise God, the preachers work gloriously, the President is a sweet man and is very much pleased. Mr. Ridgeway works hard and comes leading them up, broken-hearted, in a way sufficient to melt a heart of stone. A respectable woman met me this morning in deep distress; she was coming to see me: she could not rest; we went home with her; Mr. Lyn, junior, and Mr. Gutteridge were with me; prayed with her, etc. and she found peace directly. Praise God for ever and ever. I am happy, very happy. My heart is right, I trust, with respect to tracing all the power back to God. I want to give Him all the praise. Bless you, I hope you are well and happy. Write me all about your soul and feelings *towards me*. I love you and I trust we shall be very happy together.

CAULDON HALL,  
Jan. 18, 1855.

MY DEAREST CATHERINE — I must have returned the charge you so often prefer against me, that of not having answered my two or three letters, only that you make so good and so satisfactory an excuse. I mean you did not notice in yours all the contents of mine. However, I thank you for all that you say, so kind and so loving. I am sorry you were not satisfied with the tea meeting or with the friends; *I would* not go again, were I you, under any circumstances, at least not except *I* am there. I am glad you have Miss Bates with you. I am surprised you should spend a morning at Mrs. Love's doing so much like the man who locked up, with a patent lock that nobody could pick, his money in a small cash box, and the thieves carried box and money together away. You have wrapped up my papers and put them in the bottom cupboard where any one can open them, etc. But I will write to Mrs. Love and ask her to put them in my box under my bed and there they will be safe from the eye of Bro. D. if he should wish to pry. I do not *know* him at all and therefore I am anxious to be *right*. Bless you, you did what you thought best, and that will always satisfy *me*. I receive twice or thrice per week long and kind letters from Mr. Bates. I hope you will have done with that *shield soon*; <sup>1</sup> surely you have worn it long enough; I shall make no pledges

<sup>1</sup> An instrument for helping a weak spine.

of residence to any one I do not know where or what my future path will be except that it will be that of an *Evangelist*. I count my improved health and my strengthened chest as indication added to many others that this is *my path*.

I am washing my chest or rather bathing it with salt and cold water every morning altho' the ground is covered with snow.

But now to my *Despatch*. Last night the congregation was very good altho' the night was unfavourable — near 2,000 I suppose were present, not quite perhaps — but it was a large congregation. The word was with *power* and point. *Lot's wife*. A good prayer meeting until half past 10 or later — and 40 names taken down, making near 160 during this week. For all this we cannot be sufficiently thankful. The cases were of a higher order last night. Many very fine young men and many very respectable females. One old and fine leader told me that his son and daughter had found the Lord for whom he had been praying many many years. Another grey-headed man said his daughter and daughter-in-law had found the Lord for whom he had been praying near 28 years. Let us give God all the praise. I trust that amid all this I am kept right. I feel much for other ministers while they are cordial, but if they speak against the work or against its results, then I feel something very near akin to anger rise within my poor deceptive heart. May God in mercy *keep me right*. Pray for me, my darling, and I will if spared do all I can to make thee as happy as *God wills*. I trust I shall have some better news to tell you with respect to my mother's property; I have got another *gleam of hope*. *Farewell*. I pray for you — and often, nay always, at night resign myself after the toils and anxieties of the day to thoughts about your own sweet self.

CAULDON HALL, SHELTON,

Monday, January 22, '55.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS CATHERINE, . . . I should have written on Saturday, but going to Longton in the morning I had but time for two other letters which ought to have been posted before. My engagements are now settled for the next 5 weeks so that you may know when to expect me and I can know when to expect to see you. I finish here at Hanley on Wednesday of this week. Thursday, Friday, and Saturday I go home to Nottingham. On Sunday and the week following I preach at Burslem, the following week at Newcastle on Trent, a place about 2 or 3 miles from here — on the following week I am at Longton again, and the following fortnight I am at Mossley, a large place beyond Manchester — from thence I come to London — when after resting awhile and taking part in the opening of the New Chapel I go (by leave of my London

friends) to Tipton in the Dudley East Circuit, then on to Gateshead and Newcastle-on-Tyne, then to Bradford in Yorkshire, and then home again by Conference to you.

Yesterday was a remarkable day. In the morning the congregation was very good, at night that large chapel was crowded; it was an imposing sight. I suppose there were 3,000 persons present, some from a distance, some Independent Wesleyans, Church people, Primitives, many infidels and indifferents. God helped me to preach with a little power and in the prayer meeting we took down 50 names, many good cases. I should much have liked you to have been there. Altho' I exerted myself very much and stayed at the prayer meeting for some time I am very well to-day; my chest is a little sore, but nothing in comparison with what it was sometimes in London. For this I cannot be sufficiently thankful.

I am anxious to see you, I want to talk many things over. Especially about money matters—I feel how possible it is to be led wrong, already Satan harasses me much on the subject, and it must not be. I must preserve my disinterestedness and put my confidence in God.

CAULDON PLACE,

Jan'y. 23, 1855.

MY DEAREST LOVE, . . . I am sorry for your mother's sake that Mrs. Harthorne is going away, but perhaps some one else may come. Do not doubt the good providence of God. Bless you I trust that your anxieties on this subject will end and that you will in all other things likewise be happy. I do not think it wise or well to anticipate any perfect state of bliss *on earth*. This is at best a changing and unsatisfactory world. And our wisest and happiest course is to lay up treasure in Heaven.

The work continues; last night the congregation was very large and I preached with some liberty and power and afterwards a number of very clear and satisfactory conversions took place. Near 140 names were taken. I am somewhat tired and fatigued this morning, but a good walk will set me up again.

Give my kind love to your dear mother. The newspapers and preachers continue to say very flattering things concerning my ability. Mr. Donald, a very much respected preacher in our denomination, came over last week from Mossley, first to hear me and then if he approved to invite me there; he told Mr. McAndy that I have a stronger mind than Mr. Caughey; but of course he was *thoroughly mistaken*. I am satisfied that I have a far lower estimate of my ability than those around me.

Farewell. Write me again at your leisure. I must say I like the "you" and "your" on paper better than "thee" and "thou" and "thine." I think your writing improves.

Six days after having expressed his disapproval of "thou" and "thee," William Booth writes the following impulsive letter to Catherine Mumford, a letter as valuable and significant perhaps as any in the series:

WATERLOO ROAD, BURSLEM,  
Jany. 29th, '55.

MY DEAREST, MY OWN PRECIOUS LOVE — What a time it seems since I heard from *thee*. What a time since I wrote to thee — and thou shalt have the first fruits of my pen and I send thee the offering of a loving heart, a heart that never loved thee as it loves thee now. Thou art precious to my inmost soul and I will not only enshrine thee there but guard and watch over and protect thy image from harm or injury. I have this last day or two unceasingly carried thee with me, in my inmost thoughts and even when surrounded by crowds and listening to the voices of hundreds, I have seemed only to live for God and thee. Heaven grant that this sweet dream, nay, reality of love and fond affection, may be perpetuated for ever. Oh to see thee and press thy hand and clasp thee to my heart; and this shall soon be — till then, God protect and care for thy welfare.

Other things continue bright and cheerful. I left my mother better in health and more comfortable and happy in mind. Mary and Emma are likewise better. I arrived here in Burslem about 9 o'clock on Saturday, after a very cold and wearisome journey. I found a hearty welcome from the friends where I am now staying and they do all they can to make me happy. It is a very nice town, containing about 1,500 inhabitants. The chapel is a very unique and comfortable one, rather small, will hold about 800 persons. I never preached to a congregation so packed in my life as it was last night, and I suppose hundreds went away unable to obtain admission; all up the pulpit stairs, in the aisles, in the communion rails, in fact wherever there was standing room. I preached with a little liberty and some power and about 40 names were taken down during the progress of the prayer meeting. The Love Feast in the afternoon was a very interesting one on the whole; it was the best beginning I have as yet been privileged to have. I suppose I am to travel until Conference, if my Circuit will agree to accept of a supply. I come to London all well on the 4th of March and stay 3 weeks. I hope they will be the happiest three weeks in my life *so far*. Why not? we belong to God. Jesus is our Saviour, His Blood is our Salvation, and we belong to *each other* — as fully as we can do, until the last link has been put to our union. Have we not perfectly each other's love? Oh bless you, my darling, on



my bosom your head shall rest — yes rest. I reciprocate all your fond expressions and I assure you that *you* are in my heart.

Did you receive all my letters last week? Did you receive one with some postage stamps enclosed? Direct to me at Mr. Hawley's, Waterloo Road, Burslem, Staffordshire. Oh my dearest, let us trust in God. I hope to do something for this poor perishing world, and I do want you to give me your full heart's sympathy to aid me to realize the big desires that have existence in my breast. "You will." You say, "I will," even as you read, and you shall be mine, *mine fully*. I will love you as few are loved and watch over you as few are watched over, and we will live for each other and every sinew and every nerve shall be strained to save *thousands* and *tens of thousands* of perishing souls. Amid crowds and toils and anxieties and excitements I will carry you in my arms, nay, enshrined in my soul, and when we meet I will look the love I cannot speak. Farewell; never more fondly did I press an epistle to my lips before posting than I do this, because I know it will meet thy gaze. God bless you — remember me as your own — and love me as you were wont to do in days gone by.

*P.S.*—The editor of one of our local papers has *announced* that a sketch of one of my sermons and an article on the services will appear in next week's issue. What thinkest thou of that, my love? I was told that he was there two nights. It matters not. I hope God will help me to stand the storm when it comes and I trust He will keep me right amid His sunshine.

Wilt thou pray for me? Dr. Crofts speaks kindly of my *essay*.

WATERLOO ROAD, BURSLEM,  
*Jany. 30, '55.*

MY OWN SWEET AND PRECIOUS TREASURE, . . . I have been talking to you, breathing your name, musing on your love to me and your kindness, and thinking how much I should love to see you and to press you to my fond and anxious heart. *Oh Catherine, I do love thee*. Thou art indeed my treasure, the hope and the stay of my soul. I mean so far as earthly things should be dear. I do not love thee more. No, I may love thee very much before I love *thee* more than is consistent with my love to *Him* who is my Redeemer and my God. Him first, thou next. Bless thee we are one, and He shall be our all in all. Didst thou get my letter of yesterday? Didst thou read it over and reciprocate every fond expression? Art thou not mine, and am I not thine? *Yes! Yes!* The darkness has passed and the day of unclouded affection has dawned, and we have *awoke* up to the deep joy of loving and of being loved.



My health is *very good*. I am *strong*. I was much more tired with going home than had I stayed here and preached. My Mother is well; there is no news about the property. I will take the globules for thy dear sake. My chest is remarkably well and I believe you will be surprised at the improvement. My leaving London again is to be laid before the Circuit and I shall do as they wish. You talk about my *popularity*; dearest, believe me, I care about pleasing *God and thee* and saving *sinner*s. In seeking the salvation of souls popularity has come. It will not alter my future course; *not an atom*. I mean to *do right* and to do my duty, *all my duty*. What I alluded to about money I will say when we meet; it is not worth while to waste time to put it on paper. Don't talk about my forgiving you; send me word that you fully and freely and for ever forgive me all the past, and that in the future we shall be first each other's and then fully the *Lord's*. *Farewell*, my own sweet love—Bless you; pray for me. You are lonely without me, and I am lonely without *thee*. Oh how I wanted thee last night to go *home* to. No one else can understand me. No one else can sympathize with me; thy bosom is my earthly heaven, next to the joy of my work and my Heavenly Master. Thou art my joy, and thy soul is my paradise. *Farewell*. The 3rd of March will soon be here.

*P.S.*—I kiss this letter many times.

Thou shalt have another pen when I come up.

In the following letter one obtains not only a description of religious excitement by William Booth, but the interesting and striking confession of a revivalist's misgiving in the midst of a meeting:

BURSLEY, *Feb*y. 1, 1855.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE—I just scribble you a line. How can I help doing so? I want to tell you a few thoughts of which my heart is full. I said little or nothing yesterday as to the work here, and I want to tell you what passed through my mind respecting it last night.

Monday evening was a very heavy and painful one. We had two meetings after the sermon, one in the chapel and one in the school room. We took down 25 names, altho' it was one of the most confused meetings I ever was in. Tuesday and Wednesday evenings were the most triumphant I ever witnessed, under any circumstances. We confined the meeting to the chapel. Last night twice or thrice I became alarmed, the excitement was *almost* overwhelming; I feared for the people. I feared lest we should not be able to keep the reins of the meeting. The cries of distress were thrilling, piercing, running, as one gentleman expressed it, through you

to your finger ends. Some were violent, commenced shrieking, clapping the forms, etc.; these I stopped directly; in fact all the more violent I stopped as soon as I could. If I doubted, as in two instances, sincerity, I stopped them authoritatively; if I had confidence in them I poured on the balm of Jesus' salvation and the sweet promises of His Word, and they soon turned their tears and wailings into joy.

Amid all this I could not help but reason, Is it right? Is this the best way? Perhaps I was severely tempted to believe it all a delusion? Perhaps it was my own unbelief, but it was strange that these thoughts should be passing in my breast while I stood upon the form, the calmest and at times the most unmoved in all that dense assembly, directing and controlling every movement of the meeting so far as such a number of excited beings could be controlled and guided.

The people are more *ignorant* here than in other places I have visited, many who come are backsliders, and they wring their hands, and strike their breasts, and beat the communion rail enough to melt and break hearts of stone.

To-night we shall have a *crash* and no mistake. The place is literally packed, sitting and standing every night.

And how art thou, my love, my sweet one, my hope? When I enter my chamber, oh how it seems to bring me into communion with thy spirit. Solitude and silence has this effect. And thou dost think about me. Bless thee, I am thine and thou art mine, and we are one. Farewell. My heart yearns for thy sweet companionship; to have thee to love and to talk to and to sympathize with. I want more of the love of Heaven and more of the love of *earth, thy love, love to thee*.

My health is wonderfully good considering my continued exertion and the protracted excitement, and I am going to-morrow to the home of a very nice gentleman where I shall *rest two days*—and get strong again to labour. I am much better than when in London—in health. I do hope that I shall be able to surprise you with my *health*. Take care of thyself my precious for MY SAKE.

Give my love to mother. Get me two *good shirts* and two night shirts, 1 yard and  $\frac{3}{4}$  long *at least*, ready to send next week when I send you *word*. Farewell. Heaven bless and care for thee.

*P.S.*—I intended to post this letter yesterday—I reached the post office—and then found that it was not sealed, intended doing it with wafer at Mr. Ridgeway's, forgot it, made sure I had posted it until I found it in my pocket to-day. Bless you, I am very sorry, but post it now. I will write you, all well, to-morrow. We had a triumphant night last night. Good-bye.

CLAYTON, NEWCASTLE, STAFFORDSHIRE,  
Feb'y. 5, 1855.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE— . . . I am sorry that things are not so sunny with your Mamma as one could wish, but we must hope for better and brighter days. I do not know how *my* mother and sister would have lived had I not stepped in just as I did; for Mary has been unable to get any work for a long time. I left them £5 : 0 : 0, and I am reduced to about 15/- only that I expect something—a *little*, from Burslem. I want a coat when I can raise the money. But\*enough, I did not intend writing this rubbish.

Your letters are not quite so long as they used to be, but you are busy. I am sure I am *very much delighted* to hear of your *industry*, your improved health, and that you have adopted the cold water plan. I have very great faith in it. I have what they call a *medical rubber*. A towel *made on purpose*. Almost as rough as though made of *horsehair*. I came from Nottingham with a dreadful pain at the bottom of my back—was very bad for two days—I bathed it once, with cold water and salt, and rubbed it, and I never felt it again. I am not so well to-day. My chest is sore with yesterday's exertions. I intend being more careful to-night.

Yesterday was more successful than ever as a beginning. Altho' it rained in torrents, the chapel was crowded, many went away unable to obtain admission. We registered during the prayer meeting 40 names. What think you of the newspaper report? We often laugh about his likening me to a *Jew*.

. . . Pray for me, my darling—that I may be labouring for *Him*. For His *glory*—conscientiously trying to do His will—help *me* to do as much as I can—be my guardian angel—watch over me and prompt to *benevolent* effort for the good of *others*.

NEWCASTLE, STAFFORDSHIRE,  
Feb'y. 8, 1855.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE—Your very kind and thoughtful letter is to hand this morning. It really is a credit to both your head and your heart. I did not write yesterday or the day preceding because of circumstances and am sorry for it. I fully intended yesterday but was awkwardly and unexpectedly kept away from home and was very low and desponding all the day. I am better mentally and physically to-day. I intend, all well, resting an entire week in London. I commence the revival services at the new place on the second Sunday. I thank you for your remarks on the strictures contained in the newspapers; they are very judicious. I do hear from time to time of political affairs. *I think my duty is to leave London* after a three or four weeks' stay there.

The people are pulling me almost to pieces down here. I have letters from Leeds, Dewsbury, and Bristol the last two days. A meeting is held to-day in London to decide whether Mr. Downs is to be accepted as a supply for me till Conference or whether I shall be retained after my return; to the decision of that meeting I shall calmly submit. You shall not on any consideration be parted from me when your own heart dictates the path of duty to be *with me*. I have confidence in thy judgment and in thy love for the great work of saving souls. I have no fear, neither has Mr. Mills on this subject. And when thou art, should God see it best to bless us with *offspring*, when thou art thus detained thou shalt have a little *paradise* in some *central spot* and my *mother* shall live with us, should God spare us and spare her and Emma. And then our winter income will procure us all the blessings that we need. *Fear not* this residence: thou canst make excursions with *me*, and thou wilt have confidence in those thou leavest for a season in charge of *our loved ones* and our home for a season. Should we have no children, we will travel *together*. I never think of anything else in my joy, and thou shalt be my *guardian angel*.

I am doing nothing mentally. I intend doing something by and by. I improve my sermons as I preach them. My health is better, my chest stronger. I drink a deal of Linseed Tea. Didst thou ever try it? Do not fear about being separated. If you can go *I* shall not go without *you*. Besides, where I have been once many homes at once offer for a second visit. Here I am overwhelmed with kindness. The work progresses very favourably. Chapels crowded every night — riveted attention perhaps for an hour and a quarter's sermon and then mighty prayer meetings such as *you never saw*. Last night 67 names were taken.

I adhere to the cold water bathing of my chest and shoulders and back. I do not retire much before 12 on an average — sleep well, rise about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 8, breakfast and walk till dinner — afterwards do my correspondence, read a little and prepare for night, leaving the prayer meeting about 10 — last night they did not leave the chapel until  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 12. I have not seen Kossuth's speeches. I was so glad to hear about your improved health, you cannot think how overjoyed I am at the prospect of your being well.

We will talk more and arrive at some definite opinions and rules for the government of our future lives with respect to *money*; the controversy becomes an unpleasant and unprofitable one to *me*. I have no fear of getting sufficient for existing *wants*; it will be with respect to laying up for the *future*.

And now my dearest, I thank you from my inmost heart



for all your kind words and love. Do not say I have not tried to answer your letters. I do try. I will try more in the future. You must make some little allowance for my circumstances. Give my best love to your dear mamma. Take great care of your health. I will make the night shirts do. I shall try to manage now until I come to town if I can. If I want them I will write *again*. Have you two *shirts*? I want them worse; mine are all in tatters.

Bless you, farewell. Look forward to the future with a trusting and hopeful soul.

CLAYTON, NEWCASTLE,  
Feb'y. 9, 1855.

MY DEAREST CATHERINE — How art thou getting on and what art thou doing? I sit here nearly alone and I hail the solitude with delight, in a snug, warm, and handsomely furnished room — with every earthly comfort and all I desire but *thee*; how I should love to have thee to help me to enjoy a quiet evening; but it must not be and I must quietly resign myself to my lot; if spared we shall soon pass some *happy, happy, happy* hours *together*. By God's help I will calmly wait, and with His blessing I will enjoy the present and not be always living only for the future. There is much in the present; I have a great deal in my work that others would give worlds for; I have many kind friends; I have every earthly *luxury*<sup>1</sup> and attention, and then I have *thee*, and a *hope*, a *real and certain hope*, of HEAVEN.

LONGTON, Feb'y. 12, 1855.

MY VERY DEAR LOVE — What art thou doing, I wonder just now? Perhaps thinking about me. I do hope my two last letters have come to hand, and I do trust that thou art very happy. How is it with thee in spiritual matters? I do hope better and brighter. I awoke very happy this morning. I am truly a child of many mercies; how good God is to *me*! Oh, my dearest, help me to praise Him.

Yesterday was a day of great anxiety. I knew expectation was very high and I had comparatively new and untried sermons to preach. At night the chapel was densely crowded, packed, I suppose 2,200 persons were present — the gallery is an immense one and the people seem right upon you. I was very much impressed with a sense of my weakness and insignificance to accomplish any thing good except divinely assisted, and God did graciously help me to preach a little from "Why will ye die?"

We had a tolerably good prayer meeting; 38 professed to find peace — some *good cases*, a sad lack of *efficient help*. The

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to remember that this man, with "every earthly luxury," has just confessed that his shirts are in tatters.



congregation was very respectable and intelligent, some of the leading secularists were present, and seemed very attentive and solemn, and I hope God will impress the truth upon their minds. I shall have to preach new sermons the next two or three nights, and therefore anticipate much anxiety.

The friends at Newcastle were very kind and expressed an earnest wish to have the pleasure of seeing you the next time I visit them. I have some thought of selecting Newcastle as a place of residence. It is central—a nice little town; in it are many intelligent warm-hearted and loving friends; the scenery around it is of a romantic and pleasing character; our cause is the leading dissenting interest in the place, and altogether I was pleased with it, and I have seen a nice little house that I think would suit us well. Mr. Dixon the gentleman with whom I stayed, made me a present of £2 for my mother. That was very kind, was it not? They gave me £3 for my week's services—and every luxury that heart could desire besides to promote my health and comfort.

A gentleman of the name of Bailey who keeps his carriage and pair, and who lives in a little paradise about two miles out of Longton, would very much like us to spend a month to rest at his house next summer; but I mean to visit Paris, Switzerland, and the Rhine, if at all practicable—but we shall see.

My present popularity almost frightens me. I am alarmed as to the maintaining of it. You understand me, I mean the carrying out of the work of God. My sermon yesterday morning was a perfect failure. But God can, and I firmly believe, God will work. And now my love, I shall if spared soon see you and again we can sit and talk about *everything*.

OLDHAM, *Feby.* 21, '55.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS CATHERINE—Bless you, how I do wish for an interview—to see and love you. I am very low in spirits—*very*; the work does not progress to my satisfaction, the congregations are not very good and the cases not of a very encouraging character. My heart yearns for something more glorious and effective; here I am surrounded by a dense population of I should think 80,000 people, and yet our congregation last night was only about 300; but that is better than preaching to 20 or 30, the average week night congregation here.

Pray for me, my dearest Love; oh to live nearer to God!

I am rapidly making the acquaintance of the preachers of the *Connexion*. Many of them come to hear me at different times and places; I am afraid I am not making that impression with respect to my piety that I ought to do. Oh to live *close to God*! My soul pants for something deeper, *realler*, more

hallowed, in my soul's experience. If I fail it will be here. My dear, my own dear, write to me, all about your *heart*, all about your health; tell me you love me with *satisfaction*, that is if it be so. Oh for an uninterrupted future of harmony and confidence — when it will be one of *bliss* and *peace*. I will try and serve God better, I want Him more in my heart motives, in my soul's thinking and desires. To look at men and things and duties from a place close to His throne. The Lord help me. Let us live for each other individually and together as one; let us labour and toil for Him.

MOSSLEY,

Monday, Feb'y. 26, '55.

MY DEAREST AND PRECIOUS CATHERINE — I suppose that the storm must have had some influence on the delay that has occurred in the delivery of the letters. Your two last announcing your painful illness were not put into my hands until yesterday after the morning's service. My last ought to have reached you on Saturday, and I was anxiously expecting an answer before I wrote again. Oh, had I but known I would have employed Saturday evening in writing consolation to you so far as I could have done so. I am indeed sorry to hear of your illness. I had feared it. I had often done so. Something has often whispered that I was counting too much on my visit to town; but you will be better by then, I trust. But why not call a doctor at once? I have not much faith in them, but still I would not have delayed a moment — especially when you were so ill. It must have been very sudden. Whatever could have been the cause? But you will be better, and as you gain strength I trust you will be less the subject of these painful attacks. Bless you, I should much like to see you, and to have your company. I doubt not you feel the same. I shall (all well) be with you soon, and then I will sit by your side and we will talk all things over. If you have not answered my last letter do not trouble to do so. Never fear on my account, *anything*. All you have to do is to take care of *yourself*.

This attack seems very *mysterious* — just as we were cherishing such hopes of the future and of your ability to travel, etc. — this comes in and brings food to me for more anxiety respecting the future. Well, we must leave it with the Lord for the present.

This last week has been one of the most anxious, nervous, and desponding weeks I ever turned over in my life. Yesterday was a very heavy day — very few, if any, understand me. Congregations here were very poor yesterday, the cause is dreadfully low. Only eight cases at night. It would take

me a month to raise the place. If you were with me I think then I could plod on for a month or six weeks and more, and move the town.

I was *very* unwell yesterday but am much better this morning. I was very uncomfortable in my house last week. I am just as much the contrary *this*. I never was more cared for than here; if ever you come to Mossley I have no doubt that this will be your home, and you will find every luxury and comfort that heart can desire and I shall be with you, and I am sure altho' I distrust myself more than you distrust me, yet I am sure that I shall be *anxious* to make you as happy as you desire. To tell you that I love you seems cold; you know it, I know it,—you *are* mine, we are linked *together*, *already* united, *already one*. Bless you a *thousand times*, send me a line to tell me all is well in your heart towards me—I prayed for you last night, yes I pray for you as my *Catherine*, as my *own Kate*. And every cloud will pass away and we shall yet be helps to one another and unitedly a blessing to the *world*. Remember me kindly to your mother and father. We shall soon meet—that is, if you send me word that you repose confidence in me—and you do, I believe it, your last letters tell me that you do. We shall soon *meet*—Oh this uncertain world, how oft has it deceived me! I suspect it at every *turn*. There is nothing certain but uncertainty and let me say something else, thy love to me. Yes, that is *certain*, *unchanging*. Bless you, count me your own—oh, to come and see *thee*, and that is so near at hand, and thou wilt be a little better, *able* to take a little walk in the sunshine.

Cheer up—look not beyond to-day, at least not beyond our meeting. We will part but little while I am in London. I do not know where my salary is to come from while in town. But never mind, I shall get over that. Do not trouble to write much—only *one* line to tell me your heart is right with *me*. I will write you every day. If the letters don't come to hand blame the post, not your own in love's closest and most tender bonds.

LONGTON, March 24, 1855.

MY DEAREST AND ONLY LOVE—I am safely arrived and most comfortably accommodated. I thought much about thee during my journey, and if you were here I should have nothing more to hope for, so far as earth is concerned. I am very anxious, of course, about the services; how can I be otherwise when so much expectation is aroused and I feel so inadequately prepared and qualified to satisfy it? But I must, I will, trust in *God*.

I had a very cold ride the first part of my journey. My

portmanteau acts *well*. The cabman charged me 3/- and blustered and stormed because I wanted to give him 2/6. The friends are all pleased to see me.

LONGTON, March 26, '55.

MY DEAREST CATHERINE — Bless you! I trust you received mine this morning written on Saturday. Should you not receive my letters regularly during this visit, wait awhile patiently and attribute the failure to the post, not to any wilful neglect of mine, for I intend writing as often as you desire.

On the whole, I had a good day yesterday considering that the sermons were new for this special work. In the morning I preached from "Pulling them out of the fire" — the first time of preaching. I think it will make an effective discourse. I tried to the utmost of my ability to deepen the desire of the Christians present for the salvation of their fellowmen. At night from Blind Bartimeus, with several new illustrations: I had much liberty. The chapel by six o'clock was packed to suffocation, many, very many, were sent away unable to get inside the door. The walls and ceiling were thoroughly saturated by the perspiration, so much so that the water dropped from above and ran down the walls. We had a few good *cases*; about twenty; not so many as I expected, but a good commencement. Oh, it would do your soul good to hear the people talk of the good work that is going on, of the great and glorious changes that have taken place. Expectation is every way running very high and the leaders and members now are prepared to expect the greatest things. I was tired of course last night and wished much for your company at home, and then the day would have seemed delightfully complete.

Write me when you receive this and enclose in your note the elastic out of the collar I wore on Saturday, I have come away without one and cannot wear these *all rounds*. I have got a horrid pen and you must excuse this scrawl. Give my very kind love to your mother. Write me a loving letter — I am anxious to hear about you. Think of me as being fully and entirely your own *faithfully* and for ever. Yes, we are *one*.

P.S. — My ink is awfully thick and this pen of thine will hardly make a mark.

CAULDON PLACE, STAFFORDSHIRE POTTERIES,  
March 28, 1855.

MY DEAREST AND PRECIOUS CATHERINE — Bless you! If I could but have you in a snug home all to ourselves it would be very pleasant and happy.

I am sorry that my appetite and digestion have failed me again, directly on leaving London. I believe that the beer

agreed with me wonderfully — I am as different as possible; I believe that bitter ale or porter would be very beneficial in this respect — but, do not fear, I will stick to the pledge. Send me word how you make the beer, and I will try and get some made next week. I hope you are happy; send me all particulars about your health. I am staying at Mr. Ridgeway's; he is very kind and cordial.

Remember me as being all your own *faithfully*, yes faithfully *yours*. Pray for me. Oh I want more religion, love to God and love to man.

OLDBURY, near BIRMINGHAM,

March 31/55.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE — I am once more located in a new abode. The sweet, long, trusting, and very tender epistle came to hand this morning. I should have written yesterday, but really was not alone scarce five minutes of the day. You may expect me to be more regular now. I have announced to the lady where I am staying now that I do not go out at all to visit, and I intend sticking to it. I am sorry to have competition two days next week; Mr. Gough lectures on Monday and Tuesday. The note you sent me from the *Insurance* Society is not satisfactory in fixing me to pay £7 : 18 : 9; they have put me down, if I am not mistaken, £1 : 0 : 0 more than the printed form states. I have not a printed book with me, but I think it was £2 : 6 : 0 per £100; but I left the card at your house. I have written by this post to the secretary and then you shall, when he answers, have further information.

The chapels have without exception been very full during *the week*. And I trust some considerable good has been done. I am a little better to-day; I shall have some horehound beer made. Thou need not send the *horehound*; if thou had sent me word how to direct for it to be made, that is what I *want*; we can get any quantity of horehound *here*.

Bless thee, thy letter did me good. It seemed so trusting and *hopeful*. I have gathered some little encouragement concerning myself during the week. *Mr. Ridgeway has made me a present of the case for my papers*; it is just the thing I wanted. Did not I tell thee? When wilt thou believe in my knowledge of human nature? It would have cost me at least 10/- or more. It was very kind of him. I am very much pleased with *Pearson* and with *Blair*, and I hope to report some favourable if not considerable progress in study next week.

OLDBURY, April 2, '55.

MY DEAREST AND ONLY LOVE — I am writing April, thou seest. How quickly is time flying away. Oh, how important the moments, how seldom we think so, and how far less seldom



we act as if they were. Well, I mean this month to be a better one for *labour* and results than the last, mentally, morally, and spiritually, by God's blessing. May it be so! Amen!

And how are you? I have been thinking about you and your future, if spared you will soon write yourself *another name*. Bless you, I trust thou wilt be happy. You will be pleased to hear that I am very *much better*. I obtained the Quinine mixture on Saturday night. I was so very unwell — and I am taking it twice a day instead of three times; I drank a mug of strong horehound tea yesterday, and it is astonishing how much better I am, although I had a heavy day yesterday.

The congregations were very good. At night the Chapel was *packed*, aisles and everywhere; a very respectable gathering. I preached in the morning with great liberty and power, and at night I had a *comfortable* time to myself; the people wept very much. We had not the amount of good done I expected. The friends took down sixteen names.

I am sorry, and I said so from the pulpit, that our services clashed with Mr. Gough's coming. Three of the most respectable and influential persons in the society are publicans!!!! It is positively true! All apparently more than usually nice, good-hearted people. I am very sorry — very, very sorry. I hope to raise the religious feelings so high as to make them all ashamed of the infernal traffic and thus leave it.

I am reading Blair, Pearson, and Dick very carefully. The weather is very beautiful. Take care of thy dear self. We shall soon meet. Write me always particulars about your health. Do not attempt too much, as is thy custom as well as mine. I mean physically as well as mentally. I am glad Miss Tasker has called. She is a good creature, I *think*. Let her do some sewing for you. Pay her what she charges or more if you think it is worth it.

SMETHWICK, nr. BIRMINGHAM,

April 4, '55.

MY OWN PRECIOUS CATHERINE — Thy sweet note came to hand this morning. I trust that by this time thou art much better. Thou should wrap up well when going out, put thy shawl on, and then I think the East Wind would not get to thy chest. I am better in health but not very first-rate in spirits. Several things perplex me. The service last night was not so successful, altho' the congregation far exceeded my expectation; we had four or five very good cases, but we ought to have had more. I am very dissatisfied with the state of my heart towards the Lord. I have too much of self wrought up with all I do. The Lord help me.

The persons I named to you who keep public-houses and are

members of society here have been to hear Gough once if not both nights. I trust he has done them good. You would be surprised if you were here to find how differently the traffic is looked upon to what it is in other places. It seems to be a settled and deep-rooted conviction that ale or beer is as much a necessary of life to the miners and furnacemen as bread or meat. And these publicans would tell you that they act on this principle; they do not open on the Sabbath, neither do they allow drunkenness on their premises, etc. These are the arguments with which I suppose they justify the business to themselves.

SMETHWICK, BIRMINGHAM,  
April 6, '55.

MY OWN DEAR AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE — What a time it seems since I saw you. I do hope that cold has left you by this and that you are enjoying your walks, solitary though they be, in the mild spring weather. I had a very nice ramble this morning. I have not read much this week, but I have sat too close and worked too hard; I found that out yesterday. To-day I am doing nothing but this, and a long letter to Mr. Bates, and a little of Pearson and Dick to-night, and perhaps a page or two of a sermon. I don't preach to-night. Mr. Bates wrote me again a letter as long as the one you have [concerning Insurance]. He has seen the Doctor, but he won't alter — he has written to the Directors at Edinburgh and he recommends me, should they not alter, to *submit*. It is a shame.

We have had a good week on the whole, some of the cases very satisfactory. We have taken down about eighty names, many more persons are under conviction, and I trust they will be gathered in. I go to Bradford to-morrow. I suppose it is about 140 miles. I shall ride first-class. My head has been very bad; I don't know when worse lately than yesterday. The doctor in London says I have too much *nervous energy* for my *muscle*. Therefore rest and exercise, as Dr. Collinette of Guernsey said, are the only things that will benefit me. My digestion is considerably better. You will say I am talking a deal about myself. Well, I can talk to *thee*. And my thoughts run on this just now — I don't care what any of them say, *doctors or not*, I believe I have a rational hope (without accident) of living *thirty years longer*. — Believe me to remain, yours very *faithfully* and tenderly, WILLIAM.

BRADFORD,  
April 10, '55.

MY DEAREST AND DARLING CATHERINE — In heading this letter I have just discovered that it is my birthday. I am to-day 26. Oh the importance of employing this fleeting *time*.

Oh, my Catherine, what must *I do*? I am almost in despair with *myself*, and yet I am afraid if I were to study more it would be at once injurious to my health. I am preaching hard and therefore must be content. Bless you; I should like much to see you.

I am not very comfortable in my home — a *miserably mis-managed* family, possessing a respectable income if not *wealth*, yet here is very little domestic happiness. Snarling and snapping at one another; an indulgent mother and a quiet father. Oh, it is almost *more* sometimes than my patience can *bear*; and I am inclined when I hear a youth of 17 tell his *mother* he *will not* do something, to tell him if he were my son, and said so to his mother, *I would knock him down*. Well, thank God, I never got so far in all my waywardness and ingratitude to a fond and indulgent *mother*. And yet we have a beautiful house, furniture, etc. Happiness doth not consist in the many things which a man possesseth.

BRADFORD,  
April 12, '55.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE — I have been thinking much about thee the last two days. And I doubt not *thou* hast been thinking about me *too*.

Your letter and contents came to hand yesterday. I continue the cold-water bathing *every morning*. The remarks on *Woman's* position I will read again before I answer. From the first reading I cannot see anything in them to lead me for one *moment* to think of altering my opinion. You *combat* a great deal that I hold as firmly as *you* do — viz. her *equality*, her *perfect equality*, as a whole — as a *being*. But as to concede that she is man's *equal*, or *capable* of becoming man's equal, in intellectual attainments or prowess — I must say *that* is contradicted by experience in the world and my honest conviction. You know, my dear, I acknowledge the superiority of your sex in very many things — in others I believe her inferior. *Vice versa* with man.

I would not stop a woman preaching on any account. I would not encourage one to begin. You should preach if you felt moved thereto: felt equal to the task. I would not stay *you* if I had power to do so. Altho', *I should not like it*. It is easy for you to say my views are the result of prejudice; perhaps they are. I am for the world's *salvation*; I will quarrel with no means that promises help.

BRADFORD,  
April 16, '55.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS *KATE* — . . . I am yours, wilful, impulsive, and fitful as I am, I am yours in an affection *enduring* and tender and *faithful*. And I am indulging in fond hopes that we shall be very happy together.

I hope to have an industrious week. I have changed residence as you will see, and am now very comfortable, have a delightfully pleasant bedroom, and all my wants carefully and thoughtfully supplied.

This is my first entry into Yorkshire, and of course I was unknown but by report among my own people. I stand now on more favourable ground, and if I can find material I have no doubt in after days, if spared, to see something very glorious indeed.

Care of B. J. PROCTOR, Esq.,  
15 REGENT TERRACE, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,  
April 21, '55.

MY DEAREST AND PRECIOUS KATIE — I have just arrived, taken tea, and sit down to write to you a hasty note. So far as I can judge I am domiciled very comfortably indeed. Whom do you think I saw in the station at Leeds, just as I was taking my place in the carriage for the *North*? "*Luke Tyerman*." I went and spoke to him and he appeared *very cordial*. He is stationed at Newcastle. He invited me to go and see him; he was going to Bradford to preach to-morrow. I hear he has been very ill, but is now much better. David Hay is stationed at Bradford; I did not see him while there.

Bless you, it has been a splendid day and I have had a splendid ride — oh what beautiful and diversified scenery have we passed through, flying more than anything else — rushing, screaming, panting *on, on, ON*, 40 miles an hour *sometimes*, then stopping, and then on again, until we reached Newcastle; and I wanted *you with me*. I want you to see all that's beautiful and share all that is truly blessed and sweet and *precious*. I am full of hope for this place. I have no doubt but it will be hard work to make an impression, but it can be done, it must be done; God help us and it shall be done. The preacher is a very hearty man, and I doubt not but we shall have a very cordial co-operation. Good-bye. I must be off.

15 REGENT TERRACE, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,  
April 23, '55.

MY OWN DEAR CATHERINE — I wonder how you are getting on. I should much like to see and have a talk with you this very fine morning. I am just going down to *Tynemouth* with Dr. Candelet, one of our preachers, to have another fond look at "*old ocean*." I wish thou wast here and going with us. . . .

The people are *shrewd*, *intelligent*, and *cold* here, *proverbially so*. From all I can gather the cause of religion is very low, all sects alike involved in a cold, frozen apathy. The chapel in which I am preaching is a very good one. Will hold about 1,200, and we had it near full last night. The best con-



gregation that has been in it for many a year. Wm. Martin was here a fortnight ago, preached in it twice on Easter Sunday, and on the following Monday gave another edition of the London speech. But, after all, I suppose I had double the number of people to hear me to what he had. The Reformers here are very unsettled; I suppose both the preachers would come to us if they could. Altho' we had so large a crowd last night, for lack of earnest co-workers the prayer-meeting was comparatively a failure. 12 persons came forward. Many stayed under deep conviction, but I could not get any one to look about the chapel and bring the penitents up. I was very much annoyed and wished myself anywhere else, and told the ladies so. Oh it is indeed hard work. On the whole, the commencement is very encouraging.

Write me full particulars of what you are doing. I am much better in health. I go from hence to Manchester. You will be surprised when I tell you the Bradford friends gave me £5:0:0 for my *fortnight's toil* — out of which my travelling expenses were £1:6:3. I shall not get *much here*. Never mind, this is not my chief aim or anything near it. No; I can say that the great ruling anxiety of my mind is the salvation of sinners and the glory of God. My time is gone. Good-bye. Bless you a thousand times.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,

April 28, '55.

MY DEAR KATE, MY OWN TRUE LOVE — Your very kind note is just to hand. Bless you; I do indeed thank you for all your kind counsel and will once more try again. I have indeed this week been low. I should not like to continue this work if I am to be as I have been for the last 3 weeks. My mental machinery has been a source of great anxiety, and other things have pressed upon me with a painful assiduity. However, it is no use talking about it; we will try again. . . .

I am at present more than ever uncertain as to any step about the future. If I say anything to Conference about myself it will be to *request* a Circuit, but to leave it with *them*. If I had more *general* knowledge, love for study and *material for the pulpit*, I should not hesitate a *moment*, because all fears about my health are removed; but a consciousness of my emptiness, my incapacity to sustain a position of such vast importance, presses on me until it unfits my mind for anything. A year's *pause* might remedy this to some *extent*.

As yet we have nothing done here; all looks discouraging, and I dread Manchester. I have however started afresh in the work of gathering knowledge, and hope to report proficiency. I cannot but be surprised at the want of any aspiring emotion so apparent in many of our ministers; *they* are



nothing and seem *content*. I deplore this, and yet if I was like them I should be very much happier!

May 1, 1855.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE — May, that brings sunny days, soft breezes, and opening flowers, comes in cold and bleak with us. I was in hopes, especially for thy dear sake, that we were about to have some calm and continued summer weather. Perhaps, however, it may be finer with you in the South than with us in the far North. I am all alone — far away from almost any one who understands me or can sympathize with me. And yet I am not unhappy. Oh, that I could learn yet more fully than I have yet learned to lean chiefly on *God*. Oh how much am I the creature of *circumstances*. Last night in preaching I was almost as much shut up, *if not quite so*, as when you heard me the last time at Brunswick Chapel. I felt right when I went to the Chapel, familiar with my subject and desiring success, and praying for it, too. The congregation was good, and all were well prepared; but I failed. However, we had 23 very good cases afterwards, several young *men* who promise great usefulness. . . .

HOOD'S BUILDINGS, WINDMILL HILLS,  
GATESHEAD-ON-TYNE,

May 2, '55.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE — Thy long loving letter is to hand this morning. Now do let me try and answer it; after the gentle chiding it contains I will try and do better. The scrap you sent me I read, then *burned*; no answer to it; I must let deeds speak and not words. I might truthfully have signed yesterday's letter as you wish — *I feel on the subject as you do*. I read the article on *It will never do to be idle*; it is original, striking, and correct, and did me good. I am working a little. Bless you; for your sake I will *persevere*.

Yesterday was an industrious one; went to chapel well prepared to preach — a good and attentive congregation awaiting me, and I again failed most decidedly, and yet we had some precious cases of conversion. The work is very genuine and satisfactory. I find the great difference in the North is not, as I was taught to expect, in the non-impressibility of the people, but in the formality and death-slumber of the professing Christians, and the hindrance to the spread of the salvation of the Cross is in the influence of a cold, systematic theology and a stiff theoretical development of the truth. I am looking for a successful meeting to-night. I am happier in my own soul, more composed and trusting with regard to the future, than I have been for some time. I hope I have started in the true path of progress. . . .

GATESHEAD,  
May 4, 1855.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE — How art thou? Oh I have been thinking about thee much this last day or two. I am better in health of body and mind and soul. Once more I have to report that we finished up with a perfect triumph. What can we say to it but bow and wonder and adore? Last night the chapel was *full*. The prayer-meeting crowded — densely crowded. Forty names were taken, many of them most interesting cases, and there were numbers, vast numbers, under very deep conviction; and then in forming our estimate of this work we must bear in mind that this is the North — where the people are proverbially unimpressible, intelligent, and difficult to move. That the church was in a deplorable low state, so much so, nay more so, for many of the office-bearers were absolutely opposed to my coming. Therefore, all these difficulties have had to be met; prejudice and coldness to be removed; and it has been done, triumphantly done, and all combine to say that they cannot remember a work like it in any of the churches of the town. Wesleyans, Reformers, Primitives, and New Connexion men have all worked together, knelt at the same Communion-rail, and side by side fought the common foe, and as the result 160 names have been taken. What can we say to this but that it is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes? With facts like these before our minds, retreat from this path seems impossible, and once more bright visions of future increased usefulness are flitting before my eyes. If the *results* here had been gained in twelve months' labour I should have been hailed on every hand as a most successful minister; but because they have been gained in a fortnight I know many will question and doubt; but I cannot but see why they should not be as permanent as if gathered in or brought about by a more tedious and lengthened process. . . .

25 HYDE GROVE, SHAKESPEARE STREET,  
MANCHESTER,

May 11, 1855.

MY DEAREST, MY PRECIOUS CATHERINE — I intended writing to you yesterday, but was occupied the earlier part of the day in answering a letter of 8 pages received from a Unitarian gentleman of Gateshead, who came to hear me preach there, and took exception to being classed with infidels, etc., and pronounced worthy of the same condemnation and exposed to the same eternal woe. Several vexatious little circumstances prevented me writing, or rather getting a letter posted, during the after part of the day. I rather expected a line from you this morning, looked anxiously for the postman, but he passed our gate to my great disappointment. I should very much like

to see you, and had you been anywhere within reach, say 50 miles, this morning would certainly have found me by your side or with your own dear self in my arms. It seemeth a long, long time since I left London; I can hardly believe it is only *six weeks*.

My struggle here in Manchester is a *lonesome* one. I hardly know how to estimate the work. I am looking onwards as patiently as I can towards Sunday and next week. The respectable connected with the Chapel come very little, and yet we have had a few good cases, among others the two daughters of the lady with whom I am staying: one the eldest, a beautiful, blithe creature, the other young, about 14, but intelligent; their father was a minister amongst us, and has been now some two years in Heaven. The mother, of course, is much rejoiced, and they all are very kind and thoughtful for my comfort. I think that, with one exception, Manchester would suit us well as a residence, and for aught I know that may be no hindrance at all. Of course we should have to live out of town. The omnibuses are very nice ones, as large again as those in London, and far more comfortable than a cab. You could ride in them without being *incommoded*, and if we could find a nice home near one of our chapels — that is the difficulty I refer to — then I think Manchester would suit us well. But we shall see. I had rather take a Circuit for a time, but the difficulties in that path increase; invitations, pressing and urgent ones, continue to reach me, and those who at the commencement of the work appeared distant and suspicious are now inquiring for my services. . . . I have seen a tin-box that will do capitally to hold your *bonnet* when travelling, and that and a portmanteau, I should think, would serve you well. I think much about you and trust you are happy and still improving in *health*. . . .

25 HYDE GROVE, SHAKESPEARE STREET,  
MANCHESTER,

May 15, '55.

MY DEAREST KATE — Bless thee, thy letter is just to hand. I have to go away to Macclesfield to meet the preachers about my next three weeks' arrangements. They are pulling me to pieces — it is one heavy item I have to pay for my popularity.

I suppose we must be married, as you say, the week ending the 16th; but more of it in my next. We are getting on pretty well. They want me to stay next week over, and the President wants me to go to York.

Do as you think best about everything. Get whatever you want. I will write to-morrow. I am working hard. Am reading a little. Making a sermon on *Bring forth fruits meet for repentance*.

I hope you will improve in health now. I am engaged up to Sunday 3rd. The *postponement* will suit me well, as it will enable me to comply with one or two important and pressing invitations.

25 HYDE GROVE, SHAKESPEARE STREET,  
MANCHESTER,

22, '55.

MY DEAREST CATHERINE — Bless you. I shall soon, all well, change my address and call you my dearest *Wife*. It is astonishing how of late that name has gathered unto it in my estimation charms and sweetness which it lacked before. I intended writing you a long letter, but shall not have time. I think if it be that we cannot be married at Brunswick Chapel we will let Mr. Thomas marry us at his own chapel. I should like it much if it can be done without giving offence to Mr. C., seeing that we have discussed the matter.

Write me per return how much black silk you will want for a flounced dress and whether you would prefer that to a satinnet or satinture — I intend having a first-rate one. If I buy it without your letter I shall get black silk and *16 yards*.

I am *very* low spirited this morning. We are not getting on very well — not near so well as I expected. How are you? Are you happy? Write me all particulars about yourself. I am looking up; have been praying for you. You need not have any fear of my being over *elated*; I have almost as little self-confidence as ever. I wish I had more, I should preach far better. Look up, all will yet be well. I shall soon call you fully mine, and we shall be happy.

25 HYDE GROVE, SHAKESPEARE STREET,  
MANCHESTER,

May 24, '55.

MY DEAREST CATHERINE — Your very kind letter came to hand this morning. My head aches very bad indeed, and I am very glad of a day or two's rest. You must not expect me to say much; in fact, I am tired of this mode of communication, we seem so felicitous in misunderstanding one another. Just by way of calming your fears I will say that I do not think that there is the smallest danger of popularity making either fop or fool of me. If I am not very much mistaken it has made me a wiser and a soberer man. I think the former part of your letter censorious and needlessly severe; the latter, as I say above, is as kind as usual and therefore acceptable.

I leave here to-morrow for Burslem. So your next must be directed to me, care of Mr. Hawley, Waterloo Road, Burslem, Staffordshire. I am annoyed with the letter of Mr. Woodhouse relative to my essay; send me the strictures enclosed in your next. They asked me to write an essay on the



characteristics of an *Apostolic Ministry*, and then find fault because I have not made excuses for and drawn pictures of the do-nothings of the present day. I shall write him a note on the subject. Wait awhile and we will, if spared, try and do something. Yes, *we will*. God help us to be *one* and to labour for *Him*. What a poor magazine your letter is in. I am literally ashamed of it as the organ of our denomination. The revival movement shall have an *organ*, and if the Magazine won't take it up some other newspaper *shall*.

We finished up pretty well last night. It has been a hard struggle for *me*, how hard no earthly being knows. I have made many friends in Manchester, among others the Mr. Shuttleworth, once Editor of the Magazine, whose "Birthday Thoughts" are in the present one; he was opposed to the thing before he knew and heard me. None have applauded me more sincerely and intelligently than Mr. Hulme. I expect he will be president of the Conference.

You must excuse this scrawl. I have several more letters to write, and I ought to be out of doors. Write me a line tomorrow directed to Burslem. I am not sure whether I shall get the black silk. Without flounces I don't like them, and I don't want to cross your wish. . . .

P.S.—I wish I could come and see you to-day. I am satisfied all this gloom and mists would be dispersed. But it will be over soon, and if spared all will be well.

CONFERENCE, SHEFFIELD,  
June 1, '55.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS LOVE—I hope you received my letter posted from hence yesterday. I understand that the Conference almost unanimously resolved that I be devoted to my present sphere of labour throughout the next year. I am to have £100 for the year and my travelling expenses. This, of course, is an advance of £30 or £40 on the young man's salary. My labours are to be under the direction of the Annual Conference. I think so far the matter seems providential, and is to my mind satisfactory. The preachers and friends are very cordial—and, bless you, I do hope we shall be very happy. I am tolerably well in health, and hope with a week or two's relaxation to be first-rate. York, Chester, Ashton, and many other places are desiring my services. I do not know all particulars, but I shall obtain them and tell thee all things with my own lips on Saturday week. I have told Mr. Bates that I shall spend the week prior to our marriage at his house, if he will very kindly invite me. I hope you are well; do not go about at all while this weather lasts. I have had to pay £5:5:0 for my Beneficent Fund Subscription—but I suppose they are to give me £6:0:0 for



my last London service — so one will cover the other. I like the appearance of the Conference much. The preachers and laymen work well together. I heard the charge last night by Dr. Crofts. I hope my essay is at least as good a thing as that. Mr. Cooke is very cordial. I am going to dine with him. I shall hear what he says about our affairs. I have no doubt all will be perfectly plain. I will enclose you what passes between us after dinner. I am staying with Mr. Bates. I am indulging fond hopes — I fear not but that we shall be happy. I am sure I love you, and I need not say that I shall do all that a loving and willing heart can prompt me to hush thy every fear and make thee blissful and joyous.

GREAT ALFRED STREET, NOTTINGHAM,

June 5, '55.

MY DEAREST AND MOST PRECIOUS KATE — Thy kind note is just to hand. All well, Mr. Thomas shall marry us. I do not know hardly how to write him on the subject. But I suppose I must. I would much rather call. I have not been very high spirited since the Conference, so perhaps my last note or two have partaken of the colour of my feelings. Your last was quite satisfactory or I should have said so. I quite feel as you do with respect to the ceremony; in fact, the whole affair, and most heartily wish it was over. But that soon will be. Time flies most rapidly. I shall soon once more be sitting by your side. I shall make no arrangements for the future, and should we not have any family, and should your health permit it, we will not encumber ourselves with a home. I have obtained an address for apartments at Ryde, Isle of Wight. . . .

And now follows the last letter before the marriage:

SPALDING,

June 8, '55.

• MY OWN DARLING KATE — Bless you, how soon once more shall we meet again. Meet as we have never met before, with different feelings and different prospects. That which has been regarded as looming in the far-off distance now is very, very near. You are to be mine. We are to be one. Yes, *one*. My whole soul must lie open before your gaze, and it will be. Yes! it shall be. And thou art to be my guardian watcher. And we are to commence our life *together* in one united and, I trust, continued sacrifice, for God's glory and the welfare of our fellowmen. And yet in it I trust we shall be happy. Mutual forbearance, affection, heart-love, will do all things, be a talisman which will turn all our domestic anxieties and trials into bonds of love and cause of mutual joy. You know me; I am fitful, *very*; I mourn over it, I hate myself on account of it. But there it is; a dark column in the inner

life of my spirit. "You know it." Bless you; I will try; but suppose I fail to make myself better, thou wilt bear with me and I will try and be all that thou desirest. I pray for help from on High. Oh yes, God will give it me. Nay, give it us.

The reader will remember a reference in one of these letters to what is called the Women's Question. The letter of Catherine Mumford which provoked that reply is happily preserved, and with this letter, illuminating in many ways, the present chapter of our history may conclude.

*From Catherine Mumford to William Booth.*

*April 9, '55.*

MY OWN DEAR LOVE — I am all alone and not equal to much besides, so I will write a bit to *thee*, which generally makes me forget loneliness and everything else for a time. I have been thinking that I did not notice a little information in one of your notes last week, although it gave me very great pleasure. I refer to your defence of those two subjects not only dear to my heart, but, in my estimation, of vast *importance* to the world.<sup>1</sup> I am sure, had I been present, I should have regarded you with increased pride and affection, for there is nothing so inspires my admiration as a noble stand for *right*, in opposition to paltry prejudice and lordly tyranny. I admire Mr. Thomas more for his *noble* nature than his splendid genius. I cannot bear a time-serving, truth-sacrificing spirit. I would not falsify my convictions on any subject to gain the plaudits of a *world*, and *proud* shall I be if my husband proves himself in this respect a man whom I can delight to honour. It is a great pity that in the Church, at least, there should be so great a need for this fearless defence of what, but for enslaving prejudice and pitiable littleness, would at *once* commend itself to every man's conscience; but since it *is so*, God multiply the unflinching defenders of principles and "rights" of all kinds.

I am thankful to my *heart's core* that you are a teetotaler; so deep is my conviction of the *righteousness* of the principle that *nothing* could buy my consent to your upholding and countenancing the drinking customs of society. I believe that God's deep *curse* is on them, and never till the Church repents, and washes her hands of them, will she do much for the world. The convinced, convicted multitudes of her members *must* end the controversy by coming out on the side of *right*, or mere worldlings will put them to shame (as they are doing) and take the flag of this glorious conflict, and final victory, for ever out of their hands. Oh that God may send some mighty-

<sup>1</sup> Teetotalism and Women's Rights.

rushing moral influence to arouse them. I know you say Amen, and it is no little gratification to me that you not only sympathize with my views, but *defend* them; *bless you*, it is sweet to see and feel alike, is it not?

If, on that *other* subject you mention, my views are *right*, how delighted I should be for you to see as fully with me on it too; you know I feel no less deeply on this subject, and perhaps you think I take rather a prejudiced view of it; but I have searched the Word of God through and through, I have tried to deal honestly with every passage on the subject, not forgetting to pray for light to perceive and grace to submit to the truth, however humiliating to my nature, but I solemnly assert that the more I think and read on the subject, the more satisfied I become of the true and scriptural character of my own views. I am ready to admit that in the majority of cases the training of woman has made her man's inferior, as under the degrading slavery of heathen lands she is inferior to her own sex in Christian countries; but that *naturally* she is in any respect except physical strength and courage, inferior to man I cannot see *cause* to believe, and I am sure no one can prove it from the *Word of God*, and it is on *this* foundation that professors of religion always try to establish it. Oh prejudice, what will it not do! I would not alter woman's domestic position (when indeed it is scriptural) because God has plainly fixed it; *He* has told her to obey her husband, and therefore she ought to do so, if she profess to serve God; her husband's rule over her was part of the sentence for her disobedience, which would, by the by, have been no curse at all if he had ruled over her *before*, by dint of superiority—but God *ordained* her subjection as a punishment *for sin*, and *therefore* I submit; but I cannot believe that inferiority was the ground of it; if it had, it *must* have existed prior to the curse and thus have nullified it.

Oh I believe that volumes of light will yet be shed on the world on this subject; it will *bear examination* and abundantly repay it. We want a few mighty and generous spirits to go thoroughly into it, pen in hand; and I believe that the time is not far distant when God will raise up such; but I believe woman is destined to assume her true position, and exert her proper influence by the special exertions and attainments of her *own sex*; she has to struggle through mighty difficulties too obvious to need mentioning, but they will eventually dwindle before the spell of her developed and cultivated *mind*. The heaving of society in America (the birthplace of so much that is great and noble), though throwing up, as all such movements do, much that is absurd and extravagant and which I no more approve than you, yet shows that principles are working and enquiries awakening. May the *Lord*, even the

just and impartial one, overrule all for the true emancipation of women from the swaddling-bands of prejudice, ignorance, and custom, which, almost the world over, have so long debased and wronged her. In appealing thus to the Lord I am deeply *sincere*, for I believe that one of the greatest boons to the race would be woman's exaltation to her proper position mentally and spiritually. Who can tell its consequences to posterity? If what writers on physiology say be true, and experience seems to render it unquestionable, what must be the effects of neglect of mental culture, and the inculcation of frivolous, *servile*, and self-degrading notions into the minds of the *mothers* of humanity? Oh, what endears the Christian religion to my heart is what it *has* done, and *is destined* to do, for my own sex; and that which excites my indignation beyond anything else is to hear its sacred precepts dragged forward to favour degrading arguments.

Oh for a few more Adam Clarkes to dispel the ignorance of the Church, then should we not hear very *pigmies* in Christianity reasoning against holy and intelligent women opening their mouths for the Lord in the presence of the Church. Whenever you have to argue with such, just direct them to read the three following passages and Clarke's comment on the two first: Exodus 15th chapter, 20-22 verses; Judges 1st chapter, from the 4th verse; and 2nd Chronicles 34th chapter, from the 21st verse. In the first he says the same word in the original is used in reference to *Moses* and the other prophets, and therefore Miriam was as truly inspired; and, that she was chosen and constituted joint *leader* of the people, we have the express Word of God for it by Micah, 4th chapter, 4th verse: "For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and *I sent* before thee Moses, Aaron, and *Miriam*." On the latter, Clarke says that Deborah seems to have been supreme as well in *civil* matters as in spiritual. "She *judged* Israel"—the same term as is used to denote the functions of the regular judges—she appointed Barak as general of the armies, as well as declared God's will to him, and Barak most unhesitatingly recognized her authority. But read *carefully* the whole account, as also that in the 34th chapter of 2nd Chronicles, and say whether in *any* respect you can discover any difference between the exercise of the prophetic power, or the recognition of its reality and force, in these cases and those of Isaiah or Jeremiah.

It is worthy of remark that there are no less than *six* prophetesses mentioned in the Old Testament, one of whom was unquestionably *judge* as well as prophet. And these are not mentioned in a way which would lead one to suppose that the inspired writer regarded them as anything very *extraordinary*; they are simply introduced to our notice like the other



prophets. Now God having *once* spoken *directly* by *woman*, and man having once recognized her divine commission, and obeyed it, on what ground is Omnipotence to be restricted, or woman's spiritual labours ignored? Who shall dare say unto the Lord "What doest Thou?" when He "pours out His Spirit upon His handmaidens," or when it is poured out, shall I render it null with impunity? If *indeed* there is in "Christ Jesus neither male nor female," but in all touching *His* kingdom "they are one," who shall dare thrust woman out of the Church's operations, or presume to put *my* candle which God has lighted under a bushel? Why should the swaddling bands of blind custom which in Wesley's days were so triumphantly broken, and with such glorious results thrown to the moles and bats, be again wrapped round the female disciples of the Lord, as if the natural, and in some cases, distressing timidity of woman's nature, were not sufficient barrier to her obeying the dictates of the Spirit, whenever that Spirit calls her to any public testimony for her Lord? Oh, it is cruel for the *Church* to foster prejudice so unscriptural, and thus make the path of usefulness the path of untold suffering. Let me advise *you*, my Love, to get settled views on this subject and be able to render a reason to every caviller, and *then* fearlessly incite *all* whom you believe the *Lord* has fitted to help you in your Master's work, male or female, Christ has given them no *single talent* to be hid in a napkin, and yet oh what thousands are wrapped up and buried, which used and improved would yield "some thirty, some sixty, yea and some an *hundred fold*." If God has given her the ability, why should not woman persuade the vacillating, instruct and console the penitent, and pour out her soul in prayer for sinners? Will the plea of bashfulness or custom excuse her to *Him* who has put such honour upon *her*, as to deign to become her *Son*, in order to redeem her race; will these pleas excuse her to *Him* who last at the cross and first at the sepulchre was attended by women who so far forgot bashfulness as to testify their love for Him before a taunting rabble, and who so far overcame *custom* that when *all* (even fellow-disciples) forsook Him and fled, they remained faithful to the last and even then lingered "afar off" loath to lose sight of an object so precious?

Oh blessed Jesus! He is indeed "the woman's conquering seed." He has taken the bitterest part of her curse "out of the way, nailing it to his cross." In *Him* she rises to the dignity of her nature. In *Him* her *equality* with her earthly lord is realized, for "in Him there is neither male nor female," and while the outward semblance of her curse remains, in *Him* it is nullified by love being made the law of marriage. "Husbands *love* your wives *as* Christ loved the church, and gave *Himself* for it." Who shall call subjection to such a



husband a curse? Truly "*He* who was made a curse for us" hath beautifully extracted the venom; for what wife who *loves the Lord* can feel it a burden to "reverence" a husband thus *like Him*? — and glory to His name, while His death did *this*, and His precepts are so *tender* and so *easy*, His *example* is no less endearing. In her society He loved to spend His hours of repose and holy retirement in the *lovely little home at Bethany*. To her at the roadside well He made His only *positive* avowal of His Messiahship, and set aside the trammels of national custom to talk with her. For *her* He made a way of escape from her merciless though no less guilty accusers, and while sending *them* away conscience smitten, to *her* He extended His tender mercy, "neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

He never slighted her, overlooked her, or cast a more *severe construction* on sin in *her* than in *man*; no, He treated her in *all respects* the same. His last affectionate solicitude, in the midst of expiring agonies, was exercised for *her*, and, oh, best of all, His rising salutation, the first view of His glorified body, that pledge of His victory over her ancient enemy, was given to *her* with a commission to go and *publish* to His disciples, the fact of His resurrection. Methinks if some of our modern quibblers had been amongst them, they would have hesitated to receive such tidings from *her*; but not so Peter and John, they ran swiftly at *her* word, as if it had been a man's, and "stooping down and looking in" realized the glorious truths. Oh that many Marys may yet *tell* of His wonderful salvation. But I must conclude. I had no idea of writing so much when I began, but I do not regret it. I have long wanted to put my thoughts on this subject on paper, and I am sure thou wilt not value them the less because they are on *such* a subject. I have not written so much to thee as *for* thee, I want thee to feel as I do if you canst; but if not be as honest in thy opinions as I am, and I will honour thee for them.

If you gain anything by what I have writ, I should praise God on hearing it, otherwise I do not desire you to *answer* this. I have written it in much weariness and I should be pleased and gratified if thou wilt give it a *serious* reading. Perhaps sometime with thy permission (for I am going to promise to *obey* thee before I have any intention of entering on such work) I may write something more extensive on this subject, and on reading over this letter I perceive it would under such circumstances be a help to me; therefore I desire thee to take *special care* of it, for I can only write *thus* in certain frames of mind. Bless you, I know you will give credit for true patriotism, for you *know* nothing I have said is to be interpreted personally. Alas! I feel that *I* am far inferior to

many of my *own sex*, and therefore am the last to claim superiority, but such as I am I am *thine* in love's own bonds.  
CATHERINE.

I have "written it for a memorial in a letter" instead of a book.

## CHAPTER XVI

### MARRIAGE, HONEYMOON, AND THE THEOLOGY OF REVIVALISM

1855

ON the 16th June, 1855, William Booth and Catherine Mumford, both of them being twenty-six years of age, were married by the Rev. Dr. Thomas at the Stockwell New Chapel in South London. Mr. Mumford was present at this wedding and one of William Booth's sisters. No other minister assisted Dr. Thomas, and there was no congregation.

The honeymoon was spent at Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, the bride and bridegroom occupying those comfortable lodgings of which William Booth had heard a good account in the north of England. One week was devoted to this delicate foundation of married life, and then the Reverend and Mrs. William Booth, of the Methodist New Connexion, started off for a religious campaign in Guernsey.

It is time to say that these revivals, into which the Booths threw themselves with an enthusiasm scarcely to be matched by the earliest Christians, rose out of a theological ground which was then universally accepted by the Church. Whether we may think that ground narrow or false, it was the foundational theology of the period — a ground, moreover, which no man could even reverently criticize without the startling consequence of finding himself numbered among the infidels. The Booths, standing on this acknowledged ground, were perfectly logical in their action; those who stood on the same ground, and yet contented themselves with a tepid discharge of formal duties, were guilty of the disastrous offence which English people are most ready to forgive, namely, an incredible lack of imagination.

What was this theological ground universally acknowledged by the Church? One can state it so mildly that it

may be accepted by the great body of orthodox Christians even at this day; it can be stated with such brutal realism as might have startled even the flaming spirits of William and Catherine Booth fifty years ago.

In its mildest form this theology taught that entrance into Heaven could only be secured by faith in the Redemption of Christ; that man was so inherently corrupt in his nature that without the help of Almighty God he could do nothing to please Him: and that until he bowed his sinful will to the Divine Will, acknowledging Christ as his Saviour and Redeemer, he stood in dreadful peril of eternal damnation. In its more dogmatic form this theology taught that every human creature born into the world was under sentence of death, and that condemnation and wrath awaited those who refused to acknowledge the death of Christ as at once a consequence of their own personal guilt and an atonement for the sins of the whole world. Hell was indubitably regarded as the certain portion of all sinners, the just portion, indeed, of all who rejected Christ; and Hell was, also indubitably, pictured as a region of unspeakable misery which would endure for everlasting.

It must strike every honest mind that a man who entertained this theology and truthfully believed its implications must have had a heart of stone or a quite dead imagination to go quietly, peacefully, and contentedly about his business. To eat a meal when thousands were slipping into eternal Hell only a few yards from the table; to go happily to rest when thousands more were hurling themselves over the brink into those undying flames within a walk of one's comfortable bed; to stand at the reading desk or to mount the pulpit stairs with a written sermon in one's cassock-pocket, while thousands upon thousands of people remained outside the church doors satisfied with their sins, blackened with iniquity, and condemned to an unending agony of irremediable remorse — surely this was to be illogical, incomprehensible, utterly unimaginative, dead to every vestige of feeling.

Far more logical was the action of revivalists. They not only professed the accepted theology of Christendom, but they lived their lives as if it were the veritable truth

of the universe. They fought Satan as if they saw him face to face; they struggled to drag the souls of men from the edge of eternal torment; they seized the shoulders of the sleepers and bade them wake and be saved; they could not rest, nor find lasting pleasure in life, while thousands of their fellow-creatures were sinking into everlasting ruin ignorant of the means of obtaining everlasting felicity; their whole existence was an agony to rouse the torpid souls of a perishing world.

There is really nothing to excuse in the fervour and incitements of such men as William Booth if we remember their honest convictions. On the other hand, the frigid and decorous lives of their orthodox contemporaries, if we consider their theological foundation, demand an apology so subtle and tortuous that it might baffle even the cunning of a Newman to give it any form of expression short of the grotesque.

Sydney Smith's essay on "Methodism," which diverted readers of *The Edinburgh Review* and gave an elaborate satisfaction to the erudite Establishment, makes no mention whatever of this foundational teaching of the Church. "The Methodists," he said, "are always desirous of making men more religious than it is possible, from the constitution of human nature, to make them." Whether he ever preached a sermon from the text, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; *for they shall be filled*," or from the injunction, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect," we do not know and are not greatly concerned to discover; but much would we give and to great pains would we most willingly put ourselves to ascertain the precise condition of the delightful and witty Canon's state of mind when reciting at public worship those pronouncements of the Church which declare the everlasting damnation of the wicked.

But the only serious question for the reader of this history concerns the honesty of the Booths. Did they really believe what they taught? Did they conscientiously and implicitly hold as the very truth of existence that escape from Hell could only be secured by faith in the



Atonement of Christ? Were they passionate and whole-hearted seekers of the lost, burningly, unselfishly set upon the saving of souls, truthfully convinced that they held the commission of Christ; or were they merely the mountebanks of religious history, charlatans out for gain and notoriety, detestable hypocrites teaching what they did not believe, living clean contrary to their profession, laughing up their sleeves in secret at the victims of their cleverness? "We are for common sense orthodoxy," said Sydney Smith. What, then, were the Booths for? — what was their share, if any, in this rare conjunction of common sense and orthodox religion?

The letters which have appeared in previous chapters entirely answer any reasonable question on the head of honesty. No unprejudiced person can read those remarkable letters without convincing himself that perhaps truer and more honest souls never lived than this obscure Methodist preacher and the woman who shared the burden of his vocation. It would be impossible for any man however malicious to prove them dishonest. Honest they were in heart and soul, too honest for their peace and comfort, too honest for their worldly prosperity. But, a more difficult question remains to be answered. One asks whether William Booth, William Booth particularly — William Booth with his shrewd common sense and his obstinate self-questionings, his doubts and scepticisms even in the midst of the religious excitation which he himself had brought about — whether he had honourably assured himself that what he proclaimed so loudly and so convincingly from the platform expressed the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, of God's relation with humanity?

The easiest answer to this question is supplied in letters written by the man himself in later life. He acknowledged that his outlook at this time was narrow; he confessed that he was guilty of ignorance and of inexperience. But by this he did not mean that he ever wished his early work undone, or that he had deceived himself in the doing of it; he meant that he had circumscribed his labours to religious circles; that he had not realized the immense part played

in human tragedy by ignorance and poverty and pardonable frailty; that he had not sounded so deeply as he came to sound with larger experience the boundless charity of God. He was a man, as we can never tire of emphasizing, whose mind developed and whose character ripened to the very last. He was always in the act of growth. Therefore, without personal bias of any kind, with an actual distaste for the violence and excesses of revivalism, one must acquit him of any degree of self-deception or any inclination to shirk the ordeal of a searching analysis of his beliefs. He believed, as his letters overwhelmingly prove, that any temptation to desist from seeking the instant salvation of his fellows, any inclination to modify his methods, any whispering doubt as to his future, his health, or his happiness, came from the enemy of his soul. Faith in Satan was tremendously real to him. He felt himself called by God; he knew himself tempted in a hundred directions from a perfectly pure response to that call; and those doubts and questionings, which his intellectual power was unable to face and answer, he ascribed, naturally and logically, to the forces of evil.

I believe him to have been as honest a man as ever found himself governed by a religious conscience. I believe him to have been a man who made mistakes, who was perhaps ignorant, who was often thoughtless, and who was too easily satisfied that the Devil whispered every objection that rose from the depths to the surface of his consciousness; further, I believe that he accustomed himself to employ in the service of righteousness methods for which his taste, if definitely challenged in later years, would have expressed no approval, and of which his intellect, patiently summoned to give judgment, would have offered a settled condemnation; but I am convinced that from the very first to the very last the man's soul was wholesome and true, that he acted from an absolute purity of motive, that he was as selfless as any man in modern conditions of life can ever hope to be in seeking the welfare and the salvation of his fellow-creatures.

Revivalism can be presented to the judgment of men in such a manner as to inspire only disgust and horror. Even

when fairly and justly presented it makes no powerful appeal to contemporary imagination. Mankind has passed away from the ancient thesis of a distant and an angered God; theology, except in Rome, has ranged itself with science and philosophy in a search for the truth of life; Christology has created in the wistful heart of multitudes an infinitely more beautiful idea of the Incarnation; men now deeply, hopefully, and quietly believe that the Spirit of God is associated with humanity in an evolution of being which goes from transcendence to transcendence in an infinite circle of increasing existence; but with this newer and enlarged theology, with this deeper and therefore more boundless faith, who that widely knows the world can truthfully say that even now the hour of revivalism is past, that the cry to the multitude, *Awake out of sleep*, is not still as urgent and as divinely inspired as it was in the earliest days of William and Catherine Booth?

This history will show, I think, that the revivalism of the Booths in its first manifestations was at least justified by the state of theological knowledge, and that in its later and more humane activities it was, is still, and is likely for many more years yet to be, entirely justified by the condition of human society.

I shall not weary the reader with a laborious chronicle of their early revivals; my purpose is to show, so far as their own letters will supply the evidence, the human side of these revivalists and the many difficulties of their social history. I am more anxious to make their personalities real and intimate to posterity than to establish the successes, great or small, which accompanied their progress through the cities of England. The work by which they will be known down the centuries is not the work of their early revivalism, but the establishment of the Salvation Army — and that alone is an organization whose activity covers so vast an area of the earth's surface that many volumes would scarcely suffice to relate its history.

My purpose, then, is to supply in this place as faithful a portrait as my materials and my powers will permit of the man who came through Methodism and through itinerant revivalism to the founding of an entirely new body of

Christians, a body of Christians whose influence has already left a permanent impression upon all the Churches and nearly all the domestic politics of the world. I shall use the history of the early revivalism only so far as it subserves this chief purpose, so far as it helps us to see, to hear, and to know the man William Booth. It is more necessary to understand the spirit of that revivalism, to understand it, and to sympathize with it in the manner we have already suggested, than to learn that such a town was visited in such a year, and that in the prayer-meeting so many came to the penitent form, and so many were "good cases." The contemporary reader, I think, will thank me for sparing him all such troublesome details, and certainly the only judgment that posterity will pass upon this book will concern the vigour of the portrait it attempts to paint of a man whose character will be of curious attraction as long as the world is interested in the history of religion.

The revivalism of William Booth proceeded from the depths of his own soul as well as from his theological convictions. He was a man sharply conscious of his own faults, plagued by temptations of body and mind, the unhappy victim of a morbid infirmity. So far as the current theology confirmed his settled opinion that every ill wish which visited his mind came from Satan, the adversary of souls, so far theology influenced his conduct. But it was really this presence in himself, this continual companionship, of a nature inferior to that higher nature of which he was conscious in moods of religious exaltation; the perpetual haunting, the unlifting pressure of an evil spirit antagonistic to his peace; the breath upon his cheek, the whisper in his ear, the guidance at his elbow, the flame and fire perpetually within his blood of a demon plotting the eternal ruin of his soul — it was this root of evil in himself, and not theology, which drove him first upon his knees and then into the streets as a preacher of salvation.

Nothing was more certain to him than the existence of Satan — the proof thereof tortured his own heart. So evil did he feel himself to be that his thought was not in the least staggered by the punishment of eternal Hell. So profoundly conscious was he in moments of religious peace

of a relief from this inner torment that he could believe it came only from the mercy of God, a gift of the Son who had died to save his soul from death. Thus, so far as theology confirmed his experience, he was a theologian; but it was out of his own travail of soul that he fashioned his religion; and religion for him, from first to last, was a matter of the most personal and piercing experience. He feared and hated the Devil; he adored the Son of God, who had given him the victory over sin. Saturated through and through, penetrated and interpenetrated by this sense of an overwhelming gratitude to Christ; conscious, also, in himself of the most pervasive and sufficing happiness in his union with God, what could he do but go to those in darkness and ignorance, proclaiming with a vociferation, never mind how loud and alarming, the good news of a free and perfect salvation?

In an account he has given us of one of his earliest sermons — that under which the daughter of his tutor, Dr. Cooke, was converted — we see with perfect clearness the simple character of his theology at this time — he was then 22 — and also the driving force of personal experience at the back of his preaching:

I described a wreck on the ocean, with the affrighted people clinging to the masts between life and death, waving a flag of distress to those on shore, and, in response, the life-boat going off to the rescue. . . . I reminded my hearers that they had suffered shipwreck on the ocean of time through their sins and rebellion; that they were sinking down to destruction, but that if they would only hoist the signal of distress Jesus Christ would send off the life-boat to their rescue. Then, jumping on the seat at the back of the pulpit, I waved my pocket-handkerchief round and round my head to represent the signal of distress I wanted them to hoist.

One's first instinct is to shudder. Without being supercilious or hypersensitive one may justly shrink from the contemplation of this violent preacher with his waving handkerchief. But to be perfectly just, one must ask whether the current theology, the theology everywhere accepted, proclaimed, and even used as a menace to mankind, did not vindicate that leap to the seat at the back of the pulpit, did not justify the waving of that pocket-



handkerchief round the preacher's head? Is it true that millions of souls are shipwrecked, are sinking down to destruction — *everlasting destruction*? Is it true that they have only to cry to the Saviour of the world to be lifted out of the dark waters? Most important of all, is it true that unless they do so call for mercy and forgiveness, the undying worm and the unquenchable flame will feed upon their tortured souls for evermore? If this be so, if this is indeed the teaching of the Church, can any method be indecorous, any tone too strident, any gesture too violent, any antic too shocking and startling, that rouses even one perishing soul to escape a calamity so unthinkable as remorse and agony prolonged throughout the ages of eternity? Again, one must in fairness contend that the perfectly polite and unruffled seemliness of the orthodox, who cherish this theology as the truth of God, is a matter not only indefensible to casuistry but repellent to the most primitive instincts of humanity.

This sermon of the waving handkerchief is important because it helps one to understand the crude theology of William Booth at the beginning of his career, and to see how real was the experience from which he drew this violent illustration. He clearly held that every soul born into human life was in peril of everlasting destruction; he believed that every living soul, by its sins and rebellion, merited destruction; that destruction must infallibly be its lot but for the Atonement of Christ; and there his theology ended and his humanity began. No intellectual test was asked, no adherence was demanded to a string of self-contradicting formulae; all that was needed even of the very worst was a cry from the heart of their own helplessness for the mercy and forgiveness of an Infinite Christ. But there was something more, he tested the reality of that cry. He did not tell these troubled and affrighted souls that they had only to give up their sins, join a church, and go regularly to the public worship of God in order to be certain of an angel's destiny in Paradise; he told them that they must be born again; that they themselves at the very centre of their being must suffer a will change so utter, a transformation so complete, a conversion so unerring, that the very

face of life should appear to them for evermore altered and transfigured. The cry was their part — and they could do no more than cry; the change was the miracle of God. If their cry came very truly from the grief of a broken heart, from the bitter knowledge that of themselves they could do nothing to save themselves from judgment and destruction; then, of a surety, the miracle would descend swiftly to their relief. From the very first he preached this essential need of conversion, and never once did he make the forgiveness of God to depend either upon the easiness of a life of repentance or the difficulty of a theological proposition. He made it hard for the sinner, but only hard for his heart where it was a greater hardness that alone stood in the way of divine mercy.

This theology of William Booth was not greatly modified by experience; in later life, with a knowledge of the human heart probably unrivalled, he saw the same teaching of this old theology with an infinitely wider vision; but it must be confessed that he remained to the very end of his days a most intractable Philistine as regards the entire region of the intellect. What was merely a loose intuition in this respect during youth became in age a settled conviction. He detested the arrogance of dogmatic science. In the impatience of his sorrow for the oppressed he considered literature and the fine arts as the mere playthings of a childish humanity. He turned his back on philosophy, as being often a trick of the Devil to catch mankind with the delusions of the reason. He was born a provincial, and he remained a provincial. He was not born a Hebraist, but he made himself the most uncompromising Hebraist of his time. He must always be judged as a man who, for the sake of Christ, denied his period and lived without enthusiasm for human inquiry.

When we consider these things, remembering at the same time that he held the generally accepted theology of his day, we shall more easily sympathize with the spirit of his revivalism. He knew little or nothing of textual criticism, nothing of historical criticism, nothing of German theology; nothing of psychology, nothing of philosophy, nothing of physical science. He knew nothing of archi-

ture, nothing of painting, and nothing of classical music. Furthermore, at this period of his career he knew very little indeed of life; was acquainted, indeed, only with the dissenting aspect of the commonwealth, was in touch only with the outermost suburbs of human society. When he married Catherine Mumford he was an ill-educated pastor of a section of the Methodist body, a man only remarkable for the intensity of his feelings, the honesty of his nature, and the power of his oratory. But the reader of his letters must already have perceived that while he was this, and while on the surface he was nothing more, there was in the depths of his rough, wilful, and untutored being a gnawing hunger and a consuming thirst for sanctification, a great struggle for spiritual perfection, and a dogged, obstinate, unconquerable passion to do the will of God against the obstruction of Hell itself.

Again and again throughout his letters there is the same foreshadowing of an ultimate immortality that exists, calmly and quietly, in the most perfect and imperishable of Shakespeare's sonnets — a cry, as it were, from the dark blackness of a soul overshadowed by the powers of evil and wretched with poverty, ignorance, and a will pulling contrary to the divine, a cry that somewhere, somehow, and somewhen he will veritably strike an immortal blow for God and his fellow-men. It is this conviction of a destiny, this heroic faith in a high calling on the part of a man hampered by physical weakness and hindered on every hand by authority and indifference, which most interests us in William Booth as a revivalist, helping us to maintain our sympathy, and to expect a greater man. First to his youthful friends in Nottingham, and afterwards with a much greater intensity and a far more persistent reiteration to Catherine Mumford, he confided this feeling within himself of a power to do something for the salvation of man which should add fresh glory to religion. His friends believed in him, and Catherine Mumford, warning him against ambition, believed in him too. After long years of wandering in the wilderness he was to enter the promised land and to justify this faith in his destiny.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE HAPPINESS OF A YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE

1855-1856

So great had been the success of William Booth's various missions that the Annual Conference of the New Connexion, which was held a little time before his marriage, freed him from his circuit in London, and appointed him to the work of roving evangelist, "to give the various circuits an opportunity of having his services during the coming year."

In this way the young married couple were destined to spend some considerable time of their life without the comfort and convenience of a home. As early as August in that year of 1855 — owing chiefly to Catherine's illness — they were separated, William Booth writing from York to his "precious wife," who was with her parents in London: "I feel as though a part of myself were wanting," he says to her; adding, "How often during my journey have I taken my eyes from off the book I was reading to think about you — yes, to think tenderly about you, about our future and our home."

Catherine felt this parting keenly, and tells him how it was almost intolerable, so that she even had thoughts of starting off, in spite of her illness, to join him again:

. . . the fact of your being *gone* beyond my reach, the possibility of something happening before we could meet again, the possible shortness of the time we may have to spend together, and such like thoughts, would start up, making rebellious nature rise and swell and scorn all restraints of reason, philosophy, or religion.

She signs herself on this occasion, "Remember me always as your own faithful, loving, joyful little wife."

When they met again, Catherine wrote to her parents describing her happiness, and exclaiming, "He is kinder and more tender than ever, and is very, very glad I came. Bless him! He is worth a *bushel* of the ordinary sort."

Tender as he was, and full of sympathy for her continued suffering, William Booth could not drag himself from his work to nurse his sick wife. Very soon after this reunion they were parted again, she remaining at Hull and he going to Caistor as an evangelist. Her letters to her parents furnish a second-hand report of his triumphs and declare the sorrows of her heart in this enforced loneliness. "I would not be a voluntary exile from my beloved husband, even for a week."

We are to have apartments at Sheffield. You cannot think with what joy I anticipate being to ourselves once more. . . . For though I get literally oppressed with kindness, I must say I would prefer a home, where we could sit down together at our own little table, myself the mistress and my husband the only guest. . . . My precious William is all I desire, and without this what would the most splendid home be but a glittering bauble? Then, too, by living in different families and places, I have much room for observation and reflection on various phases of life and character which I hope will benefit my mind and increase my knowledge. . . .

A reference to her father, which follows, needs the parenthetical explanation that Mr. Mumford was suffering commercial reverses, and that with these financial anxieties he was once more sinking into a condition of indifference to religion — the ex-lay preacher crushed quite out of existence by the pressing failure of the coach-builder:

Tell father that he must not wait for a change of *circumstances* before he begins to serve God, but seek *first* the Kingdom of Heaven. . . . I wish he could be introduced into such a revival as that at Hull. God is doing great and marvellous things there.

He is bringing to His fold  
Rich and poor and young and old.

Out of his scanty earnings William Booth, the impulsive and headlong evangelist, found means to help his impecunious father-in-law. "Herewith," he wrote from Sheffield, in September, 1855, "you have P.O. for two pounds, made payable to John Mumford, at the General Post Office." He is evidently looking about him for some chance of helping this unfortunate father-in-law to make



a fresh start. "I am anxious you should keep your spirits and make an effort by and by. I think that a large town something like Sheffield would be better than the Potteries, but perhaps I am not the best judge." He expresses himself as confident of Mr. Mumford's "ability and success" if once he could get a fair start. On the same sheet Catherine writes to her father:

I quite agree with you in thinking yourself well adapted for an Auctioneer, and I have faith to believe you will yet get into business and do *well*; keep your spirits up and don't conclude that because you cannot get away *just now* you must necessarily stay where you are all the Winter. . . . I hope the enclosed order will be sufficient; we intended sending another pound, but William has not written to the Committee for money, and he runs rather short just now; but if you *want* more, send word, as he can write in a couple of days and will with pleasure send you some.

After a reference to her husband's success, telling how his name is "posted on the walls in monster bills," she addresses herself to her mother:

I often wish I could come and see you. I should like to have a little private conversation, my beloved mother. I am very sorry you have been so unfortunate in your search after apartments; nevertheless, I think there is a kind providence watching over you, and I believe all will turn out right in the end. Don't be harassed about the rent; when you have done what you can, I am sure William will help you out; he feels more with you and manifests more interest in your welfare than ever I expected he would; but it is only one of the *many* things in which he has exceeded my expectation. Bless him, I have only one fear, and that is that he will wear himself out prematurely. . . .

In another of her letters, Catherine Booth tells her mother that a composition of hers, "On the training of young converts," which has already appeared in the *New Connexion Magazine*, was now published in the *Canadian Christian Witness*, "so it has found an audience on the other side of the Atlantic." She then says, "I have been reading a very good work on Homœopathy which has removed my last difficulty on the subject, and if I should be ill I should like a homœopathic doctor." But she is

not entirely occupied with chapel-going, writing for the New Connexion Press, and studying books of medicine; she has her wardrobe to think about:

I shall soon begin to feel the cold in travelling and shall want my merino dress, etc., etc. You will have to send us a parcel before we leave Sheffield, but I will send a list of what we want next week. . . . Let Letty unpick the skirt of my merino dress and wash it nicely for me (body as well) — if you have not opportunity to make the skirt up again you must send it undone, and I must get it done at Leeds. I shall want you to send likewise that old black cloth cloak to make me a loose jacket to wear under my shawl when travelling. Will you look at William's best coat? I hope the moths are not in reach of it.

After bidding her mother look in the second drawer and send word as to what flannel underclothing the Rev. William Booth possesses which would be worth sending, she winds up with the suggestion that Mrs. Mumford should advertise for a good lodger, saying, "you would soon save a little to serve as capital for father at the beginning."

In one of her letters written from Sheffield on October 5, and addressed to "My very dear Parents," occurs a significant sentence: "I enclose a few lines solely on personal matters, *i.e.* relating exclusively to *myself*, which I wish mother *only* to see." Later in the same letter:

The place we have been to to-day is one of the most *splendid* houses I ever visited, and has a very kind and sympathetic lady for its mistress. . . . I like her much; she will prove a valuable friend to me while here. She is within a fortnight of her confinement, so she can sympathize with me fully. I feel this to be a special boon just now, because though in the house where we are staying I have everything *else* I want, I have no sympathy — simply because it forms no part of the nature of my hostess — which you know is a great desideratum with me. But I have everything in my precious husband which makes other things insignificant; otherwise I should soon be in London again with my own dear mother.

In conclusion, "William encloses ten shillings' worth of letter stamps which I presume father can easily get cash for amongst his city friends; it is for you to defray your

expenses in going to the Crystal Palace; now *remember!* that is what it is sent for; we both wish you to go."

But William Booth not only thinks of sending his poor dejected mother-in-law for a recuperative trip to the Crystal Palace, denying himself for this purpose, but becomes every day more tender, more kind, more loving, to his sick wife. Himself an invalid, and all but prostrate after every fresh exertion in the pulpit, he is Catherine's constant nurse and faithful servant. He rises at all hours of the night to give her nourishment and to tend the fire. He is never too tired to comfort her. She tells her parents of this increasing love, stopping in the midst of her news to say that William has just entered the room "exhausting his vocabulary of kind words and tender epithets," and cries out from a heart overflowing with gratitude, "Whence to *me* such waste of love?"

One cannot read these old and faded letters without perceiving a change both in William and Catherine Booth. On her part, she is no longer the writer of the love-letters, a woman so obsessed by religion that her humanity scarcely appears there, so mindful of God that she can hardly write one letter to her lover without a reproach, an admonishment, a warning, or a cry for deeper spirituality; she is now, with an even quickened sense of religion, the adoring wife and the expectant mother, full of concern for domestic trifles which are really of immense concern, and happy, contented, ravished by a wonderful love. And he, for his part, is no longer tortured about his soul or fearful of ambition. He is overflowing with love, he is surer of his mission, he is swept forward by an unmistakable enthusiasm. Nothing is too humble for him to do in the lodgings that form their home, no service is too great or too small for him to render to his wife. It is as if in their love they had found the solution of their religious difficulties, as if deep acquaintance with each other had solved the problems of their separate personalities.

Certainly William Booth had never preached with greater effect. This mission in Sheffield was perhaps his first whirlwind triumph. The chapels were so full that the stairs of the pulpits were crowded and hundreds stood at the doors. Conversions occurred among people of all

classes. He was besought to go to other chapels in the neighbourhood. The church to which he belonged seems to have realized that a new Wesley had arisen in their midst. And it is interesting to discover that Catherine Booth's anxiety for his future, and her criticisms of his dangers, came to an end at this period:

We had a wonderful day at the chapel yesterday, a *tremendous crowd* jammed together like sheep in a pen, and one of the *mightiest* sermons at night I ever listened to, from "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me!" . . . I believe that if God spares him, and he is faithful to his trust, his usefulness will be untold, and beyond our capacity to estimate. He is becoming more and more effective every day, and God seems to be preparing him in his *own soul* for greater things yet.

We do indeed (she writes) find our earthly heaven in each other. . . . I never knew him in a more spiritual and devotional condition of mind. His character daily rises in my esteem and admiration. . . . He often tells me he could not have believed he should ever have loved a being as he loves me.

After the strain of the mission in Sheffield, the Booths went to Chatsworth for a brief rest before making a fresh onslaught at Dewsbury. Old Mrs. Booth had come to them, and Catherine expresses pleasure at this meeting. "She is a very nice-looking old lady, and of a very sweet and amiable spirit." The party was a pleasant one in every way, for old Mrs. Booth — sweetened by age — could now enjoy the popularity attained by her only son, the young Mrs. Booth was no longer anxious about her husband's future, and William Booth himself was able to rest for a few days from incessant preaching. The letters are full of rather guide-book descriptions of Chatsworth, with only an occasional deviation into moral reflection. "The old Duke," wrote Catherine, "ought to be a happy man, if worldly possessions can give felicity. But alas! we know they cannot. And, according to all accounts, he is one of those to whom they have failed to impart it." She also tells her mother that Sir Joseph Paxton's house, "quite a gentleman's seat," is near the lodge which is kept by one "who still works as a plodding gardener." Then she says, "They both came on to the estate together, and at equal

wages, which were very low. And now one is 'Sir Joseph,' known all over the world, while the other is still but keeper of the Lodge."

This holiday gives us a picture of the revivalist taking his ease in the country. We learn that he was enchanted by the beauty of Derbyshire, that he walked vigorously, and that he was so happy and exhilarated that he saluted people encountered on the road. Mrs. Booth relates how "the dark frowning cliffs on one hand, the splendid autumnal tints of rich foliage on the other, and the ever-varying views of hill and dale . . . tinged with glory from a radiant sky, filled us with unutterable emotions of admiration, exhilaration, and joy." We learn, too, that when she had walked as far as her strength could carry her, William Booth would leave her to rest and plunge farther up the dale with all the enthusiasm of a Hazlitt. On one of those occasions, Mrs. Booth waited "at a very ancient and comical kind of inn," where she enjoyed "a very cosy and to me amusing chat in rich Derbyshire brogue with an old man over his pipe and mug of ale."

No sooner did this delightful holiday come to an end than Mrs. Booth was attacked by a severe inflammation of the lungs. They were at Dewsbury, and her husband was once more called upon to bear the equally exhausting parts of revivalist and sick nurse. We have the official records of astonishing success in the pulpit, and eloquent testimonies from Mrs. Booth in her letters home to his extraordinary tenderness and loving-kindness at the bedside.

In announcing to her parents that the itinerary of this revivalism was carrying them to Leeds, Mrs. Booth expresses an opinion which gives one an amusing view of her vigorous character:

I believe we are to have a very nice home, where there are no children, quite a recommendation, seeing how they are usually trained! I hope if I have not both sense and grace to train mine so that they shall not be a nuisance to everybody about them, that God will in mercy take them to Heaven in infancy.

From the struggle and success of the Dewsbury Revival they went to Leeds, arriving there in December, 1855, and



finding arrangements so bad that William Booth blazed out with indignation and wrath. He refused at first to co-operate with the plans prepared for him, and "it took the preacher — Mr. Crampton — till midnight to persuade him." We shall have something to say in the next chapter of William Booth's stubbornness and that strain of acerbity in his nature which perplexed so many people who came upon him for the first time in moments when, distracted by care and anxieties, he was by no means tractable or even polite; but in this place it is enough to say that he had real cause for his annoyance, and that it was entirely on unselfish grounds that he raised his objection.

The truth is, officialdom could never handle a man of this temperament. Officialdom exists in a system; officialdom has its own dignity to consider; officialdom is mediocrity in purple. William Booth was a genius and a fanatic; he would have broken with officialdom from the very first but for a curious weakness in his temperament which preyed upon the force and energy of his individual powers and led him, directly he began to reflect, to lean upon authority. He experienced those baffling alternations, those swift and torturing transitions, which plunge the soul from the heights of confidence into the depths of self-distrust. At one moment he felt himself able to remove mountains, and at the next afraid to raise his own head. It will be seen that but for Mrs. Booth this weakness, this rather amiable modesty of self-distrust, might have kept him in the shafts of officialdom to the end of his life.

It was at Leeds that William Booth first manifested a distaste for what is called society. His popularity was embarrassing, his success as a revivalist amazing, and all the accounts of that time show him as a fiery preacher not only able to crowd and pack large buildings with a breathless audience, not only able to sway the emotions of enormous congregations, but able permanently to change the lives of sinful men. But he was no hero of drawing-room and parlour. "The people would pull him to pieces to visit them," writes Mrs. Booth; "but he cannot accept one invitation without accepting others, and, besides, he wants retirement. Thus one of my hidden fears about the future

is dissipated, viz., that he would love company, and lose his relish for home and domestic joys."

These hidden fears which anxious women conceal from the husbands to whom they are mothers as well as wives, were real and serious fears in the case of Mrs. Booth. She feared popularity, she feared social success, and she feared insincerity. In spite of the devotion he showed her, in spite of his loving-kindness in her sick-room, and in spite of the spiritual impression his preaching made upon her critical mind, she was haunted by the doubt that popularity might turn his head, that social flattery might tempt him from the hard and narrow way of the enthusiast, that the exhaustion of revivalism might lead him into the destructive habits of formalism. It is, perhaps, the noblest tribute to his character that he dissipated, one by one, these hidden fears of his anxious and vigilant wife. His critics were numerous, and he made hundreds of enemies; but not one of those critics watched him so narrowly or penetrated so deeply into the recesses of his character as the wife whose hidden fears were born of love, and who desired his salvation with all the energy of her remarkable character.

She writes to her parents of the final triumph at Leeds: "My precious William excelled himself, and electrified the people. You would indeed have participated in my joy and pride could you have heard and seen what I did." And then he enters the room, reads her letter, snatches it from her, and writes: "I just want to say that the very same night she gave me a curtain lecture on my block-headism, stupidity, etc., and lo, she writes to you after this fashion. However, she is a *precious*, increasingly precious treasure to me, despite the occasional dressing-down that I come in for." And the letter concludes in her hand, "I must say in self-defence that it was not about the speech or anything important that the said curtain lecture was given, but only on a point which in no way invalidates my eulogy."

The coming of the first baby was no longer an inspiration for theological and educational discourse. Catherine Booth is now concerned only with the little clothes which she commissions her mother to get made for her, issuing mi-

nutest commands in the matter of style and trimming. She has a great longing for her mother, and writes from wretched lodgings, "there is no nurse like a mother, however kind, except a husband." Again and again she tells of William's watchfulness, tenderness, and patience. She falls ill with a very bad cough, and refuses a doctor because she fears bleeding and blistering; William pulls her through with a book on homœopathy and a medicine chest. In January she is assailed with terrible doubts as to whether the child is living; she fancies that she detects a strange difference in herself since she was taken ill with the cough. But she has moments of happiness and delight, free from all anxiety and full of confidence — this expectant mother, this delicate and impecunious girl living in provincial lodgings.

I have made a skirt of Scotch woollen plaid (she writes to her mother), which looks very nice. You will remember these plaids are favourites with Wm.; he often tells me how beautiful (!) I look, and says he wishes you could see me; and I do think I look better than ever I can remember doing; my countenance has quite lost the haggard expression it used to wear, and I generally have a little colour, so you see all this happiness is not fruitless.

But a sudden terror seizes her early in 1856. What if the child is born prematurely!

I am constantly meeting with someone who did not go their time of the first child; and it makes me anxious to be ready; for I find it is a very common thing, tho' I hope it won't happen to *me*. I should *hate* it! (the word *hate* is underlined vigorously three times) but I should get a doctor's certificate to say it was *premature*.

They were now living in 3 Gerrard Street, Hapwood Lane, Halifax, and from this address Mrs. Booth writes to her parents on February 11, 1856:

. . . I am not very well to-day, I have been out marketing this morning, and of course I have many little things to attend to in my new house, but I like it very much and never was happier, it will however make a great difference to us in money matters being on our own expenses in housekeeping. I have wished many and many a time that my dearest mother could

come in and see me every now and then, and I should not be surprised if we send for you in a hurry some day before we leave here. . . . I should like you to send the parcel as soon as you can now as I want to get everything ready. . . . Send the rose ointment you made for me, and the marking ink out of Wm.'s dressing case, also the small *soft* brush out of the case.

Five days later she writes :

MY PRECIOUS MOTHER — The parcel came to hand this morning while Wm. was out, I was not long in opening it, and while I turned over its contents I alternately laughed and cried, the *style* of the little gowns far exceeds my expectations, *they are beautifully done* — I am sure they must have tried your poor eyes sadly. If you joined the insertion yourself, you are cleverer than I gave you credit for, they are really very nice. I have only one regret respecting them and that is that the *material* is not somewhat *better*; on comparing it with some corded muslin I bought at  $\frac{1}{4}$  per yard, I find it much coarser, but perhaps it will wear no worse. I like the little tucked waists of the longcloth ones very much; Nurse says they are too good for night, and advises me to make a couple quite plain to sleep in, which I think I shall. I have not bought stuff for any frocks yet, and Nurse says since these are so nice I shall want but one for a best, so I shall not trouble about any more, and being as I am not going to make any more I should like to insert a couple of rows of insertion with a tuck between in the skirt of the best you sent, I mean the one with the jacket body, and insertion in the sleeves; can you get me some insertion like it? I have measured it round, it will take 4 yards and a half to go twice round, if you can get it like it, do so, and then you can either send it in a letter or bring it with you. The caps are little ducks. I am only afraid they have injured your eyes in doing them. . . .

William Booth encloses a letter of his own :

MY DEAR PARENTS — Your parcel has just come to hand and with it both wife and self are delighted. Mother has been very industrious, and has astonished us both with these specimens of her ingenuity and skill. I write to convey to you our united thanks, and most heartily do I join you in the hope that our dear Catherine may be safely brought through the hour of trial and that these little garments may be worn by some little stranger who will ultimately prove a source of gladness and comfort to us all.

With regard to Mamma coming here, there is but one thing

that causes us for a single moment to hesitate and that is the having to part with her lodgers. . . . We are anxious for her to be with us at the time the event occurs — but we do not want her on that account to suffer loss. Nurse is a very sensible woman, and I should think rather skilful in these undertakings.

Their first child, William Bramwell Booth, was born on March 8, 1856. The father records this event in a cheerful letter to his wife's parents :

It is with feelings of unutterable gratitude and joy that I have to inform you that at half-past eight last night my dearest Kate presented me with a healthy and beautiful son. The baby is a plump, round-faced, dark-complexioned, black-pated little fellow. A real beauty.

This birth began for William and Catherine Booth as difficult a family life as can well be imagined. They were poor; they had no home; their future was always threatened with disaster; and the manner of their lives was the very last one would have thought compatible with domestic happiness and family affection. Further than this, William Booth was delicate, Catherine Booth was almost a complete invalid. They went like gipsies from town to town, living in lodgings, and plunging themselves at every fresh adventure into the violence and excitements of religious revivalism. What the science of eugenics would have to say of such parents, and what medical science would have to say of their methods of living, one can imagine very easily; and yet, these parents gave to the world — not only to their own country, but to the whole world — a race of men and women sufficiently remarkable to exercise a powerful influence for good on millions of human beings. Mrs. Booth was a severe mother, William Booth was by no means a sentimental father, and yet, in the midst of their distracted and laborious life, they were able to watch over their children so successfully that they not only trained them spiritually, morally, and intellectually, but won their admiration and affection.



## CHAPTER XVIII

WHICH TELLS OF A THORN IN THE FLESH, SECTARIAN  
DIFFERENCES, AND A BREAK WITH METHODISM

1857-1861

ALTHOUGH William Booth lived to a great age, and up to the very last was full of energy, he was an invalid who suffered from one of the most distressing and exhausting of physical complaints. The seeds of this affliction were no doubt sown in the bitter days of poverty, wretchedness, overwork, and religious excitement, when he served as an apprentice in Nottingham; but he might have been cured, one thinks, had it not been for the restless energy and the continual nervous exhaustion of his life in the early days of his Mission. He may be said to have almost destroyed his digestion before he was six-and-twenty.

In his happy moments he was playful, tender, and considerate. But when dyspepsia manifested itself, when his body, starved of nourishment, was uttering its rebellion, he was often irascible, explosive, and sometimes even censorious. However, as we shall see in the course of this narrative, there was never real harm in these outbursts. There was nothing in his nature that could be called vindictive or radically bad-tempered; but ill health always found the weak spot in his character, the weak spot which in some ways was destined to be the strength of his life — that stubbornness, that sense of dogmatic rightness, that feeling of obstinate dictatorship, which gave offence to many, but which was the rock of safety for so many more.

If we wish to call him a saint we must remind ourselves that the conventional view of saintship is not catholic; there have been real and great saints very different in disposition from St. Francis of Assisi. And without exalting him to the seats of the highest saints, without claiming that he is the peer of those untroubled spirits whose names breathe like cathedral music through the soul of Chris-



THE REV. WILLIAM BOOTH (1859)



tendom, we may still urge that if the test of saintship is sacrifice of self, entire dependence on invisible power, and passionate devotion to "the poorest, the lowliest, and the lost," few men have lived, carrying so heavy a burden as this man carried, who more deserved to be enrolled among the saints of Christ.

It is possible, of course, to urge that he brought his ills upon himself; that with reasonable care and a more sensible outlook upon the world, he would have avoided the affliction which made him sometimes irritable and occasionally explosive. This, no doubt, is a just charge; but William Booth would have replied to it that had he been more cautious and more careful of himself, he would have been a thousand times more irritable. For he was a man who could not look calmly upon a distracted world; his temperament was such that he could not behold misery without longing to remove it, could not see sin without rushing to attack it. Other men can survey the sin and suffering of humanity with an infinite indifference, or, at any rate, with that dangerous form of faith common to leisured deism, which sings of God in His Heaven, unconscious of God immanent in humanity; but William Booth felt that he had to work, felt that he had to do something, felt that he was definitely charged by God with the work to which he set his hand. How could such a man be philosophical and detached? How could he take care of himself?

Mrs. Booth, as the reader will remember, was critical of some methods of revivalism in the days of her first encounter with William Booth; but she ultimately accepted her husband's views, and herself became one of the most powerful and persuasive exponents of those views. If one would have a defence of revivalism, she has given it in a few sentences which not only are a veritable defence of such methods, but which help one considerably to see into the minds of these two awakeners.

She says that she would rather have a sudden conversion than a tardy one. "When men are seen to be wrong, it must be very desirable to get them right." Here is a man, she exclaims, who has developed a fixed habit of evil-doing, of falsehood, impurity, drunkenness, or some other sin.

"The great end in view is to persuade him to abandon his evil course, and surely the sooner you can persuade him to do so the better."

I have been very much struck (she continues) with the different manner in which people argue about temporal and spiritual things. In regard to the former, supposing a friend is about to adopt some mistaken course, you ply him with the best arguments you can command, and the more quickly these take effect the better you are pleased . . . you do not think any the worse of him because of the readiness with which he has accepted the truth. Nor do you for a moment imagine that he must go through a long preparatory process before he can act upon his convictions. Why, then, in the religious world should the exactly similar phenomenon be doubted, simply on account of its suddenness?

William Booth cries out:

"Be patient," do you say? "Wait the Lord's time?" *This* is the Lord's time; why should I wait? There is a sanctified anger because it is just, and there is a sanctified impatience because it is born of benevolence. How can we wait and see the people die, and see the generations sweep off before our eyes into eternal woe, that might be rescued — that might be saved?

He answers those who say to him, "You go too fast," with the bewildered question, "What do you mean?"

I know no "Flying Dutchman" or "Flying Scotchman," or any other kind of flying railway train that goes fast enough for me. Time is so precious that unless it can be spent in sleeping or working, every minute of it is begrudged, and my feeling whenever I seat myself in a train — be the journey long or short — is "Now, engine-driver, do your best, and fly away."

He argues that if he were head of a money-making business, no investor would complain that he made profits too quickly; or that, if he were general of a killing army, he could not go fast enough in slaughter to please his countrymen. Then he faces the real criticism:

"But there is danger with great speed." Well, perhaps there is, but that is not certain; and if there is I decline to abate the speed to avoid the risk. If this thing is worth doing, let us do it with all our might. "But if you go on the smash will come." Well, perhaps it will.



He was prepared for the risk, the risk which he confronted with his wife again and again, that perhaps they were making an impossible demand which must end in reaction and catastrophe. But the destructive energy of sin dragged him away from this doubt, and he decided that the only forces which could destroy him were the forces of evil, the same forces which "smashed Jesus Christ." He cried out that sin travels faster than salvation; that salvation must press forward at all hazard to overtake and quench that "prairie fire"; that while the soldier of Christ slackens speed death steals a march upon a guilty world. No. "Faster and faster," is his cry; whatever the risk, whatever the end; faster and faster till a catastrophe like the catastrophe of Calvary ends one period and begins another.

His character may be seen very clearly in a charge to his followers where he bids them cultivate whatever disposition they possess. He does not say to the angry man cease to be angry, or to the jealous man cease to be jealous; he says to them, make your anger and your jealousy like the anger and the jealousy of God — hate sin, and be jealous for the souls of humanity. He never sought to transform men; he sought to convert them. They were to be the same men, but facing in another direction. The same faculties which they had employed for evil were to be more industriously and passionately employed for good:

Go on hating, night and day, in every place, under all circumstances. Bring this side of your nature well into play. Practise yourself in habits of scorn and contempt and loathing and detestation and revenge; but mind, let your hatred and revenge go in the right direction — the direction of sin — evil — the evil condemned by the Bible, the evil that Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy.

He used to say of himself that he was not a saint but a soldier. His disposition was what it was; he could only direct it towards God. One knows that he could never have written the Fourth Gospel. And yet it is important to observe that while he was a bold and unquestioning follower of St. Paul, he acknowledged in his heart the superior qualities of St. John. Again and again he expresses a burning and a consuming desire for deeper spirituality.

He named his first son after William Bramwell, "the apostle of Holiness." He was always seeking for that serenity of the soul which is the saint's reward, a deeper joy than the exhilaration of the soldier, a more lasting and a more permeating strength than ever comes from the exercise of battle. To the end of his life he was haunted, dimly and vaguely perhaps, by something in the spiritual life which he had missed and which he sighed for as one of the rewards of Heaven. He was distressed to his last days by the sins and miseries of the world. He had fought a good fight, but the world was not changed.

Everything faulty in his character had its rise in the impatience of a soul wellnigh maddened by the endless miseries of mankind, and stung to indignation by the sloth and deadness of the Christian Church. He was obsessed by Jehovah, and his thoughts of this terrible and avenging God of Israel had flowed from childhood in channels of a western grooving. And yet the immense achievement of his life rose out of this very conception of God. Because he believed in the everlasting tortures of Hell, he was tortured by the sins of mankind; because he believed in a stern and terrible Jehovah, he spared no moment of his life from shouting his stern and terrible warning to a thoughtless world. He not only won thousands and thousands of men from the degradation and destruction of sin, he roused the whole Church of Christ to activity and definitely influenced the social politics of the world. But if his theology had been more consonant with the theology which we feel is truer, chiefly because it is less dogmatic, his life might have passed with infinitely less benefit for mankind.

His life, indeed, presents many difficult problems. We are puzzled to decide, for instance, whether the intense exertion of impassioned preaching, which certainly helped to impair his health and perhaps tinged a fine heroic character with faults that we could wish away, did not at the same time tend to prolong his life. Instead of nursing himself and playing the dangerous tricks with his body which carry so many valetudinarians to the grave, he threw off his lethargy, his depression, and his intense lassitude, by campaigns which would have exhausted the strength of

robust men. He seems to have injured his health and preserved his life by the same means. And it would appear that he resolutely faced the sacrifice of his health, knowing full well the effect it would produce upon him, because he was convinced that his life could benefit the world.

It is no exaggeration to say of him that he thought so much more of the world than of his own personal place in the favour of God, that he never set himself to win the heights of saintship, but deliberately threw himself into the battle of life where qualities other than meekness and gentleness can alone distinguish the hero from the coward.

Until he finally came to London, in 1865, where his career entered upon a new and remarkable phase, he was a struggling minister of a dissenting church which did not pay him very liberally, and which harassed him at every turn. From town to town, dragging his invalid wife and his children with him, he went, preaching his flaming message of God's anger against sin. A more burdened and embarrassed man never set hand to work so exhausting and so heartbreaking. Poor in purse, suffering in body, worried by officialdom, torn by anxiety for his delicate wife and his young children, he was one of the most successful revivalists that ever visited the north and west of England. From the heated excitements of the crowded buildings, refusing invitations to the houses of his admirers, he hurried back to his lodgings to wait upon his wife, to care for his children, often to sit up sleepless through the night racked with pain and spiritual conflict. Is it any wonder, we may ask, that he injured his health and hindered his character?

Some of his letters at this period are charged with the melancholy of a soul suffering the extreme of mental torture. He doubts the sincerity of some conversions. He doubts his own vocation. He fears the future for his wife and children.

In one of these pathetic letters which tells his wife, "I have a constant load at my chest and weight on my head," he speaks of the conversion of a young girl who "wept sorely and appeared in great distress and to have much rejoiced when she got a hope." He continues:

But I hear she was dancing away Thursday and Friday in

the Market House, with half the town looking on. I have many thoughts about this kind of converted people, indeed many temptations about the whole affair. I find so few who seem to me to live Christianity. *Who is there?*

Then he proceeds :

I am sorry to hear you tell of your sickness. I can't help you *now*. My sympathy comes too late. I have nothing wherewith to comfort you. I have not had a thought or feeling the last 24 hours the description of which would cheer you in the least. And I don't see any ground for expecting anything in the future.

Inside the flap of an envelope, bearing the post-mark of Chester and the date Feb. 24, 1857, William Booth writes to his wife :

MY HEART'S WARMEST FONDEST LOVE — I have pressed this to my lips with as tender emotion as ever I clasped you in my arms. The usual number of kisses for "Sunshine." Does he get them all?

"Sunshine" was the child Bramwell, from whom his father was parted, and whose companionship might have driven away the clouds which pressed upon his mind and darkened his way.

So deep is his dejection that he even contemplates a complete abandonment of his mission :

I wonder whether I could not get something to do in London of some kind, some secretaryship or something respectable that would keep us going. I know how difficult such things are to obtain without friends or influence, as I am fixed. But we must hope against hope, I suppose.

The letter concludes, "I think I will take a book and go out and see if I can feel any better with a little fresh air."

Acute indigestion was not alone responsible for this fit of despair. Indigestion was there to aggravate his mind, but the real burden pressing upon his soul and sickening his enthusiasm was the hostility of his Church. He found himself harried, criticised, and opposed. The more he succeeded the more bitter became this hostility. The life he

desired to live was not an easy life; on the contrary, it was the most laborious and wearying and disheartening life that a man could undertake; but the authorities hampered him and refused his request. It was not as if he alone desired to live this life; the towns he had visited were crying out for his return. We may safely say that since Wesley no such evangelist had appeared in England.

We do not wish to imply that this opposition to William Booth was entirely without reason. His methods were ardent and unusual; he must have shocked or offended a great many pious people; his appearance in a town did, no doubt, lead to certain manifestations of violent emotion. But he was opposed on other grounds as well as these. Certain ministers in the New Connexion were his enemies; many felt that he was too young for such perpetual prominence; others were unquestionably jealous of his powers.

The result of this opposition culminated after wearisome checks and quite heroic efforts on William Booth's part to accommodate himself to authority in a final severance from the Church. In the year 1857 the Annual Conference of the New Connexion met in Nottingham, and decided that William Booth should cease his evangelistic work and be appointed to a regular circuit. He wrote to acquaint Mr. and Mrs. Mumford with this result in the following terms:

You will have been expecting a line from us containing Conference information, and now that our suspense is ended in certainty, or nearly so, I take the first opportunity of sending you a line. For some time I have been aware that a party has been forming against me. Now it has developed itself and its purpose. It has attacked and defeated my friends, and my evangelistic mission is to come to an immediate conclusion. On Saturday, after a debate of five hours, in which I am informed the bitterest spirit was manifested against me, it was decided by 44 to 40 that I be appointed to a circuit. The chief opponents to my continuance in my present course are *ministers*, the opposition being led on by the Rev. P. J. Wright and Dr. Crofts. I care not so much for myself. A year's rest will be very acceptable. By that time, God will, I trust, make plain my way before me, either to abide as a circuit preacher, or by opening me a door which no man or number of men shall be able to shut. My concern is for the Connexion — my deep regret is for the spirit this makes manifest, and the base ingratitude it displays.



From one of his sympathizers he received a manful and amusing letter of encouragement, which shows how affectionately he was regarded by some of the laity in his communion :

I believe that, as far as the preachers have power, they will close the New Connexion pulpits against you. Human nature is the same in every Conference, whether Episcopalian, Wesleyan, New Connexion, Primitive, or Quaker. And the only way for such men as you and Caughey to escape the mental rack and handcuffs is to take out a licence to hawk salvation from the great Magistrate above, and absolutely refuse to have any other master.

O Brother Booth, if I could preach and floor the sinners like you can, I would not thank Queen Victoria to be my aunt or cousin! When I hear or read of your success, I could wish to be your *shoe-black!* There is no man of whom I have read, Caughey excepted, who has equalled you for usefulness, considering the short time you have been at it. And for you to allow the decrees of the New Connexion Conference, or of any other conclave of men, to turn you away from following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is what I cannot bear to think of. I know what you feel, and I also have shed the big agonizing tear, when placed in the same circumstances. Glory be to God. I am *free*, and I will keep so. You know what the wolf said to Towser, "Half a meal with liberty is better than a whole one without it!"

The Booths were sent to Brighouse; "a low smoky town," said Mrs. Booth, "and we are situated in the worst part of it." Their superintendent is described as "a sombre, funereal kind of being . . . utterly incapable of co-operating with Mr. Booth in his ardent views and plans for the salvation of the people." It was a sad and very melancholy time, only relieved by the domestic happiness of a second addition to their family in the person of Ballington Booth. "Labour in this circuit," wrote William Booth, "is the most like ploughing on a rock of anything I ever experienced in my life." He cries out that he can only be happy "in a floodtide of salvation," and utters the desire of his heart to be "independent of all conclaves, councils, synods, and conferences."

It was at Brighouse that Mrs. Booth began to help in the work of the Church, and this she did successfully in

spite of domestic occupations. Her love for her children, and at the same time her strictness with them, is shown in the following instructive letter to her parents :

The children are well. They are two beauties. Oh, I often feel as though they cannot be mine ! It seems too much to be true that they should be so healthy, when I am such a poor thing ! But it appears as if the Lord had ordered it so, while many whom I know, who are far healthier and stronger than ourselves, have delicate children. I sometimes think it is a kind of reward to William for his honourable fidelity to me, notwithstanding my delicate health and his many temptations before we were married. I believe in a retributive Providence, and often try to trace domestic misery to its source, which is doubtless frequently to be found in the conduct of men towards their early loves. God visits for such things in a variety of ways. Bless the Lord, we are reaping no such fruits. The curse of no stricken heart rests on our lot, or on our children. But in peace and domestic happiness we "live and love together." . . .

Willie gets every day more lovable and engaging and affectionate. He manifests some very pleasing traits of character. You would love to see him hug Ballington, and offer him a bit of everything he has ! He never manifests the slightest jealousy or selfishness towards him, but on the contrary he laughs and dances when he caresses baby, and when it cries he is quite distressed. I have used him to bring me the footstool when I nurse baby, and now he runs with it to me as soon as he sees me take him up, without waiting to be asked, a piece of thoughtfulness I seldom receive from older heads ! Bless him. I believe he will be a thoroughly noble lad, if I can preserve him from all evil influences. The Lord help me ! I have had to whip him twice lately severely for disobedience, and it has cost me some tears. But it has done him good, and I am reaping the reward already of my self-sacrifice. The Lord help me to be faithful and firm as a rock in the path of duty towards my children !

The reader will understand the need for tears on Mrs. Booth's part when he remembers that the disobedient Bramwell was two years of age at the time of his whipping.

It was at Brighthouse that Mrs. Booth was threatened with a return of the spinal affliction which had condemned her to bed and sofa in youth. She exclaims that but for the children she would like to escape from her "troublesome, crazy body."

William was talking the other day (she writes home) about the different bodies we shall have after the resurrection. I replied that I hoped so, or I should never want to find mine any more. I would leave it to the worms as an everlasting portion, and prefer to live without one! It is much harder to suffer than to labour, specially when you have so many calls on your attention.

They paid a visit to Sheffield, where they met James Caughey, the American revivalist, who baptized Ballington and wrote an inscription in Mrs. Booth's Bible. "When he took leave of me," she says, "I pressed one fervent kiss on his hand, and felt more gratified than if it had been Queen Victoria."

A brief account of William Booth's ordination is furnished by his son-in-law, Commissioner Booth-Tucker, in his biography of Catherine Booth:

The Conference met in May at Hull. Mr. Booth was unanimously received into what is termed full connection, his four years of probation now having expired. He was accordingly summoned to present himself for ordination. This was a somewhat formidable ceremony. The President for the year, and the ex-Presidents of former years, stood upon the platform for the purpose of "laying hands" on the candidates, who were previously called upon to give an account of their conversion, and of their reasons for seeking ordination.

Mr. Booth had stipulated with some of those in whose piety and devotion he thoroughly believed, that he should be near them and reap whatever advantage might accrue from their faith and prayers, while there were others whom he studiously avoided, feeling that if the laying on of their hands involved the impartation of the character and spirit they possessed, he would rather dispense with it!

The question of his re-appointment to evangelistic work had not as yet come up for the consideration of the Conference. A number of circuits had petitioned in favour of the proposal, and Mr. Booth's friends were prepared to push the matter vigorously when it was brought forward for discussion. The following characteristic letter from him just after he had received his ordination describes the situation:

*29th May, 1858.*

I have just been to Hull to receive the right of ordination. I understand that my reception into full connection was most

cordial and thoroughly unanimous. The service was an interesting one. I was surprised to find so large a number of revival friends at the Conference. John Ridgway, William Mills, William Cooke, Turnock, and many others are anxious on the question of my re-appointment to evangelistic work. Birmingham, Truro, Halifax (my own circuit), Chester, Hawarden, and Macclesfield have presented memorials praying Conference to reinstate me in my former position. The discussion had not come on when the business closed last night.

In 1858 they went to Gateshead, with the half promise of evangelistic work at the end of the year. Gateshead had once been a flourishing centre of the Connexion, but the defection of a minister, who had turned infidel lecturer, had caused a grievous set-back. William Booth came as a deliverer, and soon had a full chapel. "It was not uncommon for the aisles and every available spot to be occupied so that some two thousand people were crowded within the walls." The iron-workers of the town dubbed this chapel the "Converting Shop."

A daughter was born to the Booths in Gateshead, Catherine, who, as the "Maréchale," became the pioneer of the Salvation Army in France. Instead of regarding this addition to their responsibilities as a grievance, the Booths appear to have been extremely grateful and happy about it. For one thing, their work in Gateshead was going with a swing. It was a revival in one place, continuous and well organized. Open-air work, a new thing in the town, was a feature of the campaign, and the opposition of the publicans, who sent out gangs of half-tipsy men to sing and howl the services down, only increased the enthusiasm of the workers.

But the most significant events in this campaign concerned Mrs. Booth. It was here that the idea first occurred to her of speaking to drunken people in their houses and in the streets. At a time when she was extremely delicate, and with three young children to look after, she began this hazardous and nerve-trying work, succeeding so happily that she could go into some of the worst streets quite alone and enter houses where drunkenness had brought family

life to a state of savagery. "They used to let me talk to them," she says, "in hovels where there was not a stick of furniture and nothing to sit down upon."

I remember in one case finding a poor woman lying on a heap of rags. She had just given birth to twins, and there was nobody of any sort to wait upon her. . . . By her side was a crust of bread and a small lump of lard. . . . The babies I washed in a broken pie-dish, the nearest approach to a tub that I could find. And the gratitude of those large eyes, that gazed upon me from that wan and shrunken face, can never fade from my memory.

In 1860, soon after the birth of her daughter, Emma, Mrs. Booth gave her first public address, crowning her long championship of a "Female Ministry" by practical demonstration. Her success, in spite of excessive nervousness, was immediate, and when William Booth fell ill and had to go to Matlock for hydropathic treatment, Mrs. Booth took his place in the chapel.

Trouble succeeded trouble. With William Booth seriously ill, all the children were attacked by whooping cough. And as soon as these dangers were overcome, the Booths found themselves once more confronted by the problem of the Conference. They realized that to drift was no longer possible. They thought that uncertainty had continued long enough. If the Conference could not find a plan for William Booth to do evangelistic work in the various churches of the Connexion, then he was prepared to go out into the wilderness alone.

But he possessed not a penny. His wife was delicate, and they had four young children. With these considerations weighing them down, they set out for the Conference of 1861, which was held in Liverpool. Fortunately for William Booth, Catherine Booth went with him. As will be seen from the following letters addressed by Mrs. Booth to her parents, and by what comes after, it was almost entirely owing to the resolution, courage, and faith of this wonderful woman that William Booth cut himself adrift from the moorings of his Church. Up till the last moment he was afraid, and clung to the hope of a compromise — hating controversy, reverencing authority, and clinging to





THE REV. WILLIAM AND CATHERINE  
BOOTH (1860)



his Church. It was Catherine Booth who played the good Lady Macbeth in this minor tragedy.

*Mrs. Booth to her Parents.*

NEWCASTLE, June, 1861.

We have reason to fear that the Annual Committee will not allow even this arrangement [? to be associated with the Alnwick Circuit and travel, living at Newcastle] to be carried out, and if not, I do not see any honourable course for us but to resign at once and risk all (if trusting in the Lord for our bread in order to do what we believe to be His will ought to be called a risk). If the arrangement is allowed to work it involves all sorts of difficulties. This Circuit is the worst to be managed in the whole Connexion, and William will get nothing by his connection with it but trouble and vexation. This I have seen from the beginning and have opposed his coming so far as I could. . . . We don't know what to do. We only want to do *right*. If I thought it was right to stop here in the ordinary [circuit] work, I would be quite glad to do so, but I cannot believe that it would be right for *my* husband. And none of our friends would think it right *if we only had an income!* Then, I ask, does the securing of our bread and cheese make that right which should otherwise be wrong when God has promised to feed and clothe us? I think not, and I am willing to trust Him, and suffer if need be in order to do His will.

William is afraid. He thinks of me and the children and I appreciate his love and care, but I tell him that God will provide if he will only go straight on in the path of duty. It is strange that *I* who always shrink from the sacrifice should be first in making it, but when I made the surrender I did it whole-heartedly, and ever since I have been like another being. Oh, pray for us yet more and more.

I am much tempted to feel it hard that God has not cleared our path more satisfactorily, but I will not charge God foolishly. I know that His way is often in the whirlwind, and He rides upon the storm. I will try to possess my soul in patience and to *wait* for Him.

The children are all well. They do not like the change at all. Bless them! I don't think the Lord will ever allow them to suffer if their parents seek to do His will.

We are very much obliged for your sympathy and kindness and counsel. With reference to upbraiding, I have often told William that if he takes the step and it should bring me to the Union I will never say one upbraiding word. To upbraid any one for taking such a step for God's and conscience' sake would be worse than devilish. No, whatever be the result I

shall make up my mind to endure it patiently, looking to the Lord for grace and strength to do so.

We have sold the piano to Mr. Firbank, but it is not to be paid for at present. We have nothing coming in now from any quarter. William has no invitations for work. The time is unfavourable. He has two for the winter, but the preachers will prevent the Circuits asking for him, and Dr. Cooke's resolution makes it worse than it was before, because the consent of the Superintendent is necessary. We already know of Circuits who want him where we have no doubt the preachers stand in the way. Oh, if it were not for God's sake, I feel that I should be ashamed to be a preacher's wife.

*Mrs. Booth to her Parents.*

June 24th, 1861.

I hope neither you nor my dear father think that I want to run precipitately into the position we contemplate. I have thought about it long and much. It has cost me many a struggle to bring my mind to it, but having done so, I have never swerved from what I believe to be the right course; neither dare I. But I am quite willing to listen to argument, to receive light, or even to *wait* for the accomplishment of our desires if I can only see justifiable reasons. But I have no hope that God will *ever* assure us that we shall lose nothing in seeking to do His will. I don't think this is God's plan. I think He sets before us our duty, and then demands its performance, trusting solely in Him for consequences. If He had promised beforehand to give Abraham his Isaac back again, there would never have been that illustrious display of faith and love which has served to encourage and cheer God's people in all ages. If we could always see our way, we should not ever walk by faith but by sight.

I know God's professing people are generally as anxious to see their way as worldlings are, but they thus dishonour God and greatly injure themselves.

I have only one difficulty in my own mind in making the full venture of all, and that is whether my religious experience warrants me in claiming the fulfilment of the promises in my own individual case. The Lord help us to be found faithful. I don't believe in any religion apart from *doing* the will of God. Faith is the united link between Christ and the soul. If we don't do the will of our Father, it will soon be broken. If my dear husband can find a *sphere* where he can preach the Gospel to the masses, I shall want no further evidence of the will of God concerning him. If he cannot find a *sphere*, I shall conclude that we are mistaken and be willing to wait till one opens. But I cannot believe that we ought to wait till God guarantees us as much salary as we now re-

ceive. I think we ought to trust Him to send us the supply of our need.

*Mrs. Booth to her Parents.*

NEWCASTLE, July 9, 1861.

We have at length decided our course of action for at least this Connexional year, and after careful thought we have come to the conclusion to continue the present arrangement with this Circuit, and thus secure William's perfect freedom to go wherever God may call him, and if there should be no way open he can still take a Circuit and we shall at least have done our best to secure what we deem most for God's glory and the salvation of souls.

. . . William has several invitations, one to St. Ives in Cornwall, but he won't engage there if anything nearer him offers. He had a good beginning at Alnwick, wonderful for the place, but the blindness and infatuation and narrow-mindedness of the preachers is enough to make the stones cry out. Mr. — thought it would be wiser to defer the Services till the winter as one of the leading families was going to the sea-side! so that poor convicted sinners and Christ and God must wait their convenience! However, William has delivered his soul to them!

First, we have decided to stop in this house till November because we can live rent free till then, and I have felt much better the last week. Second, William is invited to Nottingham for Anniversary sermons, and he is going to offer for a couple of Services, and if they accept, I purpose going with him, and then when we are near we intend going on to Derby and making a regular start together. Then if we only get one good work, I have no fear. I have no fear of being able to speak in public for at least some months to come, and we must make the most of our opportunities at first. It appears to me that God MAY have something very glorious in store for us, and when He has *tried* us, He will bring us forth as gold. My difficulty is in leaving home. In this matter, I am sure you can help us and serve the Lord without hurting yourselves in the least.

*Mrs. Booth to her Parents.*

July 11, 1861.

We have settled the matter, and we are not going to leave a stone unturned that is right and honourable to attain our object, and if we cannot why then we shall but be where we were before, but we intend with God's blessing to succeed. I do not fear but we shall, and if we do, every one will then see cause to honour us, and I shall get my share of



honour, for hosts of people say, and others think, that if it were not for me William would have taken the Circuit.

Well, I know my own motives, and they are such as I shall not blush to own at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It won't be the first time I have taken a leap in the dark humanly speaking, for conscience' sake.

I am aware, on the other hand, that if we fail nearly everybody will censure us and set us down as fanatics, but I am prepared to endure the cross and *despise* the shame if God sees fit to permit it to come. The same integrity of purpose which would enable me to enjoy honour will likewise sustain me under reproach.

The Conference is not likely to interest posterity, and those who desire a full account of what happened there will find it described in Commissioner Booth-Tucker's *Life of Catherine Booth* (chapter xxxix). For our purpose it is sufficient to say that this Conference was held in a chapel, and that Mrs. Booth, who was seated with other members of the public in the gallery, when questioned by a glance from her husband in the pews below as to whether he should accept a miserable compromise, rose in her place and exclaimed in a determined voice, which startled the business-like gentlemen below, "Never!" At that resolute exclamation Mr. Booth, we are told, sprang to his feet, and bowing to the chair "waved his hat in the direction of the door." Amidst shouts of "Order, order," he passed down the chapel, met his wife at the foot of the gallery stairs, embraced her, and went out to face the consequences of his act.

Efforts were made to induce the young minister to reconsider his decision, but the Booths were determined to compromise no longer. Rightly or wrongly the officials of the New Connexion were dead against the evangelistic ideas of William Booth; he was a nuisance to the powers; they wanted the machine to run smoothly; and every compromise suggested by those who knew his value was eventually coloured by this spirit of traditional respectability. In his letter of resignation William Booth said, "Looking at the past, God is my witness how earnestly and disinterestedly I have endeavoured to serve the Connexion, and knowing that the future will most convincingly and emphatically either vindicate or condemn my present action, I am content to

await its verdict." But although he could write so confidently, and although with a stout heart he had announced to the Conference that he would do the work to which he felt that God had called him, even if he went forth "without a friend and without a farthing," it was a black day indeed for him when he found himself actually cut adrift from his Church. After seven years of devoted service, he was penniless; and this time he had a wife and children for whose care he and no other could provide.

## CHAPTER XIX

### WILDERNESS

1861-1864

THE idea which now occupied the mind of William Booth — the first sign of movement towards the career which awaited him in London — was to extend his revivalism from the particular denomination he had served so industriously for seven years to all the Churches of his native land.

He and his wife paid a brief visit to Nottingham after the resignation, and Mrs. Booth then proceeded direct from this place to her parents in London. William Booth, in order to save expense, returned to Newcastle, where they had left their four children, and took them by sea to London. He was accompanied, it is interesting to observe, by their faithful Irish servant, Mary Kirton, who had declared that "no change in circumstances should induce her to leave her mistress, and that, with or without wages, she would continue to shepherd the little ones."

The stranded and penniless family were quartered for the present upon Mr. and Mrs. Mumford in Brixton, who showed the greatest kindness to the Booths in their difficult position. An invitation from a faithful friend in the New Connexion to conduct a mission in Hayle, Cornwall, was the first opening of a door since the resignation, and thither the Booths journeyed in August. But it was a very small door indeed, and people more worldly-minded than William Booth might have been tempted to wait for something that offered a wider prospect of success. No remuneration, so far as we can see, was suggested; and apparently the Booths had to pay their own travelling expenses.

However, this humble mission in a small town with a coasting trade of no very considerable proportions was destined to widen into a great Cornish Campaign. Although he was warned that the Cornish people would not tolerate a penitent-form, William Booth persisted in this

method of confessing Christ, and soon had crowds of people, weeping, groaning, and beating upon their breasts, kneeling at this simple symbol of the mercy-seat.

We had the greatest difficulty (he writes) to clear sufficient space for a penitent-form, and when we had, the people crowded up and around, and the prayers of those in distress, the shouts of those who had obtained deliverance, and the sympathetic exhortations and exultations and congratulations of those who stood round, all united made the most confounding medley I ever listened to. Again and again I endeavoured to secure order, but it was of no avail, and at length I concluded to let it go for the evening, doing as well as we could.

He speaks all through his journals at this time of difficulty in preaching, and occasionally tells of the pains which racked him. "Opened my eyes this morning," he says in one place, "with strong desire for more of the Holy Ghost in my own heart. Felt some little power in private. I want more." A venerable friend of mine, visiting in Cornwall at this time, tells me that she saw him in Pendeen Church on Good Friday, where a well-known evangelist, the Rev. Robert Aitken, was preaching; she remembers that William Booth listened intently to the sermon, that he remained in prayer long after the service was concluded, and that his eyes were filled with tears as he waited to speak to the Vicar.

There can be no doubt, in spite of all the accounts of this time, that William Booth was suffering very acutely both in body and soul. To read the descriptions of that remarkable Cornish Revival one might imagine that the revivalist himself was carried forward on a wave of enthusiasm, glowing with the pride of victory, and happy in the conviction that he had found his mission. But this is an altogether false impression. Often he had to drag himself to the various chapels he visited, his head bursting with pain, his whole body heavy with sickness, his mind harassed by the thought of the future, his soul asking questions hard to answer. Occasionally he was troubled by the character of the conversions. Sometimes he wondered if this work was indeed the work to which he had been called by God. He contemplated the abandonment of his

preaching, and once suggested to his wife that he should seek commercial work in London.

It is interesting and instructive to remember that this immense depression of mind occurred in a revival which unquestionably was a real religious awakening. Villagers tramped over the hills, and fishermen rowed eight and ten miles across a dark sea, to the towns where William Booth was preaching. Local newspapers record that in some places business was at a standstill. Throughout that corner of the duchy, from Camborne to Penzance, the flame raged with increasing force. Conversions were made in hundreds. Scenes occurred "beyond description"; the cries and groans "were enough to melt a heart of stone"; in the town of St. Just "a thousand persons have been gathered into membership in the different churches."

There was opposition, of course, to this fiery campaign. The Wesleyans, for instance, decided to close their chapels to Mr. and Mrs. Booth. Nor did the reports of the revival influence the 1862 Conference of the New Connexion. By 56 votes to 15 the Conference decided to accept Mr. Booth's resignation, and thus any hope he may have nourished of a return to the Church of his adoption was effectually knocked on the head. At the same time the Primitive Methodists passed a resolution "strongly urging all their station authorities to avoid the employment of revivalists, so called."

In this way William Booth was saved from the coils of a somewhat narrow ecclesiasticism, and, being driven out of a particular Church, was driven towards his appointed destiny. He was not to serve one Church, but all the Churches; he was not to labour in one country, but in all countries.

The Booths at this juncture were staying in Penzance, and here another child was born, a son, Herbert, bringing up the number of the family to five. The situation was a \* desperate one. Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists might be calling to William Booth from every town in the duchy, but the ministers had the key of the chapel door, and there was no admittance for "revivalists, so called." However, an opening was made for them in Redruth, where the Free



Methodists placed their chapel at the disposition of these gipsies of the religious life, and there a revival was very soon in full swing. When the Booths left Cornwall it was estimated that seven thousand persons had professed conversion.

A call came to them from Cardiff, and they left Cornwall in February, 1863, after a visit of eighteen months. It was at Cardiff that they made something of a break with the chapels and began a method of procedure which led up to the Salvation Army. Although chapels were open to them here and there, the principal chapels were now as firmly closed against them as the Roman and Anglican Churches. Therefore the Booths decided to make use of secular buildings, and the most successful of their meetings at Cardiff were held in a circus.

Some of William Booth's pecuniary anxieties were lightened at this period in his life by a rich coal merchant, John Cory, who, with his brother Richard, came under his influence and gave him generous and unflinching support. Here, too, the Booths made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Billups, also generous people, who showed the greatest sympathy in their work and became, like the Corys, their life-long friends.

In spite of this support, the Booths were faced, wherever they turned, by the boycott of the religious authorities. They went here and there, preaching where they could and hoping everywhere for an opening to reach the people, but encountering everywhere the opposition of officialdom. At Walsall, meetings were held in the open air and a real revival was established, both William and Catherine Booth drawing large crowds to hear them. And here they stayed for some time, their children with them, hoping to have found a resting-place for at least a few months.

At a children's meeting held in this town by Mrs. Booth, their eldest child, William Bramwell Booth, "gave himself to Christ." The incident is related by Mrs. Booth in a letter which is very characteristic and enlightening:

For some little time I had been anxious on his behalf. He had appeared deeply convicted during the Cardiff services, and one night at the circus I had urged him very earnestly to de-

cide for Christ. For a long time he could not speak, but I insisted on his giving me a definite answer, as to whether he would accept the offer of salvation or not. I shall never forget the feeling that thrilled through my soul when my darling boy, only seven years old, about whom I had formed such high expectations with regard to his future service to the Master, deliberately looked me in the face and answered "No!"

It was, therefore, not only with joy, but with some little surprise that I discovered him in one of my Walsall meetings kneeling at the communion-rail among a crowd of little penitents. He had come out of his own accord from the middle of the hall, and I found him squeezed in among the rest, confessing his sins and seeking forgiveness. I need not say that I dealt with him faithfully, and to the great joy of both his father and myself, he then and there received the assurance of pardon.

But Walsall was to prove a disappointment in other respects. "I feel a good deal perplexed, and am sometimes tempted to mistrust the Lord," wrote Mrs. Booth. "But I will not allow it. Our Father knows!" At that hour they had not received sufficient money to pay their travelling expenses and house rent.

Once more harried and dejected, once more ordered by the policeman of orthodoxy to "move on," the poor gipsies suddenly found themselves in a fresh crisis. William Booth broke down in health. He had contracted a bad ulcerated throat, he had sprained his ankle, and the worries of his position were now greatly disturbing his peace of mind. But for the kindness of some friends who sent him off to Matlock for hydropathic treatment, there is little doubt that this breakdown in health, coming at a time of great financial anxiety, would have had serious results.

In the quotations from the letters of William Booth to his wife which now follow it will be seen that the impulsive and ardent revivalist was sometimes called upon to encourage the drooping spirits of Catherine Booth. Depression was not entirely on his side. Very often it was his courage and his faith which rose to meet difficulties almost overwhelming to Mrs. Booth. These letters, written from Sheffield in the autumn of 1864, provide one with a fairly

intimate picture of the domestic circumstances of the separated couple:

I am rather afraid that I am not going to be very comfortably located. There is much knocking about. They come in and out of my room and sit in it occasionally. I like *privacy*. I want no company but yours. I was woke up this morning at 6 with some one at the house bell and could not sleep, so I thought I would get up and talk to *you*. But they are homely nice people from the neighbourhood of South Lincolnshire. *If I am not right I shall change . . .* you may rely on it, my dearest, that I shall be most thankful once more if possible to abide at home and to abide with *thee*. But we must be careful. We could not come here much, if anything, under £10. We shall want £21 for Assurance directly, and the extra expenses for winter clothing, sable victorine, teeth, etc. etc., will be £6 or £8 more. So we must look before we leap. Still I think there is a sphere here, and I shall do my utmost to work it, and we will all live together again so soon as the Lord shall make it possible. . . . My poor little children. Bless them. And dear Willie; I am afraid we are rather hard on them sometimes.

. . . Good-bye for the present. Cherish yourself. Always wear the respirator.

I had a slight throat affection last night. Pray for me. Live in and for Jesus.

I have little else but this paper with me and I want to use it and get it out of the way. I fancy it would suit your writing; try it. It does not suit my old quill a bit. . . . How very much I should like to see you to-day, to hold you in my arms and look at you, right through your eyes into your heart, the warm living beautiful heart that throbs so full of sympathy and truth for me and mine, and then to press you to my heart and hold you there and cover you with kisses, warm and earnest kisses. Bless you. I send you *two* kisses; you understand me and you will keep your promise with them.

Kiss the children for me. Tell Willie I got him a penknife this morning, and Ballington that I am going about the white mice. The white mice and pigeon man is coming with the Hallelujah Band to Leeds. I have not time or patience to write more. Somehow I am nervous, the day is damp and sultry, and my room is hot and close, and I am out of sorts for writing . . . I feel lonely and nervous. I don't like the folks much I am with and I am tired. I shall be better in the morning.

In one of his letters he asks her to send him "a little love-

talk" to carry about with him in his purse. It appears that he burnt most of her letters but always kept one particularly affectionate note which he packed into his purse. Sometimes, on his rare visits to her, she would find one of these crumpled notes in his purse, and ashamed of her "love-talk" would destroy it. "You robbed my purse," he complains, "of the bit you sent me to Hyde."

I could write on for hours to you. O we won't be afraid of loving one another. We will not hold in and bind up our hearts. Let us be grateful for all our mercies. We have *many* more than many around, and there may be gloomy hours in the future. Days of a long and dreary separation, a separation made by the grave, O to think of you being *the other side of the river* and me not able to see and embrace and speak to you. Never to hear your voice more. Now you are away, but I am feasting on you, and on the hour when again *I hold you*, and look at you and kiss you, and have the delicious rapture of hearing you say you love and reciprocate all my feelings.

The visit of the Hallelujah Band to Sheffield interests him, and it is evident that the impression made upon him by these Yorkshire "trophies" was a lasting one, and that it recurred to his mind when he came to form the Salvation Army.

They certainly are waking up people here, and our services are so different. They all wear red shirts, coats, and vests off, sleeves turned up, and sing and jump together. This won't last long or take with everybody.

He debates the question of renting a small house in Sheffield, and making it a centre for their free-lance revivalism:

On the whole, I think it would be the best. Of course I would like to do better and somewhat different. But is this the best? I have not seen Mr. Paton. I don't see how he could help me. It will cost me 7s. to go to Nottingham, 3rd class return. I would like to have a night there. To go and come in one day would break mother's heart.

Mrs. Booth appears to have had some trouble with a dishonest servant, and he writes to her on the subject, re-

ferring at the same time to the engagement of a governess for the children :

Your letter has amazed me. I am astonished with the girl's audacity. I am at rest now, but O she must have been to the Police Station before this time, or she would never have dared to have gone, when she could so easily have saved herself. It was that that perplexed me, and feeling how much better it was to let 20 *guilty persons escape rather than punish one innocent one*. Well! Now I think you should write her uncle to tell him she has left you, and to say you would like her to return to him until she can obtain a situation. Could you not propose this to her? I am so afraid of her taking to the WORST OF ALL. The Lord have mercy upon her.

With regard to Miss C——. I don't dislike her letter. One thing in it would need an explanation if you engage her, and that is what does she mean by *holidays*? Would she expect to go to Cambridge *twice a year*, and for HOW LONG? A week or fortnight, SAY A FORTNIGHT ONCE A YEAR, we could not object to. But longer or more frequently would not be *easily* managed. What do you think? That is my mind. Laundress of course goes in at our offer. . . . I hope she understands what we expect. You must tell her that it is Leeds where we reside if you engage her. *But you must have an understanding about holidays*. I don't dislike the tone of her letter, it is like that of one who has seen something of the world.

. . . I am sorry beyond measure about your toothache. Could any other dentist help you?

He goes to Nottingham and sees the famous Dr. Paton, who needed no urging on his visitor's part to embrace the idea of evangelistic work among the churches.

He read me an extract from an address delivered 3 years ago, before the Congregational Union of the West Riding of Yorkshire, stating that the setting apart, the ordaining of three of their ministers, suitable men to visit the churches, would in his estimation be one of the greatest boons to the community.

To this letter there is an interesting postscript :

Yours is just to hand. You acted as you often, almost always do, like a good brave woman with Miss C——. I think you did just right. Never mind about the house. *Let God provide for us*. He has led us wonderfully — often by a way that we knew not. We have much of earth, few have so much. O what a joy that we two hearts beat so lovingly and truly



to each other. *Think of that.* And our children; bless them, and *our usefulness*, and by and by *our Heaven*.

Back in Sheffield he writes to her at the end of November:

I am grieved beyond measure that you are so poorly. What is to be done? Would not a change, entire change, be useful? Suppose you were to get right off, not to work, but to rest a few days. If you could take a service you would be treated very considerably and kindly at Hartlepool. London is such a long way. The journey would be fatiguing, and then you would feel the house smaller. And mother having no servant, it always pains me to see her driving ahead and groaning amid her determined energies. I am really concerned about this sleeplessness. You must rest next week. Don't let little things put you about. All will be well. Three or six months ago there was some apparent reason for anxiety. Now, our way is at least *open*, wide open, for a supply of our temporal need and it may be for an abundant supply of it. If the Lord does open my way with the Independents or if He does continue to open our way to labour and to secure the income we have had the last two months, I will have a house in which you can have some quiet, if I pay £50 rent for it.

And we will have a governess too with some heart and conscience, if we go on changing one per month for 10 years. What a heathen trick of Miss C. Well! I am not sorry in one respect; it has settled you on the propriety of letting her go. We have not regretted parting with any of the *lot* yet. The smooth-tongued shams and hypocrisies. But look up. I think you err in not diverting your attention by reading. Here is the difference between us, and it may have something to do with my standing the wear and tear. I suffer my mind to be diverted for a season at least by prayer or books. You must be always at *work*. A change of mental occupation is rest for the mind. When *I* come home I divert *your* attention. Could you not let some book do the same? I send you the *W.T.* Look it through. Read the article on *Disraeli's speech*. I will enquire for a library and get you a book when I come. Your mind *preys on itself*.

Now I do not think that since we left Cornwall we have had such reason for gratitude and contentment as we have now. With care we can earn all the money we *need*. Our children are in health. We are saved, so far, from those gloomy visits to the churchyard which so many other families have to pay. And we have many many many other mercies. And we have that which is most precious of all that is human, our own *warm, sympathetic, thorough, intelligent, well-grounded confidence in and affection for each other*. Our love

has not been merely an emotion, but is indeed and of a truth an *affection*. Bear in mind Finney's distinction between the two words.

The optimism of this letter is characteristic. Here is a man separated from his wife and children, living in lodgings, sparing every penny, grudging every expense upon himself, travelling to and fro, working furiously in public, and never sure of an hour's privacy or next week's bread; here is a man, we say, situated as gloomily and wretchedly as this, writing encouragingly to his wife of "mercies," making the proud boast that he will take a house for her if he has to pay £50 a year for it, and looking without fear and without anxiety into his future. One admires his optimism, but one's sympathies are with Mrs. Booth.

"Cheer up!" he writes to her again. "All will be well. Whatever you do, don't be anxious." He speaks of a good meeting he has just conducted and says, "I like the folk, *humble* and *emotional*." Then the governess crops up again, and we see how his mind is concerned about his children's education, and the virtues he expects to get for £20:

I cannot . . . give you any advice respecting Miss C—— different to that already given. £20 ought to produce something more suitable to our wants. I want Ballington teaching, and the little ones, and if we give that sum we will have some one who will do it. Enquire about Willie's Latin. Tell Miss C—— she must see he is ready with it. He ought to have a lesson daily.

It seems that he had published a book of hymns, and was experiencing trouble with the publishers; but he takes matters into his own hands, acts as his own traveller, and sells 500 copies to a Sheffield bookseller. "So there is just a chance for me yet!" he adds, half humorously, half hopefully.

"What folly in you," he writes to his wife, "to do without a fire. It is not in these little things that our cash goes, but if it were, surely you can afford a bit of fire while you are at home. Have your fire upstairs." He tells her that it will do quite as well if she writes to him in pencil. "Let Willie get you a good H.B. from Bean's, not less

than 2d., and you can write more easily than with pen and ink." Her weak spine involved much lying on her back. He expresses sorrow that he cannot send her any cheering news. "Most people have had difficulties in obtaining anything great on which their hearts have been set. I hope you will get comfort from some source. I should like it to be from above. God will help us."

Mrs. Booth meets with bad treatment in her public work, and he writes to comfort her:

I cannot understand how they can possibly treat *you* and the work of God thus. If it had been me, I should have scarcely marvelled, but *you*—it is absolutely confounding. . . . I am sure I hardly know what to advise. That which comes first is give them up and do it with a high hand. Then second thoughts say, that ten years hence the treatment we *personally* receive from these "leaders" (in religion) will be as NOTHING. We shall all but have forgotten it. But *our treatment of the work of God, our forbearance and humility and meekness and perseverance* under and in the face of difficulties will be *everything*.

In another letter he writes dismally of all the various moneys he owes, "in all some £85, and then these other things not included," and adds:

I have not wherewith to meet it. But I suppose I shall have, some way or other. It certainly looks rather stiff. But it will turn out all right. . . . I am going to study economy with all my might! I have those new kid gloves on the mantel-piece to be ever before my eyes as a standing rebuke to my *extravagance!*

He concludes with the wishful exclamation, "Brighter days!" and adds a postscript, "O that I was worthy of you!"

The subject of the troublesome governess occurs in another letter full of dissatisfaction with his meeting:

We had a good many people to tea, but a poor meeting. I think it is the last speechifying meeting I will have. I had not time or power to say anything, and people who had next to nothing to do petted and patted the people, and no good was done by such a service that I could see. In future I will regard such meetings as being as much *mine* as the other

services. I will preside over them and wind them up in the good old soul-saving fashion of my other meetings. Several little things have occurred to disturb my equanimity.

I am right glad, heartily and honestly glad, that Miss C. is going. She was not born for such a service as we require. Don't be concerned. She will easily get another place. . . . Don't be put about concerning anything.

. . . My only fear is that Mr. Paton is an enthusiast in his way as far ahead of Independentism in spirit and discernment and desire for aggressive spirituality as I am myself. However in a quiet way we will try. John Unwin was with us last night. I like him less and less. It is strange, I could have embraced Mr. Paton . . . but some of these revivalists, I dislike them the more I see of them. I am a strange being, perhaps. I wonder if I appear as bragging and mechanical in my revivalism as some of these folks do.

. . . O for more of the Divine to mingle with the human! I come far short just now.

After a flying visit to his family he writes to her :

Your tearful loving face is ever before me. I do so want to receive a line to know how you are. I do hope you will be cheered with a good day. I had a long weary journey, but I got my head into the book and it beguiled the tedium and withdrew my attention from the coarsish company and converse around me.

He tells of meetings and love feasts, offers to bring some new blankets that she requires, and complains of being bothered by his underclothing—"the drawers being so short." All through his letters runs this strain of domesticity; there is nothing too small in the details of their domestic economy for his care and attention. Another letter is full of advice concerning dentists; he lays stress on the wisdom of going to a man who is abreast of the times, not old-fashioned.

In the letters written on his missionary journeys, when Sheffield was his headquarters, we are introduced every now and then to the inconveniences of a travelling revivalist. For example, he writes from Bury :

. . . left luggage at station and walked to Mr. Brown's, a mile distant; found him kind; had tea, and at nearly 7 he informed me that he had a meeting at 7, and he would take me

where he thought I could get lodgings and be comfortable. He said he had two parties in his eye but *did not know* whether they could accommodate me. When we got to the houses both wives were from home and therefore I could not be entertained there. Here was a fix! It was dark and rainy. After making an enquiry or two, he gave in and took me to the house of a friend and begged me accommodation until Monday, and here I am. He was to call this morning. I have been expecting him every minute and he has not appeared yet. Still, he is a very nice man.

A fit of depression seized him here. He found the people "cold as an ice-house." He is "much disheartened." He goes so far as to say, "I don't feel disposed to persevere much longer in a life the results of which are really so trifling." He goes on to say, sick at heart and suffering in body:

I need not tell you how I should like to see you this morning, and how lonely life is without your precious society. All the people appear only just tolerable. I don't know how it is, but quick interesting folks seem very rarely to cross my path. My tooth acts very well, saving that I feel as though I had some drying mineral in my mouth. I hope it is not the metal.

Give my love to my dear children. Bless them. I think much about them. Dear Katie's merry voice and laughter are often ringing in my ears and so are the pretty ways and tricks of them all. I forget their troublesomeness when away from them.

At Hyde, near Manchester, the darkness covers him and he is filled with despair. He speaks of a few conversions, and then cries out, "But somehow my truth does not appear calculated for immediate results. I have not personally the confidence in it I once had. Perhaps that is it. I must try again." And then after telling how he lay sleepless through the night, he goes on:

I wish I were in a more satisfactory state spiritually. I feel almost *dead*; *powerless*. Consequently my preaching and praying in public has but little effect on the people. But wishing produces no improvement. O that God would come and give me some new light or some new power. Will you pray for me? I never felt less emotion and power in prayer in my life. And I am sure I don't know what to do. . . .



It is no use me talking about my rebellion of heart against this separation. I must submit and say, Thy will be done. I wish I was sure that it was *His will*. As I turned into my lonely lodgings last night a young gentleman with a lady on his arm knocked at the door of the house opposite mine, and I could not help asking why I was parted from my young and precious wife. I know why, and for a season it must be so — perhaps we shall grow accustomed to it and not feel it so much. I do feel a measure of comfort from the thought that we are securing our own livelihood by it and not *hanging on to any one*. That thought has been like a canker at my heart of late. It must not be after that fashion. We will work and then rest together and then work again.

He calls this letter of desolation and heroic resolve, “a weary rigmarole,” and then declares, “such has been the state of my head and nerves the last three weeks that I have seemed to live in *a sort of dream*.” His only comfort just now is a “family group,” which he places on the mantelpiece of his lodgings — “a poor substitute, but the best I have.”

In another letter from Hyde the same dissatisfaction is expressed:

. . . I feel so low and powerless spiritually. It is the *Divine* we both need. But you far exceed me in the influence you can command in a service. I should much like to spend the evening with you all alone, far away from all excitement and disturbance, where we could commune with each other's heart and be still.

Then he speaks of the “precious children”:

Let Willie do something every day in cyphering, if it be a compound addition and subtraction. . . . Don't bother about anything else but your work, and giving them a little lesson or two. We must get some one to sew.

A governess is found in the person of a Miss McBean, and he writes:

I am delighted with your account of Miss McBean. Strange and good that she should have heard of us. Of course she had an idea of what she was coming to. Hope the children will be good and respectful. Tell her she must *exact uniform obedience*. Tell Willie that if he does not obey and set his brothers and sisters an example in this matter he must prepare not only

to lose his *dog*, but to live in the attic while I am at home, for *I will not see him*. On the other hand, if they are good and *obedient*, they shall have a party again on *the* Friday evening, and have Patience, etc., and we will have a great many more nuts and have some nice games, etc.

This extract, we think, is not merely typical of mid-Victorian severity in the matter of managing children, but it is in some way characteristic of William Booth's theology, a theology which never doubted the moral advantage of offering a reward with the one hand and pointing out grievous consequences for disobedience with the other.

It will be seen later on that William Booth's children were very fond of him, and it is quite certain that in his own way he was very fond of them. But we find in some of these letters expressions of regret that he had forgotten to say good-bye to them on one of his visits, or, in sending a kiss to this or that child, he adds, "I forget whether I said good-bye to him." One would not speak of him, at this time, as a father who adored his children; and he was sometimes irritated and aggravated by their noise; nevertheless, the children showed a very true devotion to him, and in later life this affectionate and reverential feeling for the tall, gaunt, dark-bearded man warmed into deep and generous love. In the case of Willie, threatened with the attic and the loss of his dog, the father was to find the most loving and faithful companion of his later and widowed years.

Here and there in those letters of the wandering preacher occur references to the children which are charged with tenderest affection and consideration; in his own way — a rough, strong, emotional, unsentimental way — he was extremely fond of them; but he is too absorbed by his work, too distracted by anxieties, and too often tried by physical pain to give them the whole and perfect love of a father's heart. To Mrs. Booth was committed the care of the family, and her character, at any rate in these early years, was the supreme and formative influence in their lives. Here, for instance, is a passage which shows how affectionately the father thought of his children, and how thoroughly he comprehended that they belonged to their mother:

Bless my darlings for me. Call them in and put your hands

on their heads and bless them for their papa. In passing a shop this morning I saw a large wooden horse. I almost jumped and involuntarily exclaimed, that is the thing for my dear little Bertie. I saw one of Tom Fenton's and one of George Hovey's boys. But they don't touch yours. Yours are the children! O may they grow up to honour their Maker and Redeemer.

It was in this year, 1864, that their sixth child was born, Marian, who, following an accident, developed serious physical weakness, and was only reared to an invalid life with considerable difficulty.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE MOVE TO LONDON

1865

By a strange chance it was Mrs. Booth who led the way out of the wilderness. It was she, and not William Booth, who laid the first stone of the Salvation Army.

While they were still living in Leeds, and he was still thinking of taking a house in Sheffield, and establishing his family there, Mrs. Booth was invited to Rotherhithe in South East London, and thither she journeyed, in 1865, to conduct a brief mission. What she saw of the poor people, and particularly the work being done by the Midnight Movement to restore fallen women, made an instant and overwhelming appeal to her heart. She resolved at once that here was the sphere for which she had prayed and longed ever since the Conference in Liverpool.

It is remarkable that some little time before this mission in Rotherhithe was even suggested, Mrs. Booth wrote a letter to her mother in which she prophesied the new departure. After speaking of the coldness of the churches and the hardness of the world, she said:

Well, we must labour and wait a little longer, it may be the clouds will break and surround us with sunshine. Anyway, God lives above the clouds, and He will direct our path. If the present effort disappoints us I shall feel quite tired of tugging with the churches, and shall insist on William taking a hall or theatre somewhere. I believe the Lord will thrust him into that sphere yet. *We can't get at the masses in the chapels.* . . . I think I shall come and try in London before long.

Mrs. Booth's mission was a considerable success. In some measure this success was no doubt due to the interest created by a "Female Minister"; bills were circulated with the attractive invitation, "Come and Hear a Woman Preach"; notices of her mission were published in some

of the religious papers; crowds flocked to hear her as a new excitement. But the real cause of this unquestionable success was the profound spiritual apprehension which inspired her oratory. No one who heard Mrs. Booth speak could fail to be moved by her eloquence — an eloquence entirely natural and entirely free from rhetoric. She spoke with an overwhelming persuasiveness because she was overwhelmingly persuaded of the truth of Christianity, and because she felt in the depths of her heart and in every fibre of her sensitive being the frightful sufferings, the destructive miseries, and the unutterable anguish of souls imprisoned in the darkness of sin. Her mind — thanks, no doubt, in some measure to the influence of William Booth — was clean of Pharisaism. There was nothing there which was narrow or mean. As for her heart, it was the heart of a woman to whom love and compassion are the very breath of existence. A brief account in *The Wesleyan Times* of a meeting of the Midnight Movement, in which Mrs. Booth addressed a number of fallen women, will furnish some idea of her breadth of view:

The address of Mrs. Booth was inimitable, pointed, evangelical, impressive, and delivered in a most earnest, sympathetic manner, bringing tears from many, and securing the closest attention from all. She identified herself with them as a fellow-sinner, showing that if they supposed her better than themselves it was a mistake, since all had sinned against God. *This*, she explained, was the main point, and not the particular sin of which they might be guilty. Then the Saviour was exhibited as waiting to save all alike, and the speaker urged all of them, by a variety of reasons, to immediate decision. Finally, the consequence of neglecting or accepting the offer of mercy was set before them, and they were encouraged by the relation of the conversion of some of the most degraded characters whom Mrs. Booth and her husband had been instrumental in bringing to Christ.

We are told by Commissioner Booth-Tucker that the sight of these victims of sin and misery deeply stirred the heart of Mrs. Booth. "Not only," he says, "did she view with compassion their unhappy condition, but her indignation knew no bounds that public opinion should wink at such cruel slavery, while professing to be shocked at the



scarcely more inhuman brutality that bore the name in other lands."

The paltriness of the efforts put forth to minimize the evil staggered her, and the gross inequality with which society meted out its punishments to the weaker sex, allowing the participators in the vice to escape with impunity, incurred her scathing denunciations.

What she saw in London greatly influenced Mrs. Booth to make the metropolis her centre, although her idea was still to work through existing religious agencies. With this end in view they moved house to Hammersmith (1865). It was not Mrs. Booth, but William Booth, who conceived the idea of going into the streets of East London, penniless and unsupported, with his message of salvation.

The anxiety and depression which had so frequently burdened the mind of William Booth during the last few years arose in no small degree from disappointment at the feeble and trifling after-effects of conversion. It will be remembered that he wrote despairful letters to his wife during the Cornish Revival; that is to say at a time when he was drawing enormous crowds to hear him preach, and when thousands of people were professing conversion. He was not dejected by the failure of his oratory; he was not inclined to doubt his mission because nobody came to hear him. He was oppressed by what he saw in the lives of some of his converts after conversion. He thought that so great a miracle as new birth ought to culminate in as great a miracle—a new life. But these chapel people remained, so far as he could judge, very much what they were before conversion. At any rate, they did not become missionaries; they did not make the great sacrifice; they did not touch the lives of other people with the attraction of Christ. Respectability, we must understand, did not satisfy William Booth. He wanted to change the whole world, but he scarcely succeeded in changing a few people. Converts told him that they were changed, but he himself, in too many cases, could see no alteration in their characters or their way of living. It was because his ideal was so lofty that he was thus dissatisfied; and because he was so humble that he rather blamed himself than his converts.

He felt that something must be wrong in him; he doubted his vocation; he faced the idea of going to London in search of a secretaryship.

We shall see that something of the same doubt harassed his mind for several years in London. He made converts of the most degraded people and sent them to their churches and chapels; but many of them relapsed, or became formal, or did nothing to hasten the Kingdom of Heaven. It was a matter of more than ten years, after his coming to London, before William Booth perceived that *the one way in which he could lastingly change men and women was to make them, from the moment of their conversion, seekers and savers of the lost.*

While Mrs. Booth was in London, her husband was conducting a mission in Louth, Lincolnshire, and from there he writes to her one or two characteristic letters, in which one can see that the idea of London is in his mind, although he is wholly unaware of the imminence of the change which is to transform his life. But the chief value of these letters, most of them unfortunately incomplete, is the evidence they afford of the financial situation and the difficult domestic life of these remarkable people.

One of the letters, written just before Mrs. Booth left for London, and addressed to "My dear little disconsolate Wife," shows that she was cast down by the refusal of some church to accept her ministry. "I am sorry indeed that they have declined," he writes. "I don't like being declined anyway. I am afraid the parson is at the bottom of it. They will want you yet, I doubt not." The letter proceeds later on:

When I talk about not giving way to feeling I don't mean hardening our hearts. I only mean the bringing our minds as far as we can in the present to our circumstances. What could I do all alone here sitting down to fret and complain? I have not a soul to whom I can talk about you. I do very largely tell everybody I meet all I can well edge in; and then again, fretting makes no better of it, so I stick to my writing and work. You have the darling children, and are doing work for eternity with them, and the way will I trust open for us to be together again and that right early. If you get at work in London I will try and make my way there and see how I succeed. Don't say or think any hard things of me. And

then again, about your poor back, what a pity *to make it bad* with sewing. Take care of yourself; take and practise the advice *you give me*. *Get ready for work*. Let us try again for the glory of God. The Lord is using me here and bringing up the Church. I have been at them all the week, and the result is a great spirit of enquiry and reconsecration. Many of the people have, I believe, really and truly *consecrated*, and with many more there is a healthful enquiry after more of God.

In one of the letters addressed to Mrs. Booth in London occurs this interesting passage:

Mr. Shadford spoke very kindly to me after you left. They both sympathized with us very much, I believe. He reminded me all the way through of the old gentleman who met and talked to George at the Hotel there when he was running away in *Uncle Tom*. As we went down to the station I said, "I forgot to pay for the things I had out of the shop, but I will give it you at the station." "Why," he said, "as far as that I have a £5 note in my pocket to give you at the station, and that is about how matters stand between us just now." With a gentle exhortation to all reasonable economy, and a request twice urged that if at any time we were in any difficulty I was to write him and he would help us, he passed the bit of dirty paper to me which I received gratefully and with a proper measure of thanksgiving. . . . I shall send him a line from here and you must just write him a page. You heard *how they pitched into my writing and praised yours*. There, as elsewhere, I must decrease and you increase! I enclose you two halves, and send the other two to father. Put them together and let father deposit them with the cheque at the Alliance Bank. . . .

When you told me that you had nothing left, I forgot the Post Office Order. *You surely did not spend that £6 as well as all the cash I left behind*. Well, I am determined to economise, and I shall write Mary to put the screw on, and I am putting it on here *myself*. I will either stop this living at the rate of £6 a week or I will know the reason.<sup>1</sup> It mortifies me beyond measure. I won't blame you. I have very possibly spent much lately. Those forks, etc., we could have done without. If mother proposes to pay for the spoons, let her; and she shall have *that teapot*. If I got her initials on it, it would look something, and please her. You might bring it about, some way or other. It won't become our table exactly for the present.

<sup>1</sup> £6 a week, for a family where the father and mother are constantly away living in lodgings, does not seem a very extravagant allowance.

We find him confessing to extravagance in the next letter :

I paid Miller £3:8:0 yesterday. I bought two books from him for 2/6. One by Calvin Cotton on Revivals, and a good *School History of Greece* for Willie and the children in turns. He has 2 vols. of Macaulay's *History of England*, the 3rd and 4th. He offers them for 5/. Should I have them? I suppose not. They are good reading for a leisure hour.

Later on in the same letter we read :

I have been very poorly ever since I came home. I have had to shut out the children since breakfast. My head has been so bad ; it is a little better. I went supperless to bed at 10 o'clock, in the hope of getting a refreshing night's sleep, but was disappointed. I was awake very early, feeling dreadfully.

Then he refers to her meetings in London :

I am glad you had so good a meeting. I have no doubt about your adaptation for that sphere, or for almost any sphere, and I could never stand in your way or prohibit your labouring when . . . you could do so much good. *This I settled years ago. . . .* All your talk about my adaptation shows how ignorant you are of the kind of men who are now at work, *specially* in London, and also of my "superficiality" ; but it is of no use talking on this theme ! I will come to London, and *once more. . . .*

Here, unfortunately, the sheet ends, and the rest of the letter is not to be found. The Booths moved to London in this year, and set up house in Hammersmith.

Besides the money paid to them out of the collections taken at their meetings, they were able to secure a small additional income by the sale of their pamphlets and books. William Booth managed his wife's pamphlets as well as his own Song Book, and in one of his letters he says of a sum of money, which is either £5 or £10, that "it is not more, nor as much by pounds, as I have received for books the last month." It would seem that by their missions, their sale of books, and with the help of one or two well-off sympathizers, they were now earning some three or four hundred pounds a year, but precariously. They lived with extreme simplicity. The children were dressed without any

display. Mrs. Booth was one of those very capable women who can find time for household work side by side with great public activity. She was often in the kitchen, when William Booth would come to consult her, he sitting on the edge of the table, while she, with her hands covered in dough, went on with her cake making. In more than one of her letters to her mother she begs Mrs. Mumford, who was an industrious needlewoman, not to send fine clothes for the children. For example:

Accept my warmest thanks for the little frock you sent. We like it very much. There is only one difficulty, namely, it is too smart! I shall have to give you full and explicit directions in future as to the style, trimming, etc., for we really must set an example in this respect worthy of imitation. I feel no temptation now to decorate myself. But I cannot say the same about my children. And yet, oh, I see I must be decided, and come out from among the fashion-worshipping, worldly professors around me. Lord, help me!

Not only did Mrs. Booth manage her house with great thoroughness, but, in order to meet their heavier expenses in London, she took in first one lodger, and afterwards, in moving into a larger and more convenient house, two. It is almost incredible that a woman so weak and delicate, so often exposed to serious physical collapse, and so frequently engaged in a most exhausting form of public work, should have found time to superintend the education of her children, to practise a careful domestic economy, and to look after the needs of a large household including a couple of lodgers. But Mr. Bramwell Booth, who perfectly remembers this time, assures me that his mother did all these things, and did them well.



## CHAPTER XXI

A LADY LODGER'S ACCOUNT OF THE BOOTHS' HOME LIFE

1865-1867

IT is not until the Booths take up their residence in Hackney — where their daughter Eva was born — that we are able to see them with any degree of clearness in the intimacy of domestic life.

One of the ladies who went to lodge with them in 1867 was Miss Jane Short, whose age sits lightly upon her, whose memory is as perfect as the most exacting biographer could wish, and who is happily of a humorous disposition, with no desire in the world to exaggerate the remarkable qualities of her dead friends. Very often as she speaks of the Booth household she breaks into cheerful laughter, recognising as shrewdly as any practical and unimaginative person the eccentricity of that family life. At the same time, her testimony is emphatic to the nobility of the Booths, and to the reality of their passionate religious zeal.

“To tell you the truth,” she informed me at our first meeting, “I was terribly afraid of going to live with these dear folk, because I had been so often disappointed, grievously disappointed, in religious people. It seemed to me that the Booths could not possibly be in their home life what they were in their preaching. I thought I should see things and hear things which would distress me; I could not imagine that it was possible for them to live their ideals. You see, I loved them so well that I quite shrank from finding my hero-worship an illusion.”

She had first encountered Mrs. Booth at Margate, where the latter was conducting a Mission, and afterwards had attended some of the preachings in the East End of London. Admiration of Mrs. Booth had quickly ripened into friendship, and William Booth had won her liveliest sympathy and her utmost enthusiasm at their first encounter.

“People who say that Mrs. Booth was the greater of

the two," declares Miss Short, "do not know what they are talking about. Mrs. Booth was a very able woman, a very persuasive speaker, and a wonderful manager; but the General was a *force*—he dominated everything. I've never met any one who could compare with him for strength of character. You knew the difference in the house directly he opened the door. You felt his presence in every department of the home life. He was a real master.

"You could never say No to the General!" she laughs. "It was he who decided, not I, that I was to live with them. When he said a thing had to be done, it was done, and quickly, too. We used to call him 'The General' long before there was any Salvation Army. He couldn't bear beating about the bush. Prevarication, like stupidity, exasperated him. Everything had to go like clockwork, but very much faster than time. I always say that he got forty-eight hours' work out of the twenty-four."

And then, laughing quietly to herself, she says, "Of course he was queer. He often used to say to me, 'Sister Jane, the Booths are a queer lot,' and laugh mischievously, for he was often laughing. I've known him suddenly kneel down in the middle of breakfast and give thanks to God because a letter he had opened contained money for the Mission. He'd be tremendously in earnest at one moment, and the next he'd be laughing at himself, saying that he was a queer fellow. He'd change, too, in a twinkling of an eye from gloom and dejection to a contagious hilarity that carried everything before it. He suffered in those days—neuralgia and indigestion; it was often dreadful to see how the poor man suffered; but he would fling it all off directly there was work to do, or if he had to comfort anybody else, particularly Mrs. Booth. His love for his wife was the most beautiful thing I have ever known. It really was an exquisite thing. You know, perhaps, that Mrs. Booth was a great invalid. Her sufferings, at times, made her irritable and exacting. The least noise on some occasions would almost distract her. Well, it was at such times as these that the love of the General shone out most beautifully. Never once did he say a harsh word, never once did he try rallying her with rough encouragement; no,

he would be more courteous and chivalrous than ever; he would make love to her as tenderly and sweetly as if she were his sweetheart; and he would wait upon her, soothe her, and nurse her with a devotion that I have never seen equalled. I don't mean that he himself was never cross and irritable. He was sometimes, in my opinion, a little too stern with the children. But his love for his wife, well, that was quite perfect; and when I look back now I can see very clearly that it was this wonderful and beautiful love for Mrs. Booth which made the greatest impression on my mind. I may forget many other things about them, but I shall never forget the General's love for his wife."

The house in which they now lived, No. 3 Gore Road, Hackney, was one of those detached, double-fronted, family residences which are typical of the London suburbs and therefore characteristic of the English bourgeoisie. With a half-basement, a steep flight of steps to the front door, large plate-glass windows, and a complete carelessness as to architectural style, this big house had every impressive charm which appeals to the middle-class English family. It looked a rich man's dwelling; it was separate from its neighbours; it possessed large living-rooms; and the road in which it lifted up its solid virtues was reputable and uneventful to the point of monotony. It was what people call the house of a substantial man.

The other lodger was Miss Billups, daughter of the rich contractor at Cardiff who had already befriended the Booths' Mission out of a lively gratitude for spiritual blessings. This lady was a trifle exacting, and never perhaps became quite a member of the family. But Miss Short, who was soon known affectionately as Sister Jane, not only, on occasion, shared her bedroom with one of the children, and became a very intimate and beloved member of the family, but worked herself very nearly to death's door in the service of the Mission.

Although the demands of the Mission were enough to disorganise the best-regulated family in the land, there was a steady sense of orderliness in this household. Meals, for instance, were served to the moment, and woe betide the

child who came in five minutes late. The General never sat at the head of his table, when Mrs. Booth was present, but always beside her. She carved at dinner, or poured out the tea. The meals were of an extreme simplicity, and a generous rice pudding appeared on the table with every dinner — haunting the minds of the children to this day. Mrs. Booth held that no child need leave the table hungry, however meagre the joint, so long as this rice pudding completed the feast. There were currants in it on special occasions.

Another characteristic of the Booth household was its tidiness. The General hated above everything else, except sin, untidiness, and dirt in every shape and form. His own study was a model of neatness. But he insisted that the same neatness should be observed elsewhere. The chairs were drilled like soldiers. Not an antimacassar was allowed to be out of place. The hearth must be swept continually. Books and toys were never permitted to be "left about."

One of William Booth's good qualities was a meticulous attention to personal cleanliness. Long before the bath was general in English life, he bathed himself every morning in cold water, with a hot bath once a week, and made use of a foot-bath two and three times during the week. He was very scrupulous in the matter of body linen, and though his things might be darned in every direction, they had to be extremely clean. He always wore long woollen stockings reaching above the knee, with old-fashioned garters wound round and round, and he never changed these articles without carefully turning them inside out; in his extreme old age, when he had to be waited upon, he would sometimes blaze into momentary ferocity if his attendant was slovenly in this particular. He was very often shabby, except in the matter of boots, but never slovenly. It is not difficult to see how the sympathies of such a man, to whom dirt was horrible and an evil smell so execrable that it often produced in him a fit of nausea, must have been quickened by the frightful barbarism of the London slums.

It seems to have been essential with him, even from the The opposition from the lower orders was increasing



very beginnings of the Mission in London, that he should break away every now and then and get into the pure air and beautiful surroundings of the country.

"We used to make excursions into the Forest," Miss Short told me, "and those were certainly among the General's happiest days. He was like a schoolboy directly he got away from London, laughing, singing, and joking nearly all the time. But, mind you, he never went away without his Bible in his pocket, and I think he hardly ever passed by a gipsy without speaking to him about his soul. I've heard him say to a man, for instance, cutting short a tale of some kind, 'But what you said was untrue. It was a lie. You ought not to tell lies. Don't you know it's wrong to tell a lie? What does God think of you when you say what isn't true?' And very well I remember that one day we were sitting at the foot of a great tree in the Forest, he with his head on his wife's knee reading the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel, when he suddenly raised his head at the words, *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you* — and fixed his eyes upon me, hard and shining, and demanded, 'Do you believe that, Jane Short? — do you believe it — cleansed from *all* your filthiness?' I remember how that question seemed to flash into the depths of my soul."

This story reminded Miss Short of the General's curtness in religious discussions and in religious meetings. "He was always practical," she said, "and he detested cant. If anybody prayed too long in a meeting, the General would cut him short with a loud 'Amen.' After a particular prayer-meeting, which I very well remember for its marvellous influence on many souls, the General sprang up and said: 'We've been in heaven; now for work.' But cant moved him to fierce anger, even the very semblance of it. A missionary came to him once in those early days and offered his services. The General inquired about his means of existence, and the man replied that he trusted in the Lord. 'Do you trust me, though?' demanded the General; 'come now, speak out; what do you want?' He was a wonder-



ful, very nearly an infallible judge of character; but he was taken in more than once — always, however, by men he had rather questioned from the first."

It may be imagined that a woman so delicate and so constantly engaged as Mrs. Booth had little time for the society of her children. She cut out and made most of their clothes; she heard their prayers, and for some reason she always insisted upon washing their heads; but neither her health nor her engagements, nor perhaps her disposition, allowed her to play with them. Miss Short considers them the most attractive children that ever breathed, declaring that the two chief impressions left upon her mind from those years, are first the wonderful love of William Booth for his wife, and, second, the delightful nature of the children.

"Of course they were odd," she says, smiling, "for, as the General told me, all the Booths are queer; but they were the frankest, purest, sweetest-minded children I ever knew. And the General knew this well, and although he was sterner than most parents are now, and certainly he did often whip where another would have tried gentler methods, still he loved them dearly, particularly Bramwell, who probably came in for more whippings than any of his brothers! And this is quite certain, the children adored their parents. They thought there were no two people in the world who could compare with their father and mother. The favourite game of the little girls in the nursery was a prayer-meeting, and they used to have a penitent-bench where the dolls were made to kneel. Often I have hardly been able to keep from laughing at the sight of a very ragged doll, all the hair gone and a great hole in the head, kneeling at the penitent-bench. Bramwell was the first to show any inclination to depart from the lives of his parents. He wanted to be a surgeon; he would spend hours dissecting the body of a mouse. I remember that he once borrowed a doll from his sister Emma, and cut it open. She burst out crying when she saw the sawdust streaming away from it, and Bramwell exclaimed indignantly, 'Silly child! do you think you can have an operation without blood?'

"But religion was the chief characteristic of the children's

lives. I can tell you a story which shows how religion entered into their thoughts. My father, who lived at a little distance from the Booths, was a very old-fashioned man, who smoked a churchwarden pipe and drank the general drink of that day, gin and water. One afternoon Ballington Booth paid him a visit, and when my father's back was turned the naughty boy drank up a good deal of the gin and water! Directly he got home, he burst open the door of the room where his father was working, and exclaimed in quite a frenzy of alarm, 'Papa, papa, I've broken my pledge!' It was some time before his agitation could be dispersed. I remember another story, too. When the same child had been naughty, his father said to him: 'Now would you rather that I prayed with you or whipped you?' Of course the child chose prayer. Then the General said, 'We'll see what prayer will do for you; we'll try that first; if it doesn't make you a good boy I shall whip you.' It might not have been a wise thing to say, but the child was sincere, and really did pray to be a good boy."

Mrs. Booth was often unable at this time to bear the noise of the children, and they never played downstairs when she had retired. But William Booth made it a rule, so far as his engagements would allow, to give to them a part of his evenings at home, and the children would come charging into the room for a romp with their father. There was no set game, so far as I can discover, although "Fox and Geese" was a favourite, but a scrimmage of some kind was the usual amusement. William Booth would lie full length upon the floor, and the smaller children had to try and pull him up. He loved to be tousled; like other men of whom we have heard, he delighted in having his hair ruffled and his head scratched; he would sit reading a book with complete absorption, while one of his children sat upon the arm of his chair rubbing his head.

"One evening," says Miss Jane Short, "his daughter Emma, then about six, amused herself by putting his long hair into curl papers. She worked away until the whole head of the General was covered with little twists of paper — such a sight you never saw in your life. And when she had finished her work, the door opened and a servant en-

tered announcing a visitor. Up sprang the General, and was all but in the hall when the children flung themselves upon his coat-tails and dragged him back, screaming with laughter. You can fancy that when the General looked in the glass he laughed too.

“By the way, I always think it is a good test of a man’s character to know what his servants think of him; and certainly the servants in Gore Road loved, I was going to say idolised, the Booths. The General might be harsh and abrupt at times, but they could not do enough for him, and they were never in the least afraid of him. I remember that sometimes, after a very exhausting Sunday, the Booths would take their breakfast in bed, and the maid used to laugh quite frankly at the General’s appearance on these occasions. They felt for him every possible respect, but there was no fear and no severity in their attitude; they considered themselves members of the family, associated themselves with its fortunes, and entered as heartily into the religious enthusiasm of the household as into the fun and cheerfulness.”

Although William Booth had an almost unreasonable, or at any rate a Hebraist’s contempt for games — hating cricket and football as if they were sins — he entered with a boy’s sympathy into the enthusiasm of his sons for animals. The garden at Gore Road was given up to rabbits, guinea-pigs, rats, mice, and fowls. The boys owned these creatures and ruled over them, but the father drew almost as much pleasure from them as did the sons. He would go round the cages and watch the feeding. If a man of one idea, and that idea a burning consciousness of the existence of a God, can be said to have a hobby, the hobby of William Booth was this boyish delight in the pets of a back-garden. His sons consulted him in every new venture, and he seems to have shared their excitement at every fresh addition to the menagerie. Bramwell Booth remembers that his father took a particular interest in his silkworms.

“I don’t think any father could ever have been prouder of his children than the General,” says Miss Short. “I am quite certain that it hurt him not to dress them up in beautiful clothes. But he insisted on simple, plain, strong clothes,

not only for the sake of economy, but for the sake of setting an example. It used to make him furious when he saw the way in which poor people wasted precious money on stupid finery. He wouldn't even allow the family to go into mourning when Mrs. Mumford died, saying that the London poor ruined themselves by wearing black for a funeral. But he longed, I know, to see his children finely dressed, all the same. I've heard him say to them, 'When I get you all to heaven, I'll deck you; it will be safe there.' And once or twice he succumbed to temptation. I said to Mrs. Booth once, 'Wouldn't Herbert look lovely in a black velveteen suit with red stockings?'—and then I told the General that it was shameful to dress such a beautiful child in plain, ugly things, asking him whether the poor would be any worse off for seeing the little child in velveteen. Well, I got my way for once; but the child only wore the suit two or three times. I think they carried this idea too far."

Another disastrous experiment in fine raiment carried with it a religious commentary. Mrs. Booth bought some beautiful silk for the girls' dresses, and gave it to one of the women converted in the Mission for making-up, the material being too splendid for home manufacture. Unfortunately the temptation of this silk was too much for the Whitechapel woman, who disappeared with the material and was never heard of again. Mrs. Booth regarded this disaster as a lesson.

On one occasion some very fine toys were sent by rich people for a bazaar which Mrs. Booth was organizing in East London. Miss Short suggested that the children of poor people would not know what to make of such things, and counselled Mrs. Booth to buy them in for her own children. "But she wouldn't listen to me," says Miss Short, "though I could see that she would have been pleased to possess the toys for her own children. She said they were intended for the poor, and the poor must have them; and she said that she had no right to spend money on such things. I never knew people in my whole life who had such a perfect horror of debt. There were times when they were exceedingly poor, driven, one might say, for a

sixpence; but never once did they incur a single debt. Mrs. Booth told me that she would far rather starve than owe a penny, and the General held the same views. They were terribly strict where money was concerned."

With such views on clothes it may be guessed that the Booths entertained very strict notions as to the wearing of jewellery. What was their horror, then, when Ballington walked into the room one day at tea-time with a ring on his finger — purchased with a shilling which had recently been given to him. Some of the astonished children, we regret to chronicle, set up a shout, "Ballington's a back-slider!" and for a moment a scene of confusion reigned at the tea-table. Then the voice of the General was heard, loud, deadly, and authoritative: "Silence! His mother will deal with him later." The meal proceeded awkwardly, and when it was over Ballington was closeted for some ten minutes with his mother. "He came out from that interview," says Miss Short, "with very red eyes and without the ring."

When the last baby, Lucy, was born in 1867, the General informed the other children of this event in the following manner: "Now, listen; I have got a wonderful piece of news for you. God has sent us a most beautiful present."

At once there was a shout, "Is it alive?"

"Yes," said the General, "it's alive."

"Is it a dog?"

"No."

"A donkey?"

"No."

After a few more guesses at live-stock, the General said, with great impressiveness, "It's a baby!"

There was a shout of joy, an instant demand to see the newcomer, and then the children crept upstairs after their father, on tiptoe, and were shown the baby. Then Ballington said, "That's what I've been praying for — a baby"; but Miss Short is disposed to think that for some weeks Ballington had been praying industriously for a donkey.

"I must tell you," says Miss Short, "about the death of Mrs. Mumford. In those days the Booths had not given up the Communion service, and towards the last, poor



Mrs. Mumford, who had suffered untold agonies from cancer, asked that the General should give her the Sacrament. I was present then, as I was also present at her death, and I cannot tell you how deeply I was affected by the beautiful tenderness of the General on that occasion. He made one feel that the whole service was deeply personal to the poor dying woman; he put his arm about her, bent his face close to hers, and said — I shall never forget it — ‘Take and eat this, *Mother*, in remembrance that Christ died for *thee*,’ and, ‘Drink this, *Mother*, in remembrance that Christ’s Blood was shed for *thee*,’ and his voice, though it trembled with tenderness, was strong with faith. I remember, too, how we were all sent for late one night, and how Bramwell and Ballington were brought to her bedside. This was the first experience either the General or his wife had had of death in their own immediate circle. They were both deeply affected. Mrs. Mumford desired to testify, and she testified in a weak and faltering voice to her unshaken faith in Christ. Afterwards, sinking back on her pillow and closing her eyes, she said, ‘Sing.’ The General sang a hymn and told the boys to sing with him, saying, ‘Softly, softly.’ While we sang that hymn very quietly, Mrs. Mumford relapsed into unconsciousness, and remained unconscious until 1 o’clock the next day. Her death was remarkable. Mrs. Booth was kneeling at her side, holding her hand, and quite suddenly Mrs. Mumford regained consciousness, opened her eyes wide, and with a light on her face that was unearthly, exclaimed, ‘Kate! — Jesus!’ and was gone in that moment.”

The children, as one can well imagine, were greatly agitated by this death; Bramwell, in particular, was thrown into a highly nervous condition of grief. “I remember,” says Miss Short, “how he would listen to no comfort from any of us, and how his father had to be fetched, and how the General bounded up the two flights of stairs to the boy’s bedroom, taking him in his arms, and comforting him with a maternal tenderness while he explained the Christian hope of union.”

Mrs. Booth, for some unexplained reason, insisted that her husband should be present at the post-mortem examina-

tion which followed Mrs. Mumford's death. This examination was made in the interest of medical science, for the cancer from which Mrs. Mumford had suffered so long was of an unusual and perplexing character. Why Mrs. Booth made this stipulation, unless it was to ensure reverence for her mother's remains, cannot be understood by Miss Short; for, not only was their doctor a very sincere Christian, a man in whom they all reposed an unbounded confidence, but she knew very well that William Booth shrank from any distressing sight, and found it almost impossible to support the sight of pain.

"You could not meet a man," says Miss Short, "whose nerves were more tortured by the spectacle of suffering. Pain, the sight of pain in others, made him wretched. He would turn away from it, quite sick and dizzy. I am sure it was this horror of suffering that helped to make him so terribly in earnest as a preacher, for he saw clearly that sin is a chief cause of nearly every form of pain and suffering. People will never know what he endured in the slums of great cities."

Immediately after the death of Mrs. Mumford, William Booth was taken ill, and it was discovered that he had contracted enteric fever. In his delicate state of health, such an illness was of the gravest menace, and for some time his life hung upon a thread. "Well, Sister Jane," he exclaimed to Miss Short, who came to visit him, "you see the lion chained at last." His courage, and his cheerfulness, carried him through this dangerous illness.

"He loved Mrs. Mumford like a son," says Miss Short, "and he loved his own mother — such a grand-looking old woman, stately and solemn, very Jewish in feature — with a boy's love to the last. One Sunday, when he was staying with them in London, he preached a sermon, to a crowded church, on Peace. Old Mrs. Booth was immensely proud of him, and when he returned she said to him, 'William, you preached a beautiful sermon.' He looked at her, a smile of roguishness in his eyes, and said, 'You've heard your son preach; how would you like to hear him pray, just as he used to pray, when he was a boy?' And there and then he dropped on his knees before her, buried his



WILLIAM BOOTH'S MOTHER  
(Mary Moss Booth)



face in her lap, and prayed with an intensity and a force that carried us all away. In another moment he was on his feet, bright again, saying to me, 'Haven't I often told you, Sister Jane, that the Booths are a queer lot?' Once I said to him, 'You ought to have been an actor,' and he looked at me, nodded his head, and laughingly replied, 'I should have made my living!' He knew perfectly well that he could throw himself into almost anything, and, although he thought his wife was the better preacher for certain audiences, he knew that he could hold vast numbers of all sorts and conditions spellbound. I am quite sure that he would have been a great actor; but oh, wouldn't he have been unhappy without religion!"

Miss Short cannot remember a single occasion on which theological difficulties, difficulties of faith, were discussed at the Booth table. Although religion entered into every detail of their lives, they never spoke — at any rate before Miss Short — of intellectual problems, all their difficulties lying in the sphere of conduct. To live more perfectly in accord with the Christ spirit, to make other Christians more earnest, to save sinners from temporal wretchedness and everlasting damnation — these were the chief subjects of their table-talk. "I think it was the suffering and misery all about them," says Miss Short, "which made the General and his wife stick to the simple elementary truths of religion. I know this, that they had made up their minds to treat the London poor exactly like heathen. It would have been absurd to preach to these poor people about theology; and the General, whose heart was torn by suffering, centred himself on saving their souls. I have heard him preach very beautiful sermons on love, and I remember in particular a sermon on the text, *Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace*, which was as gentle as it was moving; but he used to say, whenever we praised sermons of this kind, 'No; the best preaching is Damnation, with the Cross in the middle of it.' Experience had taught him that. The heathen poor had to be roused to a sense of their danger before they could shake off their spiritual torpor, and even *desire* immortal happiness. I don't think his thoughts ever wandered very far from that centre of



religion. He believed that the Bible was the inspired Word of God; and in the Bible he found that the injunction to repent preceded the invitation to holiness. No one in his house questioned for a single moment, or in any respect, the truth of the Bible."

As an example of the harrowing effect produced upon William Booth's mind by the destitution and depravity of London, Miss Short relates the story of the first Christmas Day she spent in his home. "The General," she says, "had determined that the children should have a thoroughly happy old-fashioned Christmas, and for a week beforehand every preparation was made for a great family festival. The children were full of excitement, their father entered into the spirit of the thing, and I really thought it would be a day of the purest happiness. But when the General returned from his preaching in Whitechapel on Christmas morning, he was pale, haggard, and morose. He did his best to enter into the children's fun and frolic, but it was no use; he kept relapsing into silence and gloom. He looked dreadfully white and drawn, just as if he were ill or harassed by some grievous worry. And then suddenly he burst out, 'I'll never have a Christmas Day like this again!' and, getting on his feet and walking up and down the room like a caged lion, he told us of the sights he had seen that morning in Whitechapel, indignantly saying, 'The poor have nothing but the public-house — nothing but the public-house!' I remembered how he had once stopped me at every public-house in the Mile End Road, pointing to the young men and the young women who crowded the different bars, exclaiming, 'Look at that! — look at it! — enough to make the angels weep!' Sights of this kind, which other people would see and regret, seemed to stab him to the heart; other people only saw the drinking, he saw the poverty, the misery, the disease, and the godlessness behind it; the sins of London didn't shock him, they seemed to tear at his heart with claws that drew blood. Well, he was true to his word. That Christmas Day was the last Christmas Day the Booth family ever spent together. On the following Christmas Day we were scattered in the slums distributing plum-puddings. I remember

that we thought the Mission a very great affair because we gave away 150 puddings! How little any of us foresaw the future. Last year the Army distributed 30,000 puddings in London alone! All the same, our little gift of 150, many of them made in the kitchen at Gore Road, was the beginning of the Salvation Army's Christmas Day. The General said to me one day, after a prayer-meeting, at which some of the recipients had been blessed, 'Sister Jane, the Lord accepted our puddings.' "

Distressed as he was by the penury and degradation of East London, William Booth was never morose when working to change the souls of men. Miss Short says he would carry a meeting before him by his humour and his hopefulness; and the more miserable and broken-hearted his audience, the more cheerfulness he put into his methods. She remembers that he was preaching once in a hall for the first time under a sounding-board — a very heavy and clumsy contrivance which hung just over his head. At the end of his address he invited men to come and testify on the platform, adding, "But only those who are really saved had better come, for"—pointing to the sounding-board, "it may mean death." It was such remarks as this, startling in those days, which endeared him to his rough audiences, who were sharply suspicious of sanctimoniousness.

He was, nevertheless, still a trifle clerical, for on one occasion when a converted navvy desired to preach, he insisted that the man should wear a black suit of clothes, and actually gave the convert his only other suit, frock coat and all, in which the new preacher cut a sufficiently comical figure. It will be explained later on that only after many rebuffs from the churches did he strike out on those original lines which culminated in the Salvation Army.

His great secret of success, Miss Short is quite certain, was the discovery of the enormous influence of love and kindness in dealing with fallen humanity. Very early in those first years in London, he showed boundless compassion to a man sunk in misery and sin, hunting his soul with the "deliberate speed, majestic instancy" of the Hound of

Heaven. And when the man yielded at last, it was with the astonished exclamation, "Love and kindness! Then there really is a God."

"There were many disappointments," says Miss Short, "some of them enough to embitter any man; but he never lost heart, although these disappointments caused him dreadful pain at the time. One of his evangelists went wrong, and for days he found it impossible to shake off the sorrow caused by this fall. Then there was a young man who worked for him, and whom he loved, a young man with what you might call a story-book face — so handsome, heroic, and pure. One day they came and told the General that this young man was in the London Hospital with a serious injury to his spine; although he shrank from seeing this friend in pain, he posted off at once, and when he arrived it was to hear a confession of embezzlement. He knelt down at the bedside, before the whole ward, and prayed for the soul of that young man, his own heart utterly miserable. But in this case he was made happy by the restoration of the injured youth, who took his advice, made a full confession of his crime, and repaid every penny of the money. That, as you probably know, was one of the General's strictest rules. Repentance meant confession and restoration. This teaching sent many a man to prison whose crime would never have been discovered, and many more he sent to the employers, often going with them, to confess the sins of which they had been guilty."

Of his stern honesty with himself Miss Short does not entertain the shadow of a doubt. "You can see how honest he was by his relations with Mr. Henry Reed, the very rich Australian living in Tunbridge Wells who came under the spell of Mr. Booth's preaching. I can distinctly remember the joy and the hope with which the General set out on one of his journeys to Dunorlan, Mr. Reed's beautiful place in Tunbridge Wells, believing that he would come back with hundreds of pounds towards the three thousand he was striving to raise for a Mission Hall. But he came back, instead, utterly depressed; indeed, I think that was the only occasion on which I ever saw him really dejected. And why was this? It was just because the

religious people surrounding Mr. Reed, and who crowded the park to hear the Whitechapel missionary preach, were such 'poor stuff.' I remember how the General walked up and down the room muttering, 'I want men! I want men!' He doubted all religion that made people soft and selfish. He was very suspicious of any religion which did not fructify into work for others. The people he met that day thought too much of dogma and too little of Christian service — they didn't hunger and thirst after the saving of lost souls. Mr. Reed offered the General a lot of money, and if I remember rightly a suitable site in East London, and a fine hall that was to cost something like seven thousand pounds. But after making this splendid offer, which took the General's breath away, Mr. Reed explained that the Mission in future must be conducted in a manner of which he approved, making it quite clear that he expected to exercise authority over the General.<sup>1</sup> A weaker man than the General might have been tempted to accept this splendid gift on any terms, but the General was far too honest a man to prevaricate for a moment. He rejected the offer. He refused to put himself under the dominion of a sect. But I really think he was more dejected by the spirit of the Christianity he encountered in Tunbridge Wells than by the loss of this tremendously large sum of money. He kept on saying, 'I want men! I want men!'

We shall see in the next chapter the character of the difficulties which confronted William Booth in East London, and which made him even think of abandoning the Mission. For the present we will conclude this account of the Booths' domestic life with some remarks on the subject of the father's relations with his children.

It would be possible, perhaps, for an unscrupulous writer in years to come, when witnesses for the defence are dead, to accuse William Booth of something like harshness towards his children; to suggest, at any rate, that he was

<sup>1</sup> Another of the conditions of Mr. Reed, not mentioned by Miss Jane Short, was that William Booth should settle permanently in East London and not roam about, and in that event he would settle a generous sum upon him and Mrs. Booth. He was a liberal and earnest man, but he liked apparently to exercise his authority.

a man who preached one life in the pulpit and did not quite practise it in his home. We do not pretend for a moment that he was faultless: we readily deplore in him the absence of some of those refinements of nature which are the marks of genuine sainthood; he was not perhaps as gentle as we could wish a hero of religion to be; he lacked something of that fathomless humility, that unbounded reverence for childhood, and that inexhaustible tolerance for the weaknesses of human nature which endear the holiest of men to the affections of mortality.

But enough has been said in this place to prevent his exhibition, even with these faults, as anything but a true and affectionate father. He was not one thing in the pulpit and another in his home; he was never in such a relation to his children as made them distrust or fear him. Those occasional explosions which characterised him all through life, and which malignity might exaggerate, were never taken very seriously either by his children or by his followers. They sprang from physical disabilities, from dyspepsia, and from the attacks of neuralgia which repeatedly racked his nerves; and they were short-lived. He was a man who never sulked. Suddenly he would blaze into anger, with all the appearance of fiery indignation, and at the next moment he would be laughing at himself, or rallying with generous humour the victim of his reproof.

Bramwell Booth, whose reverence for his father is well known, and on whom that father leaned almost alone in the years of his widowerhood, is honest and fearless enough to say that he considers his father did thrash him on several occasions without justice. At the same time he scoffs out of hearing the least suggestion that his father was despotic or unkind. "We adored him!" he exclaims; "every one of us; and, even when we sulked, we were always longing for his forgiveness."

Miss Short's testimony is to the like effect. "When the elder children were in trouble it was usually to their father, not to their mother, that they would go. I remember one day that Emma had a bad fit, after squashing a finger very badly in one of the doors; she lay sobbing on the floor, refusing to be comforted, till her father rushed upstairs,



threw himself on the floor beside her, gathered her into his arms, and mothered her with all the tenderness of a woman. He was impatient with them at times, particularly when he was bowed down by worries, but he loved them most dearly. One day he was dictating a number of letters to me in his room, when one of the girls entered, went to the piano, and sat down to practise her scales. Mrs. Booth was lying down in the next room, ill and nervous. He jumped up, seized the child in his hands, rated her soundly for not thinking of her mother, and then pushed her sharply out of the room. On that occasion he was distinctly angry, and it pained me to see the child treated so roughly. But a minute or two afterwards Mrs. Booth entered the room. 'William,' she said reproachfully, 'it was kind of you to think of me, but I am sorry you should ——' In an instant he was on his feet, with his arms round her, and I slipped from the room. He could repent with all the abandonment of a child."

No one, says Miss Short, can possibly understand William Booth who does not realize that he was of a most energetic and enthusiastic nature. "I have never met any one," she declares, "who could compare with him in any way in this respect. And as he was an extraordinarily pure man, loathing and abominating anything that was the least coarse — his purity of mind, heart, and soul struck me greatly — you can see that the force of his nature would drive him furiously through the day's work. He was always facing in the one direction. The day could never be too long for what he had to do. And nobody, I'm afraid, could ever be quick enough and intelligent enough to keep up with him. I know that he broke me down! Mrs. Booth herself warned me on several occasions that if I let him he would kill me; and indeed I had to go away at last, and take a long sea voyage, to recover even a fraction of my former health."

One of the early memories shared by Miss Short and Mr. Bramwell Booth concerns William Booth's love of singing. They both told me that he seldom ran upstairs, and apparently he never walked upstairs when he could help it, without singing, and that while he was dressing in the morn-

ing they would often hear him singing at the top of his voice. Mrs. Booth understood nothing of music, but William Booth was never so happy as when he was singing, and it was one of his greatest joys in life that all his children were musical, some of them being among the first composers of Salvation Army music.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE FIRST LONDON MISSION

1865-1868

WILLIAM BOOTH, describing his mission in *The Christian*, in 1865, wrote :

The moral degradation and spiritual destitution of the teeming population of the East of London are subjects with which the Christians of the metropolis are perfectly conversant. More than two-thirds of the working-classes never cross the threshold of church or chapel, but loiter away the Sabbath in idleness, spending it in pleasure-seeking or some kind of money-making traffic. Consequently, tens of thousands are totally ignorant of the Gospel; and, as they will not attend the means ordinarily used for making known the love of God towards them, it is evident that if they are to be reached extraordinary methods must be employed.

This announcement was made six weeks after the beginning of an irregular mission in Whitechapel, to the holding of which he had been invited by a firm of publishers, Messrs. Stabb & Chase. Services of a revival character were held first in an old tent erected on the Quakers' burying-ground in Thomas Street, and afterwards in the open air in the Mile End Road. From the outset these services were well attended, and scarcely a meeting passed without several conversions — conversions which must have acquainted William Booth with the strange character of the East London whirlpool, since they were representative of nearly every class in the community.

It will be observed that he speaks in this announcement of the *moral* degradation and the *spiritual* destitution of East London. There is not one word, not a hint anywhere, of the *economic* degradation and the *physical* destitution which are only too often the direct causes of spiritual torpor. At the beginning of his career in London, it is quite clear,

William Booth had one remedy, and only one remedy, for the distresses of mankind, and that the Gospel. Shocked as he was by the ugliness, the misery, the grinding poverty of Whitechapel, his vision failed at this time to penetrate beneath the surface of that immense quagmire. He was not lacking in sympathy with the poor, but he believed — and, of course, in one sense he was profoundly right — that faith in God, confidence in God, and hope of everlasting felicity were the sovran healing of all humanity's distress. It was not until later in his life that he realized how economic conditions can so oppress and bear upon the soul that its natural functions of love, worship, and aspiration may be almost completely inhibited. But even when he did come to this apprehension, even when he was hot-foot among the social reformers, he remained in nearly every essential a Conservative, and never ceased to lay his supreme emphasis on conversion as the cure of individual sorrow and of social disorder.

So far as we can judge, it was this very concentration of purpose, this intense singleness of view, this consuming one-ideanness of soul, which made William Booth so successful as a preacher of personal religion. For he differed from other Hebraists in the depth and warmth of his human sympathy, so that while he was blind and deaf to the political question he was all eyes and all ears for the sufferings of humanity. He had nothing but Christ to give to those who suffered, but this Christ was given with an eagerness and a passion infinitely more convincing to democracy than the millennial promises of the politician. He was a preacher because he truly and earnestly loved his fellow-men; and he practised, so far as his slender means would allow, the charity he preached.

The character of the man as a preacher, and his personal attraction, may be clearly seen in the account of this East London Mission which I have been so fortunate to obtain from his first London convert, an old Irishman, who acted for a considerable time as an official in the movement.

I called upon this veteran at a house in Lancing, half nursing home and half boarding establishment, where he was recovering from the after-effects of an operation.

"I must tell you," said he, "that I was a prize-fighter, and in those days we fought in a twenty-one-foot ring, not a sixteen-foot ring, so that a man had to be smart to hold his own with a quick fighter. It was because I was as smart as the wind that I bested what I took on. We used to fight at the back of The Blind Beggar public-house, and it was there, forty-eight years ago, that a match had been arranged between me and another Irishman named Fitz-Gerald, the finest man as ever walked the streets of White-chapel. There had been a bit of a chip between us over our winnings, and the fight was to be a big one. Well, one morning I was walking towards the public-house, but on the opposite side of the way, just strolling along with my hands in my pocket, when I came across General Booth for the first time in my life. I met him promiscuously. That was on the 26th July, 1865. I looked at him. He looked at me. Something in the man's external appearance took hold of me then and there. I stopped dead in the street, looking at him; and he stopped, too, looking at me. At first I thought he was going to ask me the way somewhere. I could see he was a minister, for he wore a white choker and a tall hat, and I thought he was strange to the place. But, after he had looked at me a long while, says he very sadly, 'I'm looking for work.' I was taken aback. 'I've got no place,' says he, 'to put my head in.' I got hold of some coins in my pocket, and was just going to offer them to him, when he pointed to 'the boys' outside the public-house just opposite, a great crowd of them, and says he, 'look at those men,' he says; 'look at them!—forgotten by God and man. Why should I be looking for work? There's my work, over there, looking for me. But I've got no place,' he says, 'where I can put my head in.' 'You're right, sir,' I said; 'those men are forgotten by God and man, and if you can do anything for them 'twould be a great work.' And what made me say that? Sure, it was just the man's external appearance. He was the finest-looking gentleman ever you saw — white-faced, dark-eyed, and a great black beard over his chest; sure there was something strange about him that laid a hold on a man. Well, he told me he was preaching in the Mile End Road, and asked me



to come and hear him, and bring some of the boys along with me; and I promised that I would."

I asked him to tell me whether the preacher did not say anything at that first interview which accounted in some measure for this instant effect upon his mind. But again and again he protested that "it was just the man's external appearance," hinting of some ghostly emanation, or psychic influence, which laid a spell upon his senses. "I felt I could do just anything for that fine-looking gentleman."

Then he proceeded, "On the next day I was to fight FitzGerald. I said to myself, 'This'll be the last fight of your life,' for I was still thinking of the minister; and I'll tell you the candid truth now that it's over-past, as I stripped that morning I thought FitzGerald would kill me. He was a terrible man, taller altogether than me, and fierce with it, and proud, too. But he gave up, like an old woman, after an hour and three-quarters. Although I'd beaten him, and all the boys were making a hero of me, I didn't want ever to fight again, and as soon as I could I went off to the Mile End Waste, where Mr. Booth was preaching. Well, I think he was the most impetuous man I ever met. There he was holding forth, surrounded by the blackguards of Whitechapel, who in them days were the greatest vagabonds you could meet anywhere on God's earth. Some were mocking, and some were laughing; but Mr. Booth he shouted at them finely, and then gave out a hymn, and led the singing till he just drowned their noises, or nearly so. Then I threw off my coat, and walked round the ring instead of joining in the revelry, and in two minutes all those blackguards were as quiet as lambs. Well, when the meeting was over Mr. Booth linked hold of me, and, said he, 'How did you do it?' I told him that there were better men than me in the crowd, but that my nationality covered a bit of that, for they all knew an Irishman would fight. Then he looked at me and said, 'You're not happy; you know you're not happy.' 'What reason is that?' I asked. 'You'll perish like a dog,' he said; 'you're living for the devil, and the devil will have you.' I answered: 'Who made a prophet of you?' He says, 'My Father in Heaven.' I cast down my eyes at that.

Then he put a hand on my shoulder, and says he, 'I'll make a man of you yet.' And not very long after that he had me down at the penitent-form after one of his sermons in the Tent, and he came to me, put his arm round me, and says he in my ear, 'You're not happy!'—so that I had to cry out it was true, for I was everything vile, contaminating, and diabolical. Then he prayed with me, and afterwards I was converted. I got up from my knees ready to die for that man."

I asked him if he began from that moment to work for the Mission.

"Work!" he exclaimed. "I became manager of the Soup Kitchen!"

He told me that William Booth never spared any man who worked for him, and that during those first years of service he was not only manager of the food distribution, but took the meetings in the slums of Shoreditch ("for I was a bit of a rough myself"), acted as coachman to Mrs. Booth—who was terribly nervous of driving about London—and was "more or less" the first lay secretary of the Salvation Army.

"Every day for seven years," he said, perhaps letting his imagination go a little, "I was with the General or the General was with me. We had a little bit of a shack for an office and for dinner there was always a piece of steak or a mutton-chop—he hadn't got into opulence then—which we shared together. He'd preach three times a day on that bit of meat. I was glad when he wasn't there, for then I had the chop or the steak to myself! He was a hard man, though, the General was. I remember one time there was some groups taken, and I said to him, 'I should like to have one of them groups.' 'You shall,' said he. A month later I said to him, 'You haven't given me one of them groups yet.' He turned round on me sharp, and says he, 'Why don't you buy one?' I told him straight that I'd worked for him night and day, and I thought it would be only decent for him to give me one of the groups. He laughed at that, and turning to one of the others who was present, he says, 'Oh, give him one, if he won't pay for it.' But you couldn't be angry with him."

I asked him if he himself figured in this group.

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed. "Sure it was just a group of the General by himself."

He told me how the General prophesied the ruin of his married life. "I was always one to love money," he says very honestly, "and I fell in love with a woman who had a fortune of £500. When I told the General that I wanted to get married, he said to me, 'Brother M——, it's money you're marrying for, not love.'"

"Was that true?" I inquired.

"It was true. Then the General said, 'You'll lose it all, every penny.' And that was true, too. It was a strange prophecy. My poor wife died hungry, though it was not for want of money. She couldn't eat a thing. She died of hunger. But I had lost every penny of her fortune all the same."

He told us that he went into the business of an estate agent in the north of London, remaining a Salvationist. "I've bought and sold houses for years," he said, "and now I do no work, for my employers have pensioned me off. The last house I sold was the whole of Muswell Hill," he concluded proudly, and I did not press for an explanation.

It is a curious reflection that the personal influence of William Booth has remained with this old man all his life. He underwent a very serious operation in 1913, and he was visited in hospital by many ministers of religion but by no Salvationist. This seems to have angered him. "I said to myself," he relates, "that I'd have no more to do with the Army; if that was all they cared for me, after nearly fifty years of service, sure I'd be better without them." And then he smiles, and uses a charming phrase, "Ah, but I wasn't as bad as my mind!" The trouble was cleared up, and when he left the hospital it was as a faithful Salvationist. "I'm told," he says proudly, "that General Bramwell Booth heard of my feelings, and said to one of the Officers at Headquarters, 'We'll get him back.' God bless you, he knew I couldn't desert!"

This old man's testimony to the earnestness and passionate sympathy of William Booth is worth recording: "It

was the poor people he looked for from start to finish. If he worked other people hard, he worked harder himself. All day long he was at it, preaching, praying, singing, writing, talking, journeying — always for the poor. There was never a man like him for that."

And he speaks, too, with affection of Mrs. Booth, though her extreme timidity seems to have left him with a source of continual amusement. "She wore the most consecutive dress ever I saw on a woman," he says; "and she'd look at you in a queer way, smiling out of her eyes, and talk to you as if you were something of a child. I'd drive her to meetings, hand the horse and carriage over, and go inside with her. 'Brother M——,' she'd say to me, 'remember I want you to keep the Devil out of this meeting.' And many times the only way I could keep the Devil out was by throwing him out, for Mrs. Booth would go to some queer black-guard places, same as the General. She was always very gentle and quiet in her preaching, but the General was the most impetuous man I ever met. It seemed as if he'd tear the soul out of your body. And then in the midst of it all there'd be a bit that would make you want to cry, or a tale that would set you laughing fit to burst. But all the time you felt that he wanted to save your soul. There was no doubt about that."

The account which Mrs. Booth gave of the origin of the mission to East London tallies with that of the old Irishman. "I remember well," she said, "when the General decided finally to give up the evangelistic life and to devote himself to the salvation of the East Enders. He had come home from the meeting one night, tired out as usual. It was between eleven and twelve o'clock. Flinging himself into an easy-chair, he said to me, 'Oh, Kate, as I passed by the doors of the flaming gin-palaces to-night, I seemed to hear a voice sounding in my ears, "Where can you go and find such heathen as these, and where is there so great a need for your labours?"' And I felt as though I ought at every cost to stop and preach to those East End multitudes.' I remember the emotion that this produced in my mind. I sat gazing into the fire, and the Devil whispered to me, 'This means another new departure — another start in

life.' The question of our support constituted a serious difficulty. Hitherto we had been able to meet our expenses by the collections which we had made from our more respectable audiences. But it was impossible to suppose that we could do so among the poverty-stricken East Enders. We had not then the measure of light upon this subject which subsequent events afforded, and we were afraid even to ask for a collection in such a locality. Nevertheless, I did not answer discouragingly. After a momentary pause for thought and prayer, I replied, 'Well, if you feel you ought to stay, stay. We have trusted the Lord *once* for our support, and we can trust Him *again*.' There was not in our minds, at the time we came to this decision, the remotest idea of the marvellous work which has since sprung into existence."

William Booth himself has given the following account of this fresh movement in his life: "I saw multitudes of my fellow-creatures not only without God and hope, but sunk in the most desperate forms of wickedness and misery that can be conceived. I went out and looked on the wretched sons and daughters of debauchery and vice and crime who were all about me. The drunkenness, and harlotry, and pauperism, and slumdom, and blasphemy, and infidelity of these crowds had a fascination for me. . . . I not only saw but compassionated the people sunk in the sin and wretchedness that I beheld, and the everlasting woe that I knew must follow."

It will be seen both from these accounts and from that of the old Irishman already quoted, that it was the *spectacle* of sin and suffering which moved William Booth to his decision. The incessant degradation and the multiplied misery of East London were to him like veritable and heart-breaking human cries for help; he could not walk a pace through these dreadful streets without acute suffering; he had no rest until he gave himself to the work of rescue. And yet some years were still to pass before he realized the true nature of his vocation.

Soon after the Booths' decision to give themselves to this work, a step which meant at that time a voluntary return to poverty, Mr. Samuel Morley, the philanthropist,



hearing of William Booth's courageous preaching in the Mile End Road, invited the missionary to call and see him. We learn from Commissioner Booth-Tucker that the philanthropist was cordially impressed by the account he received of the Mission. "The open-air meetings on the Mile End Waste, surrounded by blaspheming infidels and boisterous drunkards; the processions down the Whitechapel Road, pelted with garbage; the placards carried with striking texts; the penitent-form and the testifying of the new converts, enlisted his unbounded sympathy."

One result of this conversation was a generous contribution on Mr. Morley's part towards the support of William Booth and his family. It came, as it happened, just at a moment when William Booth was in sore need of such assistance, for some of his friends — and there were not many — had forsaken him. "Some of them," says Commissioner Booth-Tucker, "objected to his holiness teaching. Others considered that he laid too much stress upon repentance and works, and too little upon bare faith. Not a few grew weary of the ceaseless open-air and processions, with the mobbing and mockery of the crowd."

The extraordinary courage and tenacity of the man were never exhibited more finely than in the early years of the Christian Mission. The flourish of trumpets had died away; the excitement of novel proceedings was at an end; the enthusiasm of the over-fervent had evaporated. He was faced by an almost boundless hostility and an almost boundless indifference. Surrounded by his little band of disciples, he confronted the ridicule, the hatred, the scorn, and the bitter malice of perhaps the most destitute and degraded place in the world. It was like preaching in Hell; for the atheism of East London in those days was a fierce and oppugnant atheism, an atheism which hated the very name of God, and to which Jesus appeared as the arch-deceiver of the human race. Attacked on every side by those who hated religion, and regarded with an amused curiosity or a provoking ridicule by those who neither knew nor wanted to know about religion, William Booth doggedly continued his work, and never once lost heart. It is remarkable that often as he may have doubted in the

midst of his successful crusades as a revivalist preacher, when thousands were flocking to country chapels to hear him preach, he never once lost heart in those early and most difficult days of the Christian Mission in East London.

Mr. Morley's support came at the right moment, but William Booth was still faced by the abysmal problems which his Mission had discovered to him. He wanted more helpers, and the churches sent no one to his aid. He wanted a hall, but he had only a weather-beaten tent. Nevertheless the man fought on, making converts here and there, encouraging those who were faithful, and working everybody who offered him the least assistance almost to death.

There he was in East London — an eccentric, an innovator. Churches and Chapels were equally cold, equally hostile. Athanasius scarcely had Christendom so heartily and unanimously against him.

He called the open air his "cathedral." He stood up before the vilest people imaginable and proclaimed the Gospel of Love. He confronted the most abominable people in London, and denounced sin with the unqualified energy of an inspired prophet. He was fearless. One thing must be carefully remembered, he never lost his humanity. He could draw to his side such a person as the Irishman we have just spoken about. He inspired some of his followers with an affection which was only this side of idolatry. And he could make the worst of people feel that he cared for them. If he had lacked this humanity, it is probable that the mob would have stoned him to death.

It is told in many places that the wind one night blew down the old tent in Whitechapel. The Irishman, however, tells me that the cords of the tent were cut by a gang of roughs. He says that he knew about it, but said nothing to the General for fear of adding to his sorrows. "It was better for him to think," he says, "that the wind blew it down."

The loss of this tent drove the Mission into an old dancing-saloon. "The people danced in it," says William Booth, "until the small hours of the Sunday morning, and then the converts carried in the seats, which had for-

unately not been destroyed with the tent. It was a long, narrow room, holding about 600 people. The proprietor combined the two professions of dancing-master and photographer, the latter being specially pushed on Sundays. In the front room, through which all the congregation had to pass from the open street, sat the mistress colouring photographs, whilst some one at the door touted for business. The photography was done at the top of the house, and customers had to pass on their way up by a sort of parlour that was open to our hall. It was a regular thing for them to pause, and listen to the message of salvation as they went upstairs on their Sabbath-breaking business."

He speaks of the wonderful meetings held in this dancing-saloon, and relates that regularly during those Sundays he gave three, occasionally four, open-air addresses, led two or three processions through the streets, and conducted three meetings in the dancing-saloon. "The power and happiness of the work," he says, "carried me along, and in that room the foundation was really laid of all that has since come to pass."

The dancing-saloon was only available on Sundays. "For week-nights," he says, "we secured an old wool warehouse in one of the lowest parts of Bethnal Green. Unfortunately, the windows opened on the street. When crowded . . . it became oppressively hot, especially in summer. If we opened the windows the boys threw stones and mud and fireworks through, and fired trains of gunpowder, laid from the doors inwards. But our people got used to this, shouting 'Hallelujah!' when the crackers exploded and the powder flashed. . . . It was an admirable training-ground for the development of the Salvation Army spirit."

Mr. W. T. Stead relates some of the Christian Mission's troubles in a monograph on General Booth published in 1891, now said to be very scarce. "They migrated to a stable, from which they were ejected for disturbing a gymnasium on the other side of the wall. They found a resting-place for themselves in an old penny gaff at Limehouse, and then established themselves also on the site of an old beer-house, The Eastern Star. It was not, however, until they

took the Effingham Theatre that they considered their work as firmly rooted with some prospects of permanence." This was in 1867.

One of General Booth's later sayings affords us a pretty accurate view of the attitude now adopted towards him by the Churches. "The day has gone when the priest and Levite are content to pass by the wounded man. They must needs stop now, turn back, and punch the head of any good Samaritan who dares to come to the rescue." Of course there is exaggeration in this saying, which was uttered after bitter attacks on his Darkest England Scheme, but it is picturesque and explosive enough to make us feel the loneliness in which William Booth attempted to reach the masses.

It was this attitude of the Churches, more than anything else, which transformed the Christian Mission from a purely pioneer agency into an organized society aiming at a permanent corporate life. It cannot be too clearly known that one object of William Booth in going out to preach Christianity in the streets of London was to help the Churches. He recognized, and never ceased to recognize, that there must be a pastoral as well as an evangelistic side of Christian propaganda. He never attacked the idea of a resident minister domiciled in a particular locality and serving the needs of a community of Christians. He was indeed sincerely convinced that a pastorate was not merely a wise provision of the Church, but that it was essential to Christian life. His object at the beginning of his career in East London was to rescue from sin those who never attended church or chapel and to send them as converted men and women to the ministers of the various denominations. It was only when he discovered that the Churches either failed to keep these people, or, as in some cases, deliberately turned their backs upon such sorry "riff-raff," that he conceived the idea of a Mission composed almost entirely of its own converts.

In these early years, when he was mercilessly attacked from all quarters as a bombastic clown or as a raving fanatic bent upon setting up a new sect, few people were allowed to know the real truth. But before the end of his career it

was recognized that he had set out with no antagonism towards the Churches, and that it was the circumstance of the Churches' ill-will towards his converts which drove him to the establishment of a distinct organization.

To follow with intelligence the rise and history of the Salvation Army it is necessary to recognise the truth, and also to bear in mind that William Booth began his extraordinary work in East London as a pure Hebraist, and with but little interest in social and economic questions.



## CHAPTER XXIII

### A SUMMING UP IN MIDDLE AGE

1878

At the time when he transformed the Christian Mission into the Salvation Army and became a figure of world-wide significance and a target for the scorn and bitter hatred of nearly the whole community, William Booth was entering his fiftieth year. The work which he had done in the provinces, culminating in thirteen years of incredible labour among the poor of Whitechapel, might very easily have exhausted the strength and energy of a man more powerfully fitted for such trying exertions. But it would almost seem as if this extraordinary person, whose body was continually breaking down under the strain his iron and resistless will imposed upon it, entered upon a new lease of life, and saw a more splendid vision before his eyes, at a time when most over-worked men are looking forward to the ease and leisure of retirement.

We should give a false impression of his character if we emphasized the headlong and fiery energy of his will and mentioned only in occasional passages those pleasures and relaxations of his private life which certainly helped to keep him human, even if they failed to modify the intensity and the narrowness of his Hebraism. We propose, therefore, to give in this place, before proceeding to follow the history of the Salvation Army, some further particulars of William Booth's private life and to attempt a brief summary of his chief characteristics. The danger before us in approaching the tumultuous history of the Salvation Army without some such reference, is to lead the reader to the conclusion that General Booth was one of those hot-brained enthusiasts, one of those intolerant fire-eaters, whose natures are so radically different from the rest of mankind that they can never excite the affection of posterity.

It is with a feeling of real gratitude that one learns of

the General's indulgent habit of taking a short nap every day after the midday meal. This habit, contracted during his visit to Cornwall, lasted to the end of his life. He made up to some extent for the long sleepless hours to which he was often condemned at night by these brief snatches of sleep in the middle day; and wherever he might be, or on whatever business he might be engaged, he insisted upon his nap and could go to sleep almost in the act of closing his eyes. From these slumbers he awakened with renewed energy for the other half of the day's work.

Literature provided him with the easiest escape from the obsession of his one idea. He was a great reader, if not a very judicious or a very catholic-minded reader. He would have nothing to do with religious fiction; but, with the exception of Dickens, whom he found intolerable, he did occasionally browse among the novelists. He had well-nigh unbounded admiration for *Les Misérables* and *Jane Eyre*; as a boy he had taken a deep pleasure in the tales of Fenimore Cooper; and in early youth he found a new world opening before his vision in the romances of Sir Walter Scott, to which he returned in middle life. But he always liked to have some book at hand which attempted to deal, or professed to deal, in a spirit of sober and exact truth, with the real facts of human existence — such as books of history, biography, and travel. He was absorbed for some time by the French Revolution, and would defend Robespierre and Danton with a good deal of eloquence. Carlisle's epic was the chief source of his information. He made an effort, but failed, to read the whole of the same author's *Frederick*. He was never tired of reading Froude's *Cæsar*, and was a student of Burke's career. In the literature of political economy he was influenced by Mallock and by Professor Flint's *Socialism*.

Literature afforded him the easiest way of escape from his work, but the happiest and dearest of his distractions was the countryside. He had a particular love for rivers. He was fond, not only of landscape, but of the business of the fields. Nothing in nature more stirred his admiration than a horse — a good horse. He told me on more than one occasion that it seemed to him as if the spectacle

of a strong horse moving finely and freely gave him waves of strength, inspired him with a feeling of force and power. He was very fond of riding and driving, but the mere sight of a good, well-fed, well-groomed, and well-handled horse gave him quite as much inspiration as either of these exercises.

In the matter of field games, he was without a single liking; indeed he was intolerably sceptical of their value. He had loved fishing as a youth, and as a young minister he had once tasted the pleasures of shooting; but so far as we are able to discover he never took part in a game of cricket, football, or tennis. Any game which absorbed grown men's attention to the exclusion of the great end of life incurred his condemnation. Games were only to be regarded as diversions. The danger of cricket and football lay in their tendency to deflect the mind of men from the serious purposes of life. But his contempt for the majority of such games was perhaps coloured, if not directly inspired, by a kind of inability to understand their attraction.

With his children, as we have seen, he played a very hearty game of "Fox and Geese," and Bramwell Booth informs us, with a smile that almost writes a chapter of his father's biography—"He was always the Fox." Dominant and masterful everywhere, he was dominant and masterful even in the games of his children, throwing himself into all their pleasures with a quite boyish zest, and insisting that whatever they did should be done thoroughly. It is characteristic of him that he taught his boys to buy and sell postage-stamps to advantage, concerning himself in their collection, and encouraging them so to conduct this *business* that they might be independent of pocket-money. In the same manner, he did not merely cast a paternal eye upon the menagerie in the garden, but on occasion took an active part in "the rigging up of rabbit-hutches," in the serious side of the silkworm enterprise, and in the breeding and sale of guinea-pigs. Something of the naturalist showed itself in the interest he manifested from the very first in the children's collection of moths, and particularly in one of the boys' early enthusiasm for ants.

It may be imagined that with such a father the children





GENERAL BRAMWELL BOOTH



did not see anything odd or tyrannical in his religious habits. They worshipped him; and when he told them about the Bible they accepted every word he said without a moment's question. He encouraged them to discuss every subject under the sun, delighted indeed to set them arguing; but never was the fundamental question of the Bible's absolute authority even questioned. It was a household founded upon the Bible. The children might and did argue about the French Revolution, about socialism, about history, about characters in fiction; but the one unquestioned and unquestionable centre of their life was the unerring authority of the Bible as the Word of God.

One of the indoor games which he liked, and at this time played occasionally, was draughts, in which he seems to have been something of a master. But above everything else he liked to romp with his children, to surrender himself to their animal spirits, and to let them pull him about on the floor, to tumble over his prostrate body, and to drag him up by his hands to his feet.

He believed in discipline and punishment, and his children accepted this faith as part of their religion. He would be indulgent and kind; he interested himself heart and soul in their games; but let one of them break a rule, let them even say something foolish in discussion or arrive five minutes late for a meal, and they were at once made acquainted with his discipline. "I think, looking back," says one of the sons, "that he was over-stern on occasion; I am perfectly sure he flogged me several times without just cause; but I am equally certain that the spirit of discipline which ruled the household was salutary. None of us grew up slackers; none of us played with life. How many families go to pieces for want of discipline and punishment?"

That William Booth was in some respects a strict father may be judged from the following narrative. A slight discrepancy was discovered at the last moment in the accounts of the Christian Mission. Bramwell Booth, then a boy of thirteen, was set to help in discovering the mistake. For a stretch of seventy-two hours, without sleep, the boy toiled through all the jumble of figures, and at last found where the error lay. So delighted were the committee that

they subscribed and made him a present of £5. Of this £5 his father allowed him to keep ten shillings. "I want the balance," he said, "for the rice pudding," referring to that rice pudding which always appeared on the dinner-table challenging any member of the family to go away hungry.

Another instance may be given. In the year 1872, William Booth entered upon a commercial speculation, dictated by sympathy with the sufferings of the poor. He set up six or seven shops, where soup was always to be furnished night and day, and where a dinner of three courses could be bought for sixpence. This venture of "Food for the Million"—the first, I believe, of its kind—was a very considerable success. Bramwell Booth, a lad of sixteen, was the manager of this difficult business. He bought the necessary provisions, he inspected the depots, he examined the accounts, he supervised in its details the work of the assistants. And for this labour, a labour which might have tried the powers of a practised business man, he was rewarded by his father, who feared the effect of money, with a wage which most boys would have regarded as pocket-money.

We must bear in mind, however, that William Booth was not snatching at the profits of this enterprise in the spirit of a money-grabber. He needed every penny he could get for the expenses of his household and for his innumerable charities. The domestic expenditure was a serious charge upon his precarious income. Bramwell Booth has a most distinct memory of his father's financial worries. "He had an anxious temperament," he tells me; "he was always expecting ruin." This business of "Food for the Million," even in its prosperity, did not allay his anxiety. His children were a growing expense; Mrs. Booth was continually falling ill; the future seemed never to promise a rest from his burdens. In 1878 trouble arose with the managers of his scattered shops, competition from men with large capital threatened them with ruin, and the worry of the thing interfered with his work at the Mission. In a moment of disappointment he abandoned the business altogether.

At this point we may refer with convenience to the finances of William Booth. He aimed from the very first





MRS. BRAMWELL BOOTH

for an income of £300 a year, with a house provided for him. Mr. Rabbits, in the early days, offered to settle money on him, but he replied, "I am not going to settle down. You must keep it." At the age of thirty-two, a similar offer was made by another admirer, and again refused. He refused, as we have seen, the £10,000 proffered to him for his Mission, conditionally, by Mr. Henry Reed of Tunbridge Wells; but he accepted, much later on, £5,000 which the same sympathizer settled upon him unconditionally, and which became the only capital he ever possessed to the end of his days. Mr. Frank Crossley, the engineer of Manchester, more than once pressed upon William Booth, for whom he had a warm admiration, blank cheques to be filled up for his domestic needs; but invariably these personal cheques were returned. Later on, when Mrs. Booth was dying, Mr. Crossley offered temporary help which was accepted, and in the course of three or four years this generous good man subscribed some £60,000 to the funds of the Salvation Army.

The reader will remember that in one of his letters to Mrs. Booth, quoted in Chapter XIX, p. 305, William Booth, writing from Manchester in a time of poverty and desolation, lays emphasis on the satisfaction he feels in his independence and freedom: "I do feel a measure of comfort from the thought that we are securing our own livelihood . . . and *not hanging on to any one*. That thought has been like a canker at my heart of late. It must not be after that fashion." If this letter could have been published at a time when men of repute and newspapers of distinction were attacking the General of the Salvation Army on the financial question, and when rumours of the basest kind, calumnies of the most odious nature were filling the air, even in East London itself, how great a reproof would have been administered to the traducers of William Booth.

When his will was published, the world offered its tribute of admiration to the honour of this true friend of the poor; but even then it was not known that from the first the very thought of "hanging on to any one" had been "like a canker" at the heart of this honest, struggling, and much-enduring man. His income, even with the interest arising



from Mr. Reed's £5,000, never exceeded £600. His average expenditure on his wife and family was between £400 and £500 a year.

After the disposal of his business, "Food for the Million," William Booth largely supported himself by the sale of books, his own and Mrs. Booth's. Between 1878 and 1890 these books produced an income in the neighbourhood of £400 a year.

It is remarkable that while General Booth quite properly made profit out of the sale of these books, he refused to take the advice of the late Mr. John Cory — one of the most generous supporters of the Army — in the matter of *The War Cry*. Many people, perhaps, are unaware that *The War Cry* is one of the valuable newspaper properties of the world, and that with outside advertisements it might be made a still greater financial success. By keeping this weekly periodical as his own property, as Mr. Cory and others counselled him to do, even without the aid of outside advertisements William Booth could have secured to himself a very considerable income. But he refused the idea. He argued that he had enough to live upon, and that *The War Cry* belonged to the Army. Every penny of profit earned by this publication has gone to the funds of the Army. But more than this. On several occasions wealthy admirers of William Booth pressed on him large sums of money for the purpose of endowing his family. He invariably refused. In one case, a lady was so angered by his refusal that she threatened to strike the Salvation Army out of her will and to cease her subscription from that moment. But the General remained adamant. He did not need the money, he said. "Give it to me and I shall pass it on to the Army, just as the least of my Officers would do." This was not the only occasion on which the General refused large sums pressed upon him by those who admired his work and were acquainted with the straitened circumstances of his domestic life.

I have reason to believe that William Booth had a great fear of money. The memory of his father lasted with him into old age. He felt in himself the possibility of becoming a money-lover. "Criminal instincts?" he once exclaimed

to me, "why, we have all got them. I have got them. My father was a grab, a get. He had been bred in poverty. He determined to grow rich; and he did. He grew very rich, because he lived without God and simply worked for money; and when he lost it all his heart broke with it, and he died miserably. I have inherited the grab from him. I want to get. I am always wanting to get." It is more than probable that when he gave Bramwell Booth only ten shillings out of the five pounds the boy had earned, and when he paid him the small weekly sum for very difficult and arduous work, he was inspired by a dread of encouraging in his son that disposition to grab and to get which he had inherited from his own father and which he had laboured to convert into a grabbing and a getting of the souls of men.

Few of his words are more illuminating than those which he once addressed to an Officer of the Salvation Army. "I have been trying," he said, "all my life to stretch out my arms so as to reach with one hand the poor, and at the same time keep the other in touch with the rich. But my arms are not long enough. I find that when I am in touch with the poor I lose my hold upon the rich, and when I reach up to the rich I let go of the poor. And I very much doubt whether God Almighty's arms are long enough for this."

To sum up. At the time when William Booth transformed the Christian Mission into the Salvation Army, he was a delicate, middle-aged, family man, with a precarious income of some four or five hundred pounds a year, and an infinitely larger number of enemies to oppose and traduce him than friends to cheer him in his heartbreaking work. He was neither a scholarly man nor a great orator. The three qualities which supported him throughout life were sympathy, earnestness, and masterfulness. A hundred men, more gifted physically and mentally, might have attempted, indeed have attempted, the work to which he set his hand, and failed utterly to move the heart of the world. Two great qualities in his nature, seldom combined in one personality, intense and passionate sympathy, imperious and resistless masterfulness, carried him through even when his

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earnestness was doubted on every hand. He really felt the agonies of the poor and suffering, he really felt the horror of godlessness and debauchery, he really felt the death of torpor and indifference; and in setting out to relieve the suffering, to convert the wicked, and to raise the spiritually dead, he would suffer no man to dictate to him the words he should use or allow another to point the way in which he should go. Despotic by temperament and by habit and by conviction, he was nevertheless a simple man at heart, hallowed by a love which sweetened his tumultuous mind, and held to his course by a dogmatic faith which was the very breath of his existence.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### FROM THE CHRISTIAN MISSION TOWARDS THE SALVATION ARMY

1874-1878

THE establishment of the Salvation Army in 1878, if it opened a new controversy for the Churches of Christendom, closed a particularly interesting and difficult controversy which had in some measure distracted the Christian Mission for the last four years of its existence.

We do not propose to follow the history of the Salvation Army in any detail, or to trace in the ancient places of orthodoxy the influence of this bewildering phenomenon in the religious life of the nineteenth century. But it is essential to the history of William Booth that record be made of those events in the years 1874-1878 which led up to the founding of the Salvation Army, and in particular to that controversy, little known at present, which put an end to the Christian Mission and determined the character of the organization which succeeded it.

With the energy and courage of a great conviction, William Booth had made himself master of the Christian Mission. An attempt by a few timorous individuals to control the growing organization of this Society, and to set up a harassing and vacillating committee which would have held the reins of government, had been overruled by the force of the man who had called it into being. He got rid of these meddling people, and assumed the powers of an autocrat, to the horror of the fearful and to the great satisfaction of the bold.

But that he did not arrive at this position without opposition may be seen from the following letter — for which Dickens, we think, would have offered thanks to Heaven — addressed to him by Mr. Henry Reed, of Tunbridge Wells. This letter is dated 15th April, 1870:

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your note confounded me. To find you owed £500 upon the hall was sad—but to tell me you are also £500 more in debt, to this I know not what to say; surely there must be some mistake; still your letter I have before me. You say, “Instead of having £500 to spare I am £500 in debt, and have not wherewith to put the necessary fittings into the place.” Again and again you have assured me that nothing would induce you to go into debt; you engage all helpers by the week, with a distinct understanding they must go unless funds come in; that all your places you took on short notices, so that at any time you could stop without debt . . . on no other terms dare I have anything to do with you or the Mission. . . . I have boasted that you have adopted the principle of no debt, not one penny. I am confounded; and the knowledge that you are in debt after your solemn word given of no debt is such a violation of your word . . . that it will have a tendency to destroy confidence . . . but, above all, such conduct has grieved the Good Spirit, and is grieving Him. . . . I do not wonder now at the knowledge that you were ill. O the dishonour you are bringing on the cause of Christ . . . but I forbear, my soul is troubled.

You ask what can I advise; I can give you none, I can only say what by God’s Grace I would do. First: I would call together all paid agents, tell them my position and give them the weekly notice agreed upon, and send them away. I would then give notice to all from whom I had taken any place, large or small. If all you have in the world were sold I question if you could pay 20s. in the pound. Therefore it is not honest to render yourself liable for places under any pretence of God’s causes. “He does not require robbery for burnt offering.” Then I should put my own house into the hands of a respectable house agent for sale, taking the first reasonable offer. I would then go into a small house—hundreds of clerks have to live upon £100 a year, thousands of respectable artisans upon 30s. a week—thousands are in Glory who have made greater sacrifices than living upon £100 a year, for the Master’s sake. I would therefore resolve that for the present £100 a year should cover *everything, rent and schooling, everything*. Your wife and daughters must keep the house and do everything with the exception of washing, which I do not think she is able to do. . . . house would be small and would require but little labour to keep it clean—cooking would be only for the necessities of life. Your wife would have to give up taking halls and leaving home (I never saw this to be the path of duty) . . . all this is retrenchment—now, then, how are the debts to be paid? I would sell the soup place, which, with coppers, fittings up, lease, etc., would probably realize a good sum; in a smaller house you would want less furniture,



I would sell every stick I could do without — then, honestly acting, I would above all look to God — I would begin by confessing my sin and folly, pleading the promise, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; but it is no use confessing without honestly turning from it, and doing all in my power to pay every man his own and to undo by any means in my power the evil which my conduct may have done.

My beloved Brother — for still I love you and feel a deep interest in you — lay all that I have said before God. My great fear is your wife; if she will honestly and humbly join you and encourage you to do what is right, I believe you will, for you are much influenced by her — but for her to give up all and come down to a plain loving wife and mother willing to stop at home, send her children to a humble day school — Mrs. Booth nothing and her family nothing — I know this practically will indeed be hard — my mother came much lower with a family of little ones; the best school I was at was, I think, 20s. the year, the one before 2d. a week. She worked and with a little sister washed and laboured and brought us up, and was never ashamed of it. The Lord help your dear wife to do likewise. I am fully persuaded my wife would do everything I am asking yours to do, and would encourage me to do all I am asking you to do. . . . If you truly repent and do what is right, I believe God will deliver you; if not, you will probably find it a *sin unto death*. Of course you will call together the trustees for the Hall and place everything before them, for even the coppers belong to the Hall, and therefore should not be sold without their consent . . . and then you will lay before the Mission Committee, all, all, all, and hear what both parties say. Trustees and Committees, unless a reality, are a delusion,—you act without consulting them to a great extent, I am afraid. . . . If you have them, they must be a reality for the future. Shams of every sort are not in accordance with God's Word. Do not answer this for a week, read it over with prayer again and again, then let your wife read it.—Yours in Christ,

HENRY REED.

Unfortunately, no record exists of William Booth's reply to this remarkable epistle. Nothing is known, more unfortunately still, of what Mrs. Booth said when this letter was read to her.

But we know that William Booth did not take the advice of the plutocrat in Tunbridge Wells, who was a kinder man than his letter would suggest, and who became a true and

generous friend in after years. William Booth stuck to Whitechapel; he faced his difficulties; and he tightened his masterful hold upon the Mission.

Yet there were moments when he was disposed, so greatly did the financial burden press upon him, to seek the protection of established organizations, or a committee of wealthy men. In August, 1872, he writes to Samuel Morley:

In conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Paton, with whom I met most casually, I mentioned this thought in answer to his particular and interested enquiries as to our progress, saying that sometimes I had wondered whether it would be possible to tack our Mission, like a little boat, on to some existing religious denomination, or whether a few Christian gentlemen of different denominations might take the financial responsibility of the movement. . . . It promises me little but a life of toil and anxiety. Such is my conviction as to the necessity of some such movement, and such is my conviction that this is a line of things which, if worked efficiently, is calculated to accomplish great, blessed, and lasting results, that I am willing not only to accept, but welcome with gladness, the little labour it may bring to me.

And in the same year, writing to his wife while he is away from home after a troublesome illness, he shows how lonely he is, and how he longs for her society:

MY DEAREST, MY DARLING, MY OWN LOVE,—How mysterious the tie that binds us together, how wonderful the union. How lost and lonesome I am without you. Life loses half, nay all, its charm. I am only living and working here to get better to return to you. My last and first thoughts are given to you. Oh let us try and cherish and keep stronger with a living glow the holy flame of love as kindled in our hearts for each other. I am oppressed with the thought and feeling of my unworthiness, of the devotion you manifest for me.

But, in spite of solitude in his heart, opposition from the world, criticism from wealthy friends, and the tremendous burden of finance, he strove with might and with main to establish the Mission on a sure and lasting foundation.

William Booth had now reached that period in life which

John Morley calls the second crisis — the crisis which marks “the resisting quality, the strength, the purity, the depth of the native character.” The whole future of his days was to be determined by the work which he now held fast in his hands. What was to be the history of this obscure Mission founded in the waste places of White-chapel? Was it to be only another failure of religious realism? Was it to leave misery as it found it, and sin still deeply entrenched in the hearts of men? Was it to collect subscriptions, publish an Annual Report, and finally disappear into the limbo of religious enthusiasm? The answer made by William Booth to these questions was the Everlasting Nay of one profoundly convinced of God’s presence in his soul. He determined that this Mission should fight its way out of obscurity and reach the conscience of mankind. He was never of a stronger will or a nobler purpose than when he set himself to make this Mission a means of awakening the Church to the hope of a spiritual victory. Everything was against him except that which was indifferent to him; and the number of his faithful disciples was few.

The powers that he assumed to gain this end are set forth in the following emphatic terms under the heading of “General Superintendent,” in an old volume of the Society, called the *Conference Journal*:

I. The Mission shall be under the superintendence of the Rev. William Booth, who is spoken of hereafter as the General Superintendent.

II. The General Superintendent shall possess the power of confirming or setting aside the decisions and resolutions of any of the Official, Society, or other Meetings held throughout the Mission, which in his judgment may be in any way prejudicial to the object for which the Mission was first established.

III. The General Superintendent shall, when present, preside at all meetings throughout the Mission, unless he desire otherwise; or, in his absence, he may, if he deem it necessary, depute some person to preside in his place.

IV. The said William Booth shall continue to be for the term of his natural life the General Superintendent of the Christian Mission, unless he shall resign such office.

V. The said William Booth, and every General Superintendent who shall succeed him, shall have power to appoint his

successor to the office of General Superintendent, and all the rights, powers, and authorities of the office shall vest in the person so appointed upon the decease of the said William Booth, or other General Superintendent appointing him, or at such other period as may be named in the document appointing him.

VI. It shall be the duty of every General Superintendent to make in writing, as soon as conveniently may be, after his appointment, a statement as to his successor or as to the means which are to be taken for the appointment of a successor at the decease of the General Superintendent, or upon his ceasing to perform the duties of the office, such statement to be signed by the General Superintendent, and delivered in a sealed envelope to the Solicitor for the time being of the Christian Mission; but such statement may be altered at will by the General Superintendent at any time during his continuance in office upon a new statement being signed by him, and delivered as before mentioned to such Solicitor as aforesaid.

These powers, we must be careful to recognise, were assumed only when the tentative policy of the Conference Committee was seen to be inimical to the advance of the Mission, and only after William Booth had been approached by the most active members of the Mission and asked to assume them. Among those who approached him in this way was the late George Scott Railton, afterwards a very able Commissioner in the Salvation Army. It was pointed out to William Booth that the deputation had given up everything to follow him, and that in making this sacrifice of their worldly interests they had been influenced by the conviction that he was a man specially called by God to revivify the life of the Church; certainly, they had never thought of giving their lives into the hands of a committee whose instincts were little different from the councils and committees of other religious bodies.

With this revolution in the machinery of the Mission a fresh impetus was given to its work, both in London and the provinces. It became, one may say, from that moment the Salvation Army. Men and women surrendered their lives to the inspiration of William Booth, went wherever he ordered them to go, did whatsoever he bid them to do, and suffered without murmur or complaint a hundred hard-

ships hardly to be exceeded at the most distant boundaries of the Foreign Mission field.

The aim of this humble Mission which aspired so greatly, is expressed in the commendable brevity which was one of William Booth's characteristic gifts:

The object and work of this Mission is to seek the conversion of the neglected crowds of people who are living without God and without hope, and to gather those so converted into Christian fellowship, in order that they may be instructed in Scriptural truth, trained in habits of holiness and usefulness, and watched over and cared for in their religious course.

The same brevity is to be found in the Articles of Faith; but here, even to the most inexperienced theologian, brevity must seem a dangerous convenience. But it will be borne in mind by all generous students of religion, that the man who here expresses, or attempts to express, his Christian faith in terms of theology, was one conscious in a supreme and a very acute degree of God's existence, and of the frightful suffering and havoc wrought by sin. He was a prophet more than a theologian:

I. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

II. We believe that there is only one God who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things.

III. We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence, co-equal in power and glory, and the only proper object of religious worship.

IV. We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God, and truly and properly man.

V. We believe that our first parents were created in a state of infancy,<sup>1</sup> but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness; and that, in consequence of their fall, all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

VI. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world, so that whosoever will may be saved.

<sup>1</sup> A clerical error. The word is evidently a mis-writing for *innocency*.



VII. We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.

VIII. We believe that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

IX. We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be "wholly sanctified," and that "their whole spirit and soul and body" may "be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."—(1 Thess. v. 23.)

X. We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgment at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

Such at the time was the faith of William Booth, and this faith he impressed upon the Christian Mission with all the force and power of his masterful character. None who followed him doubted for a single moment that human life had been an act of special creation, that man in his origin was innocent and perfect, that Satan had cunningly entrapped the human race into disobedience to God, and that every child born into the difficulties of human existence was, in consequence of that original fall, liable to become a sinner totally depraved, and to come under the wrath of the Creator. This was the faith of the Christian Mission. It was a faith which inspired great heroism and a profound loving-kindness.

In the controversy to which we have referred — the controversy which had much to do with the transformation of the Christian Mission into the Salvation Army — we have more than a good example of the difficulties which now and then presented themselves to William Booth; we have a striking illustration of the working of his mind.

It began to be seen early in the seventies that conversion was not an end, but a beginning. To convert a thief, a drunkard, a swindler, a footpad, an atheist, was only a first step to making these poor sinners the children of light. A thief might give up stealing and a drunkard abandon alcohol, yet remain for the rest of their lives only respectable and law-abiding, or, at best, only formal disciples of that mystical religion which obviously has Holiness for its supreme end.

But the numbers of evil people were legion; the area covered by crime, poverty, and indifference, enormous. What should be done? Was the Christian Mission to seek the perfecting of a few, or the awakening of a multitude? Was it to go within doors and pray itself into an exquisite small holiness, or to fling itself far and wide upon the extended front of evil, and endeavour to arouse the whole world to the urgency of a decision for God?

Some were for this course, others for that; the Mission, in fact, was all but threatened by a schism. Catherine Booth, whom some people regard as the real founder of the Salvation Army, while influenced by a remarkable premonition of the coming importance of the movement, was decidedly in favour of an intense cultivation towards personal holiness. There is no question about that. William Booth oscillated between two opinions. As late as August, 1876, he was greatly troubled by this matter, as an interesting letter written during illness to his son Bramwell, then resting in Scotland after a breakdown in health, makes fairly manifest. We quote this long letter almost in full because of its intrinsic interest; the reference to Holiness appears only towards the end:

*August 27, '76.*

MY DEAR BOY — Of the abounding mercy of God I am permitted to commence writing my thoughts to those at a distance whom I love, and find it a joy as well as a duty to counsel and commune with; and first, before all others, my heart turns to you. I need not tell you how almost constantly you have been in my thoughts, and how anxiously I have desired that nothing — no evil tidings about me or aught else should interfere with your comfort or mar the good effects of your sojourn in the North. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Now for yourself, and I cannot write very fully. I must give you the results of my thinking about you.

Your *future* — *i.e.*, *your life work*. How can I divine this? You ought to have convictions yourself. One thing alone I insist on — *Be something* — be master of one branch of labour. This seems to me a necessity, *i.e.*, if you have health for it — if not — why, then, get on as well as you can. You will have God's providence to fall back upon, which makes a way and a

<sup>1</sup> Here follows an account of his severe illness, and the illness of other members of the family. He says of Catherine Booth, "She nursed me with all her might, and, as a result, broke down."

provision for the infirm — for those who have no strength to help themselves. That is, for example, if you take up a clerk's work, *be a clerk*, as fully qualified as your opportunities will allow. Be able to *write, keep books*, etc. If a preacher, then *be a preacher*.

My own and a growing conviction is that God wants you to assist me in directing and governing this Mission, and at my death, if it should anticipate yours, to take my place. With my present feelings *I should certainly name you to take my place in the event of my decease*. True, at present, your youth would be very much against you with some of the men, but you would have Mamma to counsel you and she would have much weight. But my feeling is that God will spare me for some time to come — and every year now will tell in your favour.

Well then — what ought you to do with this *possible future*? Methinks devote all your *energies to preparation for it*. Do you say — this may be a long way off? True, but there is the work already to be done of a subordinate Overseer during my life, which will be the necessary preparation for the other. This can be entered upon *at once* — this it may be said you have commenced already, and have obtained more influence of the kind needed than any one else in the concern. You may say — you do not see your qualifications and cannot accept my conviction. I hardly see how you can get out of it, because you see you are not, and will not, be left to judge for yourself in this matter. If I see no one else better qualified to take my place, *I am driven back upon you*, and if I name you, you will have *no alternative* but to accept my nomination whatever your own opinion may be as to your unfitness. But you will say — how does this accord with my first remark that “I ought to have convictions of my own and make my own choice” — perfectly, because whatever you choose will only help your qualification, seeing that *the definite application to any branch of work will give your mind that power of systematic application which you need*.

Now as to the present — I think you should lay down and act upon some plans that would:

1. Improve your mind.
2. Increase your intelligence.
3. Improve your gifts.
4. Add to your education.

To be able to read a *Latin sentence* or your *Greek Testament* I think desirable, although not necessary — and all this may be done by moderate, and, to you, an easy amount of *reading and study*.

But what are you to do *now*?

1. Either *go to College*—to which I should not *absolutely* object.

2. Or, what I should prefer, if you have *strength of purpose* to carry it out: Do a modified amount of Mission work and a modified course of study at the same time. You are at present comparatively ignorant of anything except "*politics*," and herein I am afraid you are not very profound! Now you *must* have among other things a knowledge of systematic theology. You have felt lately your need here, and as a public man, probably a very public man, to hold your own with the preachers and the *public* you must have information and skill in controversial theology. There need be no excuse here. *You have a mind for it*—and you only need (1) *To know your Bible*; (2) A course of reading. But I forbear—you will see what I mean.

*To go to College*—the difficulty would arise *where*? I know not. All except the Methodist Institutions are Calvinistic—cold-blooded—and while improving the mind, do, I fear, injure the heart. Then the effect of my son being at College would not be good, and *moreover* I am sure that there is no necessity, if you could set yourself and *adhere* to a moderate round of reading and study. But what meanwhile? Are you to resume your place at the office? By no means. You are not adapted for that *and other things*—and you are too good for that *alone*. That we will have clerks to see to, with self and G. S. R.<sup>1</sup> not by any means shutting you out when in London and I am away. But I propose that you join me in taking care of the actual work of the Mission, by visiting in turn the different stations and remaining occasionally a little time in each place. Of the usefulness, nay, absolute necessity, of such a visitation I am quite satisfied—and I am sure I cannot do it effectually alone—anyway, every year it will grow more and more difficult for me to compass.

I cannot now present you with arguments. It seems to me a work for which you are adapted by the same providence that has opened your way to it. *Only* I can only consent to it on the understanding that you will use every faculty and opportunity given to make yourself a preacher, and to qualify yourself for filling so public and eminently useful a position as that to which God and your circumstances alike seem to call you. Of course you will see that this would not involve you in any great amount of anxiety at first nor of *responsibility*. . . .

We must pray a great deal about everything. I have been reading Tyerman's *Wesley* in my illness and have, by comparing his (Wesley's) experience with my own, I think, derived some *important lessons*. One is that, under God, Wesley made

<sup>1</sup> G. S. Railton.



Methodism not [only] by converting sinners, but by making well instructed *saints*. We must follow in his track, or we are a rope of sand. He laid as much stress on visiting the members privately, and in classes, as on preaching. Let us profit by the experience of those who have trod similar paths before us. I wish you had the books.

I hope you will read this carefully. It has cost me some trouble to sit to it and taken me all day, that is with *intervals of rest*. So do ponder it well. I don't want you to answer it except in bulk.

Give my kindest regards to dear Mr. McKenzie. He has proved himself to be a brother indeed. I am glad you are not shaken in your opinions of the fulness and freeness of God's love.<sup>1</sup> *Wesley's Life* will greatly confirm you.

Look directly to God for light and guidance. Try and please Him in *everything*.

Here it will be seen that William Booth was at this time strongly inclining towards Holiness, was thinking rather about the making of saints than the conversion of sinners, and, as we shall see later on, even when he definitely decided, in 1878, for a world-wide battle in the name of Conversion, carrying Catherine Booth and most of the Mission with him, how he remained, as he always did to the end of his days, mindful of the need for Holiness—"the Higher Up Religion" as he afterwards called this experience. It is important to the student of William Booth's life that he should understand the character of the Christian Mission, for that character is in large measure the character of William Booth himself, and at the second crisis of life, the middle years.

At the outset we see that this Christian Mission had most of the main characteristics of the Salvation Army, that it did not despise any means for awakening the conscience of mankind, and that while it was in dead earnest it was nevertheless able to express its anxiety for the souls of men in a spirit of large cheerfulness and broad humour. The great thing before it was to awaken the sleeper. This was the first step. The sleeper slept soundly. A drum banged at his door, even a trumpet blown at his ear could not rouse him from his slumber. But until he was roused, until he

<sup>1</sup> Bramwell Booth had been meeting in the north of Scotland with many influences of strong Calvinistic tendency.



woke and saw the sky of heaven and the desolations of sin, until he came out of the drugged sleep of spiritual apathy, one might as well preach to a stone. First, then, the sleeper must be awakened.

Therefore we find the Mission adopting the traditional methods of Petticoat Lane to attract the spiritual attention of Whitechapel. Rewards are offered for "Lost Jewels," appeals made to help the Master to recover His "Lost Property," and invitations extended to "A Grand Banquet" in the Palace of God. But while these methods are employed — methods of an essentially English character and old as our English hills, the spirit of the missionaries is deeply and grimly serious.

No one shall be allowed to hold any office in the Mission who is not a total abstainer from intoxicating liquors, tobacco, and snuff, except in cases of absolute sickness.

No person shall be received or continued as a member who shall keep a public-house or brewery, or be engaged in the demoralising traffic or sale of intoxicating drinks; or who shall frequent any public-house or dram-shop except on business; or who shall sell obscene books or pictures, fortune-telling books, or ballads, or any other publication of irreligious tendency, or who shall exhibit bills for theatres, concerts, or balls, in their windows or premises.

Any members guilty, etc. . . . of wearing fashionable and unbecoming dress . . . shall be — 1st offence, reprov'd; 2nd, suspended; 3rd, expelled.

#### *Differences of Doctrine.*

A person shall not necessarily be disqualified for membership by differing with us on minor questions of doctrine, unless such difference, in the judgment of the elders' meeting, is likely to hinder the usefulness and mar the peace of the Society.

#### *Member's Care of Each Other.*

All our members shall be especially careful of each other's reputation, watch lovingly over each other's welfare, and promote it as far as it lies in their power:—

1. By praying daily for each other.
2. By sympathy and practical help in the time of poverty, affliction, bereavement, or any other kind of tribulation.
3. By never allowing evil to be spoken of them unrebuked, by any one in their absence.

*Don't tell soul of your brother's sin  
Cut it off*

*Classes.*

Meet weekly, opening and closing with singing and prayer. Leader relates his experiences and questions each member as to his, gives advice. Each member not to pray more than a minute at a time, so that all may pray. Each leader to avoid a "lifeless, formal manner" in leading class; must train members to give brief, sincere statement of experience during week. Prayers to be brief, singing short and lively.

We find, too, in the instructions regarding Open-Air Services, the same spirit of aggression tempered by a politic meekness which animated the startling street-work of the Salvation Army:

*Open-Air Services.*

All public services to be preceded by one or more in the open air, to be arranged by Supt. of Elders' meeting, preachers to be pious men connected with us or some other Christian denomination. Following rules to be observed:

1. Begin punctually at the time marked on the plan. If there is no one present to help you to sing, commence by reading a few verses of Scripture, praying or speaking.

2. Let all exercises be short and lively. It is better to speak several times, with a little singing and prayer between, supposing there are none present to help, than to speak a long time, unless specially led to do so by the Spirit.

3. Avoid all controversial subjects. Never mention depreciatingly any other religious body. Do not rail at papists, infidels, publicans, or any other special class of sinners, or any peculiar form of error, but deal with men as sinners in danger every moment of the damnation of Hell, and to whom Christ who died for them has sent you to offer a present, free, and full Salvation.

4. If you are interrupted, answer meekly and kindly or not at all. This will disarm opposition; whereas if you say some sharp and bitter thing, although it may turn the laugh against your opponent, it will embitter him against you, and, what is of greater importance still, against the truths you are there to publish.

5. If the police interfere comply with their requirements. If these requirements are unjust appeal to their superiors.

6. In selecting a stand always avoid those spots where you will be likely to cause any obstruction to the thoroughfare.

7. At the close of your service, if possible go in procession to the hall. In doing so select a tune and hymn that is well

known. You had better not sing at all than sing so as to render your effort ridiculous. The time in singing should be rather slower than ordinary. Singing in procession is not calculated to be useful under all circumstances. In some respectable neighbourhoods a procession without singing succeeds the best. Friends must act with judgment.

8. Be due to reach the hall five minutes before indoor service commences.

9. The conductor of the outdoor services shall make the most of the force at his disposal, selecting those best adapted for speaking, praying, etc.

10. Every speaker should carefully prepare for open-air services and not depend upon what he might be able to say at the moment.

### *Prayer Meetings.*

One or more to be held weekly at every station, after week-night preaching services where convenient, and after every Sabbath evening preaching except when the Sacrament be administered.

The praying should be loud enough to be heard by all present, but all should refrain as much as possible from praying in a loud, screaming voice, as it distresses the hearers and unnecessarily exhausts the person praying.

Responses are good when natural and made at the close of the separate requests of the person leading in prayer, but when thrown in the middle of a sentence or made in a loud or boisterous manner they divert the mind of the person praying and do more harm than good to others. In this as in other matters persons should take heed of God's Word and exercise common sense, restraining themselves from all that is extravagant or likely to bring the Word of God into contempt with those who are out of sympathy with it.

A meeting should never be kept late unless absolutely necessary, and then it should be closed formally at a suitable hour, say 10 o'clock, and let all the young people be urged to retire. Then the meeting can be recommenced when necessary; but as a rule late meetings are not expedient, they wear out the labourers, interfere with family and closet duties, and create dissatisfaction and unpleasantness at home.

At the close of these meetings and other services all should retire thoughtfully and at once; talking by the doors on trivial and unimportant subjects and all light and trifling conduct shall not be allowed, being calculated to grieve the Holy Spirit and to destroy the good that may have been received. The Stewards or the persons in charge of the station shall be responsible for the carrying out of this rule.

In dealing with the anxious let no one be urged to go forward to the penitent-form who is not deeply convinced of sin

and thoroughly in earnest for Salvation. The more thoroughly persons are awakened and broken down before God the more readily will they exercise faith in Christ and enter into rest, and the more stable will they become afterwards.

One sees from these extracts that the spirit of the Christian Mission was marked by the cardinal characteristics of William Booth. It called for a real self-denial, but counselled reasonable care of oneself. It preached the most arresting form of the Christian Gospel, but prescribed an extreme tenderness with the broken-hearted. It denounced sin with an energy that was almost violence, but sought the sinner with a loving-kindness that was entirely beautiful.

William Booth believed that if he could once rouse a torpid world to seize the idea of religion as the soul's enfranchisement from the sufferings wrought by sin, Christianity would begin its final march to the Kingdom of Heaven. It was torpor far more than sin that drove him to a propaganda which startled the parlours of respectability and amused the composed thinkers in loftier places. His faith in the power of Christ to overcome sin was absolute. He felt that his work lay in breaking down the barriers of spiritual torpor so that the power of Christ might be free to act.

## CHAPTER XXV

WHICH GIVES SOME ACCOUNT OF THE HAPPINESS AND  
EXCITEMENT OF THE MISSION AND DESCRIPTIONS OF  
“ HOLINESS MEETINGS ”

1877-1878

To the Conference of the Christian Mission in 1877 William Booth not only announced his dictatorship, but employed in his Opening Address phrases and metaphors which reveal a subconscious movement on his part towards a military discipline.

It must be borne in mind that the Christian Mission had now extended its influence beyond London. Mrs. Booth, addressing large audiences all over the country, set up wherever it was feasible a “ station ” of the Christian Mission. Evangelists were sent to these places, an organization under the jurisdiction of London Headquarters was set in motion, and the followers of Mr. and Mrs. Booth all over the country were kept in touch with the general movement by means of a periodical known as *The Christian Mission Magazine*.

Later in the present chapter we shall refer to the opposition of the Churches to this energetic attempt of the Booths to break through formalism and apathy; but it must be told here that one of the taunts constantly levelled at William Booth during these years was the unpleasant charge that he “ lived upon his wife’s petticoats.” I cannot find in his papers any reference to this gibe, but Bramwell Booth remembers how sharply his father suffered from this particular accusation. It was not true; it was venomously conceived, and it had for its evil object the destruction of the Christian Mission; but there was just so much truth in the calumny as to wound the heart of the man at whom it was aimed. Mrs. Booth at this time was “ missioning ” in various parts of London; William Booth was mainly in the shadows of East London working like a Trojan. Invita-



tions for Mrs. Booth to preach were received from many quarters; the novelty of a preaching woman attracted considerable attention; crowds flocked to hear her; fashionable ladies entreated her to hold drawing-room meetings in their houses. It is possible to say that nine people out of ten who knew the name of Catherine Booth had never heard of William Booth's work in Whitechapel.

X But while Mrs. Booth was preaching in the country, and addressing remarkable audiences in the more fashionable quarters of London, William Booth was preaching and praying for the most part in Whitechapel, perfecting the organization he had brought into existence, and shaping the characters of men and women who were to become the first disciples of a very earnest advance in personal religion. If he suffered from these taunts, they did not draw from him, so far as I can discover, a single reply. He allowed the ministers of dissenting Churches to believe that he lived in idleness while his wife went to and fro collecting guineas for the domestic expenses of his home. He was twice very ill, so ill during 1876 that his life was despaired of, and on several other occasions he was obliged to leave London for spells of rest in the country; but he never defended himself, never argued or remonstrated with his accusers, and only when the time was ripe did he take the hazardous step which made him absolute master of the Christian Mission, and begin that extraordinary work which showed his real power.

What must strike every one who reads the history of this man is, above all other things, the quality of his self-security, his unflinching and unchanging honesty. That he should ever have been arraigned, and by ministers of religion, bitterly and mockingly, as a self-seeking hypocrite, as one who lived upon his wife, not only astonishes the writer of this book, but reveals to him a condition in the Churches of that time which wholly justifies the most extraordinary and bizarre of all William Booth's dispositions to make men honestly and powerfully conscious of God.

In the momentous Address of 1877 this ringing honesty, intense reality, and clear-headed thinking of William Booth are visible to every unprejudiced eye. We see him risen

from sickness, bent by troubles, and assailed on every hand by sectarian hatreds, taking at last a sovran command of the Christian Mission, and making his plans for a struggle which he must have thought would last to his life's end.

I have looked forward to the present Conference with unusual interest, because we have to a great extent abandoned the plans of previous gatherings. Much dissatisfaction has been felt, and in many instances expressed, at the controversial aspect they assumed, so large a portion of time being consumed in discussion on comparatively trifling matters, while the mightier and practical questions, which intimately concern the work of God and the souls of our people, were left partially neglected. It became evident to me that we were drifting in a wrong direction. I confess I have been much to blame in this matter. Under the idea that teaching my brethren management and law-making would increase their sense of responsibility and unite us more fully together, I launched the Conference on a sea of legislation which all came to nothing. It was no help to me and it came to nothing with others. If anything was done that did not satisfy any one, whether evangelists or societies, they invariably blamed *me* and insisted on the exercise of my power to alter it. And yet here we were, with new men coming in thick and fast, leaving the most essential principles and practices to be wrangled about and decided by mere majorities.

Seeing all this we asked, What shall we do? There seemed only one course—to return to the practice of our earliest gatherings. Most of you were present at the Conference held in January, when I frankly and fully expressed the feeling of my heart and my intentions as to the future, and my explanations seemed to be as frankly and cordially received. I recalled the fact that at the first I had associated brethren with myself upon the distinct understanding that they should labour under my superintendence. This was the full understanding. No one asked then, as no one asks now, or expects anything else than this—each man to manage his station according to our wishes, and fall back upon us for counsel and direction as may be needed. All who come into the work now understand this. They come to me and say, "Let me work," with the fullest understanding that I should direct them. And in this understanding, which is thus both "Ancient and Modern," we shall work in the future.

But it will be asked, perhaps, what then is the advantage of a Conference? Much, I answer, every way. What is the good of a council of war? The commander in chief calls the principal officers around him to receive information and coun-

sel from all. Each brings his facts and expresses his judgment as to what is necessary and important to do, and then in view of all this he resolves upon a programme of operation. This is our Council of War. We are here to consider practical questions and how we can best deal with them: to receive reinforcements and restation our Army; and, above all, we are here to help each other's souls, to cry together to the Living God for the rebaptism of the Holy Ghost.

Now how does this altered plan affect the present Conference?

We hereby give up the Conference Committee. It seems almost useless to go into the reasons fully, but I may point out one or two. It seemed impossible to get a truly *representative* committee. Some of our oldest and most experienced brethren go into the country, perhaps three hundred miles away. London is, and must continue to be, largely a training-school, many of the stations being occupied by raw and new preachers, so that the men who could usefully advise us and to whom we could safely confide our secrets are not there as a rule.

If you are in any trouble you don't want to go to a committee. You come to me and say, "I want to see you alone." If any great question involving the happiness of us all were to arise, the only plan would be, it seems to me, to call together the most experienced of our brethren, and, if need be, all the others; but for all ordinary purposes it seems by far the simplest way, the only mutually satisfactory plan, for me to deal with the brethren personally and, when possible, face to face. *Then a committee is far too slow for us!* A brother writes, "I can have such and such a building for so much a week, and the man wants an answer immediately. What shall I say? Please send us a telegram." There is no time to call any committee together. We have to act at once. Fancy the Russians having a committee to carry on their war!

No superintendent is hampered with a committee at his station, and why should I be hampered with one? If I am to be, I shall see that you each have one to deal with as well!

This is a question of confidence as between you and me, and if you can't trust me it is no use for us to attempt to work together. *Confidence in God and in me are absolutely indispensable both now and ever afterwards.*

The step was taken, then, which made William Booth a real master of the Christian Mission, but the step which was to make him the General of a world-wide Army was delayed for a year by many and great difficulties which immediately presented themselves in the sphere of doctrine.

Although William Booth had decided that the Christian

Mission should set before itself the task of rousing the indifference of the apathetic, and of converting the sunken and depraved sinner, he was still immensely conscious of the need for spiritual growth in holiness. His one tendency towards mysticism lay in this direction, and unless we perfectly acquaint ourselves with the character of this tendency we shall miss the secret of his inner life.

He believed and taught that every man is born in sin, and because of sin cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. He believed and taught that an absolute and conscious change of nature must take place in every individual before he can inherit eternal life. The Church teaches that an infant is cleansed from original sin by the sprinkling of water in baptism. To William Booth, as to the majority of philosophers and men of science, the sprinkling of water in baptism could not by any possible means be anything more than a symbol; it could not make the smallest difference to the character and temperament of the child. John Stuart Mill had painfully learned from experience "that many false opinions may be exchanged for true ones, without in the least altering the habit of mind of which false opinions are the result." Human personality is neither to be regenerated by a ceremony nor to be transformed by logic. But Booth declared, and philosophers like William James — Henri Bergson, too, we may even say — are certainly of his opinion, that a radical, intelligent, and fully conscious change of nature is possible to man; and this radical, intelligent, and fully conscious change of nature, he held to be that "conversion," without which, according to the teaching of Christ, man cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Baptism, therefore, was for William Booth a detail of symbolism, and he left it freely to his followers to decide whether they would be baptized or not; he felt no vital concern in the matter. His emphasis was on Conversion, the conversion of the adult and intelligent individual, and this was the first and greatest of his preachings. But beyond the arrest of the sinner, and the awakening of the soul to the living fact of a Living God, lay the path of Holiness; and here William Booth could not stop and leave conversion to follow its own evolution.



The doctrine he held on this subject was a variant of the doctrine known as Entire Sanctification. This doctrine, as the extremists hold it, teaches that a converted man can so grow in grace, can so open the doors of his volition to the will of God, that sin ceases to have the least power over him; that he is cleansed of all evil, and becomes perfectly pure, perfectly holy, even in the sight of God. William Booth never held this doctrine, but he did seek perfection in love after conversion, and taught men to aspire after entire sanctification of the will.

To reach this condition was, with him, if not the supreme object of each converted man and woman in the Christian Mission, at least the first of all their personal objects. First they must preach the repentance of sins; first they must labour to rouse the whole world to the truth of Christ; but after this, if possible simultaneously with this, they must wrestle with God for the entire sanctification of their own souls.

In this way he came to encourage what were called "Holiness Meetings." The character of these meetings eventually provoked the fiercest attacks ever made upon him by religious people, and many religious people thought that they were something extravagant and something unhealthy. Nevertheless, by a careful and sympathetic consideration of these remarkable attempts to deepen spiritual consciousness we approach a rightful understanding of William Booth's religiousness, and perceive with some degree of clearness the character of the struggle which was taking place in his own soul.

Mrs. Booth, as we have said, was on the side of Holiness. She had a young but powerful ally in the person of her eldest son, Bramwell. But while Bramwell Booth was an enthusiast for these Holiness Meetings, almost a leader among the evangelists of the Mission who taught Entire Sanctification, he was more inclined for challenging the world than his mother, more disposed to startle the conscience of the age. Bramwell Booth, who had shivered for a long while on the banks of doubt concerning his fitness for the work of an evangelist, and who had shrunk in timid dread for some considerable time from the very thought of



preaching, was now, with George Railton, among the most enthusiastic and aggressive of the Mission workers.

The following descriptions of Holiness Meetings, taken from *The Christian Mission Magazine*, afford no real picture of the extraordinary sights which were witnessed, nor do they give an adequate account of the effects produced upon the souls of those who took part in them. Bramwell Booth tells me that, after many years of reflection, and disposed as he now is to think that in some degree the atmosphere of those meetings was calculated to affect hysterically certain unbalanced or excitable temperaments, he is nevertheless convinced, entirely convinced, that something of the same force which manifested itself on the day of Pentecost manifested itself at those meetings in London. He describes how men and women would suddenly fall flat upon the ground, and remain in a swoon or trance for many hours, rising at last so transformed by joy that they could do nothing but shout and sing in an ecstasy of bliss. He tells me that beyond all question he saw instances of levitation — people lifted from their feet and moving forward through the air. He saw bad men and women stricken suddenly with an overmastering despair, flinging up their arms, uttering the most terrible cries, and falling backward, as if dead — supernaturally convinced of their sinful condition. The floor would sometimes be crowded with men and women smitten down by a sense of overwhelming spiritual reality, and the workers of the Mission would lift their fallen bodies and carry them to other rooms, so that the Meetings might continue without distraction. Doctors were often present at these gatherings. Conversions took place in great numbers; the evangelists of the Mission derived strength and inspiration for their difficult work; and the opposition of the world only deepened the feeling of the more enthusiastic that God was powerfully working in their midst.

The following article from *The Christian Mission Magazine* for September, 1878, gives an account of “ A Night of Prayer,” lasting from the 8th to the 9th of August:

Compelled from want of space to omit a full report in de-

tail, we must endeavour, as briefly as possible, to describe what was undoubtedly the most wonderful meeting ever held in the history of the Mission.

The whole company, amounting to three or four hundred, settled down for the whole night—a very great advantage over meetings from which many have had to retire at midnight or early morning—and from the beginning to the end, weary as almost every one was, after four days of almost ceaseless [previous] services, the interest and life of the meeting never diminished.

Scarcely had the first hymn been commenced, when a company of butchers assembled in a yard next door, with the avowed intention of disturbing us, commenced a hullabaloo with blowing a horn, rattling of cans, and other articles, so as to keep up a ceaseless din, which was heard even whilst the whole company sang aloud. But nobody was disturbed. We felt we were fighting, that was all, and every one seemed to sing all the more gladly and confidently,

Glory, glory, Jesus saves me,  
Glory, glory to the Lamb.

But the enemy had a new device. By burning something placed near open ventilators, and in a stove-pipe which passed through that wall, they filled the air all through the building with an effluvium which set every one coughing. Two or three sisters in delicate health had to go out for a few minutes. Singing and praying became for a while all but impossible. There was a rush of strong men to close up every aperture. The stove-pipe was not only stopped but pulled down in a few seconds, and a watchman was soon at a top window with a bull's-eye ready for identification and defence, should they again come up to the attack. Throughout, we saw no ruffled countenance, no clouded brow, heard no harsh word. The disturbance was met even more promptly within the minds and hearts of the company than in its outward forms, and then, with a relieved atmosphere and an increased joy, we betook ourselves again to the business of the night.

We give up all attempt to even sum up the addresses delivered by Mr. Booth, Mr. Bramwell and Miss Booth, Bros. Robinson, Dowdle, Corbridge, and Sister Dowdle. The great object of the meeting was to address God, and it was in prayer and in receiving answers that the meeting was above all distinguished.

Round the table in the great central square Satan was fought and conquered, as it were, visibly by scores of persons whose names and number no one attempted to take. Evangelists

came there burdened with the consciousness of past failings and unfaithfulness, and were so filled with the power of God that they literally danced for joy. Brethren and sisters who had hesitated as to yielding themselves to go forth anywhere to preach Jesus, came and were set free from every doubt and fear, and numbers whose peculiar besetments and difficulties God alone can read came and washed and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

That scene of wrestling prayer and triumphing faith no one who saw it can ever forget. We saw one collier labouring with his fists upon the floor and in the air, just as he was accustomed to struggle with the rock in his daily toil, until at length he gained the diamond he was seeking—perfect deliverance from the carnal mind—and rose up shouting and almost leaping for joy. Big men, as well as women, fell to the ground, lay there for some time as if dead, overwhelmed with the Power from on High. When the gladness of all God's mighty deliverance burst upon some, they laughed as well as cried for joy, and some of the younger evangelists might have been seen, like lads at play, locked in one another's arms and rolling each other over on the floor.

Well, perhaps there *was* something besides the genuine work of the Holy Ghost there, perhaps there were cases of self-deception and presumption, perhaps there were some carried away by the contagion of the general feeling. How could it ever be otherwise while Satan comes up with the people of the Lord? But, at any rate, God wrought there with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, so as to confound the wicked one and to raise many of His people into such righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost as they never had before, and thousands, if not millions, of souls will have to rejoice for ever over blessings received by them through the instrumentality of those who were sanctified or quickened between the 8th and 9th of August, 1878.

The usual unintoxicating wine not having been prepared for sacrament, we managed uncommonly well with water, and in fact everybody seemed to have got into a condition in which outward circumstances are scarcely noticed, and the soul feasts on God, no matter what passes outside. We had been drinking the best wine for hours.

After sacrament only a quarter of an hour remained for the love feast, if we were to conclude, as intended, at six; but under Captain Cadman's energetic leading eighty-one bore their clear simple testimony to the Blood that cleanses from all sin in a very few minutes over that time, and after a little prayer we parted. Of course some felt sleepy when all was over; but so little exhausted were most of the evangelists,

that a business meeting, commenced at 7 o'clock, was kept up with energy for nearly two hours, while many remained and transacted business with Mr. Booth until one o'clock.

Another account, this time of a "Musical Service," shows how the enthusiasm of the people was welcomed as a return to the religion of the first century:

*August, 1878.*

. . . The sight of the faces on the platform was one never to be forgotten — it was more than joy that lit them all up — it was the rapture of spiritual drunkards. When we saw one brother, advanced in years and stiffened by the long habit of solemn religious "ordinances," dancing, yes, fairly dancing to the music, whilst others, less constrained, were tossing bare arms about and rolling hither and thither as they sang, we realized as never before how free and easy the grace of God can make the people. Here is once more the old religion, reckless of public opinion and full of glory and God which made it necessary for the apostles to recommend sobriety.

Mr. Ballington Booth, a month later, gives a brief description of a "Holiness Meeting," which is interesting:

On September 13 was a wonderful time. Never shall I forget it. Oh, God did search all hearts that night. After speaking about giving up all and being kept by the power of God, and singing "I am trusting, Lord, in Thee," we fell on our faces for silent prayer. Then God Almighty began to convict and strive. Some began to weep, some groaned, some cried out aloud to God. One man said, "If I cannot get this blessing I cannot live"; another said, "There's something, there's something. Oh, my God, my God, help me. Set me straight; put my heart straight"; and while we sang

Saves me now, saves me now,  
My Jesus saves me now,

a dear young sister stepped up to the table, then two more followed; and now we sang again,

Saves me now, saves me now,  
Yes, Jesus saves me now.

Many more were smitten. We dropped on our knees again. Five or six more came forward. One dear man took his pipe from his pocket and laid it on the table, resolved that it should stand between his soul and God no longer. Then six or seven

more came forward. We could scarce then sing or pray. Every one was overpowered by the Spirit. One young man, after struggling and wrestling for nearly an hour, shouted "Glory! glory! glory! I've got it. Oh! Bless God!" One young woman shook her head, saying, "No, not to-night," but soon was seen on the ground pleading mightily with God. Every unsanctified man or woman felt indescribably. Three or four times we cleared the tables and forms, and again and again they were filled. And all joined in singing the words,

I have thee, oh! I have thee  
Every hour I have thee;

and one brother said, "Oh, oh! if this ain't heaven, what'll heaven be?" Another brother said, "I must jump." I said, "Then *jump*," and he jumped all round. So we sang, cried, laughed, shouted, and after twenty-three had given their all to the Master, trusting Him to keep them from sinning, as He had pardoned their sins, we closed, singing

Glory, glory, Jesus saves me,  
Glory, glory to the Lamb.

William Booth declared his conviction that "the work was of God"; he met the opposition of those among his followers who criticised the excitement of these meetings by the assertion of a practical man, that if of God nothing could stop this movement, and that if not of God it would come to an end of itself. He was not perhaps so deeply interested in this development as Catherine and Bramwell Booth, but he was by no means opposed to it.

Here and there in the letters of William Booth at this period we find approving references to the excitement, the testing nature of this new movement in the Mission:

Our Stockton and Middlesboro' branches are not likely to be much troubled with half-hearted converts, for the ordeal through which any one has to pass, in coming out for Christ at either of the theatres, is too severe to be popular.

At Stockton a sort of gangway has been made, leading from the pit to the stage. Penitents have to face this narrow way, and cross what looks like the captain's bridge of a river-steam-boat, ere they can reach the stage, where prayer is wont to be made for them.

At Middlesboro' they have to be led round by various passages and staircases, and then suddenly come out on to the



stage, which, being lit from the top, displays them to the whole house as they kneel before the Lord.

We had the most wonderful meeting of late. At the finish two brethren swooned. Have just heard of a meeting held in somebody's house, and a brother who had sneered and disbelieved in prostration being knocked down, etc.

But we cannot find any out-and-out declaration in favour of the new development among William Booth's letters or addresses, his mind being evidently preoccupied with the master-puzzle of his difficulties—"How to Reach the Masses."

This period was a period of disintegration. Many of the workers in the Mission, between 1875 and 1878, left William Booth, and some of them none too fairly. He was criticised for setting women over men; the demands he made were felt to be exacting; the open-air work tried the courage of the more nervous or fastidious; the Holiness Meetings were disapproved of by those who objected to excitement, and the teaching of Holiness by others. Catherine Booth stood more and more for Holiness. She had one definite prescription, looking beyond conversion and preaching the "making of character." Bramwell Booth remembers the repetition of that phrase upon her lips; in her teaching and in her conversation she was for ever saying, "make character—make character." William Booth, who was troubled by the slowness of so wonderful a movement to convert the world, was puzzled why more progress was not made. Catherine Booth challenged him to think ahead, demanding, "Where is it all leading? Are we a religious body or are we an appendix to the Churches?" And William Booth's only answer at this time was, "I don't want to found a new sect."

The following address, delivered before the Annual Conference of the Mission in June, 1876, shows pretty clearly in which way the thoughts of William Booth were moving, and manifests as clearly as anything we have yet found among his public utterances the spirit which in little more than a year was to call the Salvation Army into being. This most characteristic address, ringing with honesty, aflame with energy, and passionate with love is, moreover,

one of the most valuable biographical documents left behind him by the founder of the Army:

In introducing the subject selected for consideration and discussion this evening, the first inquiry which naturally suggests itself is:

#### WHAT IS A MISSION STATION?

To this I reply that, as I understand it, it is not a building, or a chapel, or a hall; it is not even a society, but a band of people united together to mission, to attack, to christianize an entire town or neighbourhood. When an Evangelist receives an appointment from this Conference it is not contemplated that he shall deal merely with those who are already within the walls of certain buildings, or with those who may be induced to come inside them; but it is intended that he shall be an apostle of the Gospel to all those who live around. When you reach the station assigned you, if it has not been done already, you should take your stand in that hall, or theatre, or tent, and draw a line around the breadth of population you can hope to reach, and make that your parish, and aim, with tears and prayers, and the trumpet-blast of the Gospel, to christianize every soul within it.

Before you manage a Mission station you must

#### GET ONE.

What a high and holy privilege it is to be a soul-winner. “ They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.” Who believes this? Earnest, determined, sympathetic men, baptized with the Holy Ghost, may go forth and save multitudes from going down to the pit. Common men — men of quite ordinary ability — can do this; but where are they? How is it we are not besieged with men crying — Here am I, send me? We want a holy ambition for this work — men who see the privilege and desire the honour of bearing the tidings of life and liberty to the ignorant, dying, uncared-for masses going down to Hell from our very doors in this boasted Christian land.

Any one can go into training for this work. There are plenty of street-corners available in any part of this great city and throughout the land, where any brother or sister may find an audience and get a band of converts together, and in this amateur way speedily gather all the education and qualifications necessary. The best qualification for managing a station must be *to make one*; the next best plan to this is to help to work one that is made. If it be there, this will soon develop the ability to do that work altogether.

Now I am not going to give a list of the qualifications for

efficiently managing a station, but simply to state how it can be done. The man who accomplishes it proves it thereby — and he can prove satisfactorily in no other way — that he has the necessary ability for the work. You have doubtless heard of the two men who met in prison, one of whom said to the other, "What have they sent you here for?" "Oh, for so and so." "But," said the other, "they can't lock you up for that." "Oh, yes they can." "But I tell you they can't." "Well, but here I am." Just so; I care not what the preaching abilities or other qualifications of a man or woman may be, if he does not succeed — if he does not get the people saved, and keep them — he proves incontestably thereby that he has missed his vocation, and he ought at once to turn over a new leaf and alter his plans and labours, or inquire for some other walk in life in which he can succeed; and if, on the other hand, however inferior and unlikely, humanly considered, the worker's qualifications may appear, if at the end of the year, when he counts up his losses and gains, he brings us a schedule that tells of increased numbers, spirituality, and power, he proves incontestably that he has the gifts and the graces which qualify him to manage a Christian Mission station.

#### HOW TO MANAGE A STATION.

Our first counsel is:

##### (1) MAGNIFY IT.

Get to *know definitely* what it is you have to do. Think what it is to be an ambassador of Christ — to stand between the living and the dead, and to be the savour of life unto life, or death unto death. Consider what will be the outcome of the faithful discharge of your duty on the one hand, and what will follow the neglect of it on the other. Read the 23rd chapter of Ezekiel, and the Acts of the Apostles; call up the memories of the holy, successful soul-winners who have gone through oceans of difficulties and led thousands to the Cross: lay aside every weight in the shape of worldly idolatry and self-indulgence, and then lay on the altar every power of body and soul, consecrating all you have, or ever hope to have, to the successful accomplishment of the greatest undertaking to which God could possibly have called you here.

To successfully manage a station you must

##### (2) LOVE IT

with a love that never falters, never swerves, never dies. You must have the same burning, unquenchable flame that Jesus had, or you cannot — will not — succeed; and your success will be just according to the measure of your affection for your

people and for the perishing people around you. This love — this passion for souls — is the main-spring of religious activity and the principle which governs all real and lasting work for God. Love, rightly directed, makes a good parent, a good husband, a good workman; and nothing short of love, and a great deal of it, will make a good evangelist. The secret of success is often inquired for; here it is: It is not in natural gifts, or human bearing, or exceptional opportunities, or earthly advantages, but in a heart consumed with the flame of ardent, holy, heavenly love.

*Love will make a man study.* He wants to save his people: his aim is to *bless* them, not to *amuse* them. He wants to lead them on to know God, to imitate Christ, to be meet for Heaven. This he sees is to be done through the truth. He has now one absorbing anxiety to persuade them to hear, to think, to feel, to yield, to be saved, to be holy. Here is work for him. He must have arguments that will convince, facts that will affirm, illustrations that will explain, and truths that will both awaken and interest, and convert. He must range through earth, and Heaven, and Hell, for matter to make men flee to Christ, save their souls and bathe in the ocean of redeeming love. He has set his heart on this — not on *studying*, but on saving souls; but as souls are saved by preaching, and as he cannot preach unless he has something to say likely to accomplish his end, he becomes a *real student*, a *thinker*, and it is love that makes him one.

*Love will make you pray.* Love wants all the help it can command: and as it realizes that the great God is in sympathy, and willing to be a co-worker with any and every heart set on this mission of mercy, it will ever be knocking at the door of Heaven for countenance and co-operation. The love of souls will lead you into the spirit of ceaseless intercession with Him whose love for them was stronger than death.

*Love will make you feel.* A stony-hearted preacher makes a stony-hearted people. Perhaps there is no such monstrosity in the universe as a professed representative and resemblance of Jesus Christ who goes about his business in a cold, emotionless spirit. There is a great cry in some directions for more *intellect* in the pulpit; it seems to me that there is a far greater need for more *heart*.

If there be one character which above another God must abominate, angels weep over, and devils despise, it must be the automatical preachers who can discourse by the hour about the love of Christ, the worth of souls, the terrors of judgment, and the sorrows of the lost, with a flinty indifference or a ranting fervour which hardly lasts the service over, and which all can see is put on for the occasion. Oh, these ministerial machines, these mechanical preachers who are quite



content if their salaries are paid and a round of meetings gone through, are the curse of Christendom and the wholesale manufacturers of backsliders and infidels. May God deliver us from them. Brethren, whatever other gifts you have, if you are to succeed, you must have hearts, and hearts that can feel.

*Love will make you preach.* A man cannot help but be an interesting talker on any theme on which his nature is powerfully stirred, and on which he has any measure of information. It is the stolid, indifferent, professional spouters of sermons that can get neither hearers nor souls. Again and again in his autobiography, Finney, the great American Evangelist, says, "I let out my heart to my people"; and they wept and fell under the power of God. Of how many preachers can this be said? How often, alas! is it not just a got-off piece of intellectual stuff — and not much intellect either — that is let out. The last thing the preacher thinks of or desires is the letting out of his heart, and consequently the *heartless performance* is met with a *heartless response* from those who listen, and who, after a few minutes' wonderment, or, as it may be, admiration, forget the whole affair. Oh, if you love, you will pour out your souls before the people, and they will weep and feel in return.

*Love will make you beloved.* If you love your people they cannot help but love you in return. There are exceptions to all rules. There is a November time, perhaps, in every man's history, when everything is gloomy, and nothing seems to bring sunshine to the people's hearts so twisted and perverted may they have become. Cross-currents will sometimes run so strongly that, try as you will, you cannot reach the desired haven of the people's affections. But, as a rule, love will prove an invincible conqueror, and will bring the people to your feet. You can love your way through every difficulty. Hold on, then, even though the more you love the less you are beloved. . . .

To manage a station effectively you must

### (3) NURSE YOUR PEOPLE.

I don't mean that you should cozen, and comfort, and encourage the old do-nothing members, if there are any, who come with their mouths open three times every Sabbath to be fed in idleness. No! Tip up their cradle. Make them question the ground of their religious hopes. Make them understand that true godliness is practical benevolence, and that they must at once become followers of Jesus, and go in for a life of self-sacrifice in order to do good and save souls, or else give up all hope and title to being Christians. Make the people see this, and *keep on at it until they do*. They will rub



their eyes, and wake up, depend upon it, when they do see it; and though some may go off to other places where they can be edified without being constantly faced with their neglected responsibilities, others will go to work with a will, and you will soon see things move. But I was saying that you must nurse your people, and there are two classes that seem to me to want specially your tender care.

There are the *wanderers*. England is full of backsliders. These should be hunted up, and brought back. . . .

*Nurse the converts.* . . . My experience has taught me that the use of appropriate means is as indispensable to preserve the converts as it is to secure them. . . .

I leave the theology of this question to the doctors of divinity. I simply state the fact. If you fathers and mothers want to rear your children up to strong man- and womanhood, you feed and watch over them with all tender, loving care; and if you evangelists, and brethren, and sisters, in charge of God's great family want to rear up for Him and for humanity the babes with whom you are entrusted, to perfect men and women in Jesus Christ, you must care for them: you must nurse them. If you keep them, brethren, and if your returns from time to time show increases, you will prove in the most incontestable manner that you do wisely and lovingly watch them. But if, on the contrary, you do not—if you bring statements of large numbers of converts, and small or no increases in membership, you will leave it open for people to infer either that the conversions are not real, or that, being real, they are not properly looked after.

It is interesting to observe that the question of dress was at this period of transition (1877) occupying the thoughts of William Booth:

Some time ago, when supping, with a few evangelistic friends, with the Earl of Shaftesbury, his lordship said to us that in going over a London prison the chaplain had remarked the rapid increase of female prisoners, especially young people. And in reply to a question from the Earl as to the reason, the chaplain said he attributed it to three causes—drink, trashy literature, and flashy dress. He said any one would be surprised to see the tawdry feathers, and flounces, and flowers decked out in which prisoners came in, and to gain which they had doubtless been tempted to commit crime. Nothing can be more influential on this important question than the *example of evangelists' wives*. Our young men, I suppose, will have wives; but I say to you if you meet with young women wearing showy dresses don't look at them, and

if you are now engaged to somebody you met by moonlight alone long ago, before you saw the Christian Mission, make a bargain before you marry them that they shall dress neatly and scripturally, as becometh godliness, and so appear as fit helpmates for men who preach the gospel of Christ.

The reference in this letter to the good Lord Shaftesbury raises the question of how far William Booth was assisted at this time by the sympathy and patronage of powerful people. With the exception of Mr. Samuel Morley it may be safely said that the Christian Mission had few friends among the influential classes. The Booths were helped by such of their private friends as Mr. and Mrs. Billups, by the brothers John and Richard Gory, by Mr. Henry Reed of Tunbridge Wells, and by other rich people whose acquaintance they had made in the provinces. But the governing classes knew little, if anything, of this strange work; and the religious papers took every care to prevent any knowledge of the Christian Mission from reaching their particular constituencies. In spite of the success of the Mission in East London, reports rarely appeared in the religious papers of this extraordinary portent in the religious world. The Booths were isolated. The great world knew nothing of the Mission. Mrs. Booth was talked about by many fashionable and thoughtful people, and when she held meetings in their own quarter of the town they were willing, even anxious, to go and hear her; but the real work of the Booths, the great work of William Booth, in particular, had so far only earned among powerful people the encouragement and support of Samuel Morley.

Of the shifts to which William Booth was often put, let the following extract speak, an extract from one of his letters, written in 1878:

. . . I severely sprained my ankle, and then a snowstorm, such as had not occurred for years, rendered travelling difficult. Through that storm I had to go to Sunderland. No cab nor conveyance could be had, and so I used such carriage as came to hand. I commenced the journey on the stalwart shoulders of a brother, then was glad to rest on some straw in the bottom of a milk cart, and before I reached my quarters at Middlesboro' that night, I was thankful to accept the service of a wheel-barrow.

rather than decreasing at this time; indeed it was only beginning to show the intensity of its hatred for such methods as the Booths employed. From Chatham, in 1877, comes the following report:

. . . We had a little opposition on the Brook—a big burly fellow holding his fist within an inch or two of Bro. Ridsdel's face while he was speaking, and threatening to do all sorts of things; but God restrained him. As he turned away he fairly gnashed his teeth with rage; but we sang on through the mud—and there *was* some mud too! . . . Monday, the 29th, was the anniversary tea-meeting. At eight o'clock we left the second sitting down at the hall, and sang in procession to the Military Road. After one or two had spoken, the publican on the left opened his window and pitched a pail of water on to the crowd below. Immediately the people moved; but though the sisters were principally upon that side, and the water fell upon their Sunday hats plentifully, the ring was not broken for a moment, and every one heard the hearty Amen that burst from all as the dear sister who was speaking wiped the water from her face, and cried, "May the Lord save that dear man." In the meantime the crowd had tremendously increased, and God came into our midst. Then the publican gave us another pail of water; but still we kept believing and the ring was unbroken. There was a solemn influence; no one spoke a word while we sang—

But till washed in the Blood of a crucified Lord  
We can never be ready to die.

And just then a fine sailor, apparently a man-of-war's man, stepped into the ring, and grasping my hand with tears in his eyes, said, "Oh, sir, can I speak to you?" The arrow of conviction had smitten home. Then I spoke a word or two, and then a third pail of water from a publican, seemingly aimed at me, but missing the mark, fell principally upon his own customers.

Worse was the condition in London, as is shown by a report from mission work in Hackney at the end of 1878:

. . . Whilst missioning the streets I came through the court where this affair happened [two policemen knocked down by a gang], and a big ruffian came running at me, knocking me about till he, with others, jostled me into the main street. Two policemen standing there, I at once asked for protection, which they refused. I then went on singing, "My soul is now united," when these two policemen caught

hold of me and demanded my name and address, which I at once gave; and on again we went singing, when the policemen followed, kicking me upon the legs and trying to push me over. I then walked backwards before my band, the police still jumping upon my feet and kicking my shins, till we arrived at the hall, where the gate-keeper, keeping the rough boys out, was pushed down the steps by these policemen, and one of the teachers coming up at the time was served in the same manner.

On Sunday, Dec. 24th . . . while in the open air in the afternoon, passing "The Green Dragon," the publican came out and blackguarded us. He then sent out half a dozen drunken fellows, some of them six feet high, who commenced knocking me about; and one of them, laying hold of me, ripped my trousers nearly in two; another one knocking my hat off and kicking it in double. Thank God my head was not in it. . . . We are often pelted with dead cats and rats whilst processioning in the streets. . . . On Sunday, Dec. 31st, our open-air services were well attended. Whilst in a back street a butcher ran out at me, and, with clenched fist, drew his arm back as if he would have knocked me to the ground, but, with the assistance of his neighbours and friends, he was taken back again, while at the same time, Bro. King received a blow on the back of the head from a youth who was the worse for liquor. But in the midst of all this we can say that none of these things move us.

But in spite of coldness and neglect on the part of the Churches, and in spite of brutal opposition from the mob, the Christian Mission grew in numbers and increased in enthusiasm during those hard and difficult years of 1877 and 1878.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### LETTERS OF THE PERIOD IN VARIOUS MOODS

1876-1878

IN the midst of his tempestuous life William Booth found time to write to his children, to his friends, and to his wife whenever she was absent from him. Some of these letters are unfortunately dull with the local dulness of a small chronicle; but here and there we find a phrase, an exclamation, or a vigorous piece of sermonizing which helps one to understand something of the man's nature. Before proceeding, then, to an account of the transition from the Christian Mission to the Salvation Army we shall make a few extracts from these letters, whenever they seem to assist our history.

We find in one of his letters to Mrs. Billups a complaint that his wife is "moiled and muddled with some dress-making business"—a domestic labour for which he had no sympathy. He writes on another occasion to his wife, and refers to this same troublesome question of millinery:

Katie says you are gone shopping. I dread the sound of the word shop. *Mind!* Do set an example. I still incline to the thought that a *cloth* would have been nice for Katie's jacket.

Ill, and away from home in Gloucestershire, he writes the following testy letter to the boy who is struggling with many problems in London:

MY DEAR BRAMWELL—I cannot see what you want to bother me perpetually about Soho and Ridsdel and Cooper. Let me for mercy's sake have a day's rest. I won't serve you and Railton so when you go away! Every day you have bothered me with Ridsdel. Do the best you can with Soho and all else. What good could it do any one to tell me Gipsies were a failure? I might as well have been left to imagine that all was going well as have my evening clouded with the in-



formation. *Please* do, do let me alone. Railton says you have toothache, I am very sorry, but I cannot help it. *Go to Ross!* I say this as much to hinder you having the trouble to write. I have written about Cardiff. If you think Leeds (30 miles further away than this), Birmingham or Norwich better openings than Cardiff, the two latter not big openings at all, I pity you. However, for once I have decided. I do not see what you mean about Dowdle *ought* to be moved. However, if you can move him here to Cardiff all will be well. (As to vexing Cory I do not know what you mean except to raise a dust in your *own* eyes. He is most anxious of all.)

But these growls and gruntings are only occasional. He is obsessed by the thought of his work, and again and again throughout his correspondence at this time exclamations burst from his heart full of a rough passionate desire for the conversion of the world.

He writes to Mrs. Billups: "Let others look after sick and children; you follow Jesus, and go out and win thousands of souls for Him." To the same correspondent, a little later, he addresses the following quaint adjuration: "Jesus has paid for you to travel first-class to Heaven, and have a first-class mansion. Take it; don't be put off with second-class!" Then he breaks out, concerning a reported scandal in the religious world:

The Baptist papers are the most furious — one of them has a paper headed "Collapse of the Higher Life Movement." *Cruel. Cruel.* God will be level with them. I will never forgive the Baptists, neither in this world nor the world to come!

Vigorous phrases of this kind, abundantly justified in most cases by the particular circumstance, appear throughout his correspondence; but his "never, never" seldom lasted for a whole day; the more tremendous the explosion the quicker was his return to normal business.

Much more frequent are his spiritual exclamations, torn from the inward struggles of his soul, and seeking expression in language sometimes of a violent and sometimes of a very crude, almost childish character:

God! oh to compass the word — who tries? *God*, Omnipotent Almighty — Omniscient — Everywhere. And oh,

wonder of wonders, *my Lord*, and *my God* — say it — venture out on to the deep trackless ocean and find the waves as firm to tread upon as the rocks of Galilee. Heed not storms nor boisterous billows. Jesus is just on before. SING!

Satan rages. Russel was locked up on Saturday night — he had permission to stand on a parson's door-step, the police pulled him off and took him to the Police-Station. This morning he was fined 1s. and costs 8s. 6d. which with a guinea to Solicitor is nothing to the encouragement to our enemies; however, we shall go forward.

A little later he writes to Mrs. Billups of the sickness in his home, and suddenly breaks away from his news to preach a sermon on the text of domestic calamities:

. . . Lucy thrives and only wants to get away for her sake and ours, and then in due course and after due cleansing and disinfection we hope once more to get home again.

Oh to get HOME. Home, our *real* abiding home. But we must be cured and disinfected, there must be no *seeds of contagion about us*. We cannot be allowed to go in there until there is no possibility of polluting that holy place. I told the sinners yesterday that God would not allow them to go into Paradise as they were — they had spoiled earth. He would not allow them to spoil Paradise. And you and I have no desire — I have not I am sure, my yearnings are far stronger for the *meetness* than for the place itself — I love *holiness* more than I love Heaven. Do you, dear friend? The inward heaven is the more precious of the two — must be. And the inward will ensure the outward. Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God.

I preached my first sermon from "I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness." Oh how true. *Never till then — never till then!* But I *shall* be then.

In May, 1876, he writes to Mrs. Billups and makes a very interesting announcement, showing that even in those days the idea of an army was in his mind:

We are thinking of getting a "Flag" and have thought of crimson ground and blue border. *What do you think?* The crimson signifying the *atonement* and the blue *purity*.

Later, to the same correspondent, he discusses his plan for making preachers of converted sinners:

I don't want anybody to be Mission people but poor sinners.

We can make "dare devils" of them, people who "dare" public opinion, but of no one else.

Occasionally he indulges himself in a rather clumsy humour:

Why not always put the day of the week on your letters — as you never know the day of the *month*. It is true a penny almanac would tell you the date, but — Well. Stick on the day of the week and I shall know when your letters are written.

Mrs. — would not do at all, at all. You do not understand our "*sect*." Your *material* plan of things does not determine the action of men. It is a wife he wants and not a motherly body to take care of his house and family.

When one of the family is stricken down with small-pox, in 1876, he writes to Mrs. Billups releasing that good lady from her promise to visit him on his death-bed if he should contract the disfiguring disease. He says suddenly in one of his letters, "After all the line to Heaven is the best railway of all. I am on it. Express all the way." He is rather amused than otherwise by the effect of his methods on those in the Mission who came to him from the well-drilled legions of orthodoxy. "We have, I fancy, disgusted a goodly number of our respectable people with the 'vulgarity' of our announcements and efforts." To the end of his life a somewhat dissonant humour sounds through many of his utterances, as if he were ever eager to find relief from the tremendous tension of his serious undertaking in a spirit which sprang, apparently, half from the joy of his own security and half from contempt for opposing orthodoxy or foolish worldliness.

The letters to his wife at this time are full of the same tenderness and warm-hearted affection as marked his earliest correspondence with Catherine Mumford:

I get your letters, and I take care of them. I know where I am and will not leave a line of yours "out."

Katie is better and will soon be all right. I am as tender of her as you could wish. She eats and sleeps and seems very happy. Of course Mrs. — is awfully sour, but we take no notice of her. All else are very pleasant. . . .

Tell Bramwell I won't have you made miserable by him

[this apparently refers to the son's health]. He must have a holiday. Railton will be up on Tuesday, he must go away at once. Where? With you too! You must come to me or me to you. I should arrange to visit the other stations here and come off to you at once and let him come and finish up the North with K. but for my promise to take her to Edinburgh. But it will come to that. He can do with her as well as I can. Indeed I think better. He would have plenty of preaching. . . .

He is a dear darling boy, writes me beautiful business letters. What am I to do? I love him and all of you dearly. I love God and God loves me. I do wish he would alter in these little things, do you talk to him ever? . . .

Send — to Barnet. We shall get through. It may do him good. I am not near so ready to spend money on him as I should have been 3 months ago. He must alter or he will lose my love. I hate selfish lazy people.

I am in a corner, having had all sorts of interruptions. I have your affectionate letter. I do indeed reciprocate all you say. I love you BETTER, more as a woman would wish in her soul to be loved than I did when at Matlock. I have more sense, more heart, and more religion than I had then, and all I have I lay at your feet and as much on your shrine as ever I did in my life.

I have been during our late separation in much uncertainty as to where you were, and Willie opens my letters, and I can't write as freely, and many things have been on my heart and held me down, but when I get free my heart comes bounding off to my *first love* as much and far more than when it seemed miles between Newington Gate and Russell Street.

I write advisedly and with deliberation. . . . When can you come? Can you come before Monday when you would see Emma and the chicks? It seems a long time to wait till next week. . . . Come you must and shall *if you are willing*.

. . . Katie too is much better than for 18 months. She says if she had been cared for like this she would have been strong to-day, but Willie worked her without rhyme or reason! I just show her and do the brunt myself. She is a good fine girl. Bless her.

I think of you all alone, and when a gleam of sunshine comes into my heart or through my window my soul turns to you at once. If I only thought you would be happy with me it would make me *glad beyond description*; but, unfortunately, you get so anxious about me when there really is no occasion. I am wonderfully better again. I do MORE work, and do it far more easily, than I did when an Evangelist in these parts 22 years ago.

In the following letter to Mr. Railton he shows the spirit in which he is meeting opposition:

MY DEAR LIEUT.—Much more cheery about things here. Of course I am the personification and centre of all that which for months has been regarded as to be *deplored and put down. Personal Power.* The town, too, including Mr. Whitwell and Co., assisted by Mr. Lamb, and “not *hindered*” by Messrs. Allen & Clan, have found us out. “*No popery*” has been the cry, and lo and behold the pope is here, all *unabashed*, nay carrying at the outset all before him. Hold, not so fast, the tide abated, but the flood is on again and seems likely to flow. Amen, so be it — *so it is!*

. . . reported 700 saved there. Our Wood says there were but “*3 persons.*” Cheer up, Brother! you can report as much as that any day of your darkest days. You raised that even in the wilderness — I mean your *holidays!*

His care for his children is exemplified in the letter which follows, addressed to the daughter who acted as the Little Mother to the family, and who was to meet a tragic death in America twenty-six years later:

MY DEAR EMMA — I saw your letter to Mamma last week and was very sorry to find you had been so low-spirited. I am aware that your task is tedious and sometimes doubtless very trying; but, dear, you must hold, remembering how many there are who would give all they have to possess the mercies and comforts you enjoy. You have had a nice change at Southend, and now you must go through the term, and then, God willing, at Xmas you shall have another holiday, and this time, if possible, you shall go away *from* the children.

Life is a great and solemn trust, and we must do all the good we can and so earn the welcome from the Saviour, “Well done!” Bless you, I know *you* try to do well, and *He* knows it too, and He notes it and He will reward it.

Never forget that, although I don’t say much about it, I love and appreciate all your care for the dear children and all your anxiety for dear Mamma.

Domestic matters monopolize the following letter to Mrs. Booth:

Spent the night at Croydon. Tea’d with children and took Emma with me. Mrs. F. very kind. She gave me the enclosed envelope, which I dared to open and to extract a cheque for £25 from it; this I will, unless you instruct to the contrary.





EMMA BOOTH-TUCKER  
(Died 1903)



put in the bank. It will keep us on our feet. Praise God. I did not think it was to be expected just yet. She said, When you are short for the Mission *come to me*. . . .

I have your two letters by this morning's post. They perplex me much. I am *distressed* that *you are not more settled and happy*. . . . You evidently can't settle where you are without me. *Why not?* . . . If you want to come home you *must*. I don't care what I do or where I go or what happens now, if I can but feel that you are *happy*. . . . I want you ten thousand times to be at home *to-morrow* and only counsel your staying away for your OWN DEAR SAKE.

My life is a drag without you, BUT I want you to get better. Don't be anxious. Bramwell is permanently better. He has given up heavy suppers. *Sleeps* and is every way improved. . . . It is simple folly to talk about Emma coming—she has only had a month or 6 weeks with the children, and to go up—I am amazed at you—and the expense too—pray what next?

There is a tragic note, spoilt perhaps by a morbid irony scarcely to be justified, in a letter addressed to Mrs. Booth in March, 1878:

Bramwell started a letter the other day by saying, "I do miss you *so* much. I hope I don't love you too much." Those words follow me up and down like heavenly music. I seldom *hear* of anybody loving me. I don't think my people do, and that my family do I have to take very much on trust. So to hear him go out of his reticent course to tell me so, comforted me much.

Next month he is fighting a fierce battle in Wiltshire and writes to his wife:

Salisbury: we are mobbed and hunted almost out of the town. At present every hall and room is closed against us. The only promise is an old coach house, 4s. per week, and that not certain! Outdoors the Evangelists have to get into houses to escape the mob, and on Sunday they had to close the meetings—could not go on. Police refuse protection. Nevertheless there is a good Society. A lot saved. We must not give up; we will not.

Such was the enthusiasm of his followers at this time, 1878, that he was obliged to issue a command of the following character:

## GENERAL ORDER AGAINST STARVATION.

"The General has learned with great concern that several of the bravest Officers who have gone to the towns recently entered, have endured the greatest privations, going, in fact, to the very brink of starvation without informing him, and this, even in cases where they had actually money in their possession, which they intended to use for the payment of rent or other debts.

"He wishes every one to understand that such devotion, however noble, is to be avoided and condemned, especially because it not merely exposes the strength and life of the Officers, which are of unspeakable value, to great risk, but is likely to bring great discredit upon the army.

"It was never intended that those who are faithfully and zealously labouring amidst difficulties, should suffer want; but only that full salary should not be drawn and unnecessary expenses incurred, and that no station incur liability beyond the amount of its ordinary income without the General's consent.

"Henceforth let it be as clearly understood that no Officer is to allow himself to suffer from want of food, clothing, or fire, without giving information to Headquarters in time for it to be prevented if possible, and that any one who knows of an Officer being in destitute circumstances will be held responsible for informing Headquarters on the subject; and every Officer is hereby authorised to use, in case of need, any money that may be in his possession, rather than undergo such sufferings, obtaining the sanction of Headquarters for such use of rent, or other money in hand afterwards."

He seeks recruits for his great army from among his own children, and presents the choice to one of his daughters, then absent from home, in a letter which reveals a tenderness and a reverence in his attitude to the maturing family.

*Sept. 3rd, '78.*

MY DEAR EMMA — I have thought much about you ever since you left, and hope to have a look in at you next week.

I hope you are looking out for rooms for Mamma and Kate, who are expecting to come to-morrow or next day or the day after that.

I do hope you are enjoying yourselves and getting good every way. H—— does not write me as I wished. I commenced one letter to him but did not finish it, as I thought perhaps it would spoil his enjoyment at the start. He ought always to put a letter in yours if only as an educational process for him. . . .

However, Ma will look him up. Ma got a letter from you last night which I was not allowed to see even, much less know what was inside it; except a hint that the *money was going, or gone*, I forget which, for I was awfully sleepy and in bed when she read it. Well, that is the use of Papa — *money*, and I must be content!

K. seems better, she and Ma are gone to the doctor to-day. K. has toothache.

And now, my dear Emma, I have often thought I ought to write seriously or talk to you some of my thoughts, but I have so little time, and I hardly know how to enter upon the subject. I may say, however, that I do think you ought now to make up your mind about the Mission, as to whether you think it is God's plan for furthering His Kingdom — whether there is any other plan which more fully is calculated to do this. And if so, whether you will or will not give yourself to it, saying this people shall be my people, and this work shall be my work. It seems to me that is for you to settle not what *you* will be, not what you would wish to be, but to settle in your soul what system seems most in harmony with the will of God and most likely to advance the interests of the Kingdom of God; and then having settled that, the next step seems a necessity, which is to give yourself to that system with all the powers and influence you have.

Never mind what kind of a position you occupy in it, whether it is a despised and hated system and people, or not. If to you it is the Kingdom of God then its people should and must be your people.

Now I don't say choose *your father's* people. You have judgment and the Bible, and I believe you have the Holy Ghost. *Judge yourself*. But I do say that if you believe that there is no method of teaching and labour and doctrine that seems so well and so much calculated to advance Christ's Kingdom, that the time has come in which you ought to cast in your lot with us, for better or for worse, and to *make us feel* that you are with us for better or worse, for richer or poorer, for ever and ever.

If so, then this it seems to me meets all or at least a large part of the controversies that trouble you. If the Mission is embraced as the Kingdom of God, if you voluntarily choose and enlist in this army, then you must subject yourself to it and live or die or marry or be single or be poor or rich or high or low for its advancement.

That is the way, as I understand it, that the early Christians acted, and in that way Christianity was spread over the *globe*.

At present I feel as though you were outside us, looking on, uncertain how to bestow yourself, and looking about how next to settle and promote your own happiness and wellbeing.



My dear Emma, give yourself to Christ; that is, give yourself to the kind of self-sacrificing soul-saving life He lived. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though He was rich yet for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich.

Let us do the *same thing*.

I believe you have God, and I believe you do indeed want to be right and to please Him. Amen! let it be so. I don't want you to bother to answer this. We will talk it over when we meet.

May you have health and peace and all needed blessing.

Love to all my darlings. I will send you a hamper of good things when Ma comes.—Your affecte. father,

WILLIAM BOOTH.

But in November of the same year, from the town of Sheffield, he administers a sharp reproof to his two dutiful sons:

MY DEAR BOYS — I have your wire. I am obliged by your counsel and I am never above being advised; but indeed what is the good of saying what would be patent to a child, for really I am able or ought to be able to form some sort of a judgment on matters when I have the facts. I am hardly likely to take a course unless inevitable that will upset 'Leicester, and I must say that I cannot think the letter of — and — justified the alarming telegrams sent to Middlesboro' last night. . . . Do let us take things a bit calmly. We are not in such a dreadful hurry after all. If I were to come here with a sprained ankle with which any sensible person would be in bed and have a doctor, only to see these girls who simply wrote *what* and *all* they felt, it would have been a waste of time.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### THE REV. WILLIAM BOOTH BECOMES GENERAL OF THE SALVATION ARMY

1878-1879

THE August number of *The Christian Mission Magazine* in 1878 ends with the announcement of a "War Congress." The September number opens with the statement, "The Christian Mission has met in Congress to make War." In the announcement William Booth is described as "Mr. Booth" and "The Rev. W. Booth." The first mention of him in the account of the War Congress hails him as "The General."

Although it still called itself the Christian Mission, this enthusiastic company of men and women was now, in spirit and in discipline, rapidly becoming an army. The account of the August Congress tells us that the Mission "has organized a Salvation Army to carry the Blood of Christ and the Fire of the Holy Ghost into every corner of the world." That, I believe, is the first mention of the term *Salvation Army*. We are also told that, "The Christian Mission Congress has prepared for a war that shall bring true peace into the hearts and homes of the vilest and roughest of the people, and shall shake the Kingdom of the Devil everywhere." Furthermore, many of the evangelists — forbidden by the rules of the Mission to style themselves "Reverend" — were now known, in all parts of the country, as "Captain." The title is popular and friendly in England, and commended itself to William Booth; he would point out that everybody understood it, everybody knew that there must be a captain of a cricket club, a football club, a barge, or a steamer; he allowed his evangelists to be called Captains while he himself remained the solitary and supreme Reverend. He wore a tall hat, but the white choker was now no more!

His title, however, was in a state of transition. He was now "The Rev. William Booth, General Superintendent of

the Christian Mission." Miss Short has already told us that in the family circle he was called "The General" quite in the early days of the Christian Mission, rather as a genial tribute to his commanding and autocratic temper, however, than with any reference to the organization of the Mission. But now the evangelists began to speak of him among themselves as "The General," meaning by that title that he was the General Superintendent, not in any way claiming for him a military rank.

In the year 1877, when Europe was watching the struggle between Russia and Turkey, one of William Booth's followers who was conducting a mission in Whitby exhibited some bills with the heading "War! War! War!" and called for "Two thousand men, women, and children" to join "the Forces of the Hallelujah Army." This evangelist, who became Commissioner Cadman in the Salvation Army, relates that when William Booth arrived in the town, he presented his leader not as "The Rev. William Booth" but as "The General of the Hallelujah Army." This, Commissioner Cadman says, was "the first time that the title of General was given to Mr. Booth, and Whitby was the town of England where the organization was first described as an Army."

Bramwell Booth remembers the incident which definitely changed the name of the Christian Mission. He and Mr. Railton were summoned early one morning to William Booth's bedroom to compare notes and to receive instructions for the day's work. Mr. Railton sat at a table, writing; Mr. Bramwell Booth occupied a chair at his side; William Booth, in a long yellow dressing-gown and felt slippers, was walking up and down, dictating his instructions. At that time the Volunteer Movement was established, and was receiving derisive treatment at the hands of the public. The phrase occurred in the article which Mr. Railton was writing, "We are a volunteer army"; and when he came to read this out, young Bramwell Booth leaned back in his chair, glanced over his shoulder at the perambulating General Superintendent, and exclaimed: "Volunteer! Here, I'm not a volunteer. I'm a regular or nothing!" William Booth, who had stopped walking at

*Can this form be altered? Or better petition.*

# THE SALVATION ARMY.

CALLER

The Christian Mission.

## PRINCIPAL STATIONS

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH

HEAD QUARTERS, OFFICES, & BOOK STORES,  
172, WHITECHAPEL ROAD, E.

Whitechapel  
Limehouse  
Bethnal Green  
Barking  
Hackney  
Poplar  
Hammersmith  
Hastings  
Chatham  
Salisbury  
Portsmouth  
Cardiff  
Newport  
Merthyr-Tydvil  
Dowlais  
Aberdare  
Wellingboro  
Leicester  
Coventry  
Wolverhampton  
Sheffield  
Rotherham  
Barnsley  
Leeds  
Bradford  
Whitby  
Stockton-on-Tees  
Middlesbrough  
East Hartlepool  
West Hartlepool  
Spennymoor  
Bishop Auckland  
Sunderland  
South Shields  
North Shields  
Jarrow  
Bolton  
Blackburn  
Burnley  
Accrington  
Rochdale  
Lancaster  
Kendal  
Manchester  
Crewe  
Dudley  
Plymouth

*My d. P. B.*

*Dec. 24. 71*

*I have your dated 23.*





this interruption, studied his son for a moment, and then coming to the table, leaned over Mr. Railton's shoulder, took the pen from his hand, scratched out the word "Volunteer," and wrote in its place the word "Salvation."

"The effect," says Mr. Bramwell Booth, "of that one word upon Railton and me was really quite extraordinary. We both sprang from our chairs. I remember that I exclaimed, 'Thank God for that!' And Railton was equally enthusiastic."

This decision really marked the beginning of that policy which was to make the Salvation Army a world-wide influence. The old question of limiting or narrowing its message in any way was now settled for ever. The change of name meant an actual warfare upon sin and apathy, it meant a forward movement, it was a definite call to arms. Even if the Mission had retained its name, that forward movement would certainly have been made, for the enthusiasm of the Mission was now hot for the work of widening its influence; but it is evident that the change in the name hastened the forward movement, gave it a violent impulse, and was responsible for many of those changes in method which immediately attracted the public attention.

The adoption of a uniform almost synchronized with the change of name — but at first it was an optional matter, left entirely to the decision of individuals. A few young Officers immediately donned the red jersey; but the women, on the whole, were decidedly against a uniform. Neither William Booth nor Bramwell Booth made any change in their dress for some time.

As will be seen from the following articles written by the General, as we may now call him, William Booth himself saw little significance in the change of name. He announces no new policy; he alters no single rule; he calls for no new sacrifice. And yet one can hardly read this passionate address without feeling that he was at heart conscious of fresh enthusiasms and was moved by a new energy of spiritual aggression.

This article appears in the January number of the Mission's Magazine, now called *The Salvationist*. It is entitled "Our New Name," and proceeds as follows:

Only the name—the same old friend, neither altered in dress or person, bringing the same message at the same intervals—only a more expressive appellation and a more descriptive one, for in deed and truth has not our paper always been an exponent, advocate, and record of Salvation?

We are a Salvation people—this is our specialty—getting saved and keeping saved, and then getting somebody else saved, and then getting saved ourselves more and more, until full salvation on earth makes the heaven within, which is finally perfected by the full salvation without, on the other side of the River.

We are not the only salvation people in the world. What a pity it would be if we were! There must be many more, both nigh at hand and far away, people who believe, as we believe, in the damnation of Hell and the peril which unsaved men are hourly in of falling into it, and of the opportunity God gives of deliverance; and who, therefore, go about night and day, not necessarily in the way we do, but still they go about in season and out of season, giving men little rest because they won't flee from the wrath to come, and who, when they do get a poor sinner saved, make great glee and rejoicing over him, and make him a Salvationist like themselves. Oh yes, there are other fools and madmen in the world besides us, and in this we rejoice, wish them God speed with all our hearts, but we rejoice also that we are Salvationists ourselves.

WE BELIEVE IN SALVATION.—We believe in the old-fashioned salvation. We have not developed and improved into Universalism, Unitarianism, or Nothingarianism, or any other form of infidelity, and we don't expect to. Ours is just the same salvation taught in the Bible, proclaimed by Prophets and Apostles, preached by Luther and Wesley and Whitefield, sealed by the blood of martyrs—the very same salvation which was purchased by the sufferings and agony and Blood of the Son of God.

We believe the world needs it; this and this alone will set the world right. We want no other nostrum—nothing new. We are on the track of the old Apostles. You don't need to mix up any other ingredients with the heavenly remedy. Wound and kill with the old sword, and pour in the old balsam and you will see the old result—*Salvation*. The world needs it. The worst man that ever walked will go to Heaven if he obtains it, and the best man that ever lived will go to Hell if he misses it. Oh, publish it abroad!

There is a Hell! A Hell as dark and terrible as is the description given of it by the lips of Jesus Christ, the Truthful. And into that Hell men are departing hour by hour. While we write men are going away into everlasting punish-

ment. While we eat and drink, and sleep and work, and rest, men are going where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched. Can anything be done? Can they be stopped? Can drunkards, harlots, thieves, the outcasts of the Church and of society, be saved? In theory many will answer, "Yes," but in experience they must confess they have no knowledge of such things.

Look again, perhaps the most appalling aspect of mankind is its bondage. How devils and devilish habits rule it, and oh, what an iron yoke. Ask the drunkards, gamblers, thieves, harlots, money-getters, pleasure seekers. Ask them one and all. Ask the question "Can the power of these habits be broken? Can these fiends be expelled? Can those do good who have been accustomed all their lives to do evil? Speak!" Press your question—"Can these poor creatures, captives, be delivered? Saved from sinning, saved into holy living, and triumphant dying? Saved now?" The desponding answer will be "Impossible." Ask multitudes of professing Christians and they will fear it is impossible. Ask the Salvationist, and the answer will be both from theory and experience, that the vilest and worst can be saved to the uttermost, for all things are possible to him that believeth.

What is the use of a doctor who cannot cure, a life-boat that cannot reach and rescue, an overseer who cannot relieve? And what would be the value of a Saviour who was not good and gracious, and strong enough to save the vilest and worst, and to save him as far as he needs? But our Redeemer is mighty to save. Hold the standard high. Let us tell the world of the Blood and Fire.

WE HAVE SALVATION.—This paper is the mouthpiece of a people who boldly say so. In this respect, with us the trumpet gives no uncertain sound. Many there are who postpone all the certain, enjoyable realisable part of religion to the next state—to the coming hereafter. But we believe in salvation here and now; we believe in feeling, knowing, and partaking here on earth of the leaves of the tree of life, which are for the healing of the nations. Drinking of the river of the water of life which flows from the throne of God. Eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of God, and being healed, and changed and blessed, and filled with the glory of God, and the peace and purity and power of salvation. We want it *now*. And we want to know we have it, while we struggle and suffer and fight, and sacrifice, and die; we want the comforting, sustaining, girdling, upholding arms of Jehovah consciously around us, bearing us up, and making us feel glad and strong in the strength of the mighty God of Jacob. We need it, and we have it. There are think-so Christians, and there are hope-so Christians, and there are

know-so Christians; thank God we belong to the know-so people — we know we are saved. And why not? Enoch had the testimony that he pleased God. Job knew that his Redeemer lived. John knew that he had passed from death into life. Paul knew that when his earthly house was destroyed he had a building in the heavens. And we know in whom we have believed, and the Spirit answers to our faith, and testifies in our hearts that we are the children of God.

My brethren, if you have salvation you are sure of it. Not because at the corner of the street or from the stage of the theatre you have heard it preached. Not because you have read with your eyes, or heard read by others in that wonderful Book, the wonderful story of the love of God to you. Not because you have seen with your eyes wonderful transformations of character wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost; changes as marvellous, as miraculous, as divine, as any that ever took place in Apostolic or any other days.

These things may have led up to it. But these things, wonderful as they may be, have not power to make you sure of your lot and part in the matter of salvation. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but God Himself, by His Spirit, has made this known.

OUR WORK IS SALVATION.— We believe in salvation, and we have salvation. We are not mere sentimentalists or theory people; we publish what we have heard and seen and handled and experienced of the word of life and the power of God. We aim at salvation. We want this and nothing short of this, and we want this right off. My brethren, my comrades, soul saving is our avocation, the great purpose of our lives. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God, let us be SALVATIONISTS indeed.

God being our helper, this paper shall answer to its name, early and late, whether men are pleased or angry, whether they will read and bless, or reject and curse, it shall know no purpose short of the rescue of a dying world, and no meaner message than the announcement of a *present, free, and full Salvation*.

And, my brethren, my comrades, you too bear a name, an honoured, sacred name, and you must answer in purpose and character to the name of the great Salvationist.

Look at this. Clear your vision. Halt, stand still as the new year draws nigh, and afresh and more fully apprehend and comprehend your calling. *You* are to be a worker together with God for the salvation of your fellow-men. Stop a bit. Don't hurry away. What is the business of your life? Not merely to save your soul — win the bread that perisheth not and make yourself meet for Paradise? If it was so, if this were all, would it not be an ignoble and selfish lot for which



to toil and suffer, and pray and die, and would it not be as unlike the Master's as could well be conceived of? No, you are to be a redeemer, a saviour, a copy of Jesus Christ Himself. So wake up all the powers of your being, my brothers, and consecrate every awakened power to the great end of saving them. Be a Salvationist.

Rescue the perishing. There are all around you everywhere, crowds upon crowds, multitudes. Be skilful. Improve yourself. Study your business.

Be self-sacrificing. Remember the Master. What you lose for His sake, and for the sake of the poor souls for whom He died, you shall find again. Stick to it. Having put your hand to the salvation plough don't look behind you.

Oh, for a brave year. We shall have one, and you will fight and drive the foe, and rescue the prey, and we will enter the record of multitudes rescued and saved and sanctified and safe landed in Glory in the pages of *The Salvationist*.

He is far more conscious of the future in front of him when he sits down, only a few weeks later, to issue his instructions to his Soldiers. We think it may be said that from this moment William Booth cherished an ambition in his soul, which, in spite of his extraordinary success and the world-wide affection felt for his person and his work, was to distress him and yet inspire him towards the end of his life because of its delayed but ever possible fulfilment. But of this very interesting matter we shall speak more fully in our closing chapters. It is plain in the following article that he is roused to enthusiasm, that he sees before him a host springing up to overthrow the works of the Devil, and that he definitely sets before his Soldiers, as their supreme objective, "The subjugation and conquest of the world."

The article is called "The Salvation Army. By the General," and appears in the February number of *The Salvationist*:

What a strange name! What does it mean? Just what it says — a number of people joined together after the fashion of an army; and therefore it is an army, and an army for the purpose of carrying Salvation through the land; neither more nor less than that. If it be wise and lawful and desirable for men to be banded together and organized after the best method possible to liberate an enslaved nation, establish it in liberty, and overcome its foes, then surely it must be wise and law-



ful and desirable for the people of God to join themselves together after the fashion most effective and forcible to liberate a captive world and to overcome the enemies of God and man.

When Jehovah finished the work of creation, He turned from the new earth to the new Adam, and gave him the commission to multiply and increase and subdue and govern it, so that it should become a happy home for him and his posterity, and bring honour and glory to its Creator. Adam failed in his mission, and instead of Adam subduing the earth, the earth subdued Adam, and he and all his family went off into black and diabolical rebellion. But God still claimed His own, and a second time appeared, this time to redeem by sacrifice the world He had created; and when He had finished the work, He turned to His disciples, the spiritual Adams, and gave them a commission similar to that given to the first Adam, to go and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew xxviii. 19, see margin).

Again it is *overcome, conquer, subdue*, not merely teach, but *persuade, compel* all nations, that is, all men, to become the disciples of the Son of God.

So at least it is understood by the Salvation Army. This is the idea which originated and developed and fashioned it in the past, and which dominates and propels it to-day. The world, this very world, including this very England, which never ceases boasting of its freedom, is sold under sin, held in slavery by Satan, who has usurped the place and power and revenues of Jehovah, and who is indeed its Lord and Master, and to deliver it and to fulfil to the very letter the Master's command, an army of deliverance, of redemption, of emancipation is wanted. In the name of the great Three One the standard has been raised, recruits are flowing in. Drilling, skirmishing, fighting, advancing, are going on. Some territory has been won, some captives have been liberated, some shouts of victory have been raised, together with plenty of misfortunes and losses and disasters and mistakes, and all of that which might naturally have been expected in such a war, unless men had suddenly mended of their depravity, and devils had miraculously ceased to be devils; but with it all there has been growth and increase continually. Every day it is becoming more fierce and determined and courageous and confident, and every day more and more a Salvation Army.

Does all this sound strange, my brother — not sacred, not ecclesiastical, not according to the traditions of the elders, and after the pattern of existing things and institutions? Is it something new? It may be so, and yet it may be none the

less true and scriptural, and none the less of divine origin and made after some heavenly pattern for all that.

Let us look at it. What is this work we have in hand? To subdue a rebellious world to God. And what is the question to which many anxiously ask an answer? How is it most likely to be accomplished? Now, there are some things on which we may reckon all to be agreed:

1. That if ever the world, or any part of it is subdued, it will be by the instrumentality of men.

2. By holy men, saved, spiritual, divine men.

3. By men using substantially the same means as were used by the first Apostles, that is, preaching, praying, believing, etc.

4. That all that is effected will be by the co-operation and power of the Holy Ghost, given through and because of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now on these lines how could a number of the Lord's disciples conduct themselves in order the most effectually to succeed in the direction of disciplining all nations, subduing the world to God?

Supposing 5,000 godly men and women of varying ages and conditions presented themselves at St. Paul's Cathedral to-morrow, saying: "We are so deeply impressed with the awful spiritual condition and peril of the world that we cannot rest; the word of the Lord is as a fire in our bones, and the love of souls is such a constraining power in our hearts that it will not let us remain idle, we want to join in a holy crusade for the redemption of mankind. Take us and all we have and use us in the way most likely to accomplish this end." What in such a case could best be done? How could these 5,000 burning hearts be used with the greatest force and likelihood of success? Let us see. It seems to us that substantially something like the following answer must be given.

I. The 5,000 must work in COMBINATION, and that the most complete and perfect possible. To separate and scatter them, leaving them to work out varying plans, would surely be unwise. No, no. Two working in combination will accomplish more than two in separation. Let them be one and the same force, though acting in various divisions and scattered to the ends of the earth. Mould and weld and keep them together. Let them be an army, and make them feel that they are working out one plan. Shoulder to shoulder. Brethren, sisters, comrades, division is weakness, unity is strength. Why?

1. *Combination gives the strength which flows from sympathy.* The knowledge that if one is sore pressed, wounded, a thousand hearts feel with him, that if he falls they will shout victory o'er his grave, follow him in imagination to "the river," and anticipate meeting him again before the Throne, will be

stimulus unutterable, will make him willing to face enemies, loss, death, and devils.

2. *Combination gives confidence.* There is wonderful power in the consciousness that a multitude are shouldering the same weapons, engaged in the same conflict, marching to the same music, under the same standard, for the destruction of the common foe. Confidence makes men into heroes. Without knowledge there will be no confidence, and without combination there will be no knowledge. Hold together, close together, and there will be giants again even in our own days.

3. *Combination gives the strength which comes from mutual help.* With a system of combination which is a reality and not merely a name, the strong can bear the infirmities of the weak. In a great real war, no matter how carefully the forces are distributed, there will be weak places that will need strengthening when the conflict rages all along the line. There will be positions against which the enemy will hurl his most powerful battalions, which positions must be reinforced or all will be lost. How glorious for the fresh troops to come pouring in. What would have become of Lucknow had there been no Havelock, and but for Blucher, England would never have been so proud to tell the story of Waterloo.

We must hold the 5,000 together. We know not how the battle will go, and no wing or detachments must be without its supports, and all must be arranged that the power and force of the whole can be directed to strengthen and sustain the weakest part.

4. *Combination gives power which comes from example.* Man imitates. The deeds of daring and self-denial and sacrifice done here, will be talked about, and printed, and written about and imitated there. Men emulate. In every company there will be spirits more courageous and daring than others, and so all through the 5,000. These will lead and the rest will follow.

II. But such combination or oneness of action will only be possible with ONENESS OF DIRECTION. If all are to act together all must act on one plan, and, therefore, all must act under one head. Twenty different heads, according to the nature and experience and history of heads, will produce twenty different plans with different methods of their accomplishment, clashing and hindering each other more or less. Then what next? Differences of opinion, of feeling, of following, of action. Disagreement, confusion, separation, destruction. I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, soon leads, so far as the actuality of things is concerned, to being of nothing save wrangling and the Devil.

Bring in your earthly usages. How do men ordinarily act? Do you want to tunnel a mountain, bridge a river, manage

a railway, or conquer a nation? Is it committed? Did a committee build the ark, emancipate the Israelites, or ever command or judge or govern them after they were emancipated? Is it not an axiom everywhere accepted, in times of war, at least, and we are speaking of times of war, that one bad general is preferable to two good ones? If you will keep the unity of 5,000, one mind must lead and direct them. Is this direction of one mind all the direction needed? By no means. Subordinate leadership there must be in all manner of directions; all the talent in this direction possessed by the 5,000 must be called into play, but one controlling, directing will must be acknowledged, accepted, and implicitly followed, if you are to keep the unity of 5,000 and make the most of it for God and man.

1. *Then of course you will train the 5,000.* An army without training, without drill, would be simply a loose, helpless mob, a source of weakness and danger, impossible to hold together without training and drill. And this 5,000 will be little better, though every one of them may now have hearts full of zeal for God and love to man; so we must train them, and that to the uttermost. We must teach them how to fight, how to fight together, and how to fight in the very best way. Train them in the industrious, practical, and self-sacrificing discharge of their duties. Develop what gifts they possess, and help them to acquire others. They will improve. They are only babes now, they will grow up to be men, some of them to be head and shoulders above their fellows; think what they will become when trained and taught and developed, and inured to hardship and accustomed to the war. Don't despise the gift that is in any, you will very often find the last to be first and the first last; let every one have a chance; God is no respecter of persons, nor sex either, neither must you be. Every gift you need is here; they only want calling forth and cultivating, and you will be fully provided for the war. But mind, you must train and teach and develop — no pipe-clay soldiers will be of any service here — and establish your army *in actual service*. In earthly armies, something may be done in making soldiers with marchings and inspections and drillings in the barrack square, far away from the din and smoke of actual war; but not so here; they must learn as they fight, and fight while they learn. They will train most rapidly in the ranks; and only in the ranks, on the field, with the flag of victory waving over them, can they be made into veterans and inspired with that feeling, or conviction, or whatever it may be that will make them assured that they are the soldiers of the Most High, and therefore invincible, unconquerable, and all conquering.

2. *When you have trained your 5,000 you will sort them.*



When you have trained, and tried and developed your force, and found out what they are, and what they can do, then you will put the right man in the right place, and for every place you will have a man. Gifts differ. You will want the head and the ear, and the hand and the feet, and you will have heads and eyes and ears and hands in abundance. Now for every man in his own order, and according to his several ability. You want infantry and cavalry, and engineers and transports, and every other arm needed to make up a mighty force, and you have all, or you will by your training make all, and to all you must assign the place for which they are adapted and needed.

3. *Then of course there must be obedience.* If the 5,000 are to act together, and to act on one plan, it will be self-evident that it can only be effected by implicit obedience. If it were otherwise—if the Officers of the Salvation force can only express their wishes for those composing it to act in some particular manner, which said wishes can be received or rejected as they may appear pleasant, then anything like certain and foreseen action is impossible. But if it is known and assured that the 5,000 will act as directed, then the most important measures can be devised and executed with the exactest certainty. If a desired course of action will only be taken on its recommending itself to the judgment, the leadings, the impulses, the feelings of each individual, then you can be sure of nothing except confusion, defeat, and destruction.

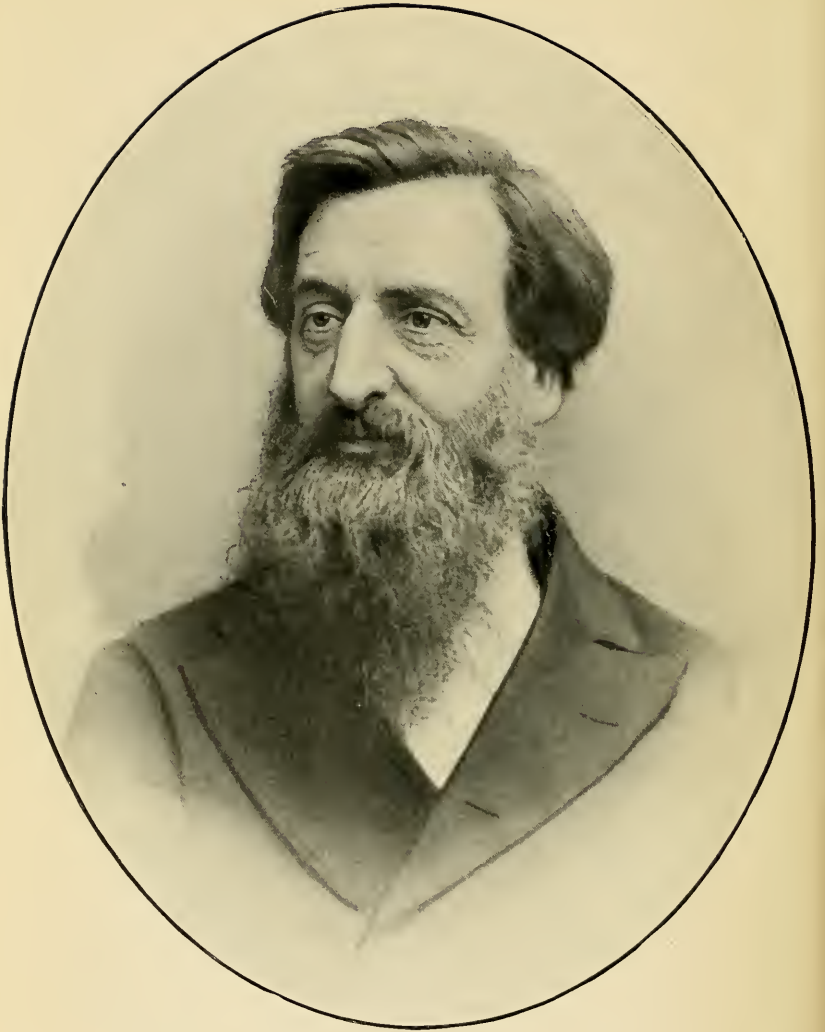
Try this on any of the aforesaid human undertakings, and where will you soon be? Any great commercial enterprise, for instance: will not the very speedy result be bankruptcy? Or war? Try it in the presence of the enemy. Let every man fight as he is led, or every regiment charge up the hill and storm the redoubt or do any other deadly, murderous deeds according as they are resolved upon after discussion, and votes and majorities, and where will you be? What sort of telegrams will you send home to an expectant country, and what sort of a welcome back will those of you that are left receive? No! obedience is the word. Somebody who knows what they are doing, to DIRECT, and then simple, unquestioning obedience. Obedience for earthly business and earthly war, and obedience for God's business and God's Army.

4. *And then you must have discipline, order.* Those who keep the commandments and who excel in service must be rewarded, and those who are disobedient must be degraded, punished, expelled.

5. *And lastly, having organized and developed and disciplined your army, it must be used, employed, and that to the*







WILLIAM BOOTH (1879)

*uttermost*. Nothing demoralises Salvation Soldiers more than *inactivity*. *Idleness* is stark ruin, and the Devil's own opportunity. Push forward, never heed the number or position of your foes, or the impossibility of overcoming them. Your Salvation Army has been made to accomplish the impossible, and conquer that which to human calculations cannot be overcome. FORWARD! If you will only go forward, and go forward on the lines here indicated, you will go forward to fulfil the commission of your Divine Captain, the disciplining of all nations, the subjugation and conquest of the world.

It is instructive to remember that as a child William Booth had loved to play soldiers, and that he became a "captain" of a secret society in his youth; it is also instructive to learn that as far back in his missionary career as 1857 he had thought of the soldier's red coat as a religious advertisement. The following memory of William Booth was written by an aged lady in Cornwall who attended his revival services in that year:

When he saw the people as they entered going in the back seats he would shout, "What are you about? Bring the people up to the front, fill the front seats first." Again and again he would reprove them for one error or another. At the end of the first service in the evening he would be impatient to get at work at the penitent rail. If he thought the people would not come down quietly from the gallery he would exclaim at the top of his voice, "*Come down* in the body of the chapel, put out the gas and cool the chapel. Do you hear there? Come down; be quiet. There is work to be done *here to-night for eternity*. Let all the prayer-leaders come up to the front. Come on; be quiet"; waving his hands and beckoning, with his lovely black hair floating about.

His preaching was earnest, faithful, and to the point. His sole aim was to bring sinners to repentance. He was not afraid to preach about the wrath of God, damnation, hell fire, and the smoke of their torments for ever and ever.

When inviting the workers to go with him to an out-door service he once remarked, "I often wish I was a soldier dressed in a red coat, so that it would attract the crowd and bring them to the feet of Jesus."

That the effect upon the world of this new portent in religious enthusiasm was almost immediate, may be seen from the following article which appeared in no other quarter than *The Saturday Review*. It was published dur-

ing July, 1879, and was joyfully quoted in the now ringing pages of *The Salvationist*, with the title, "'The Saturday Review' on the Hosanna Meeting." The article, which is not at all unfair, although it remains studiously on the surface of religious experience, proceeds as follows:

The fortresses of Beelzebub, of course, are music-halls, penny gaffs, dancing rooms, and the like; of these, in London and elsewhere, the Salvation Army, under the guidance of Mr. Booth, has stormed no less than one hundred, and has turned these haunts of ribaldry into places of divine service.

Those must have been very dull or unsympathetic persons who could resist the pious jollity of the anniversary meeting.

The proceedings began with the singing of the following stanza:

Hark, hark, my soul, what warlike songs are swelling,  
Through Britain's streets and on from door to door;  
How grand the truths those burning strains are telling  
Of that great war till sin shall be no more!  
Salvation Army, Army of God!  
Onward to conquer the world with Fire and Blood.

There was some peculiar quality in these last words which a stranger could not catch. The phrase "with Fire and Blood" was sung, or rather roared again and again, until the perspiration ran down the faces of the soldiery as they clasped one another's hands and beamed. Public attention was particularly drawn to one Captain on the lower platform, who vociferated with such zeal as almost to lose the semblance of humanity, who finally gave his neighbour a hard rub round the head in token of spiritual good fellowship. This quaint person afterwards recounted his experiences, and delighted the audience by assuring them that he used to be "a swearing, drunken shoemaker at Merthy Tydvil," but that now he was "a Hallelujah pastor at Whitechapel," to which the entire hall sympathetically replied "Hosanna."

Those foreign critics who blame the apathy and cold-bloodedness of English character can never have attended a Hallelujah meeting. If the sight of many pairs of radiant eyes and waving arms would not persuade them, they would certainly be convinced by a rousing slap on the back from some thoroughly happy and devout stranger. In fact, the flow of animal spirits, the manifest affection of all these rough people for one another, the absence of anything like hypocrisy or self-seeking in the whole affair, were not to be overlooked by any candid spectator. That the nature of the prayers and speeches was oddly boisterous, and that shouts of laughter

pervaded what was intended to be a serious divine service, interfered not in the least with the sincerity of the worshippers.

The real good, such as it is, done to the nation by widespread movements of revival like this is less a religious than a moral one, though experience has proved that they are most of all effectual when morality and religion are blended in them to an equal extent. Without religion, to use the pet phrase of the Salvation Army, there is no fire in a revival, without morality there is no blood. Most of our secular efforts to raise the masses have simply failed because of their inability to set the hearts of the populace aflame; while the notable revivals in America and Ireland flashed out and were gone in a few months because all was neglected except the religious afflatus. The strength of Mr. Booth seems to be that he unites the two powers; he preaches doctrines that fill the face of a believer with light and radiance, and he is no less thorough in enforcing a complete reform of life.

It may be said at once that what the Salvation Army accomplished at this time — long before the era of its Social Work — was to provide an outlet, an escape, for that intense burning and explosive religious consciousness which in every age has found neither relief for its suffering nor opportunity for its ecstasy in the careful provisions of Institutionalism. By challenging the world of sin and misery as an army of liberation, by boldly, triumphantly, and with a riotous happiness confronting the world of average common sense and average dulness, the Salvation Army made it easier for zealots to declare themselves, and made it easier for sinners to confess themselves. The Methodist Revivals had lacked this laughing happiness, this hilarious boldness, this immense faith in the power of Christ; they called people to God, but they did not taunt the Devil and challenge the world with so loud an assurance of religious triumph. There was something Hanoverian about them; they were bourgeois; they were, above everything else, a struggle of strong feeling to be respectable. But the Salvation Army, if we quietly consider the matter, was much more English than the Methodist Revivals; it had, indeed, an Elizabethan note in its riot; it trusted the heart of mankind; it broke through reserve and decorum; it beat its drum, and blew its trumpet because it was happy, and because to manifest happiness is natural and



true. Singing, dancing, and the occasional embracing — the very excesses which shocked public opinion — were, in sober truth, a return to the more vigorous days of medieval England.

If we quote a few reports from the pages of *The Salvationist* it will be seen at once how completely the new method appealed to the hearts of those multitudes who found it difficult to be good and impossible to be ecclesiastically obedient. We shall not argue this point; but we would ask the reader to bear in mind that the Salvation Army has largely recruited itself from the lowest, and also from the most neglected ranks of humanity; that its instrument for morality and righteousness obtains its force from men and women to whom the discipline of formalism makes no appeal; and that all the good it has accomplished in this world — including its democratic revival among the more sober and exclusive Churches — flows from the enthusiasm of people who, left alone, would never have lifted a finger for morality and never have sacrificed one moment of their life for righteousness.

In the quotations which follow, the least observant of readers can hardly fail to discern, however fastidious his taste, that here is the spirit of freedom and joy, the spirit of liberation and delight, the spirit of superhuman yearning and ecstasy, even if clumsily and crudely expressed by the rejoicing writers. The phrases which shock, or grate, or disgust are only blunders in the symbolism of language. The fact beneath the words is the fact of human nature radically changed, verily liberated and enlarged, absolutely convinced of union with the Divine.

Glory, glory, glory, glory to Jesus, to JESUS. We must conquer and win Hayle for Jesus. Good times all day on Sunday. Saints jumping, dancing, crying, shouting, and rolling on the ground. We disgusted some people. Hallelujah. — Blood-washed Johnny.

. . . Then came the power. All got down after Mr. Ballington said a few words; then came the glory; such a rush out: then a fight and a struggle. Out came seven feathers, three pipes, three pairs of earrings, three brooches, two other fine things, one grand pin, one Albert chain, one tobacco-pouch, two pieces of twist, one 24 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. They did

go in; I never saw such a meeting. Mr. Ballington asked one man, "Does He save you?" He said, "He does." "Tell Him He does again," said Mr. Ballington. He kept telling Him. At last he said, "Mr. Booth, I shall burst if God does not enlarge the vessel." Then he got them to sing, "The Lamb, the Lamb," and they did sing it.

Never can I forget Tuesday night's Holiness Meeting, held in the Salvation Chapel, Spring Garden Lane. . . . God backed the speaking with convicting, cutting power, after which His Spirit was poured upon us in an overwhelming manner. Immediately afterwards some twenty rushed forward for this freedom from sin. We sang. Weeping and groaning commenced in all parts, when some twenty more rushed forward. Oh, the scene at this juncture. One dear lad, not above seventeen, after lying his length on the ground for some time, cried out, "Oh, it's come. I have it. Oh, God! my God! my God! You do cleanse me." Then followed more wrestling and agonizing, and the forms again being cleared of those who had obtained liberty, some twenty more sprang to the front, and plunged into "the pool." Once more we cleared them, but only to make room for more who were waiting to come out and sing, "I believe, I believe, Jesus saves, Jesus saves"; but at this point nothing could be heard save sobs and groans and heart-rending prayers. Thus continued this mighty outpour until upwards of seventy rose testifying with feelings indescribable and unutterable joy, while all around stood weeping and rejoicing, singing and shouting.

A young man who rushed out of his seat, fell at the penitent-form and cried for mercy—which he soon obtained as soon as he ventured his all on the Blood—being so overpowered with the glory, for we had it down and no mistake, got up, and looking in my face with his hands on his breast, said: "I think I am going to die, but the Blood cleanseth me." I turned to Brother Davies and said, "This fellow is going to die"; and he shouts, "Hallelujah." I turned to the fellow and said, "Get on your knees, and if you die, die at the feet of Jesus"; but, thank God, he is only just beginning to live, and he is still alive, and means to fight in the Army. Glory to God.

I went to one young man that was kneeling at the penitent-form; he was just like a block of marble, he knelt with his hands clasped, and his eyes raised to Heaven. I laid my hand on his shoulder and said to him, "My brother, what have you come out to this form for?" He did not speak for a few moments. At last he gasped out, at the same time laying his hand on his breast, "Oh, it's all here, I never felt like this before," then the tears began to flow, and he began to shout, "Oh, I want Christ! I want Christ! I want Christ!" and

Glory to God he soon got what he wanted — for none ever sought His face in vain.

A sanctifying influence and convincing power seemed to steal over all as we sang. "I am coming to the Cross." And we did get to the Cross — to its very *foot*. After prevailing prayer Captains Smith, Haywood, and Coombs gave powerful testimonies of Christ's taking away and keeping from the desire of sin. I felt unutterably filled with the Spirit. Never shall I forget the scene that took place when all unsanctified were asked to come forward. It seemed as if Christ said, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" Some, when it came to real definite work, we found had not yet the witness of pardon; others had for years been hungering and thirsting for deliverance from the power of sin, but had been clinging to some fond idol. There was a cry on all sides. Some fifteen or sixteen rushed to the front. "Oh, Lord, I'll not get up till Thou hast sanctified me," said one young man. "My Lord, my Saviour," said one dear young woman, "You know for years this is what I have been seeking: Oh, Jesus, Jesus, give it to me." And He did, and she rose, clapped her hands, and shouted for joy. After this, over twenty more rushed forward; while those who had obtained the blissful peace stood round singing, with faces of rapture and tears of joy, "I am *sure*, I am sure Jesus saves, Jesus saves, and His Blood makes me whiter than snow." More idols cast at Christ's feet; more rose feeling the liberty; more room was made for those yet seeking; more rushed forward; and while weeping and wrestling and groaning on all sides, a man cried out, "I'm willing! I'm willing! I'm willing!" "What are you willing to do, my brother?" I asked. "Oh," he replied, "willing to confess Christ before my shop-mates." Some nine or ten forms were cleared, until over 200 came forward seeking in an agony of soul and heart a life of purity. We finished this meeting with 250 testimonies.

One dear woman says she will have to thank God for ever for sending the Salvation Army here. She would not yield at our meeting, so she went to our Council of War at Merthyr, and stayed at the all-night of prayer, when God set her captive soul at liberty. When she got saved she shouted and jumped like a mad woman, and Happy Jack jumped with her. It just suited me. Oh, Hallelujah! When she came out her husband scolded her for shouting so, and making so much noise. Since then he has got saved too. He was as bad as his wife. As soon as he got saved he jumped up and shouted, "*This is Glory! This is Glory! This is Glory!*" And we all shouted together. This man went shouting all the way home, "THIS IS GLORY! THIS IS GLORY!" and we could hear him five hundred yards off. One man said to me, "You have sent

him right off his head." I said, "He is all right. They suit me." Oh, Hallelujah!

I once remarked to Bramwell Booth, speaking of the risk that lies in all such fervour as we find expressed in reports of this character, that enthusiasm is a highly dangerous thing. He made answer, "Not if you organize it." The reader must bear in mind that while General Booth was doing all in his power to overcome the torpor and apathy of the world by an excess of religious fervour, he was also at the same time organizing and controlling the enthusiasm which resulted. From the very first with more than one shrewd mind helping him, the General set about organizing the zeal and fervour of his followers. He called men and women by the most violent means to his side, but once at his side he disciplined them into orderly legions. Extreme as some of his utterances seem, fanatical as indeed some of his methods appear, he was yet in some strange fashion the most practical, level-headed and far-seeing of Englishmen, a man typical of our manufacturing Midlands. He had a detecting instinct for cant, a violent detestation for professional unction, and a perfect loathing for the pernicious egoism of certain religious bodies. "A dunghill religion" was his contemptuous phrase for the teaching of the Plymouth Brotherhood. Many hard phrases did he rap out when approached by men obsessed by introspective religion. He had one test, an infallible, and a scriptural test, for all talkers: "What do you *do*? What are you willing to give up?" He cut short those who wanted to discuss doctrinal refinements with the instruction, "Go and do something."

At the very beginning of his crusade, when one might think he would be swept off his feet by the astounding success of this new movement, we find him watching over his Soldiers and rebuking them for excess of zeal.

But he did not shrink from demanding an absolute self-sacrifice, and he thought very little of a man who was not ready to give up the whole world for the sake of salvation. One of the Officers in the Salvation Army has a story which shows the way of William Booth with those who are inclined to think first of themselves:

Although I joined the Christian Mission with my father's consent (which was given disagreeably and reluctantly), it was not long before he came to look me up. He thought I was looking pale and over-worked, and protested to the General that "the first law of nature is self-preservation." I think I can hear now the General's sharp repartee, "Yes, Captain Edmonds, but the first law of grace is self-sacrifice!"

But in the midst of his tumultuous, headlong life, stirring up enthusiasm, organizing enthusiasm, calling for self-sacrifice, and directing self-sacrifice — the General, as the sole head of an entirely new religious body, found himself called upon to decide a question in the sphere of doctrine which greatly disturbed him at the time, and remained with him almost to the end of his life as a source of occasional anxiety. He was not only a General, he had to make himself a Lawgiver.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE QUESTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

1881-1882

AMONG the few people of gentle birth, who from the first welcomed the Salvation Army, was Lady Henry Somerset. She was attracted by the Army because it provided a real reason for rigorous self-abnegation, and because it presented a real opportunity for a life of devotion.

She tells me that she went to General Booth with a desire to surrender and live her life in the obscurest work of the Salvation Army, and with only one possible objection in her mind. The General had more or less banned the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Lady Henry was willing to join the Army; one may say she was eager to become a Soldier; but she could not give up the rite, which for her was the central rite, of the Christian religion. She asked General Booth if she might be allowed to go for Holy Communion to the Church of England. The answer was a negative.

Now, this question of the Eucharist is one which conveniently explains at once the success and the limitations of William Booth. If we study his attitude towards this rite, which had been from the time of the Apostles (with many borrowings from pagan ritual) the centre of Christian worship, we shall see how he drew so large a multitude to his side, and how he alienated the sympathies of a multitude, if not so large, at least of finer sensibilities.

Lady Henry Somerset said to me one day in 1913: "Whenever I hear the Salvation Army criticised, and whenever I myself am inclined to judge it from a theological point of view, I remind myself of the solitary Soldier in the slums of East London, in the slums of every great city in the world, who lives on next to nothing, who seeks the eternal welfare of souls, and who does everything for love. Always remember that William Booth inspired *that*. I re-

gard him as the true St. Francis of the modern world, the true St. Francis of our industrial civilization. He shook England by his wonderful book on poverty. He was the first man to hold up to the Church, and make her face them as they really are, the unhappy miseries of the poor. That was a great work, and only a great man, an inspired man, could have accomplished it. I tell you what I am inclined to say about him, after years of reflection. I think that he saw God, saw Him quite clearly, *but through vulgar eyes*. I do not mean *social vulgarity*, of course. I do not mean anything *banale* and snobbish by that term. I mean that his spiritual vision was always coloured by the coarseness and the hardness of his early training. He saw God clearer than almost any man of his generation, but with the eyes of a provincial who had suffered hardships. And when his spiritual life deepened, as it certainly did deepen, he had become so possessed by his huge task of world-wide social reform, that he really had not a single moment in which to acquaint himself with the spirit of the Church. I am quite sure that he really never came to know Anglican Christianity."

This is the judgment of a shrewd and refined observer. It is true in some respects, and in those respects profoundly true; but it misses one important consideration. William Booth faced the Catholic question of the Sacrament, and made a deliberate choice. Whether he was right or wrong, he deliberately rejected the Sacrament; but it was not until he had studied the matter with care and with anxiety, not until he had weighed with a grave deliberation all the consequences of that rejection.

Because he decided to do without the Sacraments of Catholic Christianity, it must not be supposed that he brushed those sacred rites impatiently, brusquely, and scandalously aside. There was nothing blatant, rash, or iconoclastic about that rejection. He did not make a mock of these holy things, so infinitely precious to thousands of Christians. For years he considered the subject; indeed, had it not been for the influence of some of his followers, particularly Railton, it is possible that he might have retained the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. To his life's

end, certainly for many long years after his decision, he was occasionally disturbed as to its wisdom.

We must see on what grounds William Booth based his disregard of the Eucharist. These grounds were at once practical and theological. To begin with, the people who crowded to his celebration of the rite were in numerous instances men and women just snatched from the destruction of alcoholism, to whom the very taste, the mere odour, of wine was a danger. Then, when he had done away with fermented wines and employed only coloured water in the rite, the scenes were sometimes so tumultuous, even so hilarious — for his earliest converts were the roughest and wildest elements in society, the multitude neglected at that time by the Churches — that he was shocked and offended.

To William Booth, born an Anglican and trained as a Methodist, there was always an element, a suggestion of mystery and beauty in his thoughts about the Lord's Supper. Until the age of fifty it was impossible for him to be rid of this heredity. He had never perhaps felt towards that Sacrament any feeling comparable with those of a devout Catholic, but unquestionably he had regarded this rite from his boyhood upward with reverence and honour; it stood for him as a part of Christian worship. But when in the social difficulties of his Whitechapel circumstances he came to decide about this matter, he had at his side young men in whose minds was no inhibiting heredity and whose impatience with anything in the nature of priestcraft, magic, or sacerdotalism was akin to passion. They were reformers who refused to be hindered by authority; progressives, with little but disdain for traditionalism; evangelists, who loathed only next to sin the paralysing touch of the formalist. For George Railton, in particular, there was only one baptism — the baptism of the Holy Ghost; only one communion with Christ — the communion of a cleansed heart devoted to His service. His influence was flung on the side of rejection; and William Booth, who leaned in matters of organization far more upon his young men than upon his wife, finally decided to give up the Sacraments.

In a draft drawn up in 1881 by George Railton for the

consideration of General Booth and his Chief of the Staff, Bramwell Booth, the arguments for abandonment are set forth with a speciousness and a plausibility which are more curious than persuasive. We shall not trouble the reader with the subtlety of this document, but where it is emphatic and declares the mind of William Booth as he came at last to make it up, we shall incorporate it with the following statement.

The ultimate decision of William Booth was reached on the one unassailable ground that his business with suffering and sinful humanity was the stern and difficult business of *redemption*. "There must be no baptismal service that can delude any one into a vain hope of getting to Heaven without being 'born again.' There must be no Lord's Supper 'administered' by anybody in such a way as to show anything like a priestly superiority of one over another — every saved person being 'a priest unto God.'" He came to suspect symbolism, and to dislike the very sound of the word Sacrament. He believed that men are only too ready to adopt excuses for idleness in the spiritual sphere; that self-analysis is put upon one side by a great majority of those who lean upon Institutionalism; that the life of asolute self-sacrifice and entire dependence upon God is hindered by a formalism which appears to set a priest between God and the soul. "There must never be a sacramental service at the end of a meeting so as to prevent the possibility of inviting sinners to the mercy-seat." Such communion services as he permitted at the time (1881) — services of a family character — were to be "at once followed by an open-air demonstration, so that the life and death pledge may be acted upon immediately."

Enough has been said to make it quite clear that William Booth would horrify a number of Christians by his decision in this matter; but perhaps enough has also been said to show how this same decision would appeal to the multitude who hunger and thirst for personal experience in religion.

If the Salvation Army offended the orthodox, it kindled the enthusiasm of the unorthodox. If the orthodox saw in William Booth a heretic, the unorthodox hailed him as one

who spoke with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees. He had for the religious world some such divided force as marked the message of Carlyle in letters. Carlyle, of whom Bagehot said, "He has contradicted the floating paganism, but he has not founded the deep religion," troubled the distinguishing mind of the philosopher and horrified the mind steeped in Greek culture; but he filled with a wild earnestness the middle classes and the democracy. William Booth had to choose between the patronage of the orthodox and the love and devotion of the unorthodox; that is to say, he was to choose between saving two or three and saving a multitude. Just as Carlyle to the young men of the middle classes appeared to be a prophet raised up by God and Goethe, for the moral resurrection of England, so to depressed multitudes of this country, William Booth by his rejection of orthodox conformity and by his unsparing insistence on the need of a changed will, a cleansed heart, and a new spirit, appeared to be the authentic voice of God.

Here was a man bold enough to preach the nothingness of this world, the vanity of riches and honour, the folly of ambition and greed, the absolute dead unprofitableness of gaining the whole world; and this thunderous preacher proclaimed the equality of every man in the sight of God, declared that no pagan beauty, no mystic rite, no tender symbolism from the poetry of superstition could set a soul right in the eyes of the Almighty Judge, commanded all those whose wills were surrendered and whose hearts were cleansed, to go feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, and sell all they had and give to the poor.

This was a religion that the multitude could understand. William Booth, in the opinion of some, would have cut but a poor and needy figure in a roomful of orthodox theologians; let us reflect, however, that orthodox theologians would have cut figures as poor and needy in the slums of Whitechapel. The subtleties of theology, the brilliant casuistry of the schools, the marvellous adaptations of the religious conscience to every fresh destruction of science and criticism — these things are, of necessity, a maze of words, a folly of language, to the man in the dark places



of civilization. Yet to the most sunken and depressed of the human race, so great a miracle as conversion seems a reasonable and a truthful condition of religion. To the most sunken and depressed of mankind, the possibility of an immense inward change is no absurdity and no delusion. William Booth made a demand which the most erudite of theologians would have trembled to make, and he addressed that demand, without compromise or equivocation of any kind, to the most unhappy and the most obstinate and the most sinful of the human race.

It will be seen, then, that in first relegating the Sacraments to an unimportant position, and then definitely abandoning their observance, the real object of William Booth was to lay every emphasis in his power on the central necessity of conversion. This central necessity was the heart and soul of his teaching; it was the doctrine which he held from first to last, which he never questioned, and which he never modified; there could be no salvation for sinful man without a new birth.

But rightfully to understand the position of William Booth it must be carefully remembered that he was helped to this relinquishment of the Sacrament by the two young men who most ardently supported his crusade. He was influenced by Bramwell Booth and by George Railton to abandon the rite; he came to the conclusion that these men had formed a true judgment; he flung himself more heartily than ever into the work of a preacher who sees the beginning of real religion in the changed heart of the sinner, but, nevertheless, to the end of his days there were moments when he looked almost wistfully to the Sacrament of the Supper, and there were moments when he appears to have doubted, if only transiently, the wisdom of his decision.

It is an interesting fact that among the Anglicans who showed a kindly attitude towards William Booth in the early 'eighties, were the greatest of her scholars, the most picturesque, if not the extremest, of her High Churchmen, and, in the person of Canon Liddon, the most eloquent of her preachers. Dr. Westcott and Dr. Lightfoot had words of encouragement for the Salvation Army; Dr. Benson,

then Bishop of Truro, and soon to be Archbishop of Canterbury, took pains to establish a friendly understanding with William Booth. The two men met, and corresponded with each other. Dr. Benson was impressed by General Booth's personality, and sought earnestly to gain from him a concession on this particular question of the Eucharist. The following letters will show the reader that while William Booth had expressed admiration for the Anglican Church, Dr. Benson applauded his decision not to celebrate the Sacraments. The concession which Dr. Benson sought to gain from General Booth was not granted, and in 1889 a correspondence took place on the same subject with a like result.

*The Bishop of Truro to General Booth.*

LOLLARD'S TOWER, LAMBETH PALACE,

May 24, 1882.

MY DEAR SIR — I should consider it a great favour if I might be allowed the opportunity of some conversation with you on practical subjects of religious work.

Dr. Westcott, Regius Professor of Divinity, at Cambridge, is also anxious to be allowed to hear your experience in such important matters.

May I venture to name twelve o'clock to-morrow as an hour at which we could call, with your kind permission, in Victoria Street.

I need scarcely express to you the interest with which your work in Cornwall inspires me.—Yours very faithfully, Dear Sir,

E. W. TRURON.

*The Bishop of Truro to General Booth.*

June 26, 1882.

MY DEAR SIR — I sincerely thank you for the very kind and friendly letter which I received from you on the subject of our conversation (for which I owe you most sincere thanks), and of the further considerations which have suggested themselves to you.

I have to thank you also for the account of the service which the Bishop of Bedford held with your people—a service of which I read the report with intense interest and satisfaction.

I need not assure you that I watch so large and special a work with anxious solicitude as well as interest. God has indeed in a marvellous way placed a multitude of souls under

your influence, and I pray often for your own spiritual peace, and that all may issue to God's growing glory among the masses.

It is indeed patent that an *Army* is not a whole *Kingdom* — that soldiers have citizens for their object and care — and that the building up of themselves as citizens is a duty which it is not safe for them to forget.

Nevertheless the state of Society is in many ways abnormal. In many districts the lowest classes have fallen into a condition resulting from many combined causes of neglect, and the devising of Christian remedies for that condition has exercised and severely tasked the energies of the most devoted sons of the Church.

However anxious, therefore, about different methods, the Church cannot but be thankful — even if it rejoices with trembling — to see your work avowedly based on principles which to so great an extent accord with her own first principles — thorough repentance — personal faith in a personal Saviour — holiness of life.

She herself has received through the Bible this system for the building up and building together of mankind, which recognises for this life, the power of the Sacraments of Christ; and she vividly experiences that power. It is for her impossible to feel that what I have called citizenship can be complete without them. At the same time, I am able to understand how the call you have to make to the dechristianised and degraded may be conducted by you without express teaching on those Institutions, and rejoice that you so firmly hold that it is no business or part of your own system to administer them. Here is to be recognised an immense difference between the Salvation Army and the sects which have adopted an imitation of the Sacramental system.

One thing I do look to with great anxiety — namely, that the Church people who follow with you — or others who, following with you, may desire to communicate in Church, should not be debarred by compulsory arrangements of your own from the partaking of the Communion with their brethren. This is surely not unreasonable, and applies also to those who belong to any Christian body, and is as reasonable for them as for us.

It is not that you should admit within your borders the celebration of sacraments, not that you should make *positive* arrangements for the communicating of your people, but that counter arrangements should *not* be made which would render their life of communion impossible.

In writing this, I can, of course, speak only as an individual. But I am sure you know that our intercourse is not "of guile," but "in simplicity of godly sincerity." — There is no worldly desire that "we should reap where we have not sown" or

“stretch ourselves into another man’s boundary.” I desire to appreciate and recognise what God works by you in those difficult regions of life. And you have assured me how much you value our working for the “edification of the Body of Christ.”

May all who have received a gift from the Lord, by prayer and sympathy and fellow-working, help on each the other’s grace; so that we may severally render in our account with joy for our service to Christ in His Body and His Spouse.—Believe me, my dear Sir, Your faithful servant in the Lord,

E. W. TRURON.

The decision of General Booth not to grant the concession suggested to him in so warm and kindly a spirit by Dr. Benson was arrived at, as we have said, after considerable discussion with Catherine Booth and Bramwell Booth and Railton. It was not so unreasonable as it may seem at the first glance. William Booth was not animated by the least feeling of animosity or antagonism to the Church of England; he was not even swayed, so far as I can discover, by the fear of any “Romanizing” influence. He reached his decision on the very logical ground of the Salvation Army’s essential unity. To grant the concession would have been to admit an incompleteness, a fragmentary character, in the message of the Salvation Army. He could not allow his converts to go to the Church for Holy Communion without making the destructive admission that the Salvation Army lacked an essential of salvation. His stand was definitely upon the central rock of conversion. Conversion was the *unum necessarium*, and after conversion there was nothing but a life of unselfish devotion.

Of all the many movements in the mind of this strange and troubled man, none strikes us so sharply and so illuminatingly as the movement towards this definite and binding rule—a rule made with an iron rigidity on the surface, made with an uncompromising forcefulness in public, but accompanied in the depths of his consciousness by an occasional disturbance and disquiet of uncertainty.

In an interview with Sir Henry Lunn, published in 1895, William Booth made the following statement on the question of the Sacraments:

“In the first place, we do not consider that the Sacraments

are essentials of salvation, and in this matter, as I know quite well, I have with me some of the most eminent members of the English Episcopal bench, who have admitted to me, in conversation, that they would never dare to say that a man who had not been baptized, and not received the Lord's Supper, could not enter Heaven. We hold that, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Faith, Hope, and Charity, with or without any formulæ or ceremonies, will carry a man into Heaven.

"Secondly. With reference to the question as to our Lord's intention to institute these as permanent ceremonies in the Church, we reply that there are other ordinances that are apparently commands of a similar character which the Church has universally agreed in not observing. The most striking example of that is the command to wash one another's feet. In the thirteenth chapter of St. John our Lord says, 'I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. If I your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye should also wash one another's feet.' We stand in relation to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper where the whole Church stands to-day in relation to many customs which were prevalent in the Apostolic days.

"Thirdly. We came into this position originally by determining not to be a Church. We did not wish to undertake the administration of the Sacraments, and thereby bring ourselves into collision with existing Churches.

"Fourthly. We were further driven to take up our present position by clergymen of the Church of England refusing to administer the rite to our Soldiers because they had not gone through the form of Confirmation. This created difficulties which seemed to me only to be solved by the declaration of my own conviction that these Sacraments were not essential to salvation.

"Fifthly. We have found the existing notions with reference to these ordinances seriously interfering with the inculcation of right views of penitence and holy living. Men and women are constantly in danger of putting their trust in ordinances, and thinking that baptized communicants must be in a secure position, no matter how inconsistently they are living. This leads us to say that as circumcision is nothing, so baptism is nothing — but the keeping the commandment of God. We attach great importance to that wonderful statement of John the Baptist, 'I indeed baptize you with water . . . but . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.'

"Sixthly. Moreover, I should like to emphasize the fact that this with us is not a settled question. We never declaim against the Sacraments; we never even state our own position. We are anxious not to destroy the confidence of Christian people in institutions which are helpful to them."



"Do you substitute anything," I asked the General, "for the Sacraments?"

"Only so far," he said, "as to urge our Soldiers in every meal they take to remember, as they break the bread, the broken body of our Lord, and as they drink the cup, His shed blood; and every time they wash the body to remember that the soul can only be cleansed by the purifying Blood of Christ."

"Your discipline is so very strong, General, that I should like to ask one or two other questions on this point. Would you be willing to sanction your Soldiers being baptized and partaking of the Lord's Supper if they desired?"

To this the General gave an unqualified answer in the affirmative.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### HOSTILITY, SUSPICION, AND OPPOSITION

1877-1881

IN the year 1880 General Booth described the Salvation Army in these words: "We are moral scavengers, netting the very sewers."

This impulse was purely evangelical; it did not become what is called humanitarian or economic till ten years later. At its beginning, the Salvation Army was a society of men and women which existed only to preach the repentance of sins. William Booth did not ask himself why moral scavengers were necessary; he did not ask of the State and of Society why humanity got itself into sewers; he saw multitudes of people perishing in a great darkness, and he set himself by every means in his power to rescue these myriad sinners from the destructive consequences of sin. "We want all we can get," was his cry in 1880, "but we want the lowest of the low."

In order to reach the bottommost multitude, as we have already seen, he adopted methods which were entirely foreign to the religious sphere. These methods, while they created for him an almost instantaneous popularity among people whose hearts were breaking for passion and intensity, brought him into immediate collision with the orthodox and the mob.

It can very easily be imagined that the methods of the Salvation Army would shock public taste; but no charge can be laid against William Booth on the score of failing to foresee this antagonism, since his first purpose was to shock, to startle, and arouse.

To a letter of criticism from Lady Cairns,<sup>1</sup> General Booth could rightfully base his reply on the success of his methods. "Why do not those," he asked, "whose criticisms, I fear, influence you, and hold back the heart and co-operation

<sup>1</sup> Wife of Earl Cairns, the then Lord Chancellor.

of other friends — why do not these who evidently understand so much better than we do how the work should be done, set to work and do it in their improved fashion? . . . Let them enter the great manufacturing towns or grapple with the rowdy classes of the cities or attack the godless crowds of poor Ireland. . . . Till they do this, and do it more successfully than does the Salvation Army, I do hope they will cease their efforts to draw off by their fears and suggestions the hearts and sympathies and co-operation of the few friends the Salvation Army possesses.”

But General Booth failed to realize that his methods, however successful with the poor and depressed, must certainly create an almost justifiable suspicion in the minds of those who knew nothing of his personal history. To thousands of people the man William Booth was only a name, and helped by rumour and slander that name very soon stood for those things that were hateful and noxious in their idea of religion — for quackery, imposture, and cant.

To those acquainted with his history, and of course to those who knew him personally, this hatred of the public was both cruel and inexplicable. But the public knew nothing of his early preaching in the streets of Nottingham, knew nothing of his revival services as a Wesleyan, knew nothing of his long struggle to work loyally with a regular Church; and they knew nothing of his superb honesty, his heroic courage under physical suffering, his noble devotion to his wife and children, his burning sympathy with the poor and depressed. To them the man had sprung up suddenly, without background and without roots; there he was, for the world's coarse thumb and finger — a middle-aged tub-thumper, a brazen-faced charlatan, a pious rogue, a masquerading hypocrite, a cunning scoundrel. What was his object? Money — the object of every man. Why did he dress up in a uniform and order a band to play in front of him? To attract fools — like a clever cheap Jack. What happened in those precious prayer-meetings and holiness meetings? Better not ask; hysterical religion drags the soul into a veritable pit of iniquity.

It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the gross slanders

that were circulated concerning General Booth in the early days of the Salvation Army; when the history of the Salvation Army comes to be written and the story of those early days is told in full, men will be amazed by the dreadful nature of these calumnies. But we are inclined to insist, in writing the narrative of General Booth's life, that there was some excuse for the world's antagonism, some justification for the mob's suspicion of his honesty. We do not take the view, even when we assert that his purpose was to startle and shock, even when we emphasize his determination to reach the masses at all costs, that William Booth possessed those qualities which immediately disarm suspicion and immediately create a feeling of devoted confidence. Those qualities he did possess, we think, in his early days, and they existed for all those who knew him intimately to the end of his life; but in the 'eighties he was a public man conscious of difficulties, a Pope Frankenstein bewildered by the Monster Church of his creation, an elderly statesman who looked ahead and who knew the danger, without appreciating the enormous value, of his headstrong and impulsive nature.

He was not by any means an entirely confident and always rejoicing General. Much of the confidence of those early days seems to have sprung from Bramwell Booth and Railton — younger men, who had caught the passion of his idea with the souls of youth and the almost laughing gallantry of adventure. When the General was disturbed by criticism, they rubbed their hands and rejoiced at "a good advertisement." Where the General appeared to lead and to thunder challenges, one finds these men at his back, urging him forward, sometimes putting the very words into his mouth. It is not too much to say that the Salvation Army would never have spread so immediately over the world, and never so violently have aroused the animosity of the Churches and the mob, if William Booth had relied solely upon his own judgment. There was a strange and often really charming diffidence about the man, a shrinking from anything in the nature of self-aggrandisement, a real loathing of public parades, and as real a love of quiet, privacy, and repose. He objected to the title of "Gen-



A CARTOON PUBLISHED IN *VANITY FAIR* (1882)





eral," for example, and had to be persuaded by others to use it publicly for the good of the Army. The first printed note-paper of the Salvation Army bore the words, "General William Booth," and on receiving a sheet of it he drew a circle round the word "General," placing it after his name, and writing above it, to Bramwell Booth, "Can't this form be altered? It looks *pretentious*." He was a man carried along on wheels which he himself had set in motion, but whose momentum he had not clearly foreseen.

While it is important to realize this element of caution in his character, it is also important to bear in mind that he exercised despotic powers and was jealous of any encroachment on them. Even the well-beloved son, who was perhaps the only man in the Army able to confront the wrath of the General, frequently found himself called over the coals. Unwilling to announce himself publicly as "The General," William Booth was in no doubt as to his generalship. He ruled, and he ruled like an autocrat, suffering no one to neglect his decisions; but in looking ahead, in legislating for the future, in meeting a crisis, he was more than ready to confer with his wife, his son, and his first Commissioner.

Bramwell Booth describes his father at this period as *watching* the movement. William Booth was convinced of one thing, that the movement was not a mission, but an army. He said frequently at this time: "We have not set up a new sect; we have raised an army, we are making a force"; and his anxiety was so great for this new thing in religious life that he felt the necessity of watching it. Quite by an accident the Salvation Army was established first in America and then in Australia. Commissioner Railton was enthusiastic about these developments, but it was some time before the General ventured to send Officers out of England to claim and unify his foreign detachments. He was quite as headlong and courageous as the others when a step was once taken, but it was in no headlong spirit that he arrived at any decision which involved fresh action.

Public antagonism troubled Mrs. Booth deeply, but chiefly because it came from religious people. General Booth himself was not greatly disturbed by these attacks;

but, on the other hand, he was not inclined to treat them so light-heartedly as his son treated them. In the letters which follow it will be seen that here and there practices of the Salvation Army annoyed him, and that he set his face against tactics which gave the enemy a handle for criticism. He was watching the movement, and he saw difficulties and dangers. To challenge the world was right and necessary, but to annoy the world was foolish and hazardous.

We are disposed, on the whole, to think that the public of that period might be forgiven for their suspicion and dislike of the Salvation Army. The thing was not only new, but violently new; and the history of the man who had brought this violently new thing into being was quite unknown. It was never understood by the public that the Salvation Army was the work of a man who from his very youth had hungered and thirsted to reach the masses with the Message of the Cross. To half the public he was a seeker of notoriety; to the other half, an impostor lining his own purse. And it may be said at once that some of the devices adopted by his first converts — devices of which he disapproved when he came to hear of them — was such as to scandalize judicious opinion.

The main fault of the public, as we see the matter, lay first in the eagerness with which it listened to slander; second, in its stupid unwillingness to understand the cause and significance of a movement which, with all its faults, was at least making for righteousness. But whether the public was to blame, or whether General Booth might have done something more effective to explain his purpose to the world, certain is it that the Army came into sharp and dangerous collision with public opinion, and it is this historical fact which the reader must bear in mind when following the story of these years. The Salvation Army discovered a devil in England, and the brutality with which it was assailed by the mob, and the venomous attacks which it encountered from many orthodox religious people, are phenomena of the times which seem to justify William Booth in his effort to Christianize the country at almost any cost.

The first letters are addressed to his son, Bramwell Booth, and begin with the year 1877:

272 WHITECHAPEL RD.,

7/3/77.

. . . I spent most of my time trying to take the conceit out of —, and succeeded a little, I hope. He is a dear good fellow, but capable of doing six times as much good as he is doing. Of course I can't forget that I have changed *myself* very much the last few months and look on things quite differently; indeed, I have gone back to where I started.

I worked hard on Sunday and did it with ease, and I am persuaded did ten times the good I should have done if I had simply preached and done all the business myself.

Ours is the co-operative plan, and the main idea should be to make the most we can of every man. People have 100 times the interest in a meeting in which they do something themselves. Now at Portsmouth I saw clearly that the talking outside and in was done by some six or nine persons over and over again. I got a Soldier baptized and blessed and he spoke with more influence *than any of them*, and he will make a fine intelligent fellow. There is a Mrs. C—— there who got very much blessed; she is a magnificent woman, capable of doing any amount of work and doing it far more effectually than either — or —, only wants leading. The lot speak *too long*, five minutes is plenty; this, with sharp singing and remarks of faith, etc., thrown in from a *spirited* leader who moves and lifts, will set any Mission Congregation on a flame. Then by dropping sharp into a P.M. [prayer-meeting] you will catch something, and you, the leader, are comparatively fresh for talking as needed through the night. . . . I don't say give up preaching; no! no! no! I preached all the time. . . . But you must have a *leader* and you must have a band of men who are "*alive*." Of course a sentimental, dead affair like Hastings came to be contemptible.

The philosophy of success is "*live*" meetings.—Let us have them. Give up the *Shopkeepers* and *Methodists* and trust the VULGAR CROWD. Let us pour contempt on our "ministerial helpers" and mend or end them.

I enclose —'s letters. I wrote him very plainly indeed, and told him the only way in which he could walk in harmony with me was in *carrying out my wishes*, and I told him I doubted him, because I had heard of his magic-lantern entertainment, and that was being off my lines. . . . Of course I have, as I said before, winked at and admitted a lot of this Chapel business, and now all at once I pour contempt on it and insist on its stopping; the men are a little amazed. . . .

19/3/77.

. . . I did not go out afternoon. R. did and got a nasty crack on his bare head with a heavy stone. . . .

. . . You can announce him with confidence. Dog-trainer, not fighter; has kept a brothel and public.

. . . I am inquiring for an American watch. The *American meat* is so first-rate I want to try the watches.

. . . But alas we have all our men to make over again, aye, and women too. . . . I never saw in any place such a congregation as we have had at Whitechapel — except when drawn in by loaves and fishes.

In 1878 he writes to the same son:

. . . Take care of yourself for my sake and my love for you. I can understand how that king never smiled again when he lost his son. What should I do if I lost my prince?

May 13, 1878.

. . . I am pleased with Merthyr. But the Hall-Keeper was full of the devil yesterday, would not let us have enough forms for the afternoon, and the confusion knocked me *clean* off — I could not preach. If it had been you, you would have concluded you were not called, and given up; but I spat on my hands and went at it again at night. It is a wonderful work and has stirred the whole town.

. . . Hold on, my boy. Wherever I follow you I find you have left blessing behind you, and people's eyes glisten at the hope of seeing and hearing you again.

Mar. 16, 1877.

I wish we did not do so many *silly* things. I think I see a great difference between *manly, natural, bold, daring action* and *WEAK, frivolous, childish COMICALITY*.

This is perhaps as valuable an extract as can be found in all his letters of that period. He was then full of energy and courage and direction; he was not yet overawed by the immense popularity of the Army; he had not yet come face to face with the bitter and brutal opposition of the mob; he was not watching — he was leading. And here, at the threshold of his crusade, the vigorous common sense of the man declares against "silly things," against anything which is merely "weak, frivolous, childish comicality," while he insists upon the rightness of "manly, natural, bold, daring action."



A letter from Commissioner Railton to the Chief of the Staff, dated March, 1879, shows rather amusingly that the Army has not yet by any means perfected its organization. He speaks of some one whose accounts ought to be seen into, and speaks of another Officer who wishes to hand over money and settle accounts, but who cannot get attention from Headquarters. "Says he, 'It's a temptation to a fellow when he wants trousers.'"

Many of the Officers, we may say, were working for a wage of sixteen shillings a week, enduring with the utmost cheerfulness very great privations, and conducting campaigns in the worst quarters of crowded cities with a courage difficult to overpraise. There is no doubt that General Booth's appreciation of this wonderful devotion helped him to take an indulgent view of extravagances which, while they gained attention, undoubtedly made enemies for the Salvation Army.

In 1879 trouble began seriously to manifest itself from the mob. In June of that year the General writes to Railton and his son:

Things came to a crisis yesterday. Roughts climbed back-walls, opened doors, filled up and took possession. Tucker closed after he lost command, but they would not go — shook the gallery front, shied the hat-rails, top of pews, and book-boards, etc., about. Police refused to come in. Tucker & Co. cleared the centre of bottom themselves, by which time a Superintendent with a force arrived and the rest cleared out. It was awful. Brydel was struck — one man in custody for this and another for a drunken pitch in our Saturday. Tucker hurried back to appear. Our lot are thoroughly cowed, lay and cleric. Lassies are afraid of open air, our lads want to be removed — machine no use — Tucker feels himself alone.

A lot of filthy half-drunk fellows came on purpose to make a row. . . . We ought to try and make Paton help us. Two constables inside would do it; as it is, the constables openly encourage the roughs to resist. . . . Who could help us? Our friends, unfortunately for this job, are all LIBERALS.

But he has glimpses of patronage and popularity. From Wick Hall, Brighton, he writes to his boys in October, 1879:

We got here. A mansion. First-class style. For the sake

of the Army and the souls of the people I sat fully one hour and a half over 12 courses of dinner with half a dozen worldly, godless people! The major did not dine with us, and hoped we should be useful to his poor relatives, one a captain and the other a "Vicar" over 70 with a young wife not more than 27. I tried to talk — but, oh! —

The two gents are out hunting this morning.

. . . The major gave me £30 this morning to go on with. He said we can't carry on without plenty of powder. I had already informed him of that fact.

Trouble arose over the printing of the first issue of *The War Cry*, and the General was by no means enamoured of his first efforts as a printer. He writes to Mr. Railton in December, 1879:

. . . We have had a lot of perplexities. Last night, nearly 11, after varied attempts to print we condemned engine as being utterly useless and machine's only value old iron. After frantic efforts all day had not got over 200 readable papers off her. Bramwell wrote Cooke to say she would not print and recommended them at once to send their man to see her, and everybody gave her up. I could not see this myself. On Saturday morning I felt bad enough about her, but now it simply seemed to me a question of *power* in the engine and *detail* in the machine, and I think it will prove so. She is now printing 1,400 per hour very fairly I hear — last night she did two and tore up 3, and 2 more and then *stopped!*

Six days later he writes to the same correspondent:

. . . I can do little here but see people and advise and get snatches of time for *The War Cry*. You can form no idea of the endless difficulties of this paper — that is, of the first issue. I never want to see such a week again as last over such a subordinate matter. It may not prove a subordinate matter, but I hear little about it at present to make me think any one else attaches much importance to it.

But real trouble for the Salvation Army began next year, and sprang from the opposition of certain leaders of the Church as well as the enmity of the mob. The first note of definite oppugnance was sounded by the Bishop of Carlisle (Dr. Goodwin), who preached, in October, 1880, a powerful but somewhat ill-natured sermon of uncompromising condemnation on the subject of Army tactics. In

a letter to Mr. Henry Reed, written from Keswick, the General refers to this attack:

I have been very poorly since we came, my old enemy, the slow ague-fever, having been on me for a fortnight. All through the meetings I spoke with a mouth so ulcerated that every movement of the tongue gave pain, and the last three days I have hardly stood on my feet. I am however a little better to-day and hope soon to be myself again.

The Lord Bishop of Carlisle preached against us on Sunday morning last, in the Cathedral there, from 1 Cor. xiv. 33 and 34. He founded on the newspaper reports of our proceedings during the last week and pitched into us pretty straight. I propose that Mrs. Booth answers the Sermon next week. Not to scold him, but to defend and explain. It will make us friends.<sup>1</sup>

But these attacks do not hurt us. They do not affect us even where it might be expected. I have just met in the street the Curate of this place, who knew me, having been at our Holiness Meetings at Whitechapel; in conversation he said how much the Rector here, Canon Battersby, would like to see me, for he had heard him the other night defending us to some clergymen who had taken up the attack of the Bishop.

More serious than episcopal condemnations was the disposition of the mob; and more serious than the disposition of the mob was the attitude of the police towards these law-breakers. Towards the end of 1880 disturbances were a common occurrence, and early in 1881 the General was obliged to make a vigorous protest to the Metropolitan police authorities:

*March 16, 1881.*

SIR — Mr. Morley<sup>2</sup> has shown us your letter of the 26th January, and we had already discontinued the use of instruments in the open-air meetings in London, according to your previous request sent direct to me.

I very much regret to say that although there has been considerable improvement in nearly all our stations since Christmas on account of the changed attitude of the police, now matters are getting worse again.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Booth's answer was a very clever and even brilliant effort, full of good humour, and only occasionally marred by inappropriate satire. She lectured to an immense audience in Carlisle, and her address was printed and circulated far and wide, making many new friends for the Army.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Morley, then editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette*.

The gangs of roughs referred to in my memorandum dated December the 22nd are now again allowed to congregate. Here, for instance, the last two evenings there have been the most disgraceful scenes, windows have been broken and the meetings upset.

P.C. 127 H. used the most disgusting language here on Wednesday night, and of this I complained to the superintendent, Arnold; as however he did not take any steps to prevent a repetition of the same thing last night, I am compelled to write you.

In view of the communications which have already passed both directly and indirectly between us, I suggest that you make an appointment to see me. I think that an interview might result in arranging for a course which would be mutually satisfactory, as I feel quite sure that we both have in a great measure the same end in view. Could you see me to-day? — Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM BOOTH.

Colonel Sir E. Henderson,  
Whitehall.

Later in the year, the General telegraphs to Mr. Gladstone and addresses an indignant letter to the Home Secretary:

12/10/1881.

From William Booth,  
101 Queen Victoria Street,  
London, E.C.

To Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone,  
Downing Street,  
London.

Unless something is done immediately to neutralize the effect of the Home Secretary's letter to Stamford, which is already the war-cry of the roughs everywhere, there will be riot and bloodshed all over the land. I am sure you would not willingly assist in inflicting suffering on men and women who will not defend themselves. Beg you read letter which I send by hand or command me to an interview.

To the Home Secretary he wrote as follows on the 10th October, 1881:

SIR — I observe with some surprise that you have written to the Mayor of Stamford in reply to some communication from him with reference to the Salvation Army in that town.

I beg to inform you that no one connected with this Army has ever yet been sent to Stamford. The Salvation Army is not in Stamford.

But this incident affords me a sufficient opportunity to point out to you the real cause of all the disturbances that are complained of. There is no town in this country where any considerable number of ratepayers would approve of any inter-

ference with our processions were it not for the violence used against us and consequent breach of the public peace.

And from whom comes that violence? Very rarely indeed from any but roughs or corner-men who would not dare to touch us were there not conveyed to them first of all an assurance that they may do as they like to us with impunity. There has never been a breach of the peace where the authorities have made it plainly understood that assault upon us will be treated as assaults upon any other people.

Those who are on the watch for an opportunity to gratify their tastes for violence are never slow to observe the attitude of authorities, even of individual policemen, and such proclamations as we suggest or any intimations of opposition to our movements which comes from the Bench, the Police-station, or even the lips of any Constable, are sure to be followed by breaches of the peace no matter whether we march in procession or not.

But it is upon the lives and property and persons in no way connected with the Army that the full force of mobs thus encouraged will sooner or later vent itself. Let the story of Basingstoke indicate what may be expected within a few weeks of the authorities' interference with our liberties; convicts are brought home from Winchester in a carriage, feasted in the Corn Exchange, and Magistrates' houses attacked. . . .

Who will be most affected by all this? Certainly not the Salvation Army, which I am happy to say has only gained more wherever this lawless spirit has been encouraged against them.

Our women as well as our men are able and willing to bear without retaliation all the stoning, pushing, beating, kicking, or other force that may be used against them with or without your advice. We have a stronger force than the authorities of any town can ever be able to bring against us, and sooner or later the force of public opinion will visit well-merited chastisement, a notorious fact, admitted by the Police in many localities as well as by Clergymen of all denominations that we are gathering together great congregations of such persons, and that the lives of very many are consequently being reformed. It is not against a Society which is labouring, and labouring successfully and self-sacrificingly, to benefit the criminal classes that local authorities should be directed how best to employ "force."

—Yours faithfully,

(Signed)

WILLIAM BOOTH.

The Mayor of Basingstoke, a brewer, professed himself unable to protect the Salvation Army in that town from the attacks of a mob organized and intoxicated, it is alleged,



by the local publicans. It needed a reprimand from the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt, to bring the authorities to their senses.

"Skeleton Armies," as they were called, sprang up in various towns and set themselves to break up the processions of the Salvation Army. Disturbances of this kind became frequent and serious, and in Weston-super-Mare a Salvationist was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for causing a riot — a sentence subsequently quashed in the Court of Queen's Bench.

But the country was stirred, and the Salvation Army — attacking the Drink Question and rescuing men and women from the ruin of the tavern — incurred everywhere the wrath of the brewing industry. Riots and disturbances of a violent kind were inevitable.

Such was the state of affairs in 1881. On the one side was a cold and critical condemnation by certain religious people; on the other, a brutal disposition of something more than horse-play in the degenerate mob of cities and towns. But more trying things than these were to befall the Salvation Army in the coming years.

END OF VOL. I







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