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BRINGING IN SHEAVES
By Absalom Backus Earle

Tenth Thousand

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS DIGITAL EDITION

A. B. (Absalom Backus) Earle was both a sanctified holiness advocate, and a Baptist. As the latter, he was also apparently a Calvinist. The fragrance of his sanctified spirit pervades this publication, and, sorry to say, there are also in it some tell-tale signs of his Baptist-Calvinistic persuasions. I have placed notations of refutation or warning in some places where the latter are found. Still, while we do not endorse A. B. Earle's Calvinistic beliefs, the Christlike spirit that shines through the whole of this work, and the final chapter on the second work of grace, "The Rest of Faith," make this work one which can prove to be a real blessing to those who are firmly grounded in the truth of second-blessing holiness. Our advice then, is that those who read this work

do so with discretion, casting away that which smacks of any Calvinistic error, while receiving the authors scriptural truths about "The Rest of Faith".

A PICTURE OF A. B. EARLE is included with this publication as hdm0636.jpg. It can be viewed in any program capable of displaying JPEG graphics. However, you may need to change the graphics filter setting to *.jpg, or whatever setting enables the program to display JPEG graphics. -- DVM

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To All
Whose Prayer Is,
"O Lord, Revive Thy Work,"
This Book
Is Affectionately Inscribed
By The Author.

* * * * *

PREFACE

The publication of this volume has been urged upon me by ministers and laymen of different denominations, for a number of years past, as a duty I owe to the cause of Christ. Among the requests for such a work, one came to me, some ten years ago, signed by nearly two hundred persons.

But, while I have believed that such a work might be useful, it has, until recently, seemed inadvisable for me to undertake it, as there appeared to be no way of doing so without turning aside from my loved and appointed work as an evangelist, which I was unwilling to do so long as strength was given me to preach to perishing men.

A few months since, however, the way seemed opened: My sons, having finished their college course, were in a situation, before entering upon their chosen avocations, to assist me in preparing the work. Accordingly, when they had rested for a season from the fatigue of study, and myself from the exhaustion and weariness of my Pacific tour, the book was commenced, and has been carried forward as rapidly as possible under the circumstances. I have only been able to work on it at intervals, as I have found here and there a spare hour, until my return home in June, for a season of rest from constant preaching.

In all the variety of matter and subjects which have been presented, the principal aim has been to answer the question that Christians are everywhere asking, -- "How are we to labor the most successfully to promote revivals of religion?"

I have endeavored clearly to present my own experience and observation in revivals; and in these I think will be found the means which God has appointed and signally blessed in the

quickenings of his people and the conversion of souls -- means which I have always, I believe without a single exception, seen blessed to the renewing of God's work.

I have given no system of rules, or set of measures, to be used in revivals, as I know of none.

Perhaps my views can most clearly and fully be learned from Chapter 1, and the sermons on "Faith" and "Joy Restored."

The chapters of "Revival Gleanings" give some idea of the character and results of meetings in which these means have been employed, although they come far short of the reality.

Had the accounts of these meetings been fuller, they, perhaps, would have been more satisfactory; still I trust they will not be entirely wanting in interest, and above all in power to do good. The selection and arrangement of them have not been according to the order of time or importance of locality, although, generally, the more recent have been mentioned, because they were most readily remembered.

The chapter on the "Rest of Faith," I can but believe will, in some measure at least, meet the earnest desire of the Christian world in helping believers reach that state of union with Christ in which they can more fully honor him, and labor with greater success in his cause.

I submit it to the careful and prayerful consideration of all, with the hope that it may prove, as in my own case, the balm for wounded hearts and the rest for weary souls.

The book contains "opinions of pastors," and personal allusions and letters which would be wholly out of place but for the purpose I have had of deepening through them the conviction of the need and importance of evangelistic labor; not on my own account, for my reception and the confidence [that has been shown] in me have been all that any man could desire, but because I want to see men who have the necessary qualifications entering this department of ministerial labor. A great field lies open, and the demand for laborers is great; prejudice is rapidly melting away; pastors feel that they are in want of just such help.

A few sermons are given because I am so often asked for them. Many persons come to me, and say, in reference to this or that sermon, "I was greatly benefited by it: can I not obtain it?"

The book was not designed to tell what I have done: far from me be such a folly; and farther still that of taking to myself credit of results in the accomplishment of which I have only been God's instrument.

To those who are unknown to me the book comes with the hope, deep in my heart, that it may be to them a source of comfort and strength; to those with whom I have been associated it comes as the letter of a friend, filled with tender regard and sympathy, and an earnest desire and prayer that they may be rejoiced and blessed as they read its pages, -- and to all with the hope that, by and by, when the battle is fought, and the victory won, we may meet in the "better country," and

sit down with "Christ's whole family," never to part again. O, will one be left out? Will a single reader of this book go away upon the left hand of the Judge, down to the night of endless despair?

May the messages spoken in weakness be made the power of God unto salvation to every one who reads these pages! My earnest prayer is, that the book may accomplish its simple purpose, and prove itself a Revival Help.

A. B. Earle
Newton, Massachusetts,
August, 1868

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Chapter 1

HOW CAN I BEST PROMOTE A REVIVAL?

Many pastors, who have been unable to secure the needed help in holding a series of meetings, write me, requesting an answer to this question: "How can I best promote a revival of religion?" Others, with whom I meet, are saying, "It has been many years since we have had a revival in our town, and I am half discouraged -- I know not what to do."

Frequently the remark is made, "Our congregation is small, and but little interest is manifest in the subject of religion; if you can come, do not be in a hurry to leave us -- this is a very hard field."

For these and all other laborers who desire to know my views concerning the best means of promoting revivals of religion, and with whom I cannot converse in person, the thoughts, in this brief chapter, are specially written.

A revival of religion, like a fire, must begin somewhere: "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

A fire often begins with a little match, and works its way through the combustible material about it until it has swept over a wide region. The great fire in Portland originated with a fire-cracker. So a work of grace often commences with a single Christian -- never with the whole church. As soon as that one Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit, he goes after others, to lead them to the Savior, or to induce believers to join him in efforts for a revival. Jesus fulfills his promise, "Lo, I am with you;" and others are soon moved and melted, and the work begins to widen.

So that whoever would promote a revival of religion should begin with his own heart, and pray, and confess, and believe, until he feels his heart all subdued and melted by the Holy Spirit, -- until his love to Christ is glowing, fervid, burning, -- and until he finds himself groaning over the lost condition of men, and, like Jesus, being in an agony prays more earnestly.

Then, when his heart is in this state, let him get a few, if he cannot many, to join him in special prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit. Let that little company hold on in united, persistent prayer, "nothing wavering," until the windows of heaven are opened.

The disciples at Jerusalem continued in prayer about ten days, before they received the promised power from on high. It does not appear that the meeting, with so many ministers in attendance, attracted much attention, until the disciples were fully anointed, and filled with the Spirit.

They could have accomplished but little had they preached and labored without this preparation; but as soon as it was received, the multitude were drawn to the place in great numbers, and were confounded when they saw the power that rested on those Galileans; a new power attended their preaching. This work commenced with those believers, and spread with great rapidity all over the country.

So it must be with all who would labor successfully in leading souls to Christ: they must tarry at Jesus' feet until they have power with God; then they will have power with men. The gift there received will be with them wherever they go, diffusing its sweet and holy influence, and God's work will be revived, and sinners converted.

I have observed, for nearly forty years past, that the secret of success in promoting revivals of religion is in having our own hearts filled with the Holy Spirit.

It is not enough for those of us who preach, that our sermons be able, sound, and well delivered, or that we preach what are sometimes called revival sermons, and that we also visit and converse with men about their souls' interest. It is not enough that the church be aroused and go to work actively for a revival: all this can be done, and but few souls be saved. Nothing can be a substitute for real "power from on high." No amount of study or talent, no effort, however untiring, can take the place of the fullness of Christ's love; "Not by might, nor by power [human], but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

I have known ministers to preach, and their churches to unite with them, day after day, for weeks together, for a revival, and yet very little to be accomplished.

The failure was not because the Spirit was unwilling to work with them and bless their efforts, nor because a continued meeting is not of divine appointment, but because they had not the needed power with God.

I am often invited to assist pastors and churches in a series of meetings, with a view of gathering in the multitudes, "who are unreached by the ordinary means of grace." Important as it is to reach this class, I have never found any way of doing so, or of reaching the unconverted in the regular congregations, until Christians were filled with the Spirit, and humbled in the dust in agonizing prayer.

The multitudes flock to the house of God, when Christ's children enjoy the fullness of his love, and no more complaint is heard about small congregations, and little interest in the subject of religion. For this reason, it is usually quite as well to commence a series of meetings with a small assembly, and in unpleasant weather; since, under such circumstances, the church -- at least some portion of it -- will be more likely to get fully into the work, and have power with God, than when the congregations are crowded, and the surroundings more promising.

So clear has this point been to my own mind for years, I have said to the pastors and churches with whom I have been called to labor, that, if there was not a revival of religion, I should not complain of the church, but take the blame mostly to myself, believing that if I am right and have power with God, others will feel that power, and sinners will be converted: there will be a revival.

Let me say, then, to pastors and to the churches: If you believe the glory of God demands a revival in your midst, and you desire to be instrumental in advancing the work and bringing sinners to the Savior, first see that your own hearts are thoroughly melted and subdued, under a deep sense of the condition of lost men, and that you are filled with the Spirit and constrained by the love of Christ; then get a few, if you cannot more, to meet with you, and pray with and for one another, until, like those who prayed with Peter and John, you are all filled with the Holy Spirit: then expect a powerful revival of religion. Barnabas was "a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith," and, as a result, "much people was added unto the Lord." Do not seek to produce an undue excitement in the community, neither be afraid of as much interest as was manifest among the people on the day of Pentecost.

In your prayer meetings have a definite object in view. If you desire an immediate outpouring of the Spirit, ask God for that; if the fullness of his love in your hearts, let that be the burden of your prayer; if the conversion of a friend, agonize for that: whatever you desire, look for it at once. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." If you would have a great blessing, ask for it in faith, in Jesus' name. The Father has nothing too good or great to give for his Son's sake. Jesus is the pledge of all that Infinite Love can bestow, or that we can receive. "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

If, in your judgment, you need some one to assist you for a few days or weeks, secure such aid, but do not rely on any human arm; make any special efforts you think needed, but rely chiefly on having power with God in prayer yourself. Human instrumentalities must be employed in the conversion of sinners, but the excellency of the power is of God.

One of the divinely appointed means for promoting revivals of religion, is, at suitable times, to hold a series of meetings for days or weeks together.

Among the other departments of ministerial labor, the Savior appointed evangelists to assist in these meetings, whenever and wherever they might be needed.

In the days of Nehemiah, we find Ezra, the priest, on a pulpit of wood, which had been made for the occasion, engaged in a series of meetings, which continued for many days. Ezra and those who assisted him read and explained the word of God one fourth part of the day, and spent another fourth in prayer and confession of sin; in this way they continued the meeting until there was a great revival of religion among them, and a marked reform in their habits and manner of living. Neh. 8-9

The apostles also, after Christ's ascension, held a meeting about ten days, with a large number of ministers present. "These all continued, with one accord [day by day], in prayer and supplication with the women," until the Spirit was poured out upon them, and they received the promised power from on high. Then they were ready for a larger congregation; and the multitudes were quickly attracted to the place, and the displays of grace were so marvelous, and the conversions so numerous, that there was an addition to the church, on a single day of the meeting, of about three thousand new members.

Let me, then, again say to all Christians who desire and labor for the conversion of souls: First, be right yourself; spend days and nights, if necessary, in humiliation, fasting, and prayer, until the Spirit comes down upon you, and you feel that you have power with God; then you will have power with men in leading them to Christ.

Let none of us, who proclaim the gospel, preach complaining, scolding sermons, or make unkind remarks about those who differ with us, or who do not come up to the work as we would have them. Let the melting, subduing love of Christ flow from our hearts and lips; the unconverted will then begin to cry out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and we shall find ourselves in the midst of a glorious outpouring of the Spirit, with a host of busy hands and loving hearts about us, reaping and bringing in the sheaves, and with no more need of asking, "How can I best promote a revival?"

* * * * *

Chapter 2

FAITH

(A sermon preached in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1863)

"Have faith in God." -- Mark xi. 22

Faith is a persuasion of the mind, resting upon evidence.

Faith must have a basis to rest upon; we cannot have faith in the absence of evidence. God never asks any one to believe anything without furnishing a basis for that belief. Does he ask us to believe in his own existence? He opens the great volume of nature, and bids us look up. Does he require us to receive the Scriptures as divinely inspired? They bear in themselves the evidence of their divine origin. Does he bid us come to him in prayer? He furnishes us with daily answers to prayer.

Some persons have faith in appearances; that is, they believe they are going to have a revival of religion, because there is a general solemnity and seriousness in the community. This is not faith in God, but in appearances: withdraw these indications, and faith has nothing to rest upon. To true faith in God the darkness and the light are both alike.

We hear others say they have faith to believe they would have a glorious revival, could they secure the labors of a favorite minister: this is faith in a minister or measure, not in God. Get your minister, if in your judgment he would do you good, but let your faith anchor in God and His promises.

As faith must have a basis to rest upon, let us see what ground we have to expect an immediate revival of religion, and souls to be converted to God, if we go on with this meeting, and preach, and pray, and exhort, and sing, and visit.

1. God appointed these means to effect this end.

God, who cannot make a mistake, and who knows all about the difficulties to be overcome in a dark, cold time, bids us go and preach, pray, exhort, and sing, in simple faith, and he will bless.

No matter how dark, or cold, or dead, -- we are to look for an immediate outpouring of the Spirit, in the use of these means. I have come to believe that God means just what he says in his word, and I expect an outpouring of the Spirit whenever and wherever the means are used in faith.

If God had told me to go into your graveyard and sing "Old Hundred" among the graves, and that by this means the dead would be raised, I would come to one and another of you, and ask if you had any friends in that graveyard; and if so, to get ready to receive them -- they were going to be raised. Perhaps you would ask me, "Can you raise the dead?" I should answer, "Not at all but

God has sent me to sing 'Old Hundred' among the graves, and says through this means he will raise the dead." I should expect to see the graves open, and the dead come forth. My faith would not rest in any power of yours or mine, but in the fact that God appointed this means to effect this end.

Just so when Jesus says, "Go preach my word, and, lo! I am with you, and will pour out my Spirit upon you," we should expect him to do it. I do expect it; I have not one fear but that we shall have a glorious result, if we use these means in faith in this place.

Moses had faith in God, when he lifted the brazen serpent to the bitten Israelites; his faith was not in the piece of brass, nor in his own power to heal, but in the fact that God had appointed that piece of brass thereby to make his power known. As Moses lifted that piece of brass in the wilderness, so must Jesus be lifted to the view of lost men.

We can have faith in God, in using these means, then, because he appointed them to effect this end.

2. Another strong ground for faith in God, in using these means, to expect an immediate revival of religion, is, that God's heart and hand are in this work.

God felt so deeply for the salvation of souls, before we cared anything about it, that he gave his own Son to die for them.

"This was compassion like a God,
That, when the Savior knew
The price of pardon was his blood,
His pity ne'er withdrew."

God sees the end from the beginning, and tries no experiment -- has all necessary resources of providence and grace; so that we can follow where he leads, with unwavering faith.

How often does some providence occur, that is made the means of a powerful work of grace. In one part of Maine, nine churches united in asking me to assist them in a series of union meetings but before I reached the place, death had taken one of the pastors, almost instantly, out of the world. This pastor had drawn off the names of more than twenty persons, whom he was going to seek, at once, to bring to the Saviour. One day, with these names in his pocket, he went to the Post Office, and died before reaching his home again. The effect was so great upon his congregation and the community, that it was necessary to commence meetings at once; and, when I reached the place, more than a hundred persons were anxious about their souls.

While I was holding a series of meetings in _____, N. Y., one evening a lady was passing near the church door, and one of the sisters asked her to come in, saying, "We are having good meetings here; quite a revival has commenced, and I would like to have you attend some of these interesting services." The lady replied, "Do you think I would go into such a meeting -- a revival meeting? No, never!" This lady went off home, scorning the meeting and religion. A day or two after this she was passing that church door again while the congregation was singing one of their sweet revival hymns. The notes went through the open door and reached her ear. She paused, and

said, "That sounds good." The same sister who had invited her in before, again at the door, said "Come in and hear more." She replied, I am too proud to sit down in a meetinghouse, unless I can own a seat." The sister told her she might have their seat, which could be emptied for her at once. This was done, and the lady spent the rest of the evening in our meeting; her heart was deeply moved. Within one short week this lady and her husband were both rejoicing in a Savior's love. Very soon both united with that church. So we see that God here blessed the songs of praise to the salvation of souls.

One of the greatest victories ever won by Jehoshaphat was won by singing: "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth forever. And when they began to sing and praise (their enemies) were smitten." 2 Chron. 20:21, 22

We find, then, its in all ages, God blessed his people when they sang his praise.

I would urge all who desire to promote revivals of religion, and to lead men to Jesus, to have the best singing you can in all your meetings. Sing with life and spirit. God appointed singing, and will bless it. Have faith in God.

How often we see a whole community moved by the power of a little prayer-meeting. Peter was brought out of prison, while the church were praying in the house of Mary, the mother of John.

"Prayer is appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give."

Let the "nothing wavering" prayer be offered, and it cannot fail.

Have faith in God when you pray, for he appointed these means to effect this end.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; " but let it be done in faith.

3. God has always blessed these means, when they have been used in faith.

None ever knew a failure, except when faith was lacking.

The walls of Jericho fell down after they had been compassed about in faith; yet I presume many of those who went round those walls, like many church members now, had no faith in God, but marched with those that had.

God honors all the faith he finds in his people. I would advise all to use what faith they have, for in this way faith grows -- it is strengthened by use. Just as David's faith, after he had rescued the lamb from the mouth of the lion and the paw of the bear, became so strong he believed he could kill Goliath.

Naaman, the Syrian, went into the Jordan to wash seven times, with very great unbelief (yet he must have had a little faith, or he would not have gone at all); but, after the wonderful cure, he went home with strong faith. He found God's word reliable. God always blesses the use of the means he has appointed, when used in faith; and he blesses in proportion to the strength of our faith.

When Ezekiel preached to the dry bones, there was nothing remarkable in his sermon or manner of presenting the truth, but simply in his faith in God. His faith did not rest in any wonderful skill, or power in preaching, nor in any favorable appearances, but in God. He would do just what God directed him to do, knowing that God could not make a mistake, and that he was able to do just as he promised. So, standing up among the bones, dried, and bleached, and scattered as they were -- Ezekiel began to cry, "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Dry bones, live! Dry bones, come together!" Power accompanied the means God appointed, and bone came to his fellow bone, and they were clothed with flesh and sinews. But the breath of life was not yet in them. Then followed prayer, or calling on the wind to blow upon the slain. The breath of life entered into them, and there stood upon their feet an army of men. By this figure Ezekiel was shown how God saves sinners.

As Ezekiel went among those dry bones and preached to them, and called on the wind to blow upon them, and they lived, so Christians must go among wicked men, and preach and pray, and use the means God has appointed, in faith, and he will bless these means, and save souls, and build up his church.

Perhaps some one will ask why God does not bless the labors of all his ministers, alike, in the conversion of souls. It is because they do not expect it. They hope God will bless their labors; they pray him to do it; they really desire it, but do not in faith, without wavering, expect it. Faith is as necessary here, as is fire to produce heat. Persons may perish in the cold, surrounded with good fuel, for the want of fire to kindle it; so men can go down to eternal death, under the ablest presentation of truth, just for the want of faith in God on the part of the preacher and those that hear. So important is faith in God, that Jesus said to the anxious around him, "Only believe;" "All things are possible to him that believeth."

"Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no respite know,
All for sin could not atone:
Thou must save, and thou alone!
Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling."

A beautiful illustration of this occurred in one of my meetings. A citizen, about thirty years of age, had such a clear view of himself as a sinner in the sight of God, and felt so deeply that he must have help or perish, that he came to my room, after midnight, to know what he should do to be saved. O, the agony of his soul! He walked the floor crying, "I shall perish! What shall I do? What shall I do?" He kneeled down by a chair, and literally laid his face on the carpet. But he soon rose, saying, "I must be lost!" His groans and cries were heart-rending. I saw plainly that he needed to get a clear view of Jesus and his work, and asked him not to groan, but to be calm, and listen to me

for a moment. After getting his attention, I told him that his tears and overwhelming anguish would not help him, but he must let go of all reliance upon anything but Jesus, and simply believe. I then repeated a portion of the old Scotch hymn (God be thanked for that good Scotch brother who wrote it!)--

"Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus died and paid it all,
Long, yes, long ago.

"Jesus paid it all,
All the debt I owe;
And nothing, either great or small,
Remains for me to do."

Looking up through his tears, he asked, "Is that it, Mr. Earle? Is that the way?" I replied, "That is exactly the way." But the light was not yet clear enough for him freely to embrace Jesus by a simple faith. He commenced groaning and pleading again, saying, "O, what shall I do?" I said to him, "Don't groan; let me have your attention a little longer." I then repeated the last stanza of that beautiful hymn,

"Cast your deadly doing down,
Down, all at Jesus' feet;
Stand in him, in him alone,
All glorious and complete.

"Jesus died and paid it all,
All the debt I owe;
And nothing, either great or small,
Remains for me to do."

As the Spirit shed light upon his dark mind, he smiled through his tears, and said, "I believe that is it; yes, that is it -- 'Jesus died and paid it all.' I thought I must do something, and could not see what I could do. How glad I am that I came here tonight. I can trust Jesus now; yes, I can trust him." I then asked him to kneel down and tell Jesus he could trust him. After doing this, he left me, saying, "O, I am so happy now!"

So that not only does our success depend upon our faith in God, but the weeping, groaning, penitent sinner cannot be saved without faith in Jesus. How necessary, when we use the means God has appointed for the salvation of men and the spread of the gospel, that we "have faith in God."

[Emphasizing that a sinner has "nothing to do" but believe on Christ is, by itself, an error. While it is a fact that a sinner who has truly and fully repented has "nothing to do" but believe on Christ, it is impossible for one who is impenitent to truly believe on Christ. Also, while some must indeed cease their moaning and groaning, having already fully repented, it would be a mistake to

tell one who was moaning and groaning during the process of repentance to stop doing this and immediately believe on Christ. "Do works meet for repentance" is also a Scriptural injunction, and the doing of those works must always precede the moment when it is proper to instruct a seeker to "only believe" on Christ for salvation. -- DVM]

Let me mention an incident or two that have greatly strengthened my faith. A few years ago, in a ministers' conference, the text for criticism was, "Is not the set time to favor Zion come?" Among other questions raised, was this: "Is it perfectly safe for a minister to commence a series of meetings in a church or community where there are no indications of a revival of religion? Ought he to go to work expecting an immediate outpouring of the Spirit?" I had just begun, as it were, to believe God, and take him at his word, and, with several others, said, "It is safe." In a few days I commenced a series of meetings in a little church of about twenty members, who were very cold and dead, and much divided -- the only green spot being a little prayer-meeting, kept up by two or three sisters. I preached the first evening, and closed the meeting at eight o'clock. There was not one to speak or pray. I succeeded the next evening in getting one brother to say a few words, and closed again about eight o'clock, but said to the people, "We will go on with the meeting." All around looked dark, but to the eye of faith the darkness and the light are both alike.

The next morning I rode six miles, to a minister's study, to get him to pray with and for me. We both kneeled at the same chair and prayed, feeling and believing that faith in God could not be disappointed. I went back, and said to that little church, "If you can just make out to board me, I will stay with you until God opens the windows of heaven. God has promised to bless these means, and I believe he will." I trusted it all to Jesus, and went to work; and within ten days there were so many anxious souls, that I met one hundred and fifty of them at a time at an inquiry meeting, while Christians were praying in another house of worship. A powerful work of grace followed, and I think several hundred souls were led to Jesus. This greatly strengthened my faith in God.

On another occasion I commenced a meeting near Boston, and preached the first evening on this same subject -- Faith in God. We had a pleasant evening and a large assembly. Everything seemed favorable. I told the congregation that I believed we should have a great work, and they must provide seats for the aisles of the meetinghouse.

The very next day a terrible snow storm came on, so that we were shut out of the meetinghouse and in our homes. For six successive days I preached in a private parlor at my boarding place (which was only a few rods from the church) to ten or fifteen persons. This was a trial of my faith; yet I knew God was able to fulfill his promises, and I believed he would.

About the seventh day, the storm being over, we came together again in the meetinghouse. On the first or second evening one hundred men and women came forward for prayer, deeply convicted. While they were shut up at home, the Spirit of God had been at work upon their hearts. God had given a voice to the howling winds, and moved the hearts of his people just as well as though they had gathered in his house. A great work followed, and many precious souls were brought to Jesus.

With these and many other tests of God's promises, I have come to believe and trust him, so that I can follow where he leads.

Let me ask you all to go home from this meeting, to preach, and pray, and sing, and visit, in faith. Do all you can; speak to all of Jesus; but rely alone on God, asking and expecting great things. If the clouds look dark, and the angel says, "Let me go," let your grasp be firm, and say, --

"Nay, I cannot let thee go,
Till a blessing thou bestow;
Do not turn away thy face
Mine's an urgent, pressing case.

Once a sinner, near despair,
Sought thy mercy-seat by prayer:
Mercy heard and set him free,
Lord, that mercy came to me.

"Many years have passed since then,
Many changes have I seen,
Yet have been upheld till now,
Who could hold me up but Thou?

Nay, I must maintain my hold;
'Tis thy goodness makes me bold;
I can no denial take,
When I plead for Jesus' sake."

The meetings in Fall River began with seventeen persons present at the first one; at the closing meeting there were present nearly two thousand. It was thought there were one thousand conversions as the immediate fruit of this meeting.

* * * * *

Chapter 3 REVIVAL GLEANINGS

ALBANY, N. Y -- In this city I have labored in two meetings; the first was held on Washington Avenue, in a hall fitted up for the purpose.

Ten or twelve members from different churches in the city had united in forming a mission station on this street, and I was invited to hold a series of meetings there. This was in 1859.

So much interest was manifested, that several times when we closed our evening meeting at nine and a half o'clock, and a part of the audience left, there were enough outside, about the doors, to fill all vacant places in the hall.

On one occasion I said to the congregation, "If any of you feel that you are sinners, and will do anything you can to find Jesus, I will stay with you until you do find him. I feel safe to take God at his word."

Six men and five women took the front seats, feeling that they were great sinners. This was after dismissing the congregation twice. After all but a few who remained to pray had retired, and the way of salvation through Jesus had been pointed out, we all bowed in prayer for the immediate conversion of these eleven individuals, they having said, "We will pray for ourselves, and as far as we know will give ourselves now to the Savior." It was a moment of deep solemnity. The Holy Spirit was there to enlighten and lead the blind to Jesus. Within two hours every one of the eleven had found Jesus.

This work went on for four weeks with increasing interest, and many hearts and homes were made happy in Albany.

After a short time many of the converts came together, and asked the few Christians who had labored so earnestly for their salvation to organize a church and receive them into it.

Accordingly six brethren and four sisters united in forming what was then called the "Washington Avenue Baptist church." This was done on Thursday. The following Sabbath I baptized forty-four happy converts, and administered the Lord's Supper in the evening. On that occasion the following lines were sung as I had never heard them before:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

Deacon Patten gave the building and land to the new church, and became one of its members.

After a brief connection with this church, this dear brother was called home -- "crossed the flood" -- to join the other branch of Christ's family. He remembered the church in his will, leaving them ten thousand dollars, which, with other blessings of God's providence, and the faithful labors of their first pastor, Rev. William P. Everett, enabled them to purchase the State Street meetinghouse and land, changing their name to the "Calvary Baptist church."

This is now a strong church, of nearly four hundred members.

I shall always feel a peculiar interest in this church, and it will ever hold a warm place in my heart.

I went to Albany for the second meeting, at the request of the Pearl Street Baptist church, Rev. W. Bridgeman, pastor. Soon after commencing, it was thought desirable to have a union meeting, and for five weeks services were held alternately with the Pearl Street church, and Dr. E. L. Magoon's church on Hudson Street.

On the last Sabbath of the meeting a union communion was held in Pearl Street church.

One hundred of the converts, having been previously baptized, at this time received the right hand of fellowship, in the following order: Those uniting with the Pearl Street church received the right hand of fellowship from their pastor, while Dr. Magoon and myself followed, cordially grasping the hand of each of the new members. Those going with the Hudson Street church received the right hand of fellowship from their pastor, while Brother Bridgeman and I followed, giving each a hearty grasp of the hand. It was a delightful hour, and no one present will soon forget it. At the close, all joined in singing, with overflowing hearts,

"Nearer, my God, to thee, nearer to thee."

EAST BRIDGEWATER, MASSACHUSETTS -- There had been formed at this place a Methodist class, numbering about twenty persons, and they had hired for a place of worship the meetinghouse belonging to the Universalist society. Thus, with so few supporters, and with prospects to the eye of sense so uncertain, this church began a career which, as we look back upon it after the lapse of a few years, we can see was one of great influence for good.

At this early period in the history of this society was invited to labor in a series of meetings with them. From the commencement, God was with us and blessed our efforts. The town seemed to be shaken to its very foundation by the power of God's Spirit working upon the hearts of men; and sinners by scores flocked to the fold of Christ.

The "Abington Standard" published the following, in regard to the spiritual condition of this town at the time of the revival: "There is one event in the religious history of East Bridgewater which seems worthy of notice. When the celebrated Whitefield was in this country, some one hundred and twenty years ago, an effort was made to secure his services at that village, and he himself expressed a strong desire to labor there; for even then the place was notorious for its wickedness. The effort, however, failed, and an old gentleman publicly prophesied that there would not be a revival there during that generation.

"Until the present time there has been none; and, during the century and over that has intervened, that part of the town has been known by its own inhabitants as the 'God-forsaken village.' Now a change has taken place. Meetings are crowded, and many are turning from their evil ways."

A business man came to my room one day, deeply concerned about his spiritual welfare. After a little conversation, he asked me if he could not become a Christian and be a "silent partner." Being assured that there was no provision for "silent partners" in the great company of Christian believers, he humbly submitted to Christ, and was willing to confess him before men.

A young man, who had seemed to have no regard for the teachings of the Bible, was convicted of sin, but hesitated to give himself to Christ, through fear that he could not meet his old companions. But, after a little delay, he yielded, and found pardon and peace in Jesus.

Still that dread of meeting his former associates worried him; and one day, to avoid meeting them, as he thought he was certain to do if he went by the road, he took a circuitous way through the fields. But way back there he met the very group which he had sought to avoid. They at once asked him if he had become religious. Then his fear left him, and he talked to them about Jesus, and invited them to come with him. They, instead of making sport, as he had expected, seemed not only willing, but eager, to hear his testimony and heed his warnings.

Thus what appeared to be a mountain of difficulty, was now a pleasure. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."

While additions were made to other churches, as the fruit of this meeting, that little Methodist class of twenty persons in a few months became a church with over two hundred members. They have since built a nice and commodious house of worship, and constitute one of the largest and most prosperous churches in that region.

Let me relate, for the encouragement of those who desire to be active laborers for Christ, how I came to go to East Bridgewater. A Christian brother, who had been an earnest worker in the meetings held in Abington, and who was well acquainted with the religious history of East Bridgewater, and mourned the effect of the long spiritual drought, had for a long time felt a great desire to see a work of grace in that village.

Doubtless he had prayed to God for the fulfillment of this desire; but that was not all: feeling the value of the soul, and the need of immediate effort, he came to me, and presenting the great wants of the place, urged me, with more than usual earnestness, to go and labor for the salvation of this people. In addition to this, he voluntarily took from his own purse quite a sum of money, to be used for the promotion of this work.

So I think it safe to say he was not only the means of my going to East Bridgewater, but I believe hundreds of souls today, rejoicing in the Savior's love, are indebted, so far as human instrumentality is concerned, to the prayers and efforts of this good brother.

CHELSEA, MASS -- The union meeting held in this city, in the spring of 1866, was blessed with a deep and far-reaching work of grace. There was a marked spirit of unity and harmony among Christians of different denominations: they seemed to feel that they were indeed members of Christ's family, and were laboring for a common cause.

An unusually large number were engaged in these meetings, as may be judged from the following incident: At one of our evening meetings, after a short discourse from the words, "Who is on the Lord's side?" an opportunity was given for any present to speak of their reasons for being on the Lord's side. Then there rose up, one after another -- from the gray-headed grandfather to the little school boy -- three hundred and seventy-five persons -- and spoke for Jesus. At this point the hour for closing the meeting had arrived, and the people were dismissed, although many more were ready and waiting to "stand up for Jesus."

The following extract we take from the "Congregationalist:--

"The religious interest in Chelsea is increasing. On Sunday evening last Rev. Mr. Earle preached to an audience of not less than fifteen hundred persons, in Rev. Mr. Plumb's church, and the latter preached at the same time in the vestry, while it was estimated that as many were obliged to turn back for want of room as were present at both services.

"Meetings, in which the two Congregational and the two Baptist churches join, are held daily. Among those who have publicly and heartily borne testimony to the saving power of the gospel, and consecrated themselves to the service of Christ, are a lawyer and a physician, both of whom have long been among the leading men of the city."

The membership of several of the churches was largely increased by this revival, particularly of those with which the meetings were chiefly held Rev. Dr. Mason's and Rev. Mr. Plumb's; with the latter over one hundred united at a single communion season, more than forty of them being heads of families.

SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS -- Although I was invited here to labor more particularly with Dr. Ide's church, the meeting soon became, in spirit and form, a union meeting, embracing the different evangelical denominations of the city.

City Hall, the largest audience room in the city, was secured for many of our meetings, where were sometimes gathered as many as three thousand persons, while many were obliged to turn away, being unable to get in.

As the interest was not denominational, so it was not sectional; but throughout the entire city the great subject of conversation was "The Meeting." War was not the all-absorbing question; but men found time to talk about Religion.

The awakening was not confined to Springfield, but, to an extraordinary degree, was felt in many of the villages and towns in the surrounding country.

Special trains of cars were run for the accommodation of those wishing to attend the meetings; this was particularly the case on the railroad connecting Springfield with Chicopee and Northampton, when extra trains waited until after ten o'clock at night to carry the people back to their homes -- some with hearts overflowing with love to God, and others deeply concerned about their souls.

The "Daily Union," of March 17, 1864, says, in reference to an evening meeting in city Hall: "Strong men, in the pride and strength of manhood, were led to inquire what they should do to be saved. No one who was there could doubt for a moment the reality of religion. There was no excitement, no shouting, no noisy demonstrations; but every one was calm, thoughtful, and deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion." [This reporter seems to have a strong prejudice against demonstration in the Spirit -- a preference more for "deathly silence" rather than for "blessed quietness." -- DVM]

The Spirit of God reached all classes. Workmen connected with the U. S. Armory at Springfield were constant attendants of these meetings, and manifested their interest in them, and in

the subject of religion, by sending the following petition, signed by nearly six hundred of their number:--

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"Dear Sir: Are you willing to hold a meeting at City Hall, some evening during your stay in our city, with special reference to the men connected with the Armory where we are employed?"

This petition is in my possession, with that long list of names, just as they were signed upon one roll, very much soiled by the finger-marks of those working men, and I prize it just its it is.

In compliance with this request the meeting was held, and it was a solemn, heavenly season -- one which we may believe many of those noble men will look back upon from eternity with great joy. It was thought over four hundred persons rose that evening, and requested the prayers of Christians that they might be brought into the fold of Christ.

Among the business men who were earnestly engaged in these meetings was W. J. Holland, a publisher. Though Springfield was his place of business, his home at that time was in Belchertown, some twenty-five miles distant, where he was teaching a very interesting Bible class of young ladies.

He became so anxious for the conversion of this class that he determined to make an effort to bring them where they could attend our meetings. Five of the eight members of his class came with him. For these he obtained boarding places, and went with them to meeting.

One afternoon, after his class had attended several meetings, Mr. Holland felt so anxious about them that he could not go to meeting nor attend to business, but spent the time in his room in agonizing prayer for their immediate conversion.

During that afternoon service they were deeply concerned about their souls, and, before leaving the church, each one of those five young ladies sought and found Christ; and when they met their teacher in the evening, all were rejoicing in a Savior's love.

The object of their visit was now accomplished, and it became necessary for them to return to their homes. The evening before their return, this happy band of classmates gathered in front of the pulpit to have a parting grasp of the hand with the Christians to whom they had become so much endeared.

They came among us -- strangers; but now were going to leave us -- "no more strangers and foreigners, but of the household of God." Much that is pleasant and important in their life experience must ever center within the few days spent in Springfield.

Mr. Holland presented me with a beautifully bound album, made expressly for his class, and containing his own photograph and that of each member of the class.

One day, while in Washington, a soldier, dressed in uniform, stopped me on the street, and, grasping my hand very earnestly, called me by name. I did not know him, but he knew me, and said, "I came from my home in Connecticut, and attended one of your evening meetings, and heard you preach, while you were holding a meeting in Springfield. I felt that I was a sinner, and from that time had no peace until I gave my heart to God. The Savior is precious to me now."

I could but rejoice with him, as I looked upon his happy face and heard his words, tracing back his present joy to the "godly sorrow" of that one night in Springfield. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

Without attempting any estimate of the number of conversions, some idea may be gained from the words of one of the pastors: "As the fruit of this meeting, over six hundred united with the churches." A new Baptist church sprang up from that meeting, and has been a growing, working church ever since, and is exerting a deep and wide felt influence throughout the city.

Many converts were also gathered into the churches in adjoining towns, as the result of that meeting.

CINCINNATI, OHIO -- The following extract from the "Journal and Messenger" gives a very correct idea of the meeting in this city: "Last Sabbath was the final day of brother Earle's visit to our city. It was every way a most solemn and important day. In the morning, at the Sabbath school of the Ninth Street church, the regular lessons were dispensed with, and an hour devoted to prayer and short addresses from various persons. But the marked feature of the session was the declaration from a number of scholars that they had found the Savior. In their own childish way they rose and confessed a new-found trust in Jesus. Just as the hour for closing came, a large number of the scholars signified a desire to become Christians. It was an affecting sight.

"In the afternoon a union service was held in the First Baptist church. Brother Earle preached from the words, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?' The design of the sermon was, to show through what difficulties of the divine placing a man must press his way to ruin.

"Then followed a union communion of the three Baptist churches. The entire house was filled with communicants. After this service, the following resolution was passed: "Since for several weeks past, brother A. B. Earle has been with us preaching a Savior for lost men, and since quite a number among us have received his message, and come to the Savior, and found forgiveness for sin, and because many, widely wandering, have returned with renewed resolution to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, therefore we, the members of the three churches herein named, the Ninth Street Baptist, the First and Second Baptist churches, of Cincinnati, who have been united in this work, esteem it simply due our brother, that, in this public manner, we express our confidence in him, declare our Christian affection for him, thank him for the great good he has done among us, and that we do now most heartily commend him to the churches in his important work.'

"The closing service was held in the Ninth Street church in the evening.

"The results have been great. Many have come to the Savior, and many are now seeking him. Indeed, it seems as if the work in this direction had but begun. Many who have been negligent are now earnest and at work. The accumulation of moral power to the churches is most noticeable. Religion holds a larger place in the thoughts of men than it did. They are easier of approach. All through the city there is an unusual thoughtfulness.

"The churches have clasped each other's hands, and felt their warm pressure, and do not mean to let go. As churches, we are better organized for work than, perhaps, we ever were before. The brethren are aroused and ready for toil. With God's help, we shall, in all the churches, accomplish much for the Master this winter. And our prayers, our love, and our thanks shall follow brother Earle."

Chapter 4 PROVINCE OF NEW BRUNSWICK

In the summer of 1858, after a year of hard and constant work in the "States," during which I had preached more than five hundred sermons, I went, with my family, to one of the British Provinces, hoping to find retirement and rest for a few weeks on those quiet, healthy, hospitable shores.

The steamer in which we embarked at Boston landed us safely at the wharf in St. John, New Brunswick, Friday evening, July 23.

"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps." I had sought this land for rest; and, I thought, "I am among strangers, my plan will surely be carried out, and I shall not have to preach for a few weeks, at least not often;" but God's purpose seemed to be that I should preach from fifteen to twenty times a week. The seed was already sown, and the way open for me to go to work at once and help gather in the harvest.

Before I had been three days in the city I commenced preaching, and went on from that time until, within about five months, I had preached, in different parts of the province, over three hundred times, and trust fifteen hundred or two thousand souls had been "born again," as the fruit of our meetings.

I found a kind and generous-hearted people there, everywhere welcoming me as a servant of Jesus. It would give me much pleasure to "repeat the vision so divine." Many of the scenes in which I was permitted to take part were very interesting, and have left a deep impression on my mind.

At St. John a large number found the Savior precious, and connected with the different churches. Though more or less characteristic of all revivals of religion, it was especially true of the work in this city, that many who had wandered far away from God saw their sin, and returning, sought with tears their Father's face. Some who had once confessed, but since denied Christ before men, could now say,

"The Shepherd sought his sheep;

The Father sought his child;
They followed me o'er vale and hill,
O'er desert, waste, and wild:

"They found me nigh to death,
Famished, and faint, and lone;
They bound me with the bands of love;
They saved the wandering one.

"I was a wayward child;
I once preferred to roam;
But now I love my Father's voice --
I love, I love his home."

It gives me pleasure to add my tribute of love and respect to the memory of two warm-hearted, active men, who were here my fellow laborers in the work of the Lord -- Rev. Mr. Robinson, of the Brussels Street church, and Rev. Mr. DeMill. As we labored together in that precious revival, we did not know which of us held the longest lease of life; but now, only a few years have passed, and they have been summoned across the swellings of Jordan, to give an account of their stewardship, and I believe have been welcomed to the "mansions" of the blessed, and have received the approval, "Well done."

After preaching a hundred times in St. John, I went up the St. John River, to labor a short time at Burton.

The quiet ride on the broad bosom of that beautiful, majestic stream, lined as it was on either side with so much to attract and delight the eye, seemed a fitting introduction to the sweet and holy scenes of the work of grace that followed. At one point, high, rocky cliffs pictured their ragged forms in the clear mirror at their feet, while from the opposite side a thick forest let down its waving image upon the river's surface. At another turn of the river the Indians had taken temporary possession of the land, by placing here and there little conical wigwams, built of poles and bark, from the top of which we could imagine the curling smoke was bearing upward with it to the "Great Spirit curses upon the white man for destroying the hunting grounds of the red man. Again the picture changed, and we looked out upon highly cultivated farms, with their green meadows and fields of yellow grain gently sloping from the hills on either side.

After such a ride, with the thoughts it would naturally suggest, any one ought to be better fitted to go to work in a revival meeting.

While at Burton, the meetings were held every other day on the opposite side of the river, which we were obliged to cross in boats; so day after day we passed back and forth, from side to side, but always realizing the presence of the same blessed Spirit, melting and uniting our hearts.

While we were engaged in prayer one afternoon, a man, about sixty years of age, who had cursed us and our meetings, was so convicted of sin while at work in his field near the place of meeting, that he left his team and came where we were, crying for mercy, and saying, "O, I am such

a sinner! can God forgive such a sinner? Will you pray for me?" Yes, we could pray for him. There was efficacy enough in the blood of Jesus to wash away even his sins. He was soon rejoicing in the Savior's love.

Frequently more than a hundred carriages could be seen about the place of meeting, many persons riding fifteen or twenty miles to be present.

The churches there were accustomed to receive converts as soon as they gave evidence of a change of heart, and on two occasions there were so many to be baptized that I was one of five ministers engaged in baptizing at the same time and place.

One Sabbath afternoon, when I was expecting to preach my closing sermon in the evening and leave for home the next day, not less than three hundred anxious souls requested us to pray for them, many of them rising for prayer in their carriages and on the ground outside of the meetinghouse, as not more than half of the congregation, it was believed, were able to get inside.

Here was a trial for me. My family needed my attention, for it was time for us to return home; these three hundred anxious souls also had a claim upon me. My duty seemed to be to go home with my family, and then return to the province. This I did, and preached one hundred and fifty times more.

From Burton I went to Frederickton, the capital of New Brunswick, where, during our meeting of two weeks, we enjoyed the presence of the Holy Spirit, and trust many souls found peace in Christ. Many leading men, occupying positions of trust and influence, were actively engaged with us in the Master's service.

At Grand Lake almost every person seemed to be awakened and interested in religion; the ungodly sought to know Christ, and Christians to know him better.

From ten to thirty ministers were generally present with us, many believing they and their churches would be more benefited in the end by their remaining in our meeting. I found them a noble class to work with. May God bless the ministers of New Brunswick!

I went out at midnight, near my boarding place, while at Grand Lake, and could distinctly hear the voice of prayer in the houses, in the barns, in the fields, and in the streets. Sometimes I could hear anxious persons praying in the chamber, in the kitchen, and in the parlor of the house where I stopped, at one o'clock at night.

Very late one night, ten men and women, deeply concerned about their souls, were assembled at my boarding place, desiring me to point out to them the "way of life." I had already conversed and prayed with so many during the day and evening that nature was almost exhausted, and, after a few words with them, I said, "I can do no more. You know the way to Jesus. Go into that room alone, and pray for yourselves." They did so; and while I rested, those ten persons were praying for themselves, without a Christian with them. In the course of an hour they all came out of the room with bright faces, rejoicing in the pardoning love of Jesus.

On the seventh morning of my stay at Grand Lake, a large number of ministers and others came together for a friendly greeting and exchange of good wishes; and, after several prayers had been offered, nearly all accompanied me to the shore of the lake, where a vessel was waiting. With a warm grasp of the hand, and a sweet, parting hymn, we separated, to meet next at the judgment seat of our Redeemer.

After holding six or eight three-days meetings in different parts of the province, which God crowned with His rich blessing, I took the last steamer going to Boston that winter, and returned to my home, full of gratitude for my visit to New Brunswick.

One incident of our visit will show the large-heartedness of this good people. Soon after our arrival at St. John, we thought it would be pleasant to spend a few weeks at a summer resort near the on the shore of the Bay of Fundy. Some of the citizens, learning of our wish, took the matter out of our hands, and themselves secured and comfortably furnished a house for us about two miles out of the city, where we passed seven weeks very pleasantly, many bringing to my family such things as they thought for their comfort, while I preached each day in the city. When we were ready to leave, the people came again and carried the furniture back, refusing any compensation for what they had done.

This and many other generous expressions of their good feeling towards me and my family have bound my heart to the people there, and my visit will be treasured among the pleasantest recollections of my life.

I have a strong desire to visit them again, and spend another season of labor there; but, if not permitted to realize this, I can say, --

"Sweet is the thought, the promise sweet,
That friends, long severed friends, shall meet;
That kindred souls, on earth disjoined,
Shall meet, from earthly dross refined,
Their mortal cares and sorrows o'er,
And mingle hearts, to part no more."

* * * * *

Chapter 5 SERMON -- JOY RESTORED

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation"
Psalm 11:12

The Psalmist does not say, "Restore unto me salvation," -- he had salvation already; nor, "Restore my hope," -- he had a good hope; nor, "Restore me to thy family," -- he had not left the family of his Lord; no, this is the burden of his heart: "I do not enjoy religion as I used to, consequently I cannot teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners are not converted through my influence; therefore, 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.'"

[While the above interpretations, and those that follow, may not violate the Hebrew meanings of the original text, they do smack too much of Calvinistic beliefs -- that it is possible to lose the joy of salvation without losing salvation itself -- that it is possible to be "out of fellowship" with God, but not out of the "family of God". Here are some of those tell-tale signs of A. B. Earle's endorsement of Calvinism. Let the reader beware. -- DVM]

We may have wealth, and not enjoy it. Every earthly source of comfort may surround us, and yet we derive but little comfort from them. We may be miserable in the most costly and magnificent home.

So we may be regenerated, truly members of Christ's family, and at the same time be unhappy. We may be heirs of heaven, and, while journeying here below, have in our possession the key to our Father's rich storehouse, and yet be fretful and complaining, having just religion enough to make ourselves and our friends miserable.

My aim in this discourse will be to show that it is the duty of every Christian to enjoy the fullness of Christ's love.

1. Religion is a joyful subject in itself. It

"Never was designed
To make our pleasures less."

There is enough to make the Christian always joyful, in the mere fact that he has been taken "out of horrible pit," and placed upon the solid "Rock;" that he has exchanged rags and filth for purity and robes of matchless beauty; that he has been made an actual possessor of "all things" in lieu of poverty and bankruptcy. It is not strange that young Christians say, as I remember I used to, sometimes,

"I wonder why old saints don't sing,
And make the heavenly arches ring
With loud hosannas to their King."

The love of Jesus gladdens the soul as naturally as fire produces heat. Everything about it is joyful; no sorrow, no gloom, not even a shadow; its fruits are "love, joy, and peace." So that when the fullness of Christ's love is ours, we cannot be unhappy, anywhere, living or dying. "Great peace have they which love thy law."

Home is pleasanter; friends are dearer; life is worth more; the business, the social, and the domestic relations, all things around and above, are made brighter by this love.

What Christian, then, who is not now resting in Jesus by faith, does not desire to join in David's prayer, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation?"

Another reason why we should enjoy the fullness of Christ's love is: We dishonor him every hour we live without it.

The Christian represents Jesus to the world. He bears his image. If he wears a gloomy, sad face, the unconverted are repelled from his Master.

Men must judge of religion by those who are considered its possessors; and they will embrace or reject it according to the manner in which it is exhibited before them.

If I were to carry from a picture gallery the photograph of a man well known to you, as one who always wore a bright, happy face, and yet the picture represented him with a sad, gloomy expression, would you not, although there were traces of the man's features in the picture, go reluctantly, if at all, to that gallery for your own picture? What greater injury could I do that establishment than by carrying about that picture?

So, when a Christian carries about a sad, dejected countenance, he misrepresents religion: the impenitent, especially the young among them, say, when they see his gloomy face, "Religion may be good for the aged, the sick, and the dying, but not for the youthful and the vigorous."

O, how wrong this impression! Religion is, indeed, good for the sick, the dying, and the aged, and still better for those in health, and for those in the morning of life

My dear Christian friend, you have no right to be seen anywhere, either on the street or at your home, at the social gathering or about your business, wearing a gloomy face.

Do you ask, "Would you not have us weep?" Most certainly you should weep. Jesus wept; the apostles wept; the prophets wept; Christians, in all ages, have wept; a heart that embraces in its sympathies the wants and woes of a world cannot help weeping. We were unworthy the name of men and women, much more that of Christians, did we never weep. But let our tears run over a shining face; let all see that religion makes our hearts peaceful and happy, even while we weep over lost Binnars, or mourn the death of our loved ones.

"From those celestial springs
Such streams of pleasure flow,
As no increase of riches brings,
Nor honors can bestow."

Only then, when the Christian has the fullness Christ's love in his heart does he truly represent religion; his first duty, therefore, to Jesus and to the world, is, to obtain this blessing, this unfailing source of constant peace and joy and well-doing. Nothing has such an effect on the wicked.

If I were preaching in a house that would accommodate thousands of people, and wished to see it filled, and to hear within its walls the cries of anxious souls, I would not rely upon eloquence, or argument, or eccentricities, but rather upon gathering around me a company of Christians who were living in the full enjoyment of religion. Every countenance would be lighted

up with happiness, and the only way in which young converts could be distinguished from older Christians would be by the fact that the latter were the brighter and happier of the two classes, inasmuch as they knew and enjoyed more of Christ's love.

The wicked, cold professors, people of every class, would surely be attracted, and the place crowded, for happiness, like a magnet, attracts people towards its possessor, and the happiness of the Christian the most powerfully of all, since it is the purest, the deepest, and the only abiding. And it would not be long before you would hear some impenitent man say, "I hope the minister will not do all the talking tonight; I want to hear the deacons, and those Christians who have been members of the church so many years, they do look so happy."

Another would say, "There is deacon B____. I heard him speak last night; his voice, manner, and countenance seemed different from what they used to. I know he is enjoying religion, and I wish I was, it does make these Christians so happy."

There is that man just in front of the pulpit and, by the way, I have not seen him sit there, before, in a long time; he used to be very stiff and solemn -- never laughed himself, and never wanted others to laugh; but now he looks genial, humble, and happy, and really seems to love everybody, and to desire to see them feel and look happy. I like him now; in fact, I believe I used to judge him too severely."

Thus does the happy Christian make religion attractive. He is a different man from what he was when he did not have the joy of religion;

"Jesus, all the day long,
Is his joy and his song."

His power over wicked men has increased a hundred fold. It is the power of love -- glowing, burning love to Jesus and to a lost world. He is no longer a shrinking, cringing disciple that wicked timidity, behind which he used to hide and excuse himself from duty, is gone. A humble but holy boldness has taken its place.

Like the sun, he throws off light and warmth along his path. In his home and in his business he makes all about him more happy, and attracts them towards Jesus.

I recall a striking illustration of this: During a meeting in which I was engaged in one of the suburban towns of Boston, a lady, connected with one of the city churches, but residing in that place, found she was not the humble, happy Christian she once was. She came to me, asking how she might obtain anew the joy of salvation; she felt she loved Jesus, but so faintly that the warmth and power of that love were gone. The conflict was long and severe. On one occasion, she said to me, "My husband has become skeptical. He rejects the Bible. It is of no use to speak to him. I have scarcely any hope of his being converted. But, O that I could enjoy the Savior's love as I used to!

At length the desire of her heart was granted, and all the joy of her first love to Jesus was restored to her.

And now, though she had been a Christian, and a kind, careful wife and mother, she seemed almost like another person. The false representations of religion were ended. Its sweetness and happiness shone in every feature of her face, gave melody to the tones of her voice, and added a new charm to all she did.

She went about the house singing the songs of Zion. Anything that was not sinful, that would make her husband happier and her home pleasanter, she cheerfully performed, saying but little, however, about the change in her feelings; she did not need to, it was so apparent. Her husband saw it, and compared her present state with her past. Somehow this led him to look into his own heart. The conviction was forced upon him that religion was a reality, and one he could not do without.

Some four days after this change in his wife, I called on him, to learn why he rejected the Bible and religion. I asked him to be frank with me, and tell me if he had no desire to be a Christian.

He replied, "Mr. Earle, I have said nothing about it to my wife; but, sir, I feel I am a lost sinner, and if you will pray for me, I will kneel down with you right here." And, pointing to his wife, who was at that moment passing through the room, with the tears on her bright face, he continued, "That woman, my own dear wife, has had more power over me for a few days past than everything else put together. She has been a professor of religion for years, but I knew she did not enjoy religion; and I said, if that was all there was in religion, I did not want it. But, for the last few days, she has looked and acted almost like an angel; and, sir, I cannot stand it; there is a power in her sweet, happy face that melts my heart. I cannot withstand the attraction of such a religion."

And all this because the joy of salvation was restored to the heart of that Christian wife. O, the power of Christ's love when it burns and glows in the heart!

And perhaps some pious wife who hears me now has gone alone to the table of our Lord, for many long years, just because her love to Jesus has been feeble and faint, and, consequently, her representation of religion unattractive and false.

Some of these parents have not seen their children converted, for no other reason than that they have not had the joy of salvation filling their hearts and running over in their lives; they are Christ's own redeemed ones, but do not live as becomes his family, every member of which ought to be a wellspring of joy, pouring its streams of gladness into every heart within its reach.

So, in every department of Christian labor and responsibility, believers fail of success for this same reason; they may work and pray much, but all avails very little if the fullness of Christ's love wanting.

Another reason why Christians should enjoy the fullness of Christ's love is: The church cannot otherwise take care of converts.

In the divine arrangement, the church is the mother of Christ's redeemed children.

The most suitable place for the new-born babe is in its mother's arms. The infant Moses was, by the appointment of God, returned to his mother to be nursed, inasmuch as she loved him most, and would, therefore, give him the best care.

So God has ordered that the church shall take care of and nourish the young converts. The requisite love and sources of nourishment have been given by him to the church, and to her alone. So that if she is negligent of her converts, they have no other resource, and will droop, and sink into a state of inactivity and spiritual death.

If, then, the church loses the warmth of her love to Christ, and becomes cold, she commits a great wrong, inasmuch as she can never do her duty to her members, nor take care of young converts, should they connect with her, if she is in a lukewarm state.

It is on this account that many young members become indifferent to the ordinances of God's house, forsake the prayer-meeting, and finally leave the church of Christ altogether; so that the guilt, in part, rests upon the older members. They do not enjoy the fullness of Christ's love.

It is plainly the duty, therefore, of every Christian who does not now enjoy the fullness of Christ's love, to offer, from the depths of the heart, the prayer of our text, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; "not only that he may teach transgressors the way of salvation, and see sinners converted unto God, but also that converts may be nourished and tenderly cared for when they come into the church.

So true it is that Christians cannot do their duty towards young converts unless they are enjoying the fullness of Christ's love.

This is still more important for a minister. He can bring into his sermons no substitute for the warm, glowing love of Jesus.

He may become pale and careworn with study; he may visit and labor among his people; he may give his time and talents entirely to the work; but yet he will not be successful in winning souls until his heart is filled with holy love.

Christ will say to him, as he did to the church at Ephesus, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." He had but one thing against them -- they did not love him as they once did.

And in the case of the Laodiceans, he would rather have them array themselves against him than live in a lukewarm condition.

And it is not uncommon to see churches dying out, apparently because they are in the same state as those two ancient churches. Their members do not enjoy religion; the love of Christ is a mere spark on the hearthstone of their hearts, and, consequently, they will not and cannot do their duty to those around them.

From such churches Christ seems to turn away, not only because he is grieved, but also because they are fruitless, and a dishonor to his cause.

Many a minister of good talents and character, and who is willing to work hard in his calling, is moving about from place to place, unsuccessful, and unable often to obtain even a support, because his heart is not filled with the love of Christ. But let him obtain that blessing and he becomes a new man. The tone of his voice is changed; his countenance beams with peace; his heart is warm; his preaching tender and persuasive; even his old sermons are delivered with a new and strange power and charm; the empty seats in his church fill up; new and warmer friends gather about him; conversions are continually occurring under his labors, and the people say, "He seems like another man."

The love of Jesus has developed, warmed, and energized all his powers, and made him humble, and yet courageous for the truth.

The Spirit has opened his eyes, that he may understand the Scriptures. He has been "endued from on high" -- with the power of love. The blessed Spirit accompanies all his labors. He gathers many souls into the "fold," has a foretaste of heaven while here on earth, and, at last, goes to his final reward, where he hears the Master say, "Well done."

An incident in my own experience, some twenty years ago, taught me a lesson I shall never forget:

I commenced a series of meetings in a town in New York, with the Congregational and Baptist churches united. I thought myself fully prepared for the work, and entered into it looking for immediate and large results.

My first aim was to preach so as to lead the churches nearer to Christ. Accordingly I prepared five sermons for Christians, as clear and pointed as I knew how to make them. The first four had no apparent effect. I wondered at it. The fifth was prepared with a scorpion in the lash; it was a severe one, and the last harsh sermon I have preached, and the last I ever expect to preach; but this, too, was powerless.

I then went to my closet, and there on my knees asked Jesus what could be the difficulty with those Christians. It did not enter my mind that the trouble could be anywhere else than among them. I had preached with tears in my eyes, and been anxious to see a revival, and had no thought but that the preacher was in a right state. But there in my closet God revealed to me my own heart, showing me that the difficulty was with myself, and not with the church; I found myself as cold as those I was trying to benefit. My tears, even in the pulpit, had been like water running from the top of a cake of ice when the warm rays of the sun are falling upon its surface, but which becomes hard and cold again as soon as the sun goes down.

I told the Congregational pastor of what I had discovered, and asked him the condition of his own heart. He frankly confessed that he was in the same state as myself.

We prayed together several times. I felt that I could not live in that state, and accomplish much. Accordingly I went home and shut myself in my room, resolved to spend the night in prayer, if necessary. O, the struggle of that night! Hour after hour I wrestled alone with God. My heart had been full of coldness, and I not aware of it. No wonder the churches had not "come up to the work!" I renewedly and repeatedly gave myself to the Savior, determined not to let the angel depart until my heart was filled and melted with the love of Jesus. Towards morning the victory came. The ice was all broken, melted, and carried away; the warmth and glow of my "first love" filled my heart; the current of feeling was changed and deepened; the joy of salvation was restored.

In the morning I went out, took the unconverted by the hand, and said the same things as on days previous; but now they were melted to tears over their sin and danger. I prepared and preached another sermon to the churches -- no lash, nothing harsh about it. They broke down, confessed their own need of a special preparation of heart, and gave themselves anew to the work, which from that hour went forward rapidly and successfully.

Thus I learned the necessity of having my heart filled with the love of Christ, if I would see the salvation of the Lord follow my labors.

Since then I have spoken kindly of ministers who do not see the conversions for which they labor. Yet I am convinced, and more and more every year, that generally the fault is in the minister's own heart, -- coldness, growing out of the absence of the joy of salvation.

I have thus tried to present some of the reasons why Christians should enjoy the fullness of Christ's love. We ought to look upon it as the greatest privilege, the most desirable of all our blessings, rather than as a duty from which we, perhaps, would turn away, if we could; for we do not attain solid happiness, abiding rest, and sweet peace until the fullness of that love is ours. O, how differently, too, everything looks to us then! Our complaints cease; we cannot retain hard feelings towards any one; all is peace and love at home and away from home; and we speak tenderly even of those we think have done us an injury.

In a town where I was engaged in a meeting, several members had left the church because of a certain resolution it had passed. One of them came to me one evening, as I was about to dismiss the congregation, and, with much earnestness, asked me to request the church to wait a few minutes, until he had (to use his own words) "given them a blowing up; they have abused me," said he, "and cannot be blessed until they acknowledge it, and undo what they have done." I asked him if he would not defer his speech, inasmuch as it would have an injurious effect on the meetings just at that stage in their progress. He consented to wait a few days. He came again at the expiration of the time; but again was prevailed upon to wait. He was a good man, and I knew if God restored unto him the joy of salvation, he would feel and talk differently.

Before long his wife came forward for prayer. I asked him to pray for her. He did so; and in that prayer the draft was opened for the fire to burn in his bosom, and, in a short time, the love of Christ filled his heart.

Everything then began to look differently to him. All his old love for the church came back. Again he asked to speak to the church. The privilege was readily granted. With a happy face and a

humble, loving spirit, he said to them, "If you can consent to receive me back, I will return, and will say nothing about my old complaint -- I am satisfied to let it pass." So changed did everything seem, when he had the joy of religion in his heart.

My dear Christian hearer, let me ask, Are you now enjoying the fullness of Christ's love? Were you ever nearer Jesus than you are at present? Have you that same tender, happy heart you once had? Or is it the case that you were never very happy in Jesus' love? In either case, -- whether you have less love and joy than you once had, or have never known much happiness in your religious experience -- do not rest until you can say, "My cup runneth over." The effort to regain your first love may, and no doubt will, cost you more than it did to be converted. You will be like a man who has strayed away from his lantern -- he must travel in the dark, until he finds it. Or like the woman spoken of in the gospel, who, having lost one of her ten pieces of silver, was obliged to search long and diligently, making at the same time all her other property and labors secondary, until she found it; but she found it at length, and was happy -- so happy that she called her friends and neighbors together to rejoice with her; and you will be happy when you have regained the joy of salvation, and you will want those around you to rejoice with you.

Let me, then, in conclusion, say to each believer who is within the sound of my voice, Be thorough in the examination of the state of your heart; not now as to the evidences of your hope, but as to your love to Jesus, whether you have all your first love, and all the increase thereof which you may and ought to have. Is it as pleasant and as easy as it used to be to speak to the impenitent, and warn them of their danger? Are the closet and the prayer-meeting as dear to you as they once were? If not, let me urge you to go to Jesus, as you did when you felt yourself a lost sinner. Ask Christians to pray with and for you. Do not offer another cold, half-hearted prayer to God. Go down to the lowest door of mercy, and knock, and seek, and ask importunately, until you feel your heart running over with the fullness of Jesus' love, and then ask and receive the grace to abide in that blessed condition until you are transferred to that home on high where there is fullness of joy forevermore.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Amen.

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Chapter 6 INCIDENTS

"MA, GIVE HIM MY TWO ONE-DOLLARS"

At the close of a series of meetings in Springfield, Massachusetts, a mother handed me a little girl's picture wrapped in two one-dollar bills, at the same time relating the following touching incident: Her only child, at the age of six years, gave her heart to the Savior, giving, as the pastor with whom I was laboring said, the clearest evidence of conversion.

At once she went to her mother and said, "Ma, I have given my heart to Jesus and he has received me; now, won't you give your heart to him?" The parents were both unconverted at the

time. The mother replied, "I hope I shall some time, dear Mary." The little girl said, "Do it. now, ma," and urged the mother, with all her childlike earnestness, to give herself to the Savior then.

Finding she could not prevail in that way, she sought to secure a promise from her mother, feeling sure she would do what she promised; for her parents had made it a point never to make her a promise without carefully fulfilling it. So time after time she would say, "Promise me, ma;" and the mother would reply, "I do not like to promise you, Mary, for fear I shall not fulfill."

This request was urged at times for nearly six years, and finally the little petitioner had to die to secure the promise.

Several times during her sickness the parents came to her bedside to see her die, saying to her, "You are dying now, dear Mary." But she would say, "No, ma, I can't die till you promise me." Still her mother was unwilling to make the promise, lest it should not be kept. She intended to give her heart to Jesus some time, but was unwilling to do it "now."

Mary grew worse, and finally had uttered her last word on earth: her mother was never again to hear that earnest entreaty, "Promise me, ma."

But the little one's spirit lingered, as if it were detained by the angel sent to lead her mother to Jesus, that the long sought promise might be heard before it took its flight.

The weeping mother stood watching the countenance of the dying child, who seemed to say, by her, "Ma, promise me, and let me go to Jesus." There was a great struggle in her heart as she said to herself, "Why do I not promise this child? I mean to give my heart to Jesus; why not now? If I do not promise her now, I never can."

The Spirit inclined her heart to yield. She roused her child, and said, "Mary, I will give my heart to Jesus." This was the last bolt to be drawn; her heart was now open, and Jesus entered at once, and she felt the joy and peace of sins forgiven.

This change was so marked, she felt constrained to tell the good news to her child, that she might bear it with her when she went to live with Jesus; so, calling her attention once more, she said, "Mary, I have given my heart to Jesus, and he is my Savior now."

For six years Mary had been praying to God and pleading with her mother for these words; and now, as they fell upon her ear, a peaceful smile lighted up her face, and, no longer able to speak, she raised her little, pale hand, and pointing upward, seemed to say, "Ma, we shall meet up there." Her life's work was done, and her spirit returned to Him who gave it.

The mother's heart was full of peace, though her loved one had gone. She now felt very anxious that her husband should have this blessing which she found in Christ.

The parents went into the room where the remains were resting, to look upon the face of her who slept so sweetly in death, when the mother said, "Husband, I promised our little Mary that I would give my heart to Jesus, and he has received me. Now, won't you promise?"

The Holy Spirit was there. The strong man resisted for a while, then yielded his will, and taking the little cold hand in his, kneeled and said, "Jesus, I will try to seek thee."

The child's remains were laid in the grave. The parents were found in the house of prayer the mother happy in Jesus, and the father soon having some evidence of love to Christ.

When I closed my labors in Springfield, Dr. Ide said to his congregation, "I hope you will all give brother Earle some token of your regard for his services before he leaves." As this mother heard these words, she said she could, as it were, see her little Mary's hand pointing down from heaven, and hear her sweet voice saying, "Ma, give him my two one-dollars."

Those two one-dollars I have now, wrapped around the picture of that dear child, and wherever I go, little Mary will speak for the Savior.

Reader, is there not some loved one now pointing down from heaven and saying to you, "Give your heart to Jesus"? Are you loving some earthly object more than Jesus? God may sever that tie -- may take away your little Mary, or Willie, or some dear friend. Will you not come to Jesus, without such a warning?

"TRY IT ON ME"

We were in the midst of an interesting series of meetings in Oneonta, New York. Among those attending from no promising motives, was Mr. Olin, a lawyer of marked ability and influence in the town.

One evening, at the close of the sermon, when an opportunity was given for remarks, Mr. Olin rose, and, in a bold and defiant tone, said, "Mr. Earle, I have heard you speak repeatedly in these meetings of the 'power of prayer,' and I don't believe a word of it; but if you want to try a hard case, take me." I said, "Mr. Olin, if you will come to the front seat, we will pray for you now." He replied, "I will do nothing of the kind; but if you have 'power in prayer,' try it on me."

Before closing the meeting, I requested all who were willing, to go to their closets at a given hour, and pray earnestly for Mr. Olin; and I requested him to remember, at that hour, that we were praying for him.

The second or third evening after this, Mr. Olin rose in our meeting, and urged us to pray for him. I asked him if he would come forward and let us pray with him; he said, "Yes, anywhere, if God will only have mercy on so great a sinner." In a few days he was a rejoicing Christian, and soon after sold his law books, and became a preacher of the gospel. He is now a presiding elder in the Methodist church.

"SHE WILL NEVER CALL ME 'FATHER' AGAIN"

A few years ago I was laboring in a town in the State of New York. Living near the place was a man bitterly opposed to religion and religious meetings -- an enemy of Jesus, though a kind father. He could not be induced to attend our meetings or seek the Savior.

The idol of his heart was a little daughter, just beginning to call him father. When at home, he spent much of his time holding or carrying her about the house; so that whenever he came in sight, she would hold up her little hands and say, "Pa, come," or "Pa, take me." He loved to hear that voice, and heed that call, but the gentle call of the "still, small voice" found no answer in his heart, until God severed the delicate cords that bound little Josephine to earth.

God seemed to place her coffin across the father's life-path, to warn him of death and a judgment to come.

At her funeral I made some remarks from these words, "Suffer little children to come unto me." I said, "Parents, if you want your little children tenderly cared for, if you wish to give them every possible opportunity for intellectual and moral improvement, if you want to know they are in the best society -- Jesus says, "Let them come and live with me."

At the close of the services in the house, the coffin was placed on a table in the yard; that the large number present might look upon the face of the little sleeper, as she lay among the beautiful flowers arranged by loving hands.

When all others had looked at the remains, the father came to look for the last time upon the face of her whom he had loved so tenderly. For a few moments he stood in silence, looking upon that marble countenance, his tears falling upon her face; then, as if his grief could be endured no longer, he sobbed out, in the most heart-rending manner, "She will never call me 'father' again! She will, never call me 'father' again!"

All around him were weeping.

When asked if the coffin could be closed, he replied, "No, you must not close this coffin." "O, the little darling will never call me 'father' again!"

He finally consented to have the coffin closed.

I went to the grave; and, returning to his home, was sitting with him in his parlor, when he saw some book or plaything belonging to his daughter, and, springing up and walking the floor, he exclaimed, "She will never call me 'father' again."

Asking his attention for a few moments, I said to him, "I am not sure your little Josephine will never call you 'father' again. She is now walking the 'golden streets,' and perhaps is this moment saying, 'I wish my dear father was up here. It is so beautiful.' If you should be converted and go to heaven, the very first voice you would hear on your arrival there might be your loved Josephine's, saying, 'O, my dear father, have you come to live with me in heaven?'"

Soon he became calm, and appeared thoughtful for a while, and then deliberately said, "By the grace of God I will seek Jesus -- I will." He sought and found a precious Savior, was found in the house of prayer, and the last I knew of him, was preaching the glorious gospel of the blessed God; and little Josephine, who is waiting "across the river," may again call him "father."

"E'en the hour that darkest seemeth
Will His changeless goodness prove;
From the gloom his brightness streameth;
God is wisdom, God is love."

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Chapter 7 REVIVAL GLEANINGS -- CONTINUED

AMSTERDAM, NEW YORK-- At the urgent request Christians of different denominations, I commenced a series of meetings in Sanford Hall, April 22, 1858.

In several of the churches, meetings had been held nearly every evening, for some months, and only one hopeful conversion reported during the time.

Many had been earnestly praying for a few influential men in the place, thinking if they were converted the whole community would be moved. But this did not seem to be God's plan.

For many days thick darkness surrounded the meeting. The wicked seemed to say to Christians, "Where is your God?"

After two weeks of hard labor, God showed us that the cause of the delay was not the hardness of wicked men.

Though Christians had been active, and were still ready to make any sacrifice for souls, yet they lacked power with God, and, consequently, with men. But they could not be easily convinced that they were not ready for a revival of religion. Many said they were fully in the work, and did not know why the blessing was delayed.

Early one morning, all who were willing to lay all on God's altar anew, and seek the fullness of his love, met in the hall, and, without any known reservation, made a new consecration. They now asked God to convert the men so long prayed for, or in any other way revive his work.

The offering was then and there accepted, and one soul was born into the kingdom during that morning meeting. At once the Spirit filled all the place where we were assembled.

Instead of the influential men, a group of children and youth first sought and found the Savior. These young converts now became God's laborers to bring their parents and others to Jesus. It was an affecting scene when the children rose, and, with tearful eyes, requested prayers for fathers or mothers, brothers or sisters.

Soon the hall was so crowded that outsiders said, "The building will fall; it is not safe for so many to enter it."

One of the first to bow in submission to Jesus was a young lawyer, who had said to a pious parent, "Mother, don't make a fool of yourself by asking prayers for your husband and children." That son became an earnest worker in the cause of Christ, and has since passed to his heavenly home.

Joy and peace now filled the hearts of God's people, more than compensating for their previous anxiety. The impenitent seemed awed and subdued by the sensible presence of the Spirit.

A young man remarked to one who had been an active worker in the meetings from the first, "I supposed religion made one gloomy; but the last few nights at the hall have convinced me that Christians have joys sinners know nothing of." The young man has since fallen in battle, and the brother to whom he made this remark has also gone to his reward.

A Saturday evening prayer meeting, started at that time, has been sustained through all these years by the young ladies, who have felt that it was "a sweet hour of prayer."

ABINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS -- With its four villages, somewhat noted for good schools and large shoe manufactories, Abington, like any manufacturing town, is an important center of influence, since it employs many persons whose homes are in other towns, and who, consequently, carry away with them the good or evil influences received. Hence the added importance of the great awakening throughout this town in the winter of 1856-57.

The meetings began in that part called EAST ABINGTON.

The congregation at first was very small. It was at a thinly attended afternoon meeting that the few praying ones seemed to "get hold of God," as it were, with a feeling that their prayers had been heard, and the power of God was about to be felt in the town. During the progress of this afternoon meeting, a scoffing infidel, in his store, was so wrought upon by the Spirit of God, -- had such a sense of his sinfulness, and felt so certain that he must spend eternity in the world of despair, -- that he thought he would go out and end his present miseries by taking his own life. But his second thought was, that there would be no use in that; he recollected to have heard Christians say that the worst of sinners might find pardon and peace in Christ, and he said, "I will accept Christ as my Savior, and devote myself to his service." God heard the prayer which followed that resolution; and at our meeting in the evening we were much surprised and rejoiced, when he stood before us, a witness of God's pardoning grace.

A wealthy business man in the place had left his office for a game of billiards. With the game unfinished he went home to dine, and before leaving his house went into the cellar to arrange his furnace; and while there was so stricken down under the power of God, that he felt hardly able to leave the house, but thought he must go and finish his game. As he went out, he met at the gate the converted infidel, spoken of above, who said to him, "come with me to meeting." He replied, "I

will;" and went, and became a follower of Jesus. He is today a strong pillar in the Congregational church.

SOUTH ABINGTON -- Here was to be a trial of faith. The way seemed fully prepared, the people ready. A large number gathered at our first meeting, and I said we might look for a great work of grace; that we would soon see the aisles filled. We went home that night with glad hearts, confident that the work was going right on with great success.

But the next morning all was changed. A terrible snowstorm had shut us out of the church and in our homes.

For six successive days I preached in a private parlor at my boarding-place, only a few rods from the church, to perhaps ten or fifteen persons. About the seventh day the snow had melted and drifts settled so that the church was opened, and we came together again.

But the Spirit of God had been at work upon the hearts of the people while they were shut up at home.

The Lord had made "the clouds his chariot," the storm and tempest messengers of his coming.

No time seemed to have been lost. At the first or second meeting one hundred persons requested our prayers for their conversion. And for weeks the work went forward with increasing power, developing Christian zeal and love, and carrying the joy of pardon to all ages and classes among the kind people of that quiet village.

CENTER ABINGTON -- The meetings here were in the Congregational church, and were much like those in other parts of the town, except that a larger proportion of the converts were men hardened man, and whom we least expected.

One young man, who professed to be a Universalist, came into the meeting one evening for the purpose of getting something to make sport of, as he afterwards told us. But he went out, at the close of the service, under deep conviction for sin, was converted, and is now preaching the everlasting gospel.

Men almost given up as hopeless knelt among the anxious, by the side of little children from the Sabbath School, and together they were heard rejoicing in hope. Many were the homes gladdened by this precious work of grace. Around some hearthstones the family gathered for the first time to establish an altar of prayer; in many others, new voices joined in the sacred services.

It may be interesting to some to know how I came to labor in Abington, inasmuch as my first meeting in the State of Massachusetts was held in this town.

Brother William Everett, at that time pastor of a small church in the town, had previously met me in New York, and from that time had felt a great desire to have me labor with him. But his

church being small, and hardly able to meet current expenses, he did not feel free to ask me to help him.

Still he did not give up the hope of some time having the meeting; and, while he considered the subject and prayed over it, his prayers were answered, and a way opened in a manner quite different from his expectations.

One of Boston's well known Christian merchants, an active and generous leader among the laymen of the Baptist denomination, spent a night with brother Everett, and during the evening was made acquainted with the wants of the church and the desire of the pastor. The next morning he handed fifty dollars to brother Everett, saying, "Send for brother Earle to come and preach fifty dollars' worth." The gift was accepted, further arrangements made, and before many months, the town was enjoying the precious revival just sketched. Eternity alone can reveal the influence of that fifty dollars, given to promote the cause of the Redeemer, by one who was then a stranger to me, but now one of my dearest and most valued friends, George W. Chipman.

HAVERHILL, MASSACHUSETTS -- The "Boston Recorder" (since united with the "Congregationalist") said of this meeting, "The revival of religion in this vicinity has been, thus far, one of unusual interest and power. Rev. Mr. Earle commenced preaching in the Third Baptist church (Rev. B. Wheeler's), in Haverhill, the latter part of April ... Shortly after the coming of Mr. Earle, five churches (three Congregational and two Baptist) joined in a union meeting under his special direction.

"The meetings were held in the different places of worship belonging to these churches, as circumstances seemed to require. They had hardly begun before marked tokens of the Spirit's presence were manifest, especially upon the members of the churches. Great solemnity, a new spirit of self-consecration, of humility, of devotion, seemed to fill all hearts.

"Soon sinners became anxious, the inquiry meetings began to be numerous attended, conversions multiplied, and the whole community was shaken as by the power of God.

"More than two hundred inquirers and recent converts were gathered in one room more than once during these meetings. There was little need of urging persons to make themselves known as inquirers, for multitudes seemed anxious to take any and every step that might help them to come to Christ.

"There was no noisy excitement, no groanings or outcries [sounds like this writer was opposed to even genuine demonstration in the Spirit. -- DVM]; but there were tears, and prayers, and earnest exhortations, and pungent sermons, and clear, pointed directions to the sinner, and deep, solemn earnestness.

"The result has been most happy in this entire community. The number of conversions I cannot state exactly. Judging from observation among my own people, I should think there must be from three to four hundred in this immediate vicinity, that, in the judgment of charity, have passed from death unto life...

"Almost all the pupils in the Female Academy in Bradford, that were not already Christians, have during this revival become hopefully converted.

"The work now seems to be extending to the towns around us, and some two hundred hopeful converts are reported from the different churches within ten or fifteen miles of us."

At the close of the meetings in Haverhill, the pastors, and recent converts and others, united with me in visiting some of the churches in the country around. Barge wagons were fitted up, some of them carrying fifty persons, and in this way we visited five churches, holding meetings through one day and evening with each. I preached short sermons, after which those Christians accompanying me talked, and prayed, and sang. God blessed these means wonderfully, in the quickening of Christians and the conversion of sinners, until it was believed there were three hundred conversions in the country around Haverhill.

After visiting these different churches, a final, closing meeting was held in the large town hall, that we might have a few parting words, bid each other "God-speed," and separate to our homes. The ten churches with which I had labored were represented at this meeting.

I have on my table a most interesting memento of the precious seasons enjoyed in Haverhill -- a very large and richly bound album, holding two hundred photographs. One evening I was invited to attend a social gathering to be held in Music Hall. About six hundred persons were present, and in the course of the evening, this album, containing photographs of many of the young converts, of the pastors and other friends, was presented to me, accompanied by the best wishes and prayers of a large number of friends.

In this album may be seen the picture of an old man bending over a book, as if in deep study, his hair almost white, his cheeks furrowed, his brow a little contracted, and over all a pleasant smile, indicating that there is within, that peace which "passeth all understanding." With his name and his works thousands are familiar. Many an hour has been spent by teacher and pupil studying and worrying over the questions which he has put forth. He has exerted a wide influence in the discipline of youthful minds, and his name is prominent among mathematicians. This good man was a constant attendant of our meetings, an active worker in the cause of Christ, a Christian gentleman.

On my occasional visits to the Academy at Bradford, to converse with the young ladies on the subject of religion, he always chose to be my companion. Though he was still active in the Master's service, his work was almost done to use the expression of good old father Porter, 'he stood on the platform, satchel in hand, waiting for the heavenly train.'

Very soon after the close of our meeting the summons came, and he went home; and there was transferred from the church book of earth to that of heaven the name of Benjamin Greenleaf.

FALL RIVER, MASSACHUSETTS -- Seventeen persons were present at my first meeting here. At the closing meeting there were as many as hundred. The interest, at first scarcely perceptible, steadily and rapidly increased up to the last night of the meeting.

A very correct idea of these meetings may be gained from the following letter in the New York Observer, of February 21, 1863: "We are enjoying a glorious work of grace in this city. It commenced in one of the Baptist churches with the labors of Rev. A. B. Earle, whose success as an evangelist has, for several years past, been so great. An invitation was extended by him and the church to the pastors and members of all evangelical churches in the city, to come in and labor together for a general revival throughout the city. A few members from different churches accepted the invitation, and became deeply interested in the work.

"The tokens of the approach of God, in his majesty and glory, became apparent. 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' Soon the fruits began to appear. It was indeed a surprise visit to many of our churches. The promise, 'Before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear,' was fully realized.

"Soon converts began to be multiplied, and many were amazed and in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Instead of the war and the condition of the country, which had been so long the all-engrossing theme, religion became the subject of conversation at the corners of the streets, the marts of business, and in the workshops and mills. All classes and all ages were alike moved, from the little school child to those who had grown gray in the service of Satan. Such was the power of the Spirit, that the strong oaks of Bashan were made to bow with as much ease as the willows by the watercourses. It is 'the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes.'

"In two of the seven churches visited, it was estimated there were one hundred conversions during the last week. Many remarkable answers to prayer, and many deeply interesting religious experiences, have come to our knowledge, but the limits of this communication will not allow of their being specified. Allow me to allude to one of the rich fruits of this blessed work.

"Our High School is composed of advanced scholars, many of whom are being fitted for college, others for teachers, as well as other spheres of influence, and is, therefore, regarded with peculiar interest as containing the flower of our youth.

"Last week was vacation, and many of the pupils attended the meetings and were converted. The principal, who, though regarded as a religious man, had never made a profession, nor taken an active part in religious meetings entered upon his duties the present week, 'filled with the Spirit.'

"The scene on Monday morning, on reopening the school, as related by him in one of our meetings, was one never to be forgotten. The opening exercises had been, reading the Scriptures and singing; but he proposed on this occasion adding prayer also. He requested all to bow their heads upon their desks (with which request every one complied), while he led in a prayer, which, as subsequently reported by one of his pupils, seemed divinely inspired. His own choked utterances were responded to by sobs and tears in every part of the house. When the time for recess arrived, there seemed to be no desire for the accustomed sports, but a request was made that one of the recitation rooms might be occupied for a prayer meeting, where the recent converts spent the time in praying and laboring with their unconverted schoolmates, of whom fifteen or twenty were deeply anxious.

"It was ascertained that of ninety scholars belonging to the school, forty-five were hopefully converted, many of whom were giving proof of their high vocation by their earnest labors to bring others to Jesus. Prayer continues to be offered each morning, and teachers and scholars are united in their efforts for the conversion of the whole school.

"The work still goes on."

It is believed that more than a thousand souls were born again as the fruit of this meeting, and more than half that number connected with the churches in the city, and many with those in the vicinity.

WASHINGTON, D. C. -- The meeting in this city was at the time of the second inauguration of Abraham Lincoln, and yet was crowned with a large blessing. There were not so many conversions as in many other places, -- only about one hundred having given me their names as among the converts; still I think the work was glorious in its results. The city was full of strangers from all parts of our land, many of them were reached by the meeting, and heavenly blessings were bestowed upon them, which they carried to their homes and made the means of good to others.

Brave soldiers, heroes of many a battlefield, there put on the "armor of God," and went away to be still better and braver soldiers, under the banner of Jesus.

But of all the sweet memories of that meeting, which come crowding my mind and heart eager for expression, there is room in this sketch for but one:

A few days after leaving the city there came to me the following cheering letter:

"WASHINGTON, D. C., March 25, 1865

"Dear Brother Earle:

"Good news for you! Night before last Hon. Amos Kendall rose in our meeting and said he believed he was converted many years ago, but obstacles arose which placed him in the dark. Since the meeting you held, he had been very much exercised.

"After giving his views of religion, and the duty of all believers in Christ, he said he was determined for the balance of his life to be known as on the Lord's side, and wished to unite with the church. He referred to your sermon of last Sabbath, from the words, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.'

Mr. Kendall's reasons for uniting with the church may best be learned from one of his own letters and if they lead those similarly situated carefully to consider them, the publication of this incident will have accomplished its highest purpose:

"WASHINGTON, D.C., March 31, 1865

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"My Dear Sir: ... I have, ever since conversion, longed to see a Christian church, the members of which should live religion as well as profess it. In those who formed the 'Calvary Baptist Church' I thought I saw a company of sincere believers. They were poor, and, without any definite purpose to become one of them, I determined to aid them in working out their destiny.

"The impulse which decided me to unite with them was, in part, a belief that I could do more good in the church than out of it, and in part, that my position was in effect a standing argument with the world against Christianity. I felt that I was looked upon and spoken of as a good man, but not a Christian; involving the plain inference, that to be a good man it was not necessary to be a Christian.

"But, my dear sir, I find it very hard to recover that blissful serenity which once pervaded my whole nature.

"I ask you to pray for me.

"Your friend,
"Amos Kendall"

A year later, in a letter asking me to assist his pastor in a series of meetings, he writes with much more assurance -- the "blissful serenity" of former days was restored. Obedience to Jesus had opened his heart to a stronger faith and love, and in their train had come joy and peace. The church had been to him a happy home; and he had been to it an active and strong helper.

Distinguished as have been the honors bestowed upon him for his services in our national affairs, and widely as he is known, his generous liberality towards the advancement of the Redeemer's cause will, I think, give a still more enduring honor and precious memory to the name of Amos Kendall.

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Chapter 8 INCIDENTS

SERMON ON A WOODPILE

While I was holding a series of union meetings in Manchester, N. H., in the early part of 1864, a boy, about fifteen years of age, who was living with a gentleman ten or twelve miles from the city, came to visit his widowed mother, and attended our meetings.

The second evening of his attendance he decided to give himself to the Savior. This he did, and at once became an earnest worker in the Master's service.

Soon after this the gentleman with whom he was living came to the city, and desired him to go back with him. "No," he said, "I cannot go while these meetings continue." (No wonder he felt so! The whole city and region around were being moved by the power of the Spirit; scores and hundreds were under conviction for sin; and, as the fruit of the work, it was thought as many as fifteen hundred were converted.) But his mother advised him to return, telling him he could carry the Savior with him. This placed the matter in a new light, and, after looking it all over, he said, "Yes, I can carry the Savior with me; I will go." With this feeling he returned to his home in the country, where he soon had an opportunity for knowing and showing to others whether or not he had brought the Savior with him. In the course of the day he went out to split some wood; and, while he was thus engaged, several of his young associates, among whom he was a favorite, hearing the sound of his axe, gathered around the wood pile where he was at work. And there, standing on that wood-pile, and holding his axe in his hand, this boy delivered a message for Jesus, which has already been the means of bringing hundreds into the church of Christ.

The boys began at once to question him: "We hear there is a great revival at Manchester; is it true?"

"It is so, boys," was the reply, "and I have given myself to Jesus, and wish you would give yourselves to him."

They did not need long arguments and repeated appeals to move their young hearts, but responded at once to his invitation, saying, "We wish we were Christians."

He then asked them to go and get as many of their companions as they could, and come to his room, and they would have a meeting that evening.

At the appointed time a large number of boys came to his room. Our young brother said to them, "I will do just as Mr. Earle does at Manchester." He then read from the word of God and prayed with them. After this, he said, "Mr. Earle says at Manchester, if any would like to have Christians pray for them, he would like to have them rise; so, if you would like to have me pray for you, I wish you would let me know." Nearly all desired him to pray for them, and many of them prayed for themselves in that first meeting. God was perfecting praise out of those young lips.

At the close of this meeting they agreed to meet again on the following evening.

A larger number were present at the second meeting, among them a business man, who came to listen to the boys. God's Spirit moved upon his heart, and he was soon converted.

The work thus begun continued to widen until it had gone among all the churches in the village, and several of the adjoining villages, and over three hundred were soon gathered into the churches in that vicinity -- all this, apparently, the fruit of that boy's sermon on the wood-pile.

But this was not all.

About six months after leaving Manchester, I was in a printing office in Boston, and there found this same boy setting type. I asked him if he was learning the printer's trade. The reply is

well worthy of record. Said he, "Mr. Earle, my father is dead, and my mother is poor. I am trying to earn money, that I may get an education and preach the gospel."

This moved my heart. I thought how many rich men have money enough and to spare, while this boy is working hard to earn a few dollars to prepare himself to preach Christ. Then and there I said, "Jesus, I will do more for thy cause than I have been doing." I left him to labor on long enough to satisfy himself that it was not excitement.

A few months after, I called there again, and finding he could leave at any time, said to him, "Go home at once, and ask your mother to arrange your clothes; go to school, and prepare for the work of the ministry, and send your bills to me; be prudent and careful in your expenses, and I will see to your wants, although it may require a sacrifice on my part."

This is now the third year since he commenced his studies. He has this summer entered Dartmouth college, and, although he is a member of a different denomination from myself, it has been my privilege so far, with the assistance of kind friends, to see that his bills were paid, and I hope it will be in my power to continue to do so, until he is on the walls of Zion, preaching the glorious gospel to perishing men.

"We all must speak for Jesus,
Where'er our lot may fall;
To brothers, sisters, neighbors,
In cottage, and in hall."

"JESUS WILL TAKE CARE OF ME"

These were the last words uttered by Ella Gilkey, as she passed away from earth, to live with Him who said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

In the winter of 1860-61 I was holding a series of meetings in Watertown, Massachusetts, during which a large number found Jesus precious, many believing they found him in my room; thus rendering that room ever memorable and dear to me.

Among those who there gave themselves to the Savior was Ella. Coming in one morning, with tears on her face, she said, "Mr. Earle, I came up here to give my heart to Jesus. I feel that I am a great sinner. Will you pray for me?" I replied, "I will pray for you, Ella, and I can pray in faith if you see that you are a sinner; for Jesus died for sinners."

After pointing out the way of salvation, I asked her if she would kneel down by my side and pray for herself, and, as far as she knew, give herself to Jesus, to be his forever.

She said, "I will; for I am a great sinner."

Could one so young, and kind to everybody, be a great sinner? Yes, because she had rejected the Savior until she was twelve years old; and when the Holy Spirit had knocked at the door of her heart, she had said, "No, not yet. Go thy way for this time."

We kneeled down, and after I had prayed, she said, "Jesus, take me just as I am. I give myself to thee forever. I will love and serve thee all my life."

The door of her heart was now open, and Jesus entered and took possession. The tears were gone from her face, which was now covered with smiles.

And I believe holy angels in that room witnessed the transfer of her heart to Jesus, and then went back to heaven to join in songs of thanksgiving; for "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

Ella then went downstairs, her face beaming with joy as she thought of her new relation to Jesus, and said to her mother, "I have given myself to Jesus, and he has received me. O, I am so happy!"

Little did we think that in a few days she would be walking the "golden streets" with the bloodwashed throng.

Like the Redeemer, who, when at her age, said to his mother, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" she seemed to long to be doing good.

"What can I do for Christ,' she said,
'Who gave his life to ransom me?
I'll take my cross, and by Him led,
His humble, faithful child will be."

Among other subjects of prayer, there was one which particularly weighed upon her heart. It was for the conversion of an older brother. One day, after earnestly praying that this dear brother might be led to accept the Savior, she said to her mother, "O, I think he will be a Christian!" At another time she said, "I would be willing to die if it would bring him to Jesus."

Could she speak from her bright home above, I believe she would say to this brother, and to all who are delaying, --

"Delay not, delay not; why longer abuse
The love and compassion of Jesus, thy God?
A fountain is opened; how canst thou refuse
To wash and be cleansed in his pardoning blood?"

Anxious to obey her Savior in all things, she obtained permission from her parents to present herself to the church for baptism; and, in the absence of a pastor, I baptized her, with several others, a few weeks after her conversion.

The next Tuesday after her baptism she was present at our evening meeting, and gave her last public testimony for Jesus. When an opportunity was given for any one to speak, Ella arose, and, turning to the congregation, said, in a clear, earnest tone, "If there are any here who have not given their hearts to Jesus, do it now."

As I sat in my room at her father's that night, after meeting, I heard her voice mingling with his, in songs of praise, until near the midnight hour. Less than three days after this, Ella was called away from us, to sing in heaven the song of Moses and the Lamb.

As death drew near, she said to her parents, "I am going home," and commenced singing her favorite hymn:

"O, happy day, that fixed my choice
On thee, my Savior, and my God;
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad."

"Yes," she whispered, "it was a happy day." Then putting her arm around her father's neck, whose heart seemed almost broken, she said, "Don't care for me, father; Jesus will take care of me."

These were her last conscious words; the smile of affection lingered a little longer on her face, the look of love in her eyes, and its pressure in her hand, and then her spirit took its flight, mid angel guards and guides, leaving behind her the clearest evidence of love to Jesus, and a worthy example of fidelity to him, though she had followed him but one short month.

On the first Sabbath of February I gave the hand of fellowship to a large number of new members, and Ella would have been with them had she lived. It so happened that, near the place where she would have stood, there was a vacant spot. I directed the attention of the large assembly to that opening, and asked, "Where is Ella today?" For a moment all was still, and the entire congregation appeared to be bathed in tears, when I said, "Jesus seems to say, 'I have given Ella the hand of fellowship up here.'"

A few days after her death, her parents, in looking over her portfolio, found she had written, -- unknown to anyone, in the middle of a blank book, as if intended only for God's eye, the following deed, which shows her depth of purpose and complete dedication to Christ:--

"December 21, 1860. This day I have given my heart to the Savior, and have resolved to do just what he tells me to do, and to take up my cross daily and follow him, -- my eyes to weep over sinners, and my mouth to speak forth his praise and to lead sinners to Christ.

"Ella J. Gilkey"

And in the vestry of the church at Watertown, these words, printed in large type, and handsomely framed, now hang upon the wall, where all who enter may read them; so that, in the

hours of Sabbath School, and in the prayer meeting and social gathering, Ella, though in heaven, still speaks, and continues her work for Jesus.

* * * * *

Chapter 9

WHY MUST I GIVE UP MY WILL?

Many persons pray and labor to become Christians, but do not succeed, simply because they do not surrender their wills to God. The provisions of the gospel are ample; Christ is willing to receive; and the Father waits to embrace them in the arms of his love; still the peace and joy of sins forgiven are unknown to them.

These persons are sincere, and really want to become Christians; but, alas! many of them live and die only seekers -- never finding Christ.

Many wonder how this can be so: the reason is: the will is not given up.

The seat of the rebellion against God is in the will. Generally, the seeker after Christ gives up all the larger objects, but clings to some little thing, in itself of no importance. He will let go of the mountain, but cling to the straw -- not realizing that the will can have as firm a hold upon the straw as upon the mountain.

We often hear men speak in this way: "I will follow thee, but --" or, "I will give up all, except --" or again, "I will do anything else." Such seekers will not find the light until all conditions are left out.

The following incidents are given to illustrate what I have said; they also show all the importance I attach to what is sometimes called "machinery," or "measures," in a meeting.

Incident Number 1

Some years ago, while engaged in a meeting in Massachusetts, I met with a lady who had been an earnest and sincere seeker after Christ for five years.

She had been greatly prejudiced against what she called an "anxious seat" [today the term "altar" is more often used -- DVM], and had been taught that God's pardoning love could be found in one place as well as another, and, consequently, the particular seat in a meetinghouse could make no difference.

This was true, for the Savior will receive the penitent soul at one time or place as readily as at another -- at home alone as soon as in public, and in a flout seat no more freely than in any other.

"If this is so," said she, "why ask me to take an anxious seat?" The matter seemed so clear to her own mind, that she deliberately said, "I will never go to an anxious seat to be converted."

With this feeling, she had prayed and wept, and sought Christ for five years; but all in vain. Her prayer had been, "Thou knowest, O Lord, I desire to be a Christian, and that one seat is as good as another. O, then, take me as I am -- a poor, lost, helpless sinner!"

"Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to thy cross I cling."

When no answer came to her prayer, she was almost led to question the reliability of the promise, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

As the revival progressed, a large number of her friends and acquaintances were converted. Nearly all of the choir, of which she was a prominent member, had found Christ precious -- many of them had gone to the front seat.

Sometimes she seemed almost angry, and at other times was bathed in tears; but still she said, "I will not go to an anxious seat."

At last, one evening, after scores had gone forward for prayer, she, while sitting almost alone in the place occupied by the choir, yielded the controversy, and said, "I will give up, and do what I have so long said I would not, and if Jesus will take me any sooner on the front seat [the "anxious seat"] than here, I will go there."

But she learned that the difficulty was not in any particular part of the house, but in her will; that when this was given up, and she was willing to go anywhere or do anything that would not disgrace a sinner, then, and not till then, would the Savior accept her.

As she came near the desk, having walked the whole length of the main aisle, I asked her if she had come to take the oft-rejected anxious seat. She replied that she had. Finding that every front seat was occupied, I said to her, "If your will is given up, Christ will receive you in one place as soon as another."

She then went to a little foot-bench near the desk, and had hardly taken her seat before she felt that her sins were forgiven, and Christ was her Savior. The long sought for peace was found at length, without her taking the anxious seat; but not until she was willing, and had made an effort to take it.

Thus we see that the will must be given up before conversion, and that all there is in any measure, or change of seats, or position, is to test the will, and assist the anxious soul the sooner to give up all to Jesus.

Incident Number 2

The folly of saying "I will not" is further illustrated in the case of a business man, of good moral character, who became interested in one of our meetings in New York.

He told us that he had been praying and seeking to become a Christian for fifteen years, but had said he never would go to a front seat for prayer -- he knew better than to do that; others had found Christ without this public demonstration, and he could.

It was true others had found Christ, and he could, without any public expression of this kind; but it is also true that no one can be converted to God until he is willing to yield every point.

Thus determined, this man had sought, through those long years, the Christian's hope; but all in vain. He was willing to take other steps, which most persons would think equally unpleasant, but was not willing to go to anything called an "anxious seat."

One evening he stood up in a large assembly, and, with deep feeling, asked the pastor to pray for him. They kneeled together, while the pastor prayed fervently for his conversion -- the man seeming to realize his lost condition, but still saying he did not believe in going to any particular seat; but no relief came.

At length I asked if there was not something which he had not given up. He said he had given up all except a foolish thing, as he viewed it; and that was, his determination not to go to the front seats for prayer.

I urged him to give up his will in this also, and go and kneel for prayer in the very spot he had so long avoided. He looked the matter over, his pride and will uniting against the step; but at last he yielded, and deliberately said, "I will do just what I said I never would." He started; but before he had reached the front seat the burden which had so long weighed him down was removed, and he felt that his sins were forgiven and Jesus had accepted him: thus clearly showing that the seat, which he had not yet reached, had nothing to do with his conversion, and that all the trouble was in not yielding his will.

This brother has since been to me with the urgent request that I would tell every anxious soul I met about his case, that they might not perish by refusing to give up their wills.

Incident Number 3

A teacher in one of the colleges of New York was at his home for a vacation, where I was holding a series of meetings, and as the interest in them increased, became anxious about his soul; but, believing God would as readily receive him in secret as if he made his feelings known, he decided to let no one know of his anxiety until he was sure his sins had been forgiven.

No matter who spoke to him about his soul, he was determined to manifest no unusual concern about the future. Holding to this decision, he prayed and wrestled for weeks, but found no peace.

It was not necessary to let people know of his desire, in order that he might be converted to God; but it was necessary that he should be willing to let them know.

He returned to the college at the commencement of the term, still desiring to become a Christian, but determined that no one should know of his feelings until he had found the Savior. He was ready to do anything else -- to part with every sin, and consecrate all to Christ; seemed in earnest, and really to desire to be a child of God.

He wondered why one so sincere, so anxious, could find no peace. He knew of no reason for doubting Christ's ability and willingness to save him, and believed he would do it as readily without any public demonstration as with it. Jesus had said, "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

He saw no necessity for making his feelings public until he was sure of his adoption into the family of Christ; for he might fail, he thought, and then would always regret that he had spoken of his desire.

Here he discovered the difficulty -- he had made a condition: No one should know he wanted to be a Christian until he was sure himself that he was one.

Thus, hardly knowing it himself, he had been limiting God, by marking out one path in which he was not willing God should lead him.

Sitting alone in his study one evening, and wondering why he was unable to enter into the "way of life," the thought occurred to him that the trouble might be in his unwillingness to ask anyone to pray for him; and at once he said, "I will give up my way, and go now and ask one of the professors to pray for me." He left his room for this purpose, having given up all conditions, and feeling willing to follow wherever God might lead; but before he had reached the foot of the stairs he received evidence of sins forgiven. All that had seemed so dark a few minutes before was now bright; and what had seemed so strange through those long weeks was now made plain.

Happy in the Lord, he returned to his room without seeing any Christian, or asking anyone to pray for him; thus showing that there was no virtue in the particular act, but in being willing to perform it.

Incident Number 4

The presiding judge of a district in which I once had a meeting became deeply convicted of sin, and privately asked Christians to pray for him, but, through pride and prejudice, he had become very much opposed to kneeling at a Methodist altar; the meetings in that place were held in a Methodist church.

He attended the meetings, but usually sat in the back part of the house. Once or twice he rose for prayer, but would not go to the altar for prayer. He asked one of the ministers if he could not be converted without kneeling at a Methodist altar, and, of course, was told he could. Still he found no peace, although he sought it carefully with tears.

So deeply did he feel his sins, that he sent out at midnight for a minister he knew, to pray with and for him; and they both prayed earnestly, the judge knowing Jesus could, and believing he would, receive him without his going to the altar; that the place he occupied made no difference. That this was true, the result showed; but it also showed that he could not be accepted by Christ until he was willing to go to that despised altar.

At that midnight hour, while the pastor and judge were pleading for the salvation of the latter, he seemed to throw himself upon the Savior, saying, "Jesus, take me just as I am." In the judgment of the pastor he found the sought for peace.

The next day two of the pastors came to me, and said, "We think the judge is converted, and will let the congregation know it this evening, if you give him an opportunity."

I said I would give him a good opportunity to speak; but was sure he was not converted, and could not be until he was willing to kneel at a Methodist altar.

In the evening, after the sermon, I said, "If there is one present who thinks God has forgiven his sins, we would like to hear that one speak a few words." All eyes were turned towards the judge but he had nothing to say. We then bowed in prayer, the judge kneeling in the aisle, and praying for himself as a lost sinner -- this time giving up all, and feeling willing to go even to the spot to which he had so often refused to go.

After this season of prayer he arose, and, turning to me, said, "Mr. Earle, I am now willing to go anywhere. I have found Jesus precious. I am willing to kneel at a Methodist altar, or do any thing Christ wishes." I replied, "We do not want you at this altar if your will is given up; it was only necessary that you be willing to kneel here."

He then gave clear testimony before all that he had found no peace until he was willing to go to that altar; but the moment he yielded his will he found peace, without actually going there.

This case, like the others related in this chapter, shows the necessity of a full surrender of the will before conversion, and also all the importance that can be attached to "measures."

Many anxious persons suppose they have given up all until the will is tested by some simple thing which has no virtue in itself, but shows whether the individual is in complete submission to God or not.

I think it is well, sometimes, to ask the inquirers to meet Christians in another room, to stop after meeting for conversation, or something of the kind, without adopting any set of measures: let the occasion and circumstances suggest their own measures, or none at all, according to the judgment of the person conducting the services.

I find measures, as they are called, that seem very objectionable in a time of coldness in religion are looked at quite differently by the same persons, when the heart is weighed down with earnest desire for the salvation of souls.

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Chapter 10

SERMON -- THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Delivered Sunday evening, October 14, 1866, in Union Hall, San Francisco, California

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven Him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Matt. xii. 32.

Every person will see at once that there is a difference between speaking against the Holy Ghost and speaking against Jesus. If you will look at the connection you will see that the Pharisees had been charging Christ with being in league with the devil. "Now," said the Redeemer, "you can call me a devil, and say I cast out devils through the prince of devils, and yet be forgiven; but when my Father comes, by his Spirit, and bears testimony that I am his Son, and you reject that testimony, for that sin there is no forgiveness." One is speaking against Jesus in the absence of light, and the other is speaking against him under the clear evidence of his divinity. I understand this to be the distinction between speaking against Christ and speaking against the Holy Ghost.

I know there are various opinions about the Unpardonable sin. Some suppose it could only have been committed by those who saw Christ's miracles, and heard his instructions from his own lips others think it has been committed since that time, but in very rare instances; while others believe they have committed it, and spend their lives in gloomy forebodings, unfit for the service of God or the society of men. And yet I believe this sin has been committed in thousands of instances little suspected. I heard, some time ago, of a dying man asking a minister to pray with him. The minister kneeled down, but could not utter a word, and rose from his knees. Said the dying man, "Why will you not pray with me?" The minister replied, "I do not know why I could not speak in prayer, but will try again." He kneeled down and tried in vain to utter words in prayer. God has said, "There is a sin unto death; I do not say you shall pray for it." God does not always mark this sin in this manner, but clearly shows us that when it is committed he will not hear prayer for it.

I shall answer, as clearly as I can, four questions.

1. What is the unpardonable sin?

The process by which this sin is committed is very simple: it is to continue to say "No, no, no," to the offers of mercy, until you are a sinner let alone or given up by the Holy Spirit. When thus left, conscience no longer exercises its functions, and the Holy Spirit no longer applies the truth. When this state is reached, the soul is usually calm and quiet. The individual can then sleep well, and go on with his business, without much trouble about his soul's salvation; the conscience is then measurably at ease, the "spirits light and gay." He did not, does not, will not, know or feel that he is doomed.

It is generally believed that the Pharisees did finally succeed in committing this sin; and, if you will go with me, we will see how they managed to do so. We see in their case, from first to last, a willful and a continued rejection of evidence. No matter how plain and conclusive the evidence Christ gave them of his divinity, they said, "Away with it! Away with it!" Look at a few instances of this rejection of light: The sisters of Lazarus sent for Jesus when their brother was sick. Jesus waited until Lazarus had been dead four days, then went to the grave, in the presence of a large number of these men, and, when the stone was removed, Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." It is thought Lazarus lay on something like a table, or shelf, not in a coffin, and that he threw his feet to the ground, raised himself up, and stood wrapped in his grave-clothes. Jesus said; "Loose him, and let him go."

This miracle was laid before the Pharisees, as if to ask them, "Will you now receive Jesus as the Christ?" They reply, "Away with the evidence!" I ask you, my hearers, do you not see in this a willful rejection of light? But they had not committed the unpardonable sin yet: God is longsuffering.

By and by a girl about twelve years of age died, and was laid out in an upper chamber. Jesus went into that chamber, and said, "Talitha cumi," that is, "Maid, arise;" and she was restored to the rejoicing family. "Pharisees, will you now embrace me as your Savior?" "Away with him! Away with him!" But it was not yet too late.

After this a young man died, and was being carried on a bier to the grave. Jesus approached that bier, and said, "Young man, arise;" and the young man arose, and was restored to his friends. This evidence of Christ's divinity was also rejected, and Jesus still waiting to be gracious.

The Pharisees heard that Christ was a little out of town, preaching, and they sent officers to arrest him. I should not wonder if those officers carried with them chains and handcuffs, to bind him if necessary; but after listening to him a few minutes they were deeply affected, and returned without him. The Pharisees inquired, "Why have ye not brought him?" "Never man spake as this man," said the officers. Why did not the Pharisees say, "Officers, if you think he is the Redeemer of lost men, we will weigh the evidence"? But no: they say, "We will not receive him, if even our own officers are converted to him." They cry, "Away with him!" O, the deep depravity of the human heart! Yet they had not rejected half the light that we have. But there was mercy for these men yet.

Christ was brought before Pilate to be condemned; but, after a fair examination, Pilate said, "I find no fault in him; I will, therefore, release Jesus unto you." But they cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Pilate, therefore, went back into the hall, and asked him if he was the Son of God. Jesus satisfied him of his divinity. Then Pilate took a basin of water and washed his hands in their presence, and said, "Take ye him and crucify him: I find no fault in him." The Pharisees said, "His blood be on us and on our children." Then Pilate delivered him to them to be crucified, and the soldiers led him away.

After he was nailed to the cross, a very affecting scene followed, which gave clear evidence of Christ's divinity. As the blood streamed from his hands and feet, Jesus cried, "My

God, my God, why hast; thou forsaken me?" The great veil or curtain of the temple was torn from top to bottom, and the sun seemed to muffle its face for three hours over the dying Jesus; the graves were opened around Jerusalem: and so fully did the Father vindicate the Son, that even the captain of the guards smote upon his breast, and said, "Surely this was the Son of God." Christ here evidently saw the sword of divine wrath raised to strike his murderers down, and cried, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." That is, "Father, my murderers have not all the evidence of my divinity I am going to give them."

They went to Pilate, and said (O, what bitterness against Christ!): "We remember that deceiver said, if we put him to death, the third day he would rise again; now we want a guard, in order to make him secure until three days are past, that we may prove him to be an impostor." A heavy guard of Roman soldiers was furnished, and Christ's dead body put in a new tomb, and guarded from Friday night until Sunday morning. Jesus was sweetly sleeping in the embrace of death all this time: thus teaching this children that the grave is not a gloomy place to those who love God.

Sunday morning the Father seemed to say to one of the angels, "You can now go and roll away the stone." The angel flew to the sepulcher, and rolled back the stone, and sat down upon it, I think, with folded wings, and doubtless said in his heart, "How much depends on the resurrection of that body!" While the angel sat looking upon the corpse, the Savior arose, as if it had been from a sweet night's rest, and walked out, in the presence of the soldiers. The soldiers went to the Pharisees and told them that Christ had done as he said; that he had just arisen from the dead in their presence. This was soon hushed, and the soldiers were paid large sums of money to swear that his disciples had stolen him away while they were asleep. All this evidence they rejected, and still could be forgiven.

One more proof of Christ's divinity was to be given them by the outpouring of the Spirit after his ascension. This was done ten days after his departure, in a wonderful manner, adding three thousand to the Messiah's kingdom in a single day. The Pharisees, by rejecting this last evidence, together with all that had preceded, seemed to fix the black seal of death upon their souls. O, the doom of the sinner when God has given him up! Then he is a sinner let alone.

2. I will now notice, very briefly, the inquiry, What persons can commit the unpardonable sin? If what I have just said is true, then anyone who can deliberately reject the offers of mercy, and say "No" to Christ's invitations, is in danger of being left by the Holy Spirit to perish.

Our danger is greater than the Pharisees' was, because we have more light than they. All the evidence they had of Christ's divinity we have, together with the accumulated evidence of eighteen hundred years.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."

All this light is shining around your pathway; and if the Pharisees could commit this sin, how much more easily can you commit it, young man, or young woman. I do not know why you have rejected the Savior so long and so often. Do think of it? How many times you have said "No" to the calls of the gospel. O, your peril! I hope it is not too late! Do not say "No" to this call tonight.

3. How does this sin show itself after it has been committed? -- Generally it shows itself in one of two ways. One is, by calling out the malignity of the heart against Christ and his people. In this state, nothing torments the sinner more than a revival of religion. The very ringing of the bells that call Christians to the house of prayer annoys him: nothing is too severe for him to say against religion.

But the most ordinary way in which this sin shows itself is, by shutting up the heart in indifference, so that the one who has committed it has no feeling on the subject, no fears, no trouble; has no idea that he has committed this sin, but is perfectly calm and easy. The terrors of the law cause no alarm. Christ's claims on him do not move him. In fact, no view of religion troubles him; he is at ease; he is not, as many suppose, in great distress for fear he has committed this sin; full of gloom and fearful forebodings, fearing it is too late for him to be saved. It does not show itself in this way, but, on the contrary, removes fear; he is a sinner let alone.

We often find persons near death without religion, and yet without fear. If asked a few minutes before death if they would like to have a Christian pray with them, they say, No; or if they would like to have the Bible read to them, they do not wish to see the Bible. Ask them if they are not afraid to meet God, they say they are not in the least; they are ready to meet him any minute. In this state, there is great reason to fear that the sin in question has been committed.

We find many church members, and others who have been church members, in this indifferent state. They do not weep over the unconverted, nor warn them as though they felt for them at all. Where this has continued long, it is a bad indication: such professors should be alarmed. Do I speak to one in this indifferent state? O that I could sound a note of alarm, that might reach a tender chord in your heart, and break this spell of indifference!

I do not know that I can show how this sin manifests itself, better than by repeating those beautiful lines of Dr. Alexander:

"There is a line by us unseen
That crosses every path --
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and his wrath.

"To pass that limit is to die --
To die as if by stealth;
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Nor pale the glow of health.

"The conscience may be still at ease,

The spirits light and gay;
That which is pleasing still may please,
And care be thrust away.

"But on that forehead God has set
Indelibly a mark,
Unseen by man, for man, as yet,
Is blind and in the dark.

"Indeed, the doomed one's path below
May bloom as Eden bloomed;
He did not, does not, will not know,
Or feel that he is doomed.

"He feels, perchance, that all is well,
And every fear is calmed;
He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell --
Not only doomed, but damned.

"O, where is that mysterious bourn
By which our path is crossed,
Beyond which God himself has sworn,
That he who goes is lost?"

Let me entreat you, my dear hearer, if it is not too late, if God's patience is not exhausted by your long-continued rejection of his offers of mercy, if one faint wish or desire lingers in your bosom to become a Christian, cherish it as you would the last ray of hope of heaven. Let everything go until you find Christ precious. Tomorrow it may be too late, even if life is spared. Your situation may be like that of a man of whom I lately heard, who entered a dark, winding cave, carrying with him a lamp and ball of twine. That he might find his way out of the cave, in case his light went out, he fastened one end of the twine outside, and unwound it as he walked into the cave. In this manner he had gone a long distance into those dark recesses, sometimes climbing over rugged rocks, and then descending into low, damp passages, until at length he entered a large and spacious apartment, containing very rare and beautiful curiosities.

Desiring to bring from the cave some of these rich treasures, he set down his lamp, and placed his ball by it -- only for a moment. While breaking off a stalactite of peculiar beauty, his lamp, by some means, tipped over and went out. Supposing he could easily find his lamp and ball of twine, he commenced feeling about in the dark cave: but his efforts were in vain. No human ear was there to hear his cries for help, as he crawled first in one direction and then in another, searching for that thread. Could he but grasp again that weak, that little thread, it would lead him back to the sunlight, never before so dear.

Long, weary days and nights were spent searching for that only ray of hope; but all to no purpose -- he was never again to look upon the faces of the dear ones at home. His lifeless body was found in that dark cavern long afterwards.

O, what reflections he must have had when starving and dying in that cave! What would he not have given, could he have held once more that thread in his trembling fingers. But the light once gone out, his doom was fixed -- he must perish.

So, my dear hearer, you have a little desire at this hour to become a Christian. The Holy Spirit, though often grieved and insulted by your rejection of his kind and earnest entreaties to embrace Jesus, still shines in the dark recesses of your soul. As in the cave, when the light went out, the thread was lost, so when the Spirit leaves you, the silken thread of desire is lost, and you are in the dark cave of sin without a guide to lead you out to hope and heaven; and your lamentation will be. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

But I must answer the fourth question.

4. Why cannot this sin be forgiven as well as others? If the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, why not from this?

It is not because the person is a greater sinner than others, but because he rejects the only remedy God has for his sins, and continues this rejection until he is a sinner let alone; then conscience does not exercise its functions, and the Spirit ceases to apply the truth, and he must perish.

You remember the fiery flying serpent that came among the Israelites. When it struck a man, it was certain death; no remedy could be found; every person stung died. Moses went to God for a remedy. God said to him, Take a piece of brass, of the shape and size of the fiery serpent, and raise it on a pole, and when any man, rich or poor, aged or young, cries out, "I am stung!" tell him to look at that piece of brass. That was God's remedy -- the only one in the world. All who looked were cured. Every one knows the brass could not remove the poison, but was a type of the Redeemer on the cross -- "As Moses lifted up the serpent, even so must the Son of man be lifted up."

Suppose a man to cry out, "I am stung, but will not do anything unless I can give a reason for it." He will not look at that piece of brass for a remedy, but rejects it, and puts it under his feet, and then prays for help. God would say to him, "Your disease is incurable, for the simple reason that you have rejected the only remedy that can remove the poison."

So the sinner has only to reject the gospel of Christ and the offers of mercy, until the grieved Spirit takes his final departure, and God has given him up; then his sin is unpardonable, because he has rejected the only way by which God can save him.

O, how deeply do I now feel the solemnity of this hour, with three or four thousand precious souls before me. Perhaps many of you are making the final decision, whether you will embrace the Savior now, or again say, "Go thy way for this time." Let me urge you not to say it, but open your heart now to the Holy Spirit.

"O, grieve him not away,

'Tis Mercy's hour."

I think I feel as the nurse did, in the hospital, with his thumb on the great artery, while a wounded soldier arranged his matters to die.

After a severe battle, a soldier had his limb amputated very near his body. The veins had been taken up, and he seemed to be doing well; but on one occasion, as the nurse was dressing his wounds, the blood began to flow freely. The nurse held the vein with his thumb, and sent for a physician, who, on entering the room, said, "It is well, my brave fellow, that it was not the large artery -- I can take this up." A short time after, the blood flowed more freely than before, and the skillful nurse, placing his thumb this time on the large artery, which had broken open, sent again for the physician.

After a careful examination of the whole matter, it was decided that the artery could not be taken up without removing the thumb of the nurse; and if his thumb was removed, the soldier must die immediately.

It only remained for the brave man to make immediate arrangements for death. About three hours were employed in sending messages to loved ones, and in arranging his effects before he left the world. When this was done -- the nurse still holding the vein, and knowing that death would follow in three minutes after lifting his thumb -- the brave but dying soldier said, "Now, kind nurse, you can take off your thumb: I must go. Farewell to all."

Now came the severe trial to the nurse -- how could he lift his thumb under such circumstances! The accumulated blood already rendered it difficult to hold the artery; so, turning his eye from the soldier, he lifted his thumb, and in three minutes death had done its work.

I think I feel very much as this nurse did -- fearing, as I do, that with many in this congregation the crisis has come when you are to decide where you will spend eternity. I fear [that] this [time] is for some of you the line

"That marks the destiny of men
For glory or despair."

As the nurse felt that he could not lift his thumb, and yet must, so with me now -- How can I close this sermon, and end this entreaty, without knowing that you will not grieve the Spirit away this time?

Let me ask the Recording Angel to hold his pen, while each one of you in this hall decides the question -- whether you will cherish what little desire you have to become Christ's, what little of the Holy Spirit's influence still lingers about your heart, or say, "Go thy way for this time," which may be forever!

But I must not linger. Let me request every person in the hall -- whether professor of religion or not -- who intends to cherish what desire he has to serve God, to rise on his feet.

Thank God, nearly every one present has risen! May God help us all to keep our resolution, for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

At the close of this sermon, a short time was spent in silent prayer, after which it was believed not less than five hundred persons requested us to pray that they might receive forgiveness of sin. As nearly as I can ascertain, not less than five thousand souls have been brought to embrace Christ through the influence of this single sermon.

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Chapter 11 FIREMEN'S MEETING

One evening, during a series of meetings held with the Second Baptist church in Brooklyn, N. Y., I preached, by special appointment, to the firemen, and have thought it might be interesting and profitable, instead of a general account of the meeting, to quote from the "Daily Eagle" of March 12, 1858, the following report of the sermon:

"Last evening the members of Neptune Engine company, No. 7, of Brooklyn, attended in a body the Second Baptist church, on Leonard Street, to listen to a sermon by Rev. A. B. Earle. As the announcement was made public, the attendance at the church was so great that nearly half that came could not get inside.

"The services were opened by prayer, followed by singing, after which Mr. Earle delivered his discourse. He spoke in a plain but earnest manner, engaging the deep attention of his audience.

"The text selected was from Mark ix. 44: 'Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.' He said he should call their attention more particularly to the latter clause of the text. He thought nothing would grieve them more than to meet with a fire which they could not put out; they would go home sorrowful at heart should such an event happen to them. They had often met and subdued this enemy -- fire; they had always quenched it; but he should speak to them of a fire which could never be quenched.

"He then divided his text into two parts; first, What the worm is that dieth not, and why it does not die; second, What the fire is that is not quenched, and why it is not quenched.

"The worm that never dies is guilty memory, -- the remembrance of past guilt. Memory is like a living, gnawing worm, producing a restless pain in the soul, as a gnawing worm would do in the vitals of the body. Impressions once made upon the mind can never be effaced. A name once heard or mentioned, though forgotten for a time, will return in after years when circumstances shall recall it. Incidents of childhood carry their recollection to the grave. Memory is active when all else is still. In moments of peril the memory is more vivid and active, and thoughts of the past crowd upon the brain with inconceivable rapidity.

Instances are often related of men in peril, by sea who have seen the events of former days recalled by memory; words and deeds they had thought forgotten have returned to them; their past life has seemed to come before their mental vision with startling reality. When the soul shall have dropped its fetters, and passed beyond the restraints of flesh, memory will still be fresh and active. This memory which tenants the body during life, and clings to the spirit hereafter, is the gnawing of the deathless worm. This worm draws all its nourishment from this world.

"He cited as an instance of the activity of memory, and its effects, the case of a prisoner who was removed from one prison to another, where the treatment was better. The man said he did not like the new prison as well as the old one, although he did not have to work as hard, had better food and kinder keepers; but in the new prison the convicts were not allowed to speak to each other; and in this terrible silence his memory was ever active -- it was all think, think, think. So it will be hereafter: we shall be constantly thinking. We should therefore be careful how we store the memory, since its recollections will ever be present with us.

"In the second part of his discourse he considered the fire that can never be quenched.

"They might believe that no fire could break out in the city which, by their skill and activity, they could not put out; and their fellow citizens, confident in their ability, went to their repose, feeling that by the vigilance, tact, and energy of the firemen their lives and property were secure. But there is a fire that cannot be quenched: it is remorse, or the realization of our sin in the dark world of despair. The Savior says it is better to have but one eye than to be cast into hell,

"The fire of God's wrath is the sinner's realization of his wickedness, and a guilty remembrance of the past. The reason this fire cannot be quenched is, there is nothing there with which to quench it. Suppose a building was wrapped in flames, and the firemen brought their engines to the spot, but could find no water; they would be powerless, however good their intentions. So with the fire of God's wrath -- the guilty remembrance in the world of despair: there will be nothing with which to put it out; there is nothing here that can quench it but the blood of Jesus.

"He called their attention to the heroic fireman, young Sperry, of New Haven, who went into a burning building to save a child supposed to be there, and lost his own life. He felt assured there was not one among that company whom he addressed but would rush, as Sperry did, into the flames to save a fellow creature's life. So if he (the speaker), by rushing into the flames of perdition, could drag a brother out of the fire, how readily would he do it.

"An Indian, who had been converted, was asked by a white man to describe how religion came to him. He led the white man out into the woods, and gathering some dry leaves, arranged them in a circle, and put a little worm in the center of it. He then set the leave on fire. The worm sought escape, first on one side, then on another, but there was no way out; so, drawing itself again to the center of the circle, it sank into a numb and listless state. The Indian then lifted the worm from the fire with his fingers, and said, "This is the way God saved me! Jesus plucked me out of the

flames." So nothing but the hand of God can save any one; nothing but the blood of Jesus can quench the fires of a guilty soul.

"To be saved we must be born again. Some people suppose they would be happy if they could get to heaven. They are mistaken; they could not be happy there, unless this fire within them had been quenched here. A guilty soul in heaven would be like a convicted murderer pardoned at the last moment by the governor of a state. He is now a free man, and the law cannot touch him. He returns to his home and his family. His wife welcomes him back with joy, and his children gather around him. Still he cannot be happy: consciousness of guilt haunts him. The governor may pardon, but cannot justify. Remorse preys upon him, and he feels that he cannot stay in that happy home -- it is no place for him while blood is on his soul.

"The preacher then drew a metaphor, strikingly applicable to his hearers, illustrating the free agency of man in his own salvation.

"Suppose the exterior of a building was constructed of fire-proof materials; fire could not reach it on the outside, and it could be opened only from the inside. Suppose this building should take fire from the inside, and you knew there was a citizen within, liable to perish in the flames. You would go there with your engine, and seek to save him; but you could not reach the flames from the outside, and could do nothing unless the man opened the door. If he would be saved, he must open the door, and that speedily, for the flames were gathering closer around him each minute. So it is with each of us -- every man holds the key of the door to his own heart. Jesus says to every one, Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if you will open the door, I will come in and save you.

"There is a fountain filled with blood that will extinguish this fire, and it will be poured upon the guilty soul if the door is opened; for the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. But when we pass out of this world this blood cannot be obtained, and the fire cannot be quenched.

"Mr. Earle, after thanking the audience for their attention, concluded with an earnest exhortation to them to seek for the truth and light of the gospel.

"At the close of the sermon the congregation were invited to remain for a prayer meeting which would follow; many of the visitors left, but the firemen kept their seats until the meeting closed."

* * * * *

Chapter 12 LETTERS FROM YOUNG CONVERTS AND OTHERS

We give the following letter from little Sadie, as written by her mother, in Sadie's simple words:--

"Tell brother Earle I am sorry that he is going away. Tell him I will pray for him twice a day, and he must not forget to pray for little Sadie. I feel so very happy this beautiful day. Tell him

that I love Jesus better than anybody in the wide world. I love my own angel Georgie, that went to Jesus when papa was in the war. I want to see Jesus holding our little lamb in his arms; for Georgie prayed, and I will always pray to Jesus. Tell him that when I went to tell my dear teacher that I was going to give my heart to Jesus, the devil said to me, 'Don't go; don't do it, Sadie.' But I said, 'Yes, I will.' And when I came home, and knelt down at the bed, and prayed, he came again, and said, 'Don't pray.' But I said, 'I will,' and I did, and felt so happy. Tell him I will try and be a good girl, and then I will see them all in heaven.

Your little friend,
Sadie

"Dayton, Ohio, January 29, 1866."

* * *

A family letter, signed by the father, mother, and three children: --

"Hartford, December 26, 1864

"Dear Brother Earle: The love of Christ constraineth us to declare to you that our hearts have burned within us while you have talked with us and opened to us the Scriptures. Our souls are drawn out towards you, as we believe you are one of our blessed Savior's reflectors to our race. When you came among us, two of our number were as sheep without a shepherd; but now we trust that we are all pursuing the way to the fold on high. God grant that we may meet each other there."

* * *

Ohio letter; sent with a pair of socks.

"Dayton, January 29, 1866

"Dear Brother Earle: Will you accept this pair of homespun socks -- made of Ohio wool, spun and knit, primitive style, by 'Buckeye' industry, insured to be warm and durable, but far less so than the friendship of your many, many friends in Ohio? I need not, like the old lady who knit socks for the soldiers, attach a note, saying to the wearer, 'Let the toe never be turned from the foe,' for you have told us that in the whole armor of God there is no shield for the back, no provision for the coward, none for defeat nor surrender. So I have no fear but that you will continue to fight Satan and sin as long as your feet need protection from the chill winters of earth.

"I pray that you may still be successful, win and conquer, till the great Captain of our salvation promotes you to fields elysian, where, with feet immortal, you haste along the shining ranks, under orders divine, file in with angel hosts, whose feet need not even be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, for no rugged, thorny ways are there to tread, and all is peace."

* * *

"WOULD LIKE TO BE A MINISTER"

"Dayton, January, 1866

"Dear Sir: I am a little boy twelve years old, but I love Jesus and his people. I would like to be a minister of the gospel. Pray for me that I may become one in God's good time."

* * *

Another lad, fifteen years of age, writes: "It seems to me, the height of my ambition in this world would be to stand up and preach the gospel. To this end I hope I may have your most earnest prayers."

God seems to have planted such seed in the hearts of many of the youth interested in our meetings, and to have nourished that seed, until scores of living ministers, now gathering sheaves in the great harvest field, can look back to these same meetings as God's seed time, when he said to them, "Go preach."

* * *

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF WANDERING

"Chelsea, April 18, 1866

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"Dear Sir: As you have not my name upon your little book, will you add it as the name of one who has returned from his wanderings, after a period of twenty-five years, and is now in the enjoyment of his first love? I thank God for a praying wife, the prayers of Christians, and your kind invitations, which have been instrumental in bringing me back to the Savior."

* * *

A HAPPY NEW YEAR

"Sacramento, California, January 1, 1867

"Dear Mr. Earle: On this beautiful, sunny morning, I wish you a very, very Happy New Year. I am glad you came to our city, but I am sad that you must leave us so soon. I recollect, however, that as you made me happy by coming here, so others will be made happy wherever you go.

"I shall always remember you, and in truth can say, with my little brother, I wish you could be with us always. I shall, at least, always remember and love you."

* * *

A SABBATH SCHOOL CLASS NOT TOO YOUNG FOR JESUS

"Dayton, January 29, 1866

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"Dear Sir: You will remember me as the Sabbath School teacher who did not want her class converted, because she thought they were too young. I have earnestly prayed that God would forgive me this sin, and convert every member of my class. Two of them think they have found the Savior; three more are feeling deeply on the subject.

"Pray for me, that I may be a faithful teacher, and that each member of my class may be a Christian."

* * *

ALMOST FOURSORE

"Concord, N. H., May 16, 1864

"Rev. Mr. Earle

"Dear Sir: I am almost fourscore years old. I will ask sometimes to be remembered in your prayers, that my heavenly Father will watch over me through the remainder of my earthly pilgrimage; keep me from sinning against him; give me sweet submission to his will; be my support when called to pass through the dark valley; and, through the infinite riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, be my portion forever."

* * *

PART WAY UP

"Cincinnati, January 6, 1866

"My Dear Mr. Earl:

"By your coming to our city I have received new light on religious matters. My proud heart has been humbled. I have set up the family altar, where I read and pray. I have, as yet, but little feeling, except growing stronger in my resolution. I cannot go back; I must go forward; my word is pledged.

"I feel like being part way up an inclined plane: to press forward and upward, Jesus may be found; to go back is sure destruction."

* * *

A GRANDDAUGHTER'S REQUEST

"Dayton, Ohio, January, 1866

"Dear Brother Earle:

"I want to ask you to please pray for my dear old grandfather, whose hairs are white with many winters. O, do not forget him in your prayers, that he may seek the Savior ere it is too late."

* * *

FROM A LITTLE SCOLDER

"Manchester, N. H., 1864

"Dear Mr. Earle:

"You have almost brought me to the Savior. I think I have found him, and he is precious to my soul. You remember my telling you I could not keep from scolding. I prayed that night very earnestly, and I believe God helped me, because the next day I tried very hard and almost succeeded. I am going to try every day. I want to love God still more."

* * *

FROM A GRATEFUL DEACON

"Burlington, Vt., June 26, 1866

"My Dear Brother Earle:

"I have much to be thankful to God for. I have a kind, Christian wife, two kind, Christian daughters, and a little jewel just given us, to be cared for and trained for heaven. O, how much I love them! Yet I love my dear Savior more than these.

"Now, my dear brother, I cannot express the gratitude I feel towards you for what you have been enabled to do for me and mine, and the cause of Christ in this place, during the past two weeks. I have felt, in being in your company, that I was getting as near my Savior's representative as man could get. I have enjoyed your words of counsel and cheer. I have felt that God, by his Holy Spirit, was with you at all times. My heart was drawn out towards you before you came here; but how much stronger does the magnet draw as I come nearer to it! Why is this? The answer to my mind is, Because of your nearness to my blessed Savior.

"I feel that I have come to love Christ and his cause more; have found a nearness to God that I have never known before. I feel that I am a better man, and better prepared to labor in the vineyard; my implements are in a better condition for use. My purposes are very much strengthened.

"While I say these things for myself, I know I can say the same for my family, and especially would I mention my wife's parents. Mother says, 'How many sermons brother Earle has preached, taking for his text, The food he eats, the clothes he wears, and everything his eye rests upon.'"

* * *

From two little brothers, sons of one of the leading members of the San Francisco Ministerial Union:

"My Dear Mr. Earle: I am very glad you came ere, for since I gave my heart to Jesus in your room I have been very happy. I wish you would stay here a little longer, for I think these meetings are doing a great deal of good. I hope you will pray for all the boys that have come to Christ while you have been here, and remember that we will all pray for you. Wherever you go on this coast, may the Holy Spirit rest on your labors; and may you get home safely to your children, and meet us all in heaven at last."

* * *

From the other brother: "My Dear Mr. Earle: I am exceedingly happy since I gave my heart to the Savior. I know that Christ has received me into his fold. I am very glad that you came to this city. One reason why I am glad is, that by you I found a precious Redeemer. I wish you could stay here longer, and advance the religion of Jesus. I hope that wherever you go you may be the means of leading many sinners to Christ. When you are returning to Boston, you may remember that I am praying for you. I thank you very much for all your kindness to me."

IN SUCH AN HOUR YOU CAME

"Cincinnati, January 6, 1866

"Kind Friend: You are about to leave us for another field of labor. I can say, with many thanks, it has been good for me that you have been here. Three years ago a light from the 'shining shore' flickered across my life-path. I listened to a 'still small voice,' saying, 'Give me thine heart.' I learned to know that voice, and loved it. I 'laid down my arms,' laid my burdens at the feet of the great Shepherd. One after another have the blossoms in our home garden been culled to bloom anew in Paradise. On the billow of earthly sorrow Christ has laid his hand, and said, 'Peace, be still.' But must I say it? -- there have been times when I seemed all alone -- there was no Christ; weary -- no rest; hungry -- no manna. All was dark. In such an hour you came. Your plain teaching and perfect trust helped me to say, 'The Lord is my Shepherd.' I have wept bitter, scalding tears at my unworthiness; but you have said, 'The Lord loveth his erring ones.' Many of your sermons will be treasured in memory forever; they will be green spots in the desert of life.

"My earnest wish and prayer is, that God may ever be with you, Christ's promises your stay, and holy angels forever over you."

* * *

BURDENED FOR FRIENDS

"Stockton, Cal., December, 1866

"Dear Brother Earle: I have an aching heart today -- a heavy-laden heart. I feel as did Jacob of old, that I cannot let the angel of God depart: 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.'

"I cannot bear the thought that ours may be a divided family in the other world. I desire the prayers of Christians for my dear parents. O, how dreadful if they should be lost! Will you pray for me that I may have faith in God?"

* * *

WE CANNOT SAVE OURSELVES

"Sacramento, January 1, 1867

"Rev. Mr. Earle

"Dear Brother in Christ: Today, I think, is the happiest New Year I ever experienced.

"I thank God for the sermon you preached from the text, 'Have faith in God.' From that time I have seen my utter helplessness, and inability to save myself by any act of my own. I have been enabled to see the beautiful simplicity of faith of taking God at his word. Then and there I took Christ as my all in all, and have since been sweetly resting in him by faith."

* * *

NO OTHER REFUGE

"San Jose, Cal., February 11, 1867

"Dear Brother Earle: ... My experience for several days has been gloomy. My mind has been exercised in a peculiar manner, and I have been tempted to doubt the genuineness of my conversion to God.

"The doubts in my mind, and the peculiar relations of my business life and associations at the present time, render my work in the good cause an up-hill one of no ordinary grade. For several days I have not seen a single ray of light -- not one bright spot to dispel the inky blackness which seems to press down close on my defenseless head; and often has the cry been forced from me,

'Cover my defenseless head
With the shadow of Thy wing.'

"I have no other refuge in this storm but Christ, and to his cross I will cling even though I perish there.

"I have made an entire surrender of soul and body, with everything I know of, to God; and I cannot think he is doing anything else than testing my faith in the fire of a furnace seven times heated.

'O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though pressed by every foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of any earthly woe!'"

The writer of this letter is a business man in San Jose. He rose one evening in our meeting, and requested prayer for four persons. He says he made this request in derision, but sat down a convicted sinner, and did not rest until he found peace in Christ.

* * *

THE WAY LITTLE FREDDIE MADE HIS WILL

The following letter was written by Freddie's sister:

"Brooklyn, N.Y., March 17, 1866

"Dear Brother Earle: ... Little Freddie was always ready to give, especially to the Sabbath School. When the Tabernacle Baptist church was built, Mr. Spencer, our superintendent, asked the children if they would not help pay for the building, telling them that every three cents they brought would pay for two bricks. Dear little Freddie, who was then five years old, collected as much money as he could, in order, as he said, that he might own some of the bricks. But he did not live long, to enjoy the Sabbath School on earth. The last Sabbath he spent with us he wept bitterly because he could not go to Sabbath School.

"He had just been promoted from the infant class, and his teacher had given him a Testament. As we stood around his dying bed, he asked for his Testament, and, clasping it in his hands, said, 'Give all my money to the Sabbath School,' and fell asleep, as he had lived, in Jesus."

The following letters, from two little sisters, show how differently even young Christians can regard the same truth. To both Jesus was precious. To one this was simply a matter of happy experience; to the other, it was the evidence of her conversion:

* * *

"Mr. Earle: I think I have found the Savior, and he is precious. I want you to remember me in your prayers, and I will remember you in mine. -- Laura."

The other sister writes, --

"Mr. Earle: I know I have found the Savior, because he is so precious. Pray for me that I may be one of God's flowers. -- Nellie"

* * *

MUST WORK AS WELL AS WISH

"Cincinnati, Ohio, January, 1866

"My Dear Mr. Earle: ... I have often wished to be a Christian. You taught me that to become one I must work as well as wish, -- seek if I would find. I felt the truth of your teachings, and sought my Savior, and trust I found him; for I have sweet peace and happiness, such as life's pleasures never gave. All the years of my life will be too short to serve him ... I know that with my human heart I cannot live Christ-like, unless he leads me ... I want to do some good while I live, -- to bring some weary, sin-laden soul to Jesus. I want to be willing even to bear the cross, and if, by and by, I may wear the crown, I don't want it to be a starless one.

"You will always be remembered, for you were instrumental in having my name written in the Lamb's book of life. -- Georgia"

* * * * *

Chapter 13

THE VERMONT MEETING

God works through means of his own sovereign choosing; often, perhaps always, in his moral world, through individual instrumentalities. It would seem as if God loved to set the great seal of his strength upon what otherwise were weakness. He touches the spring of a single human heart as tenderly and absolutely as if it were the only heart; then touches corresponding springs in many others, and when all is ready, he places, at the weakest point it may be, a little battery in the shape of some event or providence, and the whole unconscious community of hearts is stirred into sudden life and responsive action.

In the year 1866 the Spirit of God moved in this manner: first upon the heart of one man who was to be the mover in the matter, and then upon the hearts of many ministers and church officers in Vermont, producing such a new impulse and interest as culminated at length in a unanimous call for a convention of Christians of all denominations in the state, to be held in the city of Burlington, for the purpose of making a united effort to get nearer to Christ individually, and of consultation with each other as to the best means of promoting a revival of religion in the churches. The people came together upon the fifth day of September, and continued the meeting through three days, holding each day three sessions, each session continuing three hours. Some remained in the place of meeting from nine o'clock in the morning until five in the afternoon, spending the interval at noon in prayer and inquiry for entire consecration to Christ.

In the words of Rev. John Quincy Adams, who was present, "No description of these meetings can be given to one who was not present. At the first meeting we attended, on the morning of the fifth, brother Earle, who had been requested to preside over the convention and direct its movements, and who had preached the evening previous, gave us a discourse from the text, 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.'

At the close of that sermon about fifty ministers came forward and knelt at the altar, making then and there an unconditional surrender of themselves to God. And from that meeting until the close of the convention on Friday, testimony after testimony to the reception of the rich blessing of God in leading Christians into a higher knowledge of Christ and his requirements of them, was given. The sensible presence of the Holy Spirit was at times almost too much to be borne; and the whole audience would be melted into tears, or feelings would find vent in sobs or audible expressions of praise.

"On the morning of the eighth, by the special suggestion and urgent request of some of the brethren, about an hour and a half was occupied in relating personal experiences of the blessedness and vital importance of an entire self-dedication to Christ.

"Almost every moment between the public meetings was occupied in conversation with inquirers upon this subject, who literally besieged us, so that we gladly went without our food to afford time to converse and pray with them.

"At the close of the sermon on Friday evening sixty or seventy testified that they had formally given themselves wholly and forever to God. Old, gray-headed ministers tearfully and solemnly declared that they were never in such a meeting before."

At the close of the public services we retired to the vestry to hold an experience meeting, to recount the manner in which each came nearer to the Savior; and it seemed as if the very place was filled with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

A correspondent of the New York Examiner says, "The meeting at Burlington, Vt., last week, under the direction of Rev. A. B. Earle, was one of an extraordinary character. It was evident that the brethren who met there had been waiting on God in secret before coming together publicly. The attendance was very large; almost every church in the state being represented, and several brethren from other states being in attendance, and, like the meeting on the day of Pentecost, the brethren -- 'were with one accord in one place.'

"Earnest desires for personal holiness were expressed by all, especially the pastors of the churches. The most entire, and solemn, and irrevocable consecrations were deliberately uttered by one after another. More than once about fifty pastors were bowed together before God, pledging themselves to renounce all worldly ambition and all self-seeking, and consecrate themselves and their entire being anew to the service of God. The testimony of not a few was given to the reception of an increased measure of the Holy Spirit, and, in several instances, the declaration that a new experience had been realized, as the result of an entire consecration to God, and the reception, by faith, of the Lord Jesus Christ, in all his fullness, as their Savior.

Constantly increasing power was manifested from the commencement to the close. Each meeting was better than the preceding one. Frequently the entire audience was melted, and nothing but sobs could be heard.

"The preaching by brother Earle was characterized by great simplicity, and every sermon seemed specially prompted by the Holy Spirit.

"When the opportunity was presented for persons to come forward for prayer, not less than two hundred took the front seats, which had to be vacated to accommodate them. In some instances the midnight hour heard the voice of prayer in the dwellings and hotels where the delegates were stopping, and in others the rising of the sun was anticipated by earnest supplications.

"I think we may confidently look for a glorious revival of religion in Vermont this fall and winter; and I hope that other states will imitate this movement inaugurated at Burlington.

"The universal testimony was, 'I was never in such a meeting in my life.'"

The experiences alluded to in the above did not lose their depth or fervor with the close of the meeting, -- the work of the Spirit thus manifesting itself in their permanency as well as blessedness.

One says, several months afterwards, in a letter, "I have been a professor of religion for more than thirty years. I have never lost sight of my Master, although I have followed him a great way off. I now seem to have him by my side by night and day, in the market and in the church, and I do feel that he is a blessed Savior."

Another says, "For years I have had the form of godliness without its power; have been thought to live when I was dead. O, those years of joyless life! -- knowing my Master's will, feeling alive to duty intellectually, but not willing to do it I have always clung to my church, and never thought of leaving it, though well knowing how unworthy I was. God would not let me alone. But to live a stranger to the peace of God, and yet find no joy in sin, is awful. 'I will arise and go to my Father,' I resolved. He met me while yet afar off. O, the joy of being home again! I cannot tell the comfort and blessedness of the past week. Earth even seems changed; the Bible is precious beyond all other books, and above all, Jesus is my Savior now. It seems as if I had lived in the twilight, and now I rejoice in summer suns and flowery fields."

A minister, called by his brethren "one of the strongest men in Vermont," was able to attend but one day, but speaks of it as one of the most important days of his life, as he then, with fuller and more solemn purpose than ever before, dedicated himself to God and his cause, and received an impetus for all coming time.

In a letter written by a brother from New York, who attended this meeting, he speaks of being present at some county meetings in his own state, and of engagements to attend several others, similar in character to the one in Vermont, and says, in conclusion, "These meetings were the immediate results of the Burlington convention. I feel that to have been one of the most important meetings since the day of Pentecost."

Still another testifies: "The Lord is blessing the feeble instrumentalities made use of throughout the state, such as 'four days' meetings, &c., which all acknowledge have grown out of that great meeting in Burlington."

"The good influence of the meeting held here just before your departure for the Pacific coast," writes another, "has been seen and felt in many directions, both in and out of the state. There seems to be a more general inquiry among the ministers and laymen, 'What can be done for our churches, and for the souls of impenitent men?' Meetings on a lesser scale are being held all over the state, and in other states also, with blessed results. The meeting at Burlington is often referred to, very tenderly and gratefully, as being a marked manifestation of the descent of the Holy Ghost in answer to prayer."

Thus God works. And the vibration of that one little battery may have for its circuit a continent or a world, for still the work goes on.

* * * * *

Chapter 14

COME OVER AND HELP US

The following letters are given, -- as specimens of those that come to me by almost every mail, -- to show the need of more evangelists. To at least twenty-nine out of every thirty such requests I am under the painful necessity of saying, "No."

"Is It Not The Spirit of God?"

Elizabeth, N. J., September 4, 1865

"My Dear Brother Earle: I can hardly express to you how earnestly we desire your coming among us. I wrote you three letters a year ago, and when we learned that you could not come last fall or winter we felt a deep regret...

"Our church is at a point in its history when a few weeks' labor of an experienced evangelist will, we believe, through the blessing of God, result in untold good...

"And now, my dear brother, do not say, 'Nay.'

I feel that I cannot have you disappoint us. I seem to hear the cry of the perishing in this community, whom the pastors and churches have failed to reach, saying, 'Come over and help us.' If it were necessary, I would gladly go and see you, and lay the case before you more forcibly than it is possible to do in a brief letter.

"I have prayed earnestly over this matter, and feel as if I could lay my hand upon you, and say, 'You must come.' Is it not the Spirit of God? Is not God moving my heart and the hearts of the

brethren to send for you? I now leave the matter with you and with God. May he direct your heart towards us, even as he has directed ours towards you.

"Though I have not seen you, yet I feel that I know you in the Lord.

"Yours in the gospel,
"G. W. C., Pastor."

* * *

"Richmond, VA., 1868

"Rev. A. B. Earle

My dear Brother: I address you in the name of the Baptist pastors of this city ... We have seen with deep interest the accounts of your labors among the churches in the North, and recognize you as one whom it has pleased God our Savior to bless with remarkable success in reviving Christians and winning souls. Our churches are greatly in need of such gracious influences as have attended your ministry. We have, therefore, agreed to solicit you affectionately and urgently, to make us a visit early next fall, and spend several weeks with us laboring for the salvation of souls. We are prepared to welcome you with open hearts. We trust you will favorably consider our request, and at an early day appoint a time when we may expect you.

"In the service of a common Master,
"Yours affectionately,
"I. A. C."

* * *

"Grand Rapids, Michigan, August 27, 1866

"My Dear Brother Earle: I wrote, and received a letter from you almost two years ago, about coming here and holding a series of meetings. We have been laboring and praying, and feel that the time has come for you to do us good. There have been a few conversions. We all feel that we must love Jesus more, and do more for him. Can you come and preach Jesus to us? You shall have the hearty help of all the churches ... Do, my dear brother, if possible, help us.

"Yours truly,
"C. B. S."

* * *

"Come Now"

"Lynn, February 9, 1860

"Dear Brother Earle: We want you here -- want you very much -- want you now. Can you not come, and come soon? One has come out on the Lord's side -- others are anxious. There is evidently a preparation and an asking after the Lord. We need evening preaching -- evangelistic labor. We need you. I know you, and have fellowship and sympathy with you. The brethren know of you, and say, 'Come now.'

"Sincerely yours in Christ,
"A. O., Pastor."

* * *

From the pastors and members of the evangelical churches of Napa, California:--

"Napa, February 4, 1867

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"Dear Sir: We, the undersigned, pastors and members of the different evangelical churches of Napa, having watched with deepest interest the progress of your efforts since your arrival on this coast, and earnestly desiring that we and ours may enjoy the benefit of your labors, which God has been graciously pleased to bless abundantly in those places which you have already visited, do unitedly and cordially invite you to hold with us a series of religious meetings as soon as it may be convenient.

"Assuring you of our prayerful interest in your work, and promising our hearty co-operation and support, we hope that ere long you may come to us in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

To this was attached a long list of names. I could not go.

* * *

From Washington Territory:--

"Vancouver, W. T. [Washington Territory], April 11, 1867

"Rev. Mr. Earle: The citizens of Vancouver, and the United States garrison at this point, would be pleased to have you come to our city and preach to us.

"The undersigned feel anxious that you should visit this city, for a day or two at least. Should you find it in your power to comply with our request, be pleased to have us informed when it would best suit your convenience.

To this long list of names, also, I was obliged to say, "No."

* * *

"Do Not Answer, Nay"

"Vallejo, Cal., March 4, 1867

"Rev. Mr. Earle

Dear Sir: Souls are perishing here, and we would urge upon you our claims. Do, we beseech you, come and visit this place. We feel assured that a great harvest is here awaiting the reaper. Will you come and thrust in the sickle? Do not answer, Nay. The truth has long been faithfully preached, and we are not without the evidence of God's blessing; yet our hearts are not satisfied, and Christians are unitedly praying for a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and there is a general assurance that God will open the windows of heaven and pour a large blessing upon us.

"Mrs. H. B. R.,
"Wife of Rev. H. B. R.,
"Presbyterian Minister at Vallejo

"P. S. Since writing the above your communication, in reply to my husband's, has been received, and our hearts are pained. I think we shall have to follow the example of a certain man who caused his neighbor to rise and give him bread because of his importunity. Do try and spare us a little time and effort, and our prayers and blessings will be upon you.

"That God may open your pathway to this place is the earnest prayer of your friend, E. S. R."

* * *

From a cold church:

"_____, N. H., August, 1865

"Rev. Mr. Earle

"Dear Sir: It is more than twenty years since there were more than two added to our church by baptism at one time. During this period quite a number have left us to form other churches; many have left town, and others have been called by their Master to come up higher. The remainder of us are very cold or lukewarm, and feel unable to contend with the hosts of our adversary. We have tried to arouse ourselves at several different times, and to set ourselves about our Master's business, but soon fell back, if possible into a worse condition than before.

"There are but very few of us that take part in meetings, and none of us feel able or qualified to do so.

"Our pastor has been sick, and is now in a dangerous condition. It is doubtful if he is able to preach this fall, if at all.

"Some of us wanted to send for you last fall, but others thought we were unprepared to receive a revival preacher, because we were so cold. I have talked with quite a number of late, and they are unanimous in favor of inviting you to come and labor with us this fall.

"The churches are very feeble all around us, so far as spiritual strength is concerned."

* * *

From the President of Corvallis College

"Corvallis, Oregon, April 12, 1867

"Rev. A. B. Earle: The brethren of the Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist churches, to you send greeting!

"We feel truly grateful to Almighty God for that degree of success which has thus far attended your labors and ministry in Oregon. It is our prayer that God's people may be united in the great work of salvation, and then we may confidently expect still greater displays of divine power in awakening and converting sinners.

"We feel great need of revival influence in our midst. For this we are laboring, for this we are praying.

"To aid us in our endeavors to glorify God, and advance the interests of Christ's kingdom, it is the earnest desire and request of the different churches in our city that you spend a few days with us. I am confident there is no city in Oregon where your ministry is more needed. We learn that your visit in Oregon is limited to a few weeks; yet we feel that could you fully realize our wants, a share, at least, of your precious time would be given to Corvallis. May God direct you, and if consistent with his will, give you a mission to our people, and that a mission of salvation! May God continue to bless your labors

"In behalf of the churches of Corvallis, I subscribe myself,

"Yours fraternally,

"W. A. F.,

"President of Corvallis College"

* * *

Praying God To Send You to Baltimore

"Baltimore, Md., November 28, 1864

"Dear Brother Earle: It is with emotions almost impossible to describe that I attempt to pen you this heart-felt epistle.

"I have been in Baltimore now over one year, preaching, and God has owned my poor efforts, and I have had the gratification of baptizing nearly thirty happy converts, and of seeing my congregation more than trebled, and our prospects somewhat encouraging; yet we are far from a general revival spirit.

"O, what desolation is experienced for the want of some faithful and unflinching one to 'stand up for Jesus.' I have been led to cry out in the bitterness of heart, in the words of the prophet, 'By whom, shall Jacob rise, for he is small?'

"There is no such field for well-directed effort in all the land as here. Now, brother Earle, I have been praying God to send you to Baltimore. O, that my prayers may be answered! For I do believe, from what I know of you, that you would see the salvation of God. Are you at liberty to come? Can you feel that duty calls this way? O, may God direct!

"Yours affectionately,
"E. F. C."

The widely-known and honored Dr. F., of that city, has sent a like request. But I have not yet been able to say "Yes" to either of them.

* * *

"This Fashionable City"

"Newport, R. I., August 6, 1868

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"My dear Sir: ... Can you not come to Newport this August? Even if you cannot stay beyond a few days, or preach more than two or three sermons, come.

"I long for this fashionable city, now, in August, in the full tide of fashion, in all this wonderful pomp of pride and wealth, to feel God's power.

"Who knows but God may give you some of these disciples of Mammon and Pleasure as trophies for Christ? God is omnipotent. O, what a field this for divine grace!

"Most affectionately, yours,
"C. H. M."

* * *

Only those in similar situations can know what it costs me to deny these petitions that are constantly coming, with pleading so earnest, from large churches and from small churches, from churches cold and from those active and growing, and representing almost every evangelical denomination.

Official calls are usually accompanied or followed by private letters from pastors burdened for their churches; from church members longing to see their pastors more in earnest in the work of saving souls; from parents weary with praying for unconverted children, and from devoted Christian wives anxious for the conversion of their husbands, each case having its peculiar and strong claims.

And when, in response to such urgent need, I am obliged to sit down, and hurriedly write, "I cannot be with you," then am I moved to pray, "O Lord, raise up more evangelists! call into this work men after thine own heart, who shall be willing to renounce worldly honor and ease, that they may win souls to Jesus."

Young men, who may read these pages, does not God call upon you to enter this branch of the Christian ministry? The mere fact of a want of more men is not, of course, a call to enter this or any department of the ministry, but it is a call for you to offer yourselves to the Lord, and, with a willingness to go or stay, seek to know his will.

Pastors, has not God, by special adaptation, intended some of you for this work?

Christian friends, of whatever name or place, will you not join with me in the prayer that God will multiply the number of those whose special work is the promotion of revivals? "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth more laborers into his vineyard," and, among them, more evangelists.

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Chapter 15

THE OPINION OF PASTORS

By request, I give a few letters from some of the pastors with whom I have labored. Their value to any one but myself, and my apology for consenting to their publication, are, that they answer the inquiries so frequently made about the character of these meetings, and the permanency of their results, and the work of an evangelist.

From Rev. Dr. Ide:

"Springfield, Massachusetts, March 21, 1864

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"My very dear Brother: At the close of your labors with my people I feel it to be both my duty and my privilege to express to you my deep sense of obligation for your assistance in the

glorious work of the Spirit now in progress among us, and my entire satisfaction with your ministrations.

"Your preaching has been thorough, sound, evangelical, tender, and winning, adapted alike to quicken believers and to arouse and melt sinners.

During the four weeks that you have been with us, I do not recollect that you have said or done a thing that has not met my cordial approval.

"Your labors have been greatly blessed to the revival of gracious affections in the hearts of Christians; and hundreds in this city, converted through your instrumentality, will in eternity praise God that he sent you to us.

"I believe that the great Head of the church has given you the office and the qualifications of a true evangelist: that he is with you in your work.

"I know that I speak the feeling of every pious heart in the city, and of large numbers who are not pious, when I say that I most heartily thank you for your coming, and pray that the same divine blessing that attended your visit here may still follow you wherever Providence may lead you.

"Very affectionately yours,
"Geo. B. Ide."

* * *

From Rev. Dr. Kirk:

"Boston, May 14, 1866

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"Dear Brother: It makes me happy to find a happy Christian, made so, not by temperament or indiscriminating good nature, but by the fullness of Christ's Spirit.

"I bless God, and thank you, for your labors in Boston. I have long waited for an evangelist with whom I could cordially co-operate. After more than twenty years of waiting, God has granted me this desire of my heart.

"I congratulate you, both on the revelation the Lord has made to you of himself, and on the blessing which has crowned your labors here and elsewhere. The good you have been enabled to accomplish here cannot be comprehended by any statistical statement. It embraces several classes of benefits imparted to great numbers of persons in the city and out of it.

"Ministers have learned of you to live nearer the Savior, to preach more scripturally, simply, and earnestly than was their wont. They have learned to draw their hearers to more prompt

and definite decisions on the vital question, Shall I submit to Jesus? Backsliders, to an uncommon extent, have been reclaimed during this revival. Sinners have been converted to God. Besides all this, a sweet influence has been diffused through the community. Without compromising the truths of the Bible, you have awakened no opposition needlessly.

"All pastors who seek the salvation of men will find their facilities for doing good greatly increased in consequence of your labors.

"Myself I regard as a better man and minister for having known you, and been associated with you in this blessed work, the memory of which will enter heaven with us, and diffuse its fragrance through eternity. Let us give all the glory to whom it belongs.

"Yours in the fellowship of Christ,
"Edward N. Kirk."

* * *

From Rev. Dr. Turnbull:

Hartford, Connecticut, December 29, 1864

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"My dear Brother: I wish cordially to thank you for your labors of love among us in this city, in connection with the two Baptist churches.

Incessantly, night and day, have you given yourself to the work: preaching with great simplicity and power the fundamental truths of the gospel; holding inquiry meetings, and conversing with the anxious at your room.

"I thank you, especially, for your uniform patience and kindness in all your dealings with inquirers and others. You have won the cordial esteem and love of the members of our churches and of the pastors who have labored with you.

"May the Lord bless you in all your efforts to do good, and in all your future course of life.

"Your friend and brother,
"Robert Turnbull"

* * *

From Rev. I. D. Clark, in the "Watchman and Reflector": "I know of no man so well adapted to the work of a successful evangelist as brother Earle. Plain, direct, and forcible in his preaching; careful and discreet, and yet sagacious in his management of a meeting beyond any man I have ever seen; this, with his almost marvelous faith, persistency, and iron power of endurance, make him, what he has been for years, a power in the church.

"Instead of weakening the pastoral tie, he strengthens it, unites the church in a deeper piety, and, like John the Baptist, prepares the way for a still more blessed work after his leaving. At least so it has been with us."

* * *

From Rev. Dr. Phelps:

"New Haven, Connecticut, June 5, 1865

"My Dear Brother Earle: Before you leave us this afternoon, I must, in a word, express to you my gratitude to God and to you for the great privilege I have enjoyed the past five weeks in being permitted to witness and join in your evangelic labors among my people and in this city.

"We have been quickened, edified, refreshed, and brought nearer to Christ, in hearing the gospel from you, and in kneeling in prayer with you.

"Your conduct of revival meetings has been judicious, scriptural, and adapted to win souls.

"The Master has been with us, and made you the honored instrument of the conversion of many precious souls among us.

"May our blessed Lord, my dear brother, long spare you to labor as an evangelist; and may we sometimes share in your labors here again.

"You will ever have a warm place in our hearts, and a remembrance in our prayers. "Yours affectionately, "S. D. Phelps"

* * *

From Rev. Dr. Harvey, in the "Journal and Messenger":

"Brother Earle's work with us has been greatly blessed. The sound judgment and clear views of the gospel which characterize him, with his kind, earnest spirit, and strong faith, have given him a large place in the confidence and affection of Christians here, and mark him as a man singularly adapted for such labors.

"His sermons have been distinguished, not so much by novelty of subject matter, or mere logical demonstration, as by the vivid illustration of the great common truths of the gospel, and the earnest enforcement of them on the conscience and the heart.

"We have had no noise. [I fear that this is intended as a compliment, and indicates that the writer was opposed to even genuine demonstration in the Spirit. -- DVM]

"The large and solemn congregations which have often crowded our spacious house attest the power of the truth as presented by him."

* * *

From Rev. Dr. Hague, in the "Watchman and Reflector":

"Again and again have we been asked by friends, far and near, 'What do you think of Mr. Earle as an evangelist and a co-worker? Does he exert an influence that is healthful and enduring? Wherein lieth his power?' Some who are mere lookers on ask these questions from the mere impulse of curiosity, and many others from a sincere desire to know the truth. Now this question as to the secret of power is more easily asked than answered; for spiritual power is like some of the hidden forces of nature, that may be recognized by their effects, while they are so subtle as to escape analysis. The realm of material nature is full of hidden forces that baffle every effort of science to define. So it is in the spiritual realm; there is power that is felt, but 'thou canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth.' Its 'springs are in God.' We have often met men, in all departments of life, whose power we have acknowledged, while we could not define it or characterize it by any combination of graphical words.

"Such a man, no doubt, was Barnabas, the co-worker of Paul; His power was great. Luke acknowledges it; takes note of it as having been mightily felt at Antioch. But he does not report a single address, exhortation, speech, prayer, or sermon; simply says of Barnabas, 'He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added unto the Lord.'

"Now, in regard to Mr. Earle, his ministrations are incessant but never wearisome. We never feel disposed to report his sermons, but rather say, 'Come and hear him,' 'Come and see him.'

"First of all, you will say to yourself, he is honest, he is in earnest, he is simple-hearted, he believes what he says, he is a transparent character; he has gained your sympathy and confidence.

"Next, you are consciously inclined to give him your attention, and yield yourself to his friendly suggestions, that seem so apt, so judiciously put, so exactly adapted to your condition. They reveal you to yourself; they touch the points of your own unexpressed experiences; they meet your deep heart needs. All at once, 'before you know it,' as one said, you will respond to his appeals. You forget he is a minister, so far, at least, as to regard him officially; you think of him as a good man, a loving brother, a joyous Christian, who has a heavenly treasure that he desires to impart, and that you would receive.

"If you must tell somebody where his power lies, you will say it is in his simplicity and godly sincerity, and a profound heart experience, which tells its own story and wins you."

* * *

From Rev. Dr. Baldwin, in the "Christian Era":

"Troy, New York, February 28, 1868

"Dear Brother Webster: Yours of the twenty-seventh, containing this inquiry, 'Will you oblige me and my readers by giving us an account of the labors of Rev. A. B. Earle in Troy, and their results as far as they can now be judged of?' was duly received, and I make the following condensed reply.

'Although I had heard much of brother Earle, I had never met him until he came here five weeks since to labor with me. Without ever having seen him, I invited him 'to come over and help' me, for two reasons. One was the warm commendations I heard of him and his labors, from pastors with whom he had labored. From them never heard but one opinion. The decisive reason, however, was this: While absent, visiting the army, nearly a year ago, brother Earle preached one sermon in my pulpit. When I came home, I found that that one sermon had produced a deep religious impression upon my people; and then I resolved to secure his aid in a series of meetings I proposed to hold the following winter.

"With regard to him and his labors in general, I can truthfully say that our expectations have been more than realized. His solemn, earnest, and kind manner; his freedom from all vulgarities of expression, or eccentricities of style; his simple-heartedness and entire devotion to his work; his honest piety, incessant prayerfulness, and strong faith; his plain, scriptural, pointed preaching; his obvious dependence on the Holy Ghost, and freedom from devotion to any particular routine of measures; his warm and loving exhibitions of 'Christ crucified,' and his fidelity in bringing the law truths in direct contact with the conscience; his yearning after the salvation of souls, and his developments of the blessedness, importance, and means of attaining the higher Christian life, -- these and similar elements in him, his preaching and his work, have secured to him the affection and confidence of my own soul and that of my beloved people.

"To me, as a pastor, he has been a most affectionate, confidential friend, as well as a most efficient helper. No man could labor with another more considerately, more faithfully, than he has with me; and I commend him to all my brethren in the ministry as worthy of their most implicit confidence.

"The work in our church has been the deepest, most thorough, and general I have ever witnessed in a pastorate among them of nearly nineteen years, during which time God has graciously favored us with many precious 'visitations from on high.'

"The unanimous judgment of my most spiritual people is, that for clearness and thoroughness they have never heard the experiences of those already received into the church surpassed.

"We regret that on account of his many pressing engagements, our beloved brother is about to leave us, for the work appears as promising as ever. But we shall always bless God that he came to us; he is embalmed in our grateful affections. All will be rejoiced to see him in Troy, and none so much as myself and my family, who have enjoyed his society during these weeks in our own house.

"Fraternally,

"Geo. C. Baldwin"

* * *

Rev. J. R. Kendrick, D. D., in the "Examiner and Chronicle":--

"... Brother Earle's labors have been indefatigable, earnest, and in one view almost superhuman. It is little less than a miracle that his physical system endures with apparent ease the steady strain of five weeks' continuous toil.

"His preaching has been plain, pungent, sometimes startling and lacerating in its stern fidelity, yet always kind and free from bitterness, uncharitableness, and the language of denunciation. It has been marked, not merely by simplicity, directness, and tenderness, which I expected, but by a real power, which, I confess, took me by surprise. It is often fresh, quaint, and truly original, giving a new aspect and force to truths which familiarity and stereotyped modes of treatment have degraded into impotence.

"Brother Earle evidently understands human nature very thoroughly, and here, in my judgment, lies one great secret of the effectiveness of his labors, so far as those labors are open to our view on the human side. I have already intimated that his spirit is gentle and genial, tolerant and encouraging towards those who do not fully share his views or unite in all his measures. Thus he carries with him the warm regards of all those to whom he has ministered, and lives in pleasant remembrances after his departure to other fields.

"One of the happiest effects of our meetings has been to vitalize the piety of a good many languid disciples, and rouse them to a hearty service in the Master's cause. Our church is left, I think, not in an exhausted state, ready for reaction and depression, but in a healthy, working condition, inspired and exhilarated by Christian love and hope."

* * *

Rev. Thomas Armitage, D. D., in the same paper:--

I have never had an opportunity of toiling side by side with our brother till now, and although his method of presenting truth is so different from my own, I shall esteem it a great privilege to pass through another siege with him, whenever the providence of God may open the way.

"A number of friends who are not acquainted with brother Earle, have asked me wherein his ability lies. He often takes occasion himself to say that he aims at nothing profound or oratorical in his preaching, yet his sermons are so good that they hold the attention and stir the hearts of almost all classes of minds. He preaches like a man in earnest. Both in the pulpit and out of it, he is a pattern of Christian manliness. There is nothing that borders even on the small and mean, either in his spirit or manner. Common sense is one of his handmaids, and comes at his beck. She seldom fails him. A Christlike tenderness runs through all his appeals, both to the converted and the unconverted. With this is blended a childlike simplicity. These are followed by an

indefatigable toil, the most indefatigable that I have ever witnessed. And the whole of these are crowned by unceasing prayer, and by an unwavering faith in God.

"In leaving us he carries with him the warm love both of pastor and people, and our earnest prayers that he may long be spared to the churches, and that showers of blessings may accompany him wherever he goes."

* * *

From Rev. Dr. Boardman:--

"Philadelphia, May 5, 1868

"My Dear Brother: I cannot part with you without giving formal expression to my feelings of gratitude that you have been permitted to labor among us.

"For years I have been convinced that Christ, in his administration of his church, has a place for the office of 'evangelist,' in the modern, technical use even of that term. My only doubt has been concerning the fitness of those who have thought themselves called to that office, not concerning the office itself.

"I cheerfully bear record that, in the toilsome and patient fidelity with which you have exercised the office while among us, -- in the earnestness and simplicity of style which has marked your preaching, -- in the kindness of spirit with which you have treated the severest themes of the law, in the absence of eccentricities and mechanical artifices, -- in the helpful spirit with which you have co-operated with me, and in your full and distinct recognition of the supremacy of the pastoral office, -- in this I recognize evidences that God has indeed called you to 'do the work of an evangelist' (2 Tim. iv. 5).

"May God long spare your life, and keep you humble, and continue to make you instrumental in winning to Christ multitudes who in His gracious purpose are ordained to eternal life.

"Affectionately yours,
"Geo. D. Boardman"

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Chapter 16

TITLE EXAMINED

(Sermon Preached in Tremont Temple, Boston)

"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, yet that work iniquity." -- Matt. vii. 22, 23

The Saviour in these few words lifts the veil that conceals from us the future, and permits us to look upon a scene of the judgment, at the final assembling of all people and nations to receive their everlasting sentence. It is one of mingled grief and happiness, joyful surprise and bitter disappointment: some, who had been loud in proclaiming their devotion to God, or had gone through life without any fear about their salvation, are doomed to the abode of the lost, and turn away in horror and despair upon the hopeless "left hand."

O, who can tell the disappointment, when those who have lived and died in the fellowship of the church, and have gone to the judgment expecting a welcome among the white-robed throng that dwell on the banks of the river of life, receive, instead, the sentence from the Judge, "I never knew you: depart from me"! What could make amends for the anguish of such a disappointment? And yet, our text tells us, this will be the experience of many at that approaching trial.

Let me, therefore, urge upon each one of you, my hearers, the importance of a thorough examination of your hope, or your title to heaven.

1. We should be thorough, because it is a matter of faith, and not of sight.

Were it something we could see with our eyes, and our hands could handle, we could then very quickly and easily satisfy ourselves as to its validity. But such is not the case -- it is in no way connected with the bodily senses; its evidences lie wholly outside of their province. It is wholly a matter of faith, -- we speak of a clear title as the "assurance of faith:" the Scriptures affirm it still more explicitly, telling us, "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," as though this faith was to its possessor what the deed of your house is to you -- a clear, genuine title, signed and sealed. But while the title to your house can be read at any time, and its genuineness ascertained without difficulty, your title to heaven requires the most careful and thorough examination, because its evidences are, as I have observed, beyond the reach of the bodily senses; and it is still more difficult, because these evidences vary with your faith. When your faith is clear and strong, they are clear; and obscure and weak, when your faith is weak and clouded. How unwise and dangerous, then, is a hasty, superficial examination of a title, on the genuineness of which our eternal happiness depends, when the evidences of that title are so subject to change, and must be read only through the medium of the spiritual vision.

2. We should be thorough, because it is often difficult to distinguish between a movement of the animal feelings and true religious affections and impulses.

Many professors of religion go to meeting and appear very happy, and honestly think themselves Christians, and yet, in truth, they know nothing of the love of Christ; their happiness is no deeper than their emotional nature.

A person who loves Jesus may be cast down and sad, while another may apparently be happy in him, and yet be a stranger to pardoning grace.

Emotions come and go, like the waves of the sea, with our changing circumstances. The fruits of the Spirit appear, on a superficial examination, to be closely imitated in the natural and

unrenewed heart, -- so that we want a better evidence than the mere fact that we are happy. We want a title that is unmoved by sorrows; that neither floods nor flames can destroy; --

"A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt.

"That bears, unmoved, the world's dread frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile."

3. We should be thorough, because we are in danger of being satisfied with the existing standard of religion in the community where we live.

The standard of piety, in most places, is very low. Christians have been "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves," until that dwarfed and imperfect pattern seems to be about the only one we employ, or care to employ. If we reach that, we are quite likely to settle down into a contented state, without making much further effort.

Many are evidently relying very much on the forms of religion, without its vitality and power, and that, too, in our evangelical churches.

The standard of admission to our churches is also low in very many cases; a few tears over sin, a little outward change, and especially a certain correctness of theory and deportment, far too often open the door to church membership, while the heart is still unrenewed.

We need, therefore, great care in our examination, lest we take up with a mere human standard of religion.

Jesus has given a pattern in his own life on the earth, and in the plain teachings of his word; by that, men must measure themselves. O, that we might all do so, for therein would we find safety!

4. Another reason for a thorough examination of our title is, A deceived soul is a constant dead weight in the church.

The man who is deceived may pray, or preach, or exhort, but his heart will not be in his work. He cannot speak from heart experience; and as heart must answer to heart, you do not feel what he says; or your heart, if warm and active with the love of Christ, cannot unite with his: it finds there no answering voice, not even a resting place, and, like Noah's dove, turns back to its home.

A warm-hearted, earnest Christian will sometimes kneel down to join in prayer with a deceived soul, and wonder why his heart is not moved and led by the prayer; he cannot see any cause unless it be in himself. But the secret is, one heart has been made alive by renewing grace,

while the other is still "dead in trespasses and sins." The deceived soul cannot pronounce the family language; his lips may, but that does not answer, for it is a heart language, and no man can make his heart say, "Abba, Father," but by the Holy Spirit. It matters not how rich or influential the deceived soul may be, he is still a dead weight in the church.

Simon made a profession of religion, joined the church, prayed and talked with the rest, was rich and influential, and yet he was regarded as an injury to the cause of Christ, just because he was a deceived soul, still "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity;" his "heart was not right in the sight of God," and, so long as that was the case, nothing could counterbalance the burden such a heart was to the church.

And so it has ever been and ever will be. A deceived soul, in the church, is a dead weight.

5. We should be thorough in the examination of our hearts, because God will be thorough with us at the judgment, no matter how careless we may be here.

O, what a fearful ordeal every person will there pass through, whether he be a true Christian, a deceived soul, or one who never professed any interest in Christ! "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

Like the fire that brings out the half obliterated letters and designs on a worn piece of silver, the fire and light of the judgment will reveal the real character of the letters on our titles to heaven whether they were drawn with the red blood of Jesus or the pencil marks of earth.

O, the bitter remorse of such an hour, when the church member learns that his title is spurious!

Let us, then, before it is too late, examine our hopes carefully and thoroughly, each for himself. Let us not trust to the judgment of the church or of our friends, for no one can know our hearts as well as ourselves. We know best whether we love to pray, whether we weep over lost sinners, whether we love God's people; and so in regard to all the evidences, we can best search our hearts for them.

6. Another reason for a thorough examination of our title is, Many professing Christians, and even ministers of the gospel, have actually found themselves deceived, after having been members of the church for years.

A young man of fine talent and promise, after completing his studies, was settled over one of our large churches.

The people were delighted with their new pastor: his education, his eloquence, his devotion to his work, and his theology, even, were all they could wish; his discourses were listened to with great pleasure by large congregations.

But soon those who knew Christ experimentally, and had power with God in prayer, became satisfied that their pastor was an unregenerate man.

All was right except his heart. The church, however, did not wish to part with him, or to injure his influence. Accordingly they, unknown to him, appointed a day of fasting and prayer for his conversion.

But as they were assembling to humble themselves before God for that purpose, the pastor saw a brother who never could keep a secret, passing by his study, and inquired of him why so many of the people were going into the church. The plain, straightforward reply was, "We are going to pray that God will convert your soul, pastor."

This information deeply moved the heart of the pastor; he went to his room, fell on his knees, and asked God to show him his real condition.

And there, in answer to the prayers of his people and his own petitions, the Spirit revealed to him the startling truth that his heart was still unrenewed, and led him to give himself to Jesus, and obtain an experimental knowledge of the way of salvation.

From that day he was all the church could desire.

Very many professing Christians have discovered a similar mistake in time to correct it, and secure a genuine title. But multitudes, as our text teaches, pass through life in a careless state, expecting to reach heaven, and, dying with that hope in their hearts, go to their final reward, thinking to be welcome within the "pearly gates" of the New Jerusalem; yet there learn, to their utter dismay and sorrow, they had been deceived, and, when it is too late to make any change, hear from the lips of the Judge their everlasting doom: "I never knew you depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Who can conceive the magnitude of such a disappointment, not of a hypocrite, not of an outwardly immoral character, but of a soul in one sense sincere, and yet deceived thought to have been born again, and yet, in reality, in the "bond of iniquity"!

"O, wretched state of deep despair,
To see my God remove,
And fix my dreadful station where
I must not taste his love!"

Let me then urge you to make a most thorough examination of your title for heaven. Do not rest until you can say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

"Yes, I'm secure beneath thy blood,
And all my foes shall lose their aim:
Hosanna to my Savior God,
And my best honors to his name."

To assist you in making this examination, I will answer, as well as I am able, the question, What ought to satisfy me that I am a Christian?

And, perhaps, I can do this in no better way than by making use of "Ten Evidences of Conversion," which I prepared some years ago, and now have with me on this little card. On one side are these "evidences," and on the other ten questions for "self-examination," for older Christians, and which were drawn up originally only for my own heart. At such times as the present many wish to obtain them. I have already given away, in this manner, some fifty thousand copies, and now, tonight, any who desire a copy will be welcome to one after the close of the meeting.

I wish each one of you would carefully examine these evidences, and settle in your own mind whether you have one, two, half, or all of them; and if you find one, -- and but one, -- take courage, and hope for others.

1. "A full surrender of the will to God."

As the will is the seat of the rebellion against God, this stronghold is the most obstinately defended and the very last to be surrendered.

Men will give up their property, their health, their honor, their homes, and in some cases even their lives, sooner than surrender their wills. And yet no one can be regenerated until this is done: though the man give up all else, it is in vain, so long as he retires within this fortress and refuses its surrender.

So that the first evidence of a genuine hope in Christ is, a will given up to God.

In the case of the anxious sinner, this act of surrender is at once followed by a change: it is the first step in the way of salvation. The rebellion in his heart is gone, and, like Saul of Tarsus, his prayer is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He may think himself still in his sins, yet the change is apparent, though he may still be seeking pardon; he is willing to do the very things he had stoutly refused to do until now. He, perhaps, had said, 'No one shall know my feelings, until I am sure I am a Christian; yet now he is heard in the crowded assembly, asking for prayer. Or, perhaps, he is the first to accept the invitation to go forward with those who are anxious, although he had asserted that he never would take such a step. The sentiment of his heart is, --

"I can hold out no more;
I sink, by dying love compelled,
And own Thee conqueror."

My hearer, have you this evidence of your conversion? When the lines are clearly drawn, and you feel that you are called on to give up God's way or your own, do you adopt the latter course? If so, rejoice; if not, you have reason for great anxiety. If you find no real desire or purpose to make God's will first and supreme, you lack the most important evidence of a genuine title for heaven.

2. "The removal of a burden of sin suddenly or gradually."

The burden of conviction for sin varies greatly with different individuals: some persons are overwhelmed with a sense of their guilt, while others complain that they have scarcely any feeling, and pray for deeper conviction.

Yet, when conversion takes place, these burdens are removed, though, in one case, as suddenly as Bunyan's pilgrim lost his at the cross, and, in others, so gradually that neither the hour nor the day can be told. [Beware Here! One cannot have been genuinely saved some time in the past without ever knowing for sure that it has occurred. This smacks too much of A. B. Earle's Baptist beliefs. See also his testimony a few paragraphs below. While the witness of the Spirit may be delayed for a season after one has fully repented, believed, and begun to obey God, the assurance of salvation when received is too clear not to know when it happened. Furthermore, the witness of salvation is never delayed long after one has fully repented, believed, and begun to walk in obedience to God. -- DVM] This difference in the removal of these burdens may be illustrated in this simple way: Suppose two men each have a sack of sand tied, with strings, upon their shoulders, and in one case the strings are cut -- the sack with its contents instantly falls to the ground; but in the other case a small hole is made in the sack -- the sand runs out slowly, and the man is so gradually relieved of his burden he scarcely realizes when it was removed, nor can he fix upon any moment, and say, "At that time my load was taken away." Yet the latter was as great and real a change as the former, and the real work -- that done by the knife in cutting the strings, and in opening the sack -- was as instantaneous in one case as the other, only the results or evidences followed gradually in one case and instantly in the other.

[As W. M. Tidwell used to say, "That's good preaching, JUST ISN'T SO! It is easy to poke holes in this theory, but God simply does not poke holes in the burden of sin and let the burden drain out little by little! The entire burden of sin is instantaneously lifted, bag and all, when one is forgiven. Further, God never makes one aware that "any" of the load is gone until the moment he witnesses that it is "all" gone! -- DVM]

If, then, your burden is gone, and you feel that some love to God and his people has taken its place, you have an evidence of a change of heart, no matter though you cannot tell the time of the change.

If there be "the full corn in the ear," there has surely been "first the blade, then the ear."

3. "A new feeling of love to Christians and to Jesus."

This is one of the best evidences, and almost the first change, the renewed soul discovers.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." The young convert seeks the society of Christians -- they appear so different to him; when the prayer meeting has closed, he waits that he may speak with them; his song now is,

"Lonely I no longer roam,

Like the cloud, the wind, the wave;
Where you dwell shall be my home,
Where you die shall be my grave."

If you discover this evidence, and only this, be encouraged, and go forward in the Christian journey; the morning star is the harbinger of the full-orbed sun.

[READERS AND USERS, PLEASE NOTE: Two things seem obvious from the following personal testimony of A. B. Earle, and from his testimony at the end of the book about entering into "The Rest of Faith": (1) His thoughts concerning how one is saved, and his youthful seeking for salvation were clouded and confused by the errors of his denomination; and (2) In spite of those errors, because he was sincere and earnest in his seeking, God eventually brought him into both a genuine experience of salvation and a real experience of entire sanctification. Nonetheless, it also seems apparent that his theology throughout his ministry was colored to a considerable extent by his Baptist beliefs. He seems to have been one whose heart experience was far better than his head knowledge, and the great success of his ministry was no doubt in spite of, rather than because of, certain errors which were never removed from his doctrines. God blessed him and used him because of what he was in heart, a sanctified, Spirit-filled man of God, and not because he was accurate in all of his theology. THEREFORE, PLEASE TAKE HEED. ACCEPT THE GOOD, AND CAST AWAY THE BAD FROM WHAT YOU READ IN THIS PUBLICATION. -- DVM]

I was baptized and taken into the church when I had only this one evidence. I was determined to go forward, and perform the duties required of a faithful Christian. And, as I went on, evidences began to multiply. I was like the traveler, who, finding one mile-post, passes on to another, and then on to still another, and so on in his journey, each one increasing the evidence that he is on the right road, and, also, is steadily approaching the desired city.

God has said, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

If you find one spark of this love in your heart, thankfully cherish it, although it may have come so gradually, and may still be so faint, you can but just discern that it is there. The wind sometimes blows much more softly than at other times; yet it is as really the wind that whispers in the zephyr as that thunders in the hurricane. So in conversion: some come into the kingdom shouting their love to God, their evidences seem to them so clear; and others come with but a gentle breath of love; yet both conversions are equally genuine and precious.

4. "A new relish for the word of God."

All true conversions are followed by a new love for the Scriptures. There is a lingering over the inspired page, unknown before; the words of Jesus are full of beauty and sweetness; the objections that once were made are gone. It is no longer a gloomy book. The convert finds some of its contents wrapped in mystery; yet he understands enough of its truths to lead him to say, "O, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day."

There may be times when none of this love is felt.

Emotions vary with circumstances; one class may be wholly thrown out of sight for a time, and another altogether different aroused by some change in our surroundings, -- thus all relish for the Bible may temporarily seem to be wanting. But even at such a time we need not be wholly cast down and discouraged; there is good reason to believe we have been "born again," if we can remember seasons when we could say, "My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly:" such love is the fruit of a renewed heart.

5. "Pleasure in secret prayer, at least at times."

This is a good evidence of a change of heart; for it is very natural that we should find pleasure in converse with those we love: and since prayer is converse with God, we must have some love for him if we find pleasure in this exercise.

"Behold he prayeth," is one of the first signs of spiritual life: a renewed soul will pray.

I think no unregenerate person ever enjoyed secret prayer for a single hour. If, then, you do enjoy secret prayer, even at times, and exhibit some of the fruits of true prayer in your life, you have good reason to hope that you are an heir of heaven, although you may never have had the conviction and the light you desired.

"Prayer is the breath of God in man,
Returning whence it came;
Love is the sacred fire within,
And prayer the rising flame."

6. "Sin, or sinful thoughts, will cause pain."

Unholy thoughts are often thrown into the minds of even the most devoted Christians, and while they are endeavoring to serve God -- perhaps in the closet, or in the prayer meeting, or in the pulpit. The Christian will always be liable to them while on the earth. But there is no sin in them unless they are cherished. Only when they are pleasing, and are cherished, do they make us guilty.

Jesus had such thoughts thrown into his mind. The devil suggested to him that he give up the purpose for which he came into the world, and become universal king; but the thought was instantly hurled back upon Satan, its author.

Again it was suggested that he throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple -- only a thought; but Jesus found no pleasure in it, and rejected it wholly and at once, vanquishing the tempter with the "sword of the Spirit," "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

And thus He "who knew no sin" teaches his followers that no matter how vile and unholy the thought that may come into their minds, there is no taint of sin about it if it is at once rejected.

The question, therefore, for us to settle about these unholy thoughts is this: Do they produce loathing and sorrow? If they do, there is evidence in that pain of love to Jesus. But if they produce

pleasure, and are cherished, they are "swift witnesses" against us. Are they unwelcome visitors? Then take fresh courage for your heavenward journey.

7. "Desire and effort for the salvation of others." The natural impulse of the "new man" is, to lead others to the Savior.

"Then will I tell to sinners round
What a dear Savior I have found;
I'll point to thy redeeming blood,
And say, 'Behold the way to God.'"

Andrew's first impulse, after his conversion, was to seek the salvation of those about him. "He first findeth his own brother Simon," tells him what a precious Savior he has found, and then, as we are told, "He brought him to Jesus."

And Philip, when his heart had been changed by pardoning love, went in search of his brother Nathanael; and although Nathanael tried to excuse himself, on the ground that Jesus was a Nazarene, Philip, in his new love and zeal, conquered, and led him to the Master.

My dear hearer, do you weep over lost men? Does it sometimes seem as if you must go at once to the sinner, and show him his danger and need of a Savior? And yet are you troubled and hindered by the fear that you yourself are not a child of God?

Then let me say to you, Throw aside that fear, and go to work for Jesus, as your heart prompts you. Those desires are evidences of your love to Jesus.

[It is clear here that A. B. Earle's motive in the above is, in part, to help true Christians to cast aside their misgivings about their experience and get busy for God. However, there seems to be too much in this chapter that could encourage unregenerate persons to rationalize themselves into believing they are born again -- all based upon supposed, indirect evidence, apart from a clear witness of the Spirit that they had passed from death unto life. Herein lies a real danger. One can be fatally deceived by rationalizations, especially when they are exercised with no basis in fact. Therefore, no seeker for initial, or full, salvation should be encouraged to rest from seeking short of the direct, personal witness of the Spirit that the work is done. -- DVM]

8. "A desire to obey Christ in his commands and ordinances."

You need not be troubled to know how you came by such a desire; but, if you find you have it, accept it with joy as an evidence that you have been born again. I refer, of course, to a desire to obey all the commands and ordinances, not isolated and particular ones. There may be some selfish reason for desiring to obey some particular command; this must be the ruling desire of your heart in reference to every known command, in order to be of real value as an evidence of a new heart.

Our Master says, "If a man love me, he will keep my words:" that means, I suppose, he will desire so to do, and will actually obey those commands so far as he understands them and has

opportunity. The heart is the controlling power; whatever a man loves most, to that he devotes himself; if, therefore, there be the indwelling of a spirit of obedience to God, and an effort to do his will, it is an evidence of love to him.

No person should call himself a Christian while living in known neglect of one of Christ's commands or ordinances.

The renewed soul is anxious to know and do the whole will of God; with one of old, he says, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments, for therein do I delight."

"I would not sigh for worldly joy,
Or to increase my worldly good;
Nor future days, nor powers employ,
To spread a sounding name abroad.

"'Tis to my Savior I would live;
To him who for my ransom died;
Nor could all worldly honor give
Such bliss as crowns me at his side."

9. "Deep humility and self-abasement."

This must have a prominent place among the evidences of conversion.

Whoever has seen himself a guilty, condemned sinner, vile and wretched, under the curse of a holy law, justly doomed to death, with no merit of his own, no ability to save himself, and one who if saved at all must be saved by pure, undeserved, unrequited grace, -- whoever has thus seen himself will, when he has been actually thus saved and freed from the sin and curse that were resting on him, be very likely to feel humble.

"'Tis faith that lays the sinner low,
And covers him with shame;
Renouncing all self-righteousness,
He trusts in Jesus' name."

A whole-hearted Christian will be humble, like his Lord, who "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant;" for we are told in the word of God, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

My hearer, can you claim this evidence -- "deep humility and self-abasement"?

10. "A growing desire to be holy and like Christ."

This is the crowning evidence of all. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump:" where the leaven of grace has been implanted there will be this "growing desire to be holy and like Christ," an inward hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

The unrenewed man has no such desire; he may seek to be free from some faults and vices, and to make for himself a character that men will esteem; but he has no desire to follow Jesus, and imitate him in holiness and self-denying devotion to God.

The renewed man, on the other hand, desires this likeness to Jesus above all things else; his unceasing prayer is, --

"Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!
E'en though it be a cross
That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee."

And even when the "dark river" has been crossed, and he is being conducted by angel guides towards his home in glory, he is represented as still longing to be nearer and more like Jesus:--

"And when on joyful wing
Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
Upward I fly;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to thee,
Nearer to thee!"

Let me, then, inquire, my dear hearer, if you can claim one or more of these evidences that you are a child of God?

If you can, then offer your thanksgiving to God. If but a single ray of sunshine from the cross has crept into your darkened heart, be encouraged, cherish all the warmth and light thus afforded you, and go forward, looking for the coming of other and brighter evidences; "then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

No Christian, however near the Savior, will realize all these evidences at the same time; generally but one.

One day he will, perhaps, say, "I wanted to be constantly in secret prayer, it was so delightful and precious. I could feel the truth of those sweet lines, --

"There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads;
A place of all on earth most sweet;
It is the blood-bought mercy-seat."

The next day he has not so much inclination to pray, but rather a strong desire to read the word of God, and says, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." At another time all his thoughts and feelings go out for the salvation of lost men. So he vibrates back and forth, -- now to this evidence, and now to that.

Do not, then, expect all these evidences to be found in active exercise at the same time. And even though you may, for a time, seem to be confined to one, remember that a renewed heart is just as necessary for the production of that one as for all; the tree, and the usual operations of nature, are as essential to give us a single specimen of ripe fruit as to load our garner.

How many of you, my dear hearers, are now prepared to say, I believe I have been born again; and, with what evidence I have, I will go forward and perform the duties of a faithful Christian as well as I can, thankful for what light I have, and hoping for more?

May Jesus bless us all with a genuine title for heaven, and say to each of us, at the judgment, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Amen.

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Chapter 17 EVANGELISTS Their Trials and Joys

When our Redeemer "ascended up on high, he gave gifts unto men" -- "some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of Christ."

Thus we see that the work was not to be done through one department of Christian labor, nor were different offices to be merged in one, and placed on one man; but there were to be several distinct offices of ministerial labor, each calling for special qualifications, and each filled by its own special workmen, yet all working in perfect harmony, and for the same end -- the perfecting of the kingdom of Christ.

The Savior having established these different departments, has always placed his seal of approbation on them, and says to those who labor in either of them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

One of these departments, as we have seen, is that filled by the evangelist.

An evangelist is a minister who is not settled over a church, at least permanently, but is temporarily to fill a vacancy, to form new churches, and to assist pastors and churches in special labor for the salvation of souls, whenever such labor is needed.

Work began in this branch of service with the commencement of the church of Christ. Thus we find Philip, the evangelist, going forth and engaging in meetings in different places, for the purpose of promoting revivals of religion.

"He went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them," continuing the meeting for some days and perhaps weeks. The work became so deep and general, that Peter and John were sent down from Jerusalem by the brethren, to assist in carrying it forward.

After a while these brethren returned to Jerusalem, but Philip went on towards Gaza, baptizing the eunuch on the way. So pressing were the calls for this kind of labor, that the "Spirit caught away Philip," and hastened him on to other places that were waiting for him. His next field of labor was at Azotus; but how long he remained there we are not told. From Azotus he went on, and preached in at the cities till he came to Cesarea. Here was his home -- the evangelist's home.

Paul and his company stopped with this evangelist, and rested several days. It was no doubt a pleasure to Philip and his family to entertain such distinguished guests.

But my principal object at this time is to speak of a few of the trials and joys of an evangelist:

One great trial in this work is, the necessity of being from home most of the time.

Those who have homes, where the dear ones dwell, and where the purest bliss and peace on earth can be found, understand at once the pain of such separation. It is hard to leave home for a single month; but to be away from it year after year, for ten months out of twelve, when life is so very brief, is one of the hardest trials in the work of an evangelist. And, besides, home has so many sweet and soothing associations, so many holy, purifying influences, which are just what a minister needs in his work, -- to be deprived of all these for so great a portion of the time is no small sacrifice. O, the joy of my bounding heart, when, after weeks, and perhaps months of unceasing toil and anxiety, I turn towards my home, weary and worn! No matter how long the journey, or rough the way, or chilly the winds, I heed them not on the homeward track.

I have often, at such times, repeated the expressive lines:--

"What do we reck [care] on a weary way,
Though lonely and benighted,
When we know there are lips to chide our stay,
And eyes that will beam, love lighted?"

But when home is reached after such an absence, one or two days are usually all I can spend with my family before duty calls me away to another meeting, already pledged.

I often say to my family, I trust we shall know each other in heaven, where we may dwell together without interruption, and our joy be the greater, when the "sheaves," gathered through these years of separation are brought into the garners above. With this thought before us, we often sing these beautiful lines:--

"When the holy angels meet us,
As we go to join their hand,
We shall know the friends that greet us
In the glorious spirit land.

"We shall see the same eyes shining
On us as in days of yore;
We shall feel their dear arms twining
Fondly round us as before."

But yet, with all this prospect of meeting and dwelling with the loved ones in the "better country," the separation from them here is a very severe trial; and I can only say, as did that heroic missionary, Mrs. Comstock, -- "Jesus, I do this for thee."

Another of the evangelist's trials is, the distrust and prejudice cherished, even among good men, in regard to his work!

Many pastors feel such a prejudice towards this department of ministerial labor, that they say, "I will never invite an evangelist to assist me;" and not a few of their members sustain them in this position. This feeling becomes so strong that they honestly think, as Nathanael did about our Savior's coming out of "Nazareth," that no good can come from such a source.

This is, no doubt, in part the result of misrepresentation, and the want of a careful examination of the subject. And much, no doubt, is chargeable to the want of wisdom, and prudence, on the part of those of us who are attempting to perform the difficult work of an evangelist.

But while our mistakes have given cause for deep regret and sorrow, they are not a sufficient cause for the rejection of this divine appointment.

Would there not be the same reasons for rejecting the pastoral office?

Is it not marked by mistakes and inconsistencies equally great?

One of the disciples sold his Lord for a small sum: another denied with an oath, that he knew him. Pastors have fallen into grievous sins, while the ministry of others is marked by many imprudences. Yet we do not cast aside the pastoral relation on that account. We do not say that all work among men should be suspended, because everything that is done is imperfect.

So with the work of an evangelist: it has been attended with inconsistencies, which have pained the hearts of good men; yet, like the pastoral office, it must be perpetuated, notwithstanding its faults.

And therefore, those who are called to this work must go forward in it, no matter what its trials.

Years ago I made up my mind to go on with this work, and do what I could in the great harvest field, and bring as many souls to Jesus as possible, without stopping to defend it against prejudice or opposition. And yet no one feels more keenly than myself an unkind word, or look, or act, or is more sensitive to the touch of distrust or prejudice. But knowing how short my time is, and that Jesus has used, and no doubt will continue to use imperfect men in gathering the ripened harvest, I am to speak kindly of all, and go on with my work, grateful for the success that has attended these efforts.

"Soon the reaping time will come,
And angels shout the harvest-home."

It is a great trial also to be obliged to say "No," to so many calls for such labor. O, how often the Macedonian cry is heard, "Come over and help us! -- if not for a week, come even for one day." Although the heart yearns to go, a great proportion of these calls must be refused.

The burden of soul at certain stages of a meeting is sometimes almost crushing. No one can realize this who has not borne the responsibility of conducting a series of revival meetings.

It is often necessary to converse and pray with different inquirers many times in a single evening, until nature seems unable to endure more.

When one meeting is closed, he must pass directly to another field, and so on for months without rest, until his whole being seems to be utterly prostrated, and Jesus, by the Spirit, whispers, as he did to the disciples, "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were so many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."

It is a trial to be obliged to part with friends almost as soon as their acquaintance is formed.

It is necessary in this work to go to a new field almost every month, and sometimes every week. All are strangers, many hardly seeing the necessity of the pastor's calling in such aid. But soon prejudice and coldness give place to warm, glowing love to Christ and his people, and with a company of happy converts in our midst, the acquaintance and friendship formed under such circumstances, even in a few days, are very pure and strong; and to be obliged to tear away from all this so often is a great trial.

Habit does not render it any easier. It is just as painful now, after having held about two hundred series of meetings, in different parts of the country, to part at the close of these seasons, where we have wept, and prayed, and rejoiced together, as it was many years ago.

O, the strength of friendship formed at Jesus' feet!

"It cannot in Eden be found,
Nor yet in a Paradise lost;
It grows on Immanuel's ground,
And Jesus' dear blood it did cost."

Such are some of the trials in the work of an evangelist; but they are far outweighed by its joys.

One great source of comfort in his work is the necessity of living near the Savior, if he would have success.

Most pulpits are now supplied with good, and in many instances talented ministers, who preach clearly the gospel of Christ: the ground is plowed, and the seed sown, and only needs the showers and harvest sun to commence "bringing in sheaves," so that the evangelist's work consists largely in helping "gather in the harvest." To do this work, he must have "power with God." He must abide in Christ if he would reach and move the hearts of men.

It is said, "Barnabas was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith; and much people was added to the Lord."

We ought all to abide in the fullness of Christ's love; but if we do not from choice, it is a great blessing to be compelled by the very nature of our work to do so.

This alone is an ample reward for any sacrifice we can make.

There is also the joy of constantly making new friends and very warm and lasting friends are those made in a revival. What a joy, then, to be yearly increasing the number of real friends by thousands.

Another joy in this work is that of seeing immediate results from his labors. He labors for this, and looks for it -- if he is right himself -- without a doubt, and is not disappointed. Here the reaper overtakes the sower, and both rejoice together.

Every month of his labor he is, perhaps, permitted to see hundreds of precious souls gathered into the kingdom of Christ, and the churches greatly revived and strengthened.

Who can describe the joys that rise
Through all the courts of Paradise;
To see a penitent return,
To see an heir of glory born?"

But the greatest joy connected with the work of a faithful evangelist is in reserve for him until his labors are ended, and he has passed within the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem.

Then, when the glories of that wondrous world have fully burst upon his enraptured vision; when his feet have really pressed its gold-paved streets, and the bright, beautiful banks of its flowing river when the music of the harps of gold, and of angel voices have thrilled his soul; when he has really seen and bowed himself before the Savior; when he begins to realize the blessedness and peace of such a home, -- who shall describe the joy of his heart, as from that white-robed throng there come many thousands, gathering around him, grasping him by the hand in gratitude and love, and lead him to the Redeemer, saying, "Jesus, we have believed on thee, and been led to this beautiful world through this one whom thou didst appoint to 'do the work of an evangelist' in thine earthly kingdom!" O, the joy of such an hour! And as the endless ages roll on, and his expanding mind ranges in wider fields of knowledge, and comprehends more and more the glories and wonders of the "inheritance of the saints," that joy will be ever growing deeper and sweeter, as he meets from time to time those who were brought there through his labors.

There may be greater trials in other departments of ministerial labor than in that of the evangelist, but there cannot be greater joys. And he whom God calls to this work may well rejoice and give to it all his strength and powers.

"O, faint not in the day of toil,
When harvest waits the reaper's hand;
Go, gather in the glorious spoil,
And joyous in His presence stand."

* * * * *

Chapter 18 UNION MEETINGS

[The sentiments of this chapter were probably more appropriate in A. B. Earle's day than they are today. However, his views on the subject of union meetings, as set forth below, presume more than is wise, especially today:-- that all, or many, within various denominations are genuine Christians, divided only by the peculiarity of their several beliefs. Mutual effort among those who are genuinely born of God is one thing. However, more harm than good can result to spiritually alive groups who fellowship in union meetings with those who give every evidence of being nothing more than worldly, unregenerate, professors of Christianity, and/or whose doctrines are hostile to real salvation and to the second work of grace. -- DVM]

For a number of years past I have endeavored, when convenient, to have all evangelical denominations, who were willing, unite in meetings in which I have been called to labor, believing it to be better for the Redeemer's cause in the world, and for the salvation of lost men, that Christians of every name should work together in these special efforts. And although I have often labored with single churches of my own, and also of other denominations, yet I have usually felt satisfied that it would have been as well for that single church, and much better for the cause of Christ generally, had all the churches within a reasonable distance united in the work.

I have never seen, or heard, or read anything to change my views on this subject, but, on the contrary, my experience and observation have been constantly strengthening them.

I have no sympathy with denominational quarrels. All Christians ought to exhibit towards each other the spirit of their Master; they should be one in him, and love one another as brethren.

This they can do, and still differ in their opinions. Their highest interests are one; they have the same Savior, and journey towards one home, so that however dissimilar their views of some of the ordinances in the church, they can love as children of the same Father, and unite heartily in work for him. Nor does this compel them to hold their opinions loosely and half-heartedly; such a thing would be dishonorable and unmanly in anyone. I respect and love a Christian the more for being firm in his denominational views; it is his duty, as it is that of every man, fully and decidedly to believe what he professes, and to practice what he believes.

My own denominational sentiments have ever been dear to me, and never more so than now; and so I think it should be with everyone.

But, as I have labored, and wept, and prayed with thirteen or fourteen different denominations, in our own country and the British Provinces, I have learned to love all in whom I find the spirit of Christ. And, as I cannot and must not be the judge of their hearts, I concede to them, what I ask them to concede to me -- the credit of entire sincerity.

I never allow myself, when holding union meetings, to compromise what I believe to be true; but intend to preach, and pray, and labor just the same as when alone with my own denomination.

If, as some maintain, the churches strive wrongfully to secure for themselves the new converts; the blame must rest where it justly belongs. But I see no reason for unkind feeling between the different denominations, although each preach and practice what they believe to be right.

I am accustomed, in every revival, to urge the converts carefully and prayerfully to search the Scriptures, that they may learn the will of Jesus, and, having learned it, to go and do what they believe he would have them.

Beyond this it does not seem necessary for me to go, nor can I think it would be wise; because, believing it best to leave the work in the hands of the pastors while the interest is rising instead of waning, my stay in any revival is usually short, closing while many, frequently hundreds, are still inquiring the way of life. Further and more particular direction, if needed, is left with the pastors and churches. I may have erred; but this has been my usual course, and probably will be in the future.

I will mention a few reasons for my confidence in the usefulness and propriety of union meetings, where special efforts are to be made for a revival of religion.

They lead Christians to speak more kindly and tenderly of what they call each other's errors.

As they work together they come to a better understanding of each other, and learn how few things there are in which they differ, and how many in which they agree. Their hearts are drawn nearer together and love one another as never before; and, as a natural consequence, they speak more carefully and kindly of each other, and of those things in which they differ.

In times of revival the joy of salvation is restored, and this tends to the same result; no one, in the full enjoyment of religion, can speak unkindly of another. So that when Christians unite in labor for a revival, everything is at work removing the disposition to speak of others in any way but kindly and lovingly. O that the sweet influences of these seasons of refreshing might permanently abide in the hearts of all believers!

What forbearance, what deep and tender love, what union of effort, what searchings after truth, what casting away of error, what rapid triumphs for Christ, what an attractive exhibition of the real spirit of Christ would then be manifest!

[Ah! But what about those naive ones who are induced by this mixed fellowship to cast away truth!?? All would be well and good, if it were only non-essential customs that some naive, Christians were induced to cast away while fellowshiping in such muddled multitudes. The fact is, however, that sometimes unwise mixed fellowshiping can be used of Satan to induce genuine, but unwary Christians to cast away a teaching or conviction that came to them from God -- a teaching or conviction that is re-enforced in their own, lively congregation, and a teaching or conviction that once doubted and laid aside will result in their falling from grace and perhaps losing their soul. -- DVM]

Union meetings convince the unconverted of a reality in religion.

When they see Christians who differ in their denominational views, bowing together in prayer and laboring harmoniously and lovingly in a revival, notwithstanding all they have said and published in support of the practices of their various churches, they are constrained to say, "We think you are honest. We now believe there is a reality in religion."

A well-known gambler in Massachusetts was brought to Christ through just this influence, and said to me, "Mr. Earle, wherever you go, tell the world of my conversion; tell them I could withstand the appeals of each denomination when they worked separately, but when they united in a meeting, and I saw the spirit of love prevailing among them, I felt its power, and gave myself to the Savior."

A talented physician, who had advocated infidel sentiments for many years, came into one of our meetings on the Pacific coast, and publicly made this statement: "For the last four years I have been convinced that there was no real foundation for infidelity; and when I looked upon the different denominations, often speaking unkindly of each other, and refusing to work together for the salvation of souls, I felt there was about as little in the churches to rest upon. But when I attended this union meeting, and saw the brotherly love manifested, then I felt there was a reality in

religion, and that I needed it. Nothing seemed to reach me until I felt the power of this union of denominations."

Such cases are becoming common; and they show clearly that when the impenitent see intelligent men, who honestly differ on points that seem to them of sufficient importance to require separate organizations, so far merging their differences as to toil and weep side by side for the salvation of souls, they are convinced thereby of a reality in religion.

I will mention two instances, out of many, where churches of different denominations united and labored harmoniously together for a number of weeks, each administering the ordinances according to their own views, in the presence of the other, without apparently disturbing in the least the good feeling in the meeting, but, on the contrary, producing a marked effect in leading men to Christ:

One occurred in New York more than twenty years ago. Two denominations -- Congregational and Baptist -- united in a series of meetings, and continued them three months; afternoons and evenings of one week all worked together in one church, and the following week in the other, thus alternating back and forth, from week to week. When the meeting had been going on about four weeks, the time came for the Baptists to have their communion season and receive new members. At this point, if at all, trouble was to be expected.

The ministers and deacons assembled to consider what to do: whether to pass by the ordinances, because the two denominations differed in regard to them, or observe them, each church according to their belief, with the other present as spectators, and thus show to the world that they could differ on these points, and yet love each other, and work together cordially, leaving each denomination to be responsible to God for their peculiar views.

It was decided to adopt the latter course; and, accordingly, on the following Sabbath the Baptists observed both ordinances, just as they would have done alone, -- giving their reasons for not inviting to the communion table the other church, who were present as spectators.

The Holy Spirit descended upon the great congregation with melting power, and all seemed impressed with the fact that Christians could honestly differ and yet love one another. That week the revival was much more powerful than it had been at any previous time.

Four weeks more of this united labor passed, and then the Congregational church observed the ordinance of the supper, receiving at the same time several adults and infants, according to their belief, and practice; -- this time the Baptist church were present as spectators.

The house was crowded. Again the Spirit filled the place; and the ungodly went away, at the close of the service, feeling that they no longer had an excuse for doubting the value of the religion of Jesus.

A few weeks after this, when it was thought best to close the extra meetings, the last day was spent in hearing converts relate their Christian experience, in the presence of both churches. Those candidates intending to join the Congregational church were then requested to take seats on

one side the aisle, and those to join the Baptist, on the other. When this was done, each pastor brought forward the "articles of faith and practice" of his church, and examined the candidates for admission to that church, as thoroughly as he would have done had they been alone.

At the close of the meeting, all bowed in prayer and thanksgiving to God, who had so richly blessed his people throughout that delightful three months' union meeting; and all hearts found expression in the language of the familiar hymn, --

"Among the saints on earth
Let mutual love be found;
Heirs of the same inheritance
With mutual blessings crowned."

Each pastor has since expressed a strong desire to repeat that union meeting, so productive of good.

The other case was where the Baptist, Methodist, and Congregational churches united in a meeting, and carried it on, with great success, for four weeks. Many hundred, it was believed, found Christ precious. The meeting was held one or two days in one church, then in another, and so on through the four weeks.

As the Baptist church had no pastor, I recommended, at the close of my labors, that all the converts read and pray and search the Scriptures, as they had opportunity, for five weeks, to learn their duty; and that, if any one in the three churches spoke unkindly of the other denominations, an evident view of influencing them to join their church, they mark that member -- for it would be an evidence that he was not enjoying much love to Jesus, and therefore his words on those matters should have little weight.

With these suggestions I left them, promising to return in five weeks, and meet all the converts and the three churches, at nine o'clock in the forenoon, to hear experiences.

When the day came, we all met according to the appointment. The entire day and evening were spent in hearing the experiences of the young converts.

At the close, each church in the presence of the others, appointed the time and place for meeting those converts who had decided to join that church, and completing the examination according to the views and practice of such church.

The utmost harmony and good feeling prevailed between the churches, and Christ's cause was greatly honored and strengthened.

These results have been experienced in so many other places as to confirm me fully in expecting them, wherever the different denominations heartily unite in working for the salvation of men.

On the Pacific coast, wherever I labored, the denominations united, and I found their power over the community greatly increased thereby.

When we are united to Christ, we are strong; so when we, who are his children, are united, I believe we are strengthened. One may "chase a thousand," but "two put ten thousand to flight."

Another reason for a union of different denominations, in special effort for a revival, is that the churches where the converts go will be prepared to receive them.

When this is the case, the converts, as they join the various churches, are not taken to the arms of a cold mother, but find her warm, loving, and ready to nourish them. But when the revival is confined to one church, and converts -- as some are almost sure to do -- go to some other church and connect, they find no warmth, no nourishment; and after a little while, we may hear that they have not held out well, and have been excluded. They may have truly loved Jesus, but the unrevived church had no such warm milk as was needed by these babes in Christ, and so they drooped and fell.

The Spirit of God, I believe, is moving the denominations in regard to this subject -- not only in favor of protracted effort for the salvation of men, but united effort. Calls come to me for such meetings from all parts of the country -- from the Atlantic states, the Pacific coast, from our territories and the British Provinces, and even from the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii]; so that I have now on hand requests for such meetings, from at least two hundred churches of other denominations, besides those from my own.

O for more laborers, and more evangelists, to meet the urgent calls from all parts of the civilized world!

When this demand is met, we may soon begin to sing, --

"See, Jehovah's banner furled;
Sheathed his sword: he speaks -- 'tis done!
Now the kingdoms of this world
Are the kingdom of his Son.

"Hallelujah! hark! the sound,
From the center to the skies,
Wakes -- above, beneath, around
All creation's harmonies."

* * * * *

Chapter 19 FOUR DAYS' MEETINGS

The Burlington meeting closed; I hastened home for a day, then on to New York, and embarked for the Pacific coast. For nearly a year I was absent from the Atlantic States; yet during

all that time the heaven of that one meeting was at work, and had proved itself of divine implanting. The great and effectual door, which our fathers had known forty years ago, had again opened to the church, and into it earnest Christians were pressing.

Immediately on my return, calls came for meetings, three or four days in length, -- "like the one at Burlington." States, counties, and associations had been holding them, and with great success.

In October I met the churches of the "Woodstock Association," for one of these meetings at

CHESTER, VERMONT -- The interest was wide-spread, and drew together people from all the country around: mechanics closed their shops; merchants left their stores; farmers, their fields; women, their homes, -- and came to the place of worship.

The "Watchman and Reflector," of October 24, 1867, contains the following letter: "... Friends in Boston, Burlington, and Brandon had been praying earnestly, as they had at many other points, that the Spirit would descend in great power upon the meeting.

"The clouds hung down close upon the mountains. Appearances all bespoke a long, uncomfortable rain; and before night, sure enough, it came down in torrents. If it shut out those who had not yet left their homes, it shut in those who had come, so that they had nothing but God's promises to rely upon.

"Sunday was a memorable day; our Father smiled, and held back the rain, and parted the clouds, and gently, yet powerfully, shed abroad his Spirit in the hearts of saints and sinners.

"The Baptist house was too small, and we went over and packed the large Congregational church, above and below.

"In the afternoon the subject of the 'unpardonable sin' was presented, to an audience still as death. All seemed as if taken to the very point of decision; and when the people were invited to express their intention to cherish whatever degree of interest was then felt, almost the entire assembly arose.

"In the evening the expression on the part of the congregation was even more full and emphatic than in the afternoon. A second meeting was appointed after the dismissal of the assembly. The body of the house was nearly full. From eighty to one hundred came to the front seats for special prayer. When, at ten o'clock, this meeting was dismissed, many bowed their heads and hearts, and could not go.

"These meetings were open to all denominations: Methodists, Congregationalists, and Baptists, alike felt that it was good to be there."

The plan was to close that evening; but so deep was the feeling, I consented to remain through the next day, and take the midnight train for Massachusetts.

This last day was the best of all. The academy in the place was closed, and worldly matters quite generally made secondary, so great was the interest. At the evening meeting, at the close of the sermon, those who believed they had that day obtained hope in Christ were requested to rise. Forty-six at once responded; one hundred spoke for Jesus. The memory of that evening is precious.

A month after this meeting it was my pleasure to preach again in Chester, one afternoon and evening. The work had continued. More than one hundred persons, who either had no hope, or had just started in the way of life, but were groping in twilight, knelt in the aisles and around the desk, to be prayed for.

The hearts of God's people were as warm as when I left them; work for Jesus had brought its reward, as it always does. When we complain of spiritual coldness and leanness, we have only to go to work for the Master obediently and sincerely, and our cause of complaint will be gone.

CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS -- At the invitation of the "Boston North Baptist Association," I began a four days' meeting, with the churches of that body, at Charlestown, Massachusetts, October 17, 1867.

The attendance, at the opening, was not large; but the presence of the Master Workman, and the evidences that he had been preparing the ground throughout the association, were marked in the tone of the meeting, and in the requests made by pastors and their people for friends that lay heavy on their hearts.

In the afternoon nearly the entire congregation knelt down before God, and solemnly renewed their covenant with him.

The second day was one of gracious triumph for Jesus; the powers of darkness were routed; the clouds rolled away; and the place seemed the school of Christ, where all were sitting at his feet, learning of Him.

On the Sabbath the Spirit fell more especially on the unconverted, a large number of whom asked the prayers of God's people.

Monday afternoon the pastors came back to join in a closing service, and all felt it to be a season of delight and blessing.

Among the incidents of that meeting one comes touchingly to the minds of many of us, as we recall the name of our esteemed brother Fulton, father of the successful pastor of Tremont Temple church, Boston.

Prompt at the meetings, quick to hear and obey the call of duty, ready for work, zealous for the Master, he yet seemed dissatisfied with himself and his work.

And on one occasion of great heart-searching among Christians, he expressed a deep longing to know, beyond a doubt, that his feet were on the Rock; and when an opportunity was

given, he at once, with his usual decision, went forward and knelt with those who sought a clearer evidence of their acceptance.

We wondered then, but now is it not all unraveled and made plain? Had not his inner ear caught the footsteps of the dread messenger? the premonition that his title to an inheritance among the blessed was about to be tested at the gates of heaven? Yes, the longing soul was already pluming itself for its upward flight, beyond all doubt, and fear, and sin, to rest forever with its Savior; for he had hardly time to reach his western home before there came back the tidings, "Mr. Fulton is dead!" That prompt tongue was silent; that earnest eye closed forever; that meeting at Charlestown had, in truth, been the "vestibule of heaven" to him, where we had almost seen him throwing off the sin-stained, travel-worn garments of earth, and gathering around him the folds of the spotless robes of heaven.

My brother ministers, who of us will go next? Are we ready to lay down the sickle and meet the summons?

I trust many still waiting on this side the river, were anointed from on high in this meeting, and are now, even here amid the work and trials of life, calmly anchored in the haven of God's promises.

OGDENSBURG, N.Y -- On the last day of October I started for Ogdensburg, to begin the first of a series of four days' meetings, to be held in November, stopping on my way at Amsterdam and Herkimer to give some account of the work on the Pacific coast, and reaching my destination Saturday evening.

The meeting began on the following morning, with a good attendance from among the churches of the "St. Lawrence Association" -- the body that had called the meeting.

Though we started at the foot of the hill, the progress of the work was by no means slow. The way grew brighter at each step, and soon emerged into the clear sunlight, where we found our hands filled with work and our hearts with gladness. Christ revealed himself unto his people, and they communed with him as a Friend. There were those in attendance who learned for the first time, in their own experience, what the love and friendship of Jesus meant. Believers bowed anew in submission to their Father in heaven, and looking upon all the events of life, whether sweet or bitter, dark or light, as coming from him, found peace and contentment.

Holy faith and love grew rapidly during those four short days; and from the precious closing meeting on Wednesday evening we went away to our places in the battle of life, happier and stronger for our work than when we came together.

FAIRFAX, VERMONT -- Long before the dawn of another day the cars were hurrying me away towards Fairfax, where I was to begin a similar meeting with the churches of the "Lamoille Association."

This meeting opened with a large attendance, and marked manifestations of the Spirit's presence, and gave to sight as well as faith promise of a good work. The promise was realized: the glory of the Lord shone about us, and his salvation appeared unto many.

His people laid their all anew upon the altar, and he bestowed upon them, in turn, his richest gifts. The "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God," flowed far and wide, increasing in depth and power each day, until on the fourth and last day it rested on all the place "like a sea of glory," and bore to many hearts and homes the priceless blessings of life and peace.

A letter in the "Watchman and Reflector," of November 21, says of this meeting, "... A large attendance from the churches, with nearly every one of the pastors, indicated the -- deep interest felt in the meeting.

"Throughout the session the power of the Divine Spirit was very marked.

"Christians were very much revived, and returned to their churches prepared to work.

"At the close of the exercises the following resolutions were adopted:--

"Resolved, That the Lamoille Association gratefully recognize the hand of God in the present gathering of Christians at Fairfax, and acknowledge its obligations to him for the wonderful work of grace displayed in the quickening of his children and the conversion of sinners.

"Resolved, That we do cordially recommend to our sister associations to hold similar meetings.

BRISTOL, VERMONT -- The meeting at Fairfax closed on Monday evening, and the same night, bidding the delightful town good by, I started for Bristol, to meet the churches of the "Addison Association," for a meeting of the same character.

The first day was stormy; the attendance, small; the prospect, not very encouraging. We could not tell then, what God had in store for us; but on the second day all question was gone. The storm abated, and the people came crowding into the village from every direction, for long miles, and gathered together, with one accord, in the place appointed for the meeting.

From this time until the close it was a season of rare sweetness and heavenly blessing.

On the second day nearly the entire congregation, large though it was, renounced all selfish ambition, and pledged themselves to be the Lord's, in their hearts, their lives, and their all. Jesus was present among his people, ratifying the covenant by a gracious fulfillment of his promises.

Genuine consecration to God will at once manifest itself in the life -- a change will be seen; this was marked in this case. At the evening service following this afternoon's work, the Spirit was present in great power, searching hearts as with a lighted candle. Duty was thus made plain, and it was promptly met and obeyed. Christians saw wrongs they had done their fellow men, and confessed them on the spot. One brother grasped the hands of two fellow Christians with

whom he had been at variance, acknowledged his wrong, and asked their forgiveness; and amid sobs and confessions, mutual forgiveness and reconciliation followed. The scene broke down the congregation disputes, complaints, and coldness rapidly melted away, and at the close our hearts were one in Christ Jesus.

The last evening of the meeting was one of mingled rejoicing and weeping: believers were happy in the Lord; Jesus led them up to Pisgah's height; the impenitent were in deep sorrow on account of sin, and more than fifty of them asked the prayers of Christians.

We could not tarry all night, as did the disciples at Troas; but another meeting, -- the final, parting service -- was appointed, to be held the next morning at half past seven. And at that Pentecostal hour, the weather quite cold, and the darkness hardly gone, a large congregation gathered at the church. I preached a short sermon, and then, in the remaining time before nine o'clock, -- the hour I was compelled to leave, -- seventy-five persons spoke for Jesus, and others led in prayer and songs of praise.

The paper, just quoted from, says, in a letter from a correspondent: "... It was not long before the place of meeting was crowded to its utmost capacity; sinners were found inquiring the way of life, and converts were rejoicing in hope.

"Brother Earle's engagements compelled him to leave on Friday morning, after a meeting as nearly approaching the joys of heaven as anything we expect to participate in, this side the land of rest.

"The work continues not only unabated, but with daily augmenting power, and is extending itself into the adjacent towns. From forty to fifty are already rejoicing in a new found hope, and new cases of inquiry are of daily occurrence...

At a later date, Deacon S. wrote: "The good work still goes on; Christians are alive to the work, and are taking their neighbors by the hand, saying, 'Forgive me for my poor Christian life and neglect in not coming to you before, and asking you to come to the Savior.' I have seen some touching scenes of this description between parents and children.

"Today is a day of fasting and prayer, that God may prepare his children to go over the town, and converse with every person on the subject of religion. Brethren and sisters are undertaking this work, who, two weeks ago, would have shrunk from it instantly; so it is, God works through you in Bristol.

"I cannot find language to express my gratitude for your coming to Bristol; and in this I know every soul in the place would join...

SAXTON'S RIVER, VERMONT -- Leaving Bristol, I spent an afternoon and evening at Chester, and before the morrow's sun had risen was on my way to begin a similar meeting, at ten A. M., with the various denominations at Saxton's River.

This meeting, though not associational, had quite an extensive influence, and it was well attended.

For many miles the people came, on foot, in private carriages, and by public conveyance, sometimes packing every available seat and standing place in the church.

At times the entire congregation seemed swayed by the power of the Spirit, sinners were crying for mercy, and Christians were pleading with and for them, and for one another. But Jesus, ever nigh to hear and save, turned the mourning of many into rejoicing, and the terrors of a broken law gave way to the joys of pardoning grace.

The closing meeting was one of great refreshing; our Father bestowed his benediction upon us, and we parted, faith pointing to the meeting above, where separation never comes.

"There is a world above,
Where parting is unknown;
A long eternity of love,
Formed for the good alone;
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that glorious sphere."

But the work did not stop with this four days' meeting. Says a friend, in a letter nearly a month later: "... I want to tell you what is being done in Saxton's River. The Spirit of God is moving with mighty power; it does seem as though the place was being shaken from center to circumference; old and young are coming to Christ; and religion seems to be the theme in every shop and store in the village...

"We all thank our dear Savior for directing you here, and we feel that God through you has worked a great work among us. It is the saying of many that this place has never been visited by the Holy Spirit with such power as at the present time...

One of the pastors, writing for a Boston paper, at a still later date, says, "... The true revival spirit was poured on the place, and we are enjoying a more general and deeper work of grace than has been witnessed here, perhaps, for forty years.

"Both the churches in the place united in those meetings and both are now reaping a rich harvest.

"A very beautiful scene was witnessed as brother Earle closed his labors with us. When leaving the house of God for the last time, as he was about to start for home, an interesting company of little girls were gathered in the vestibule, weeping, and desiring to speak with him. When asked by him what they desired, with sobbing and tears they said, 'We are all sinners, and want you to pray for us.' He knelt in their midst, and in simple faith commended them to God. Four of the dear little girls, at least, are rejoicing in the Savior's love, as we write."

Weary in body, but glad in heart, because of what God had done, I reached my home; and though I had worked hard, preaching usually three times a day, meeting inquirers from sunrise until midnight, and traveling often by night, I felt that I would not exchange the sweet memories of that journey for those of the most tempting route of pleasure travel.

AMSTERDAM, NEW YORK -- The meeting here began Thursday morning, January 17, 1868, and was continued through five days. Four denominations united in the work, and met one day in one church, the next day in another, and so on through the meeting.

The Young Men's Christian Association, mentioned in another place, had for some time been helping prepare the way for the meeting, and now gave to it all their characteristic energy and earnestness.

Prayerfulness, zeal, and brotherly love marked this entire season of labor. Frequently prayer was continued until the midnight hour.

The heavenly showers at once began to descend on all the place.

The Master of the vineyard was present to direct and bless.

The attendance soon became too great to be accommodated in any one church. Accordingly, Christians retired as fast as necessary, and gave their places to the impenitent. In this way, on Sunday evening, the Presbyterian church was densely packed with a congregation quite largely made up of those who had no hope; believers had retired to the session room, where they continued in prayer during the sermon; others had gone to private houses. One group remained on their knees in prayer, without once rising, from seven until nine that evening. And we may believe prayer was heard; for at that time the Spirit fell in great power upon the congregation in the church. So deep was the conviction for sin, we were obliged to ask Christians to vacate the session room for the anxious, nearly two hundred of whom immediately reported there for prayer and direction.

On Monday evening the meeting in the Methodist church was of much the same character.

Christians were greatly moved in their own hearts. The remark was made in regard to one of the ministers, and one who came to be a faithful worker, "You would not know him; he appears altogether different; even his voice is entirely changed, -- I actually would not have recognized it, had I not seen him when he was speaking." So marked is the change when the joy of salvation is restored to the Christian.

Many sought a closer union with Christ, -- a rest in him by faith. A little company have since met with reference to that object, and very sweet and precious, I learn, have been their experiences. A letter says of the close of this meeting: "The farewell meeting on Tuesday morning was melting. The love and union between the ministers, and also the churches, were truly beautiful. There seemed to be one common interest, no more feeling for their own than for other churches."

The interest had reached such a height, that at this closing service nearly two hundred anxious souls requested the prayers of Christians. God's people met the responsibility, and carried the work forward for weeks with great success.

A letter, written some weeks after my departure, says, "... We have had a glorious work in Amsterdam. There must have been two hundred and fifty conversions, already, and they are all such bright, active converts. Large additions have been made to the churches. An unusually large proportion of the converts are young men. And still the work goes on. We all find plenty of work to do for Jesus.

Such is the outline of some of the four days' meetings among the churches.

And from these my own experiences in such meetings, from the success that has everywhere attended them, and from the fact that the church, years ago, reaped similar blessings from them, I am led to the firm conviction that in them we have one of the most valuable agencies that can be employed, at the present day, in promoting revivals of religion.

They can hardly be objected to on any ground:

They are practicable; neighboring churches can easily come together for such a work for four days.

They bring together the best, most active, and earnest element of our churches for deliberation, prayer, and labor. They thus lead out of forms of service that have become stereotyped and life less, correct mistakes and give to all the benefits of the experience of each.

They promote harmony and love between Christians of different churches and denominations.

They enlarge our conceptions of the power and resources of the church, and thus strengthen our faith and courage.

And, to crown it all, they are generally followed by a precious revival of religion.

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Chapter 20 REVIVAL GLEANINGS

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS -- In the spring of 1859 I held a meeting in Tremont Temple, and preached about eighty times. This was a very precious meeting, and widespread in its results.

As the Temple will seat about three thousand persons, and the seats are free for all, it is a great resort for the multitude. Many came from different parts of the city and country to this meeting, found Christ precious, and carried the influence far and wide. I learned that between one

and two hundred converts united with the Temple church, and many with other churches, as the fruit of this meeting. I held another meeting in the same place in 1862. This meeting continued about three months. My home during this last meeting was in the family of deacon Timothy Gilbert, the founder of the Temple enterprise, who has since gone to his reward on high.

"The memory of the just is blessed."

In the Spring of 1866 I held a union meeting in Boston with the Shawmut Avenue (Baptist), Park Street, and Mount Vernon (Congregational) churches; dividing the five weeks of the meeting between the three. I need say but little more about this meeting than to refer the reader to the notice given of it in the fifteenth chapter of this volume, by Rev. Dr. Kirk and Rev. Dr. Hague.

I held another meeting of four weeks in Boston, in the First Baptist church, January, 1868, Rev. Dr. Neale, pastor. This meeting will be cherished among the pleasant memories of my life. There is a noble class of working members in this renowned church of two hundred years' standing.

The work is still progressing. I give below the pastor's account of the meeting, taken from the "Watchman and Reflector" of January 23, 1868.

"Rev. A. B. Earle In Boston

"Allow me to say a word in your paper of the recent labors of Rev. Mr. Earle in my church. I had hoped that by special and continuous meetings, the church, pastor, and all, might be quickened anew; that the effort might be blessed to the children of the Sabbath school; that Christians who have thought to cherish their piety in secret might be led to make open profession of faith; and that strangers in the city, young men from the country, and persons who do not attend church anywhere, might be induced by the excitement of the occasion to come into the meetings, and thus be reached by the gospel. It is with grateful emotions that I am able now to say that these anticipations have been more than realized. Many conversions have already occurred among the young people of the congregation, and the number is multiplying daily. The members of the church are awakened to new life. There is among them a fervency in prayer, a sense of personal responsibility, and an activity of individual effort, that I have not seen for years, and which are so essential to a church's prosperity.

"Mr. Earle is admirably fitted to this service by his long experience and personal character. He is a laborious, praying, and most trustworthy man. His preaching is faithful, earnest, direct. He deals in no clap-trap or offensive personalities. He interferes with no pastoral prerogative, but goes to his work like a true ambassador of the cross, with strong faith and most untiring persistence, and watches for souls as one that must give account. Resorting to no arts to secure personal favor, he has yet greatly endeared himself to us all. The farewell meeting and the parting interview will be long remembered by the church; attached friends, rejoicing converts, and a grateful pastor gathered around him. There was a delightful mingling of smiles and tears as we took him by the hand and sung,

'Blest be the tie that binds

Our hearts in Christian love.'

"The kindest wishes and many prayers will follow our brother in his future labors."

NEW YORK CITY, FIFTH AVENUE. -- The meeting in this church was commenced the last of January, 1868.

Although I had engaged to be with them the year before, I was released until after my return from the Pacific coast.

The church is not so central as those "down town," along the old and crowded thoroughfares of business; still the ability of its pastor, the character of its members, and its position in the midst of the wealth and fashion of the city, gave it a wide influence, and drew to its services quite a large attendance. The ordinary congregations were sometimes increased to overflowing during the meeting, but usually, only enough to comfortably fill the house. Among those who came in from other churches were many whose familiar faces called to my mind pleasant memories of former meetings in the city.

The pastor had been preparing the way for the meeting, and without reserve threw his whole heart and strength into it. I trust we were one in heart and effort.

The church slowly but surely rallied to the work, and put on their strength, and went out after the unconverted, and led them to Christ. So that a precious revival was enjoyed.

My principal object, however, in this account is to give a single incident in this meeting. A Broadway merchant was awakened by the artless words of his little son: "Father, are you a Christian? I don't see any seal on your forehead."

The circumstances were these: During the morning service, one Sabbath, a gentleman devoted to his business and the pleasures of the world, noticed his little boy persistently holding his fingers in his ears. Surprised; he asked, "Charlie, why do you hold your fingers in your ears?"

Why," said he, "Mr. Earle made us all cry, in Sunday school, this morning, and I don't want to cry here in church, so I am not going to hear what he says." By and by, looking around him, and noticing that nobody seemed to be crying, he ventured gradually to remove his fingers from his ears. Just then I was speaking of the "sealing" mentioned by John in the seventh of Revelation, and I made a remark something like this: "My brethren, would you be willing to have a plain, broad seal put upon your forehead, so that, wherever you went, every one could see it, and learn that you were a Christian? Would it not keep you from some places which you now visit?"

This aroused his attention and curiosity, and, turning about, he whispered, "Father, what is a Christian?"

The unconverted father replied as best he knew how. The boy looked searchingly at his father's forehead, and asked, "Father, are you a Christian? I don't see any seal on your forehead." The father afterwards said, that had his boy drawn a pistol on him he could not have startled him

more suddenly and painfully. The question sped straight to his heart, as an arrow of conviction; he knew not what to reply.

He was determined, however, not to yield to his feelings, and in the afternoon went out for his customary pleasure drive. But the pleasure was gone; he felt no interest in the ride; his boy's sermon was rankling in his heart, he could not get rid of it; his eyes went straight to the forehead of every one he passed, in search of the "seal."

He resisted the Spirit for several days; but at length yielded so far as to come again to the meetings. The sermon, that evening, was on "The Unpardonable Sin." His convictions grew stronger; Charlie's words sounded louder than ever, "Father, are you a Christian? I don't see any seal on your forehead." Fear lest he had committed the sin that never can be forgiven, now added its terror. He felt that he could not, must not delay; if it were not already too late, it soon might be. He seized the offered opportunity, and presented himself as a subject of prayer; with his whole heart he sought pardon. Soon he was rejoicing in hope, and, not long after, he was baptized, and received into the church.

And, before I left, little Charlie came to me, saying, "Mr. Earle, I wish you would put my name in your little book; for I think I love the Savior now. I don't want to stop my ears any more when you speak."

People from other churches and other cities shared in the blessings of this work. Thus, I am told, a precious revival was commenced in Patterson, N. J. Many families and churches in different parts of the city were blessed in the same way.

Such seems to be the divine plan in regard to revivals; by some providence, people from other localities are drawn into them, and thus the work is extended.

TABERNACLE CHURCH -- Here I found a noble company of working members. The Spirit had preceded me all was ready, and a blessed work followed. This church is located on the crowded thoroughfare; the throng came, and many found Christ precious, and carried the influence of the meeting in every direction. Although a large amount of wealth is found in this church, and an able pastor, I have seldom found a more humble, working body of members.

Many of the converts united with this church, and large numbers with other churches in the city and vicinity. A further account of this and the Fifth Avenue meeting is given by their pastors, in another chapter.

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA -- I left New York, and commenced meeting here, in April, 1868, with the First and Tabernacle Baptist churches, alternating between the two.

With the strong hold both pastors have on their people, and the large number of regular attendants in each congregation, our audiences were very large, sometimes numbering two thousand. The Spirit had prepared the way, so that the city of William Penn seemed all ripe and ready for the sickle. Many were gathered into the fold of Christ; but I have no space for

particulars, and can only say, after a short, but precious meeting of three weeks, I left for Syracuse, thankful for the acquaintance formed and the blessings received.

LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS -- In 1859 I assisted the pastor, Rev. F. Remington, in a meeting of four weeks in this city. More than fifty converts were received into the church the last Sabbath of the meeting, and many others gave themselves to Christ in that precious revival, among them some who were shortly afterwards killed by the falling of the "Lawrence Mills."

DOVER AND GREAT FALLS, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AND SOUTH BERWICK, MAINE. -- This was my first series of meetings in the fall of 1864. Twelve churches united in this work of four weeks. A part of the time I preached in Dover in the morning, South Berwick in the afternoon, and Great Falls in the evening, and so on day by day. I can only say here, I expect to praise God forever with many happy souls brought to Christ during this glorious union meeting.

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE -- This meeting was held in 1864. All the evangelical churches united. Meetings were held two days in one church, then two in the next, and in this way with each one. A very precious revival was enjoyed, the sweet fragrance of which will spread throughout eternity.

BIDDEFORD AND SACO, MAINE -- Nine churches united in this meeting in 1864.

Meetings were held in two large halls, one in Biddeford, the other in Saco, alternately, a day at a time in each. The power, and preciousness, and widespread results of this meeting will only be seen when we reach the "better country." Our dear brother Packard laid down his life at the commencement of this work.

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK -- This meeting was held in 1866. As Strong Place and the Tabernacle churches called this meeting, the largest share of the services were held with them, but mornings, and several times during the whole day, in other churches of different denominations. In this way we held meetings in twelve different churches. The meeting continued forty days. The season was glorious. The pastors and members of these churches will ever hold a warm place in my heart for their earnest and hearty co-operation in these services, and their great liberality to me. May our dear Savior bless and keep them all.

The volume in heaven contains a full account of all these meetings. May the final review be pleasant to us all.

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK -- I commenced meeting here in May, 1868. This meeting also was with the two Baptist churches.

Their pastors are young, but men given up to God, and of fine talents. I do not know how many have united with the churches, but hear the work continues. I thank God for my visit to Syracuse.

It was now June, and having preached more than four hundred times since October last, without rest, I bade the churches good-bye, and hastened to my home in Newton, Massachusetts, to rest for a season, and complete this volume.

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Chapter 21 THE WORK ON THE PACIFIC COAST

The recent remarkable work of grace in the Pacific States having been watched with uncommon interest in the other portions of our country, because of the peculiar relation of their people to us, they having gone out from among us, leaving here their youthful homes, their friends, and often their families; and, as a natural consequence, a very general desire having been expressed that I would give fuller information concerning it, I have consented to do so in this form; yet I shrink from the attempt, since the canvas herein afforded is too narrow for anything but a bird's-eye glance -- the merest outline. What a marvelous history of incident and experience belongs to any revival! How then hope, in these few pages, to describe this work, embracing as it does so revivals, and interest and influence so wide!

And this shrinking is increased by the fact of my ignorance of much of the work, since, in the different places I visited, it continued after my departure; and, besides, many a lamp was lighted in those places and then borne away to distant and neighboring towns, where other revivals were kindled by it. In all these movements the circles swept beyond my vision, and their results and character are, to a great extent, unknown to me. Still, perhaps, I may be able, in some measure, to meet the desire on both sides of our continent, and also realize the hope I cherish of hereby increasing faith in Christian labor, and above all of honoring the Divine Leader of this work.

When and where this work really began, we cannot fully know; its sources are far and wide, like the springs that feed our wide-sweeping rivers. Could we trace this river of salvation back through its first silent, secret streams, to its sources, we should be led to many a mountain side, quiet valley, busy town, secluded cottage, and there find them in pastors' studies, mothers' closets, and consecrated sanctuaries, where burdened Jacobs wrestle in unyielding prayer. God knows all these places; the work is all traced out by his we, and in due time he will openly reward those who toiled in secret.

But, to human eye, the most obvious starting point is in the summer of 1866, with the San Francisco Ministerial Union, -- a body of ministers then recently organized, and representing most of the evangelical churches of that city and vicinity. Here seemed to be the culmination of whatever forces had hitherto been in operation -- the gathering of the waters, and the first bursting forth of the stream that was to grow deep and strong more rapidly than the one Ezekiel saw flowing from beneath temple. This may best be seen in the following letter: "

"San Francisco, Cal., July 5, 1866

"Rev. A. B. Earle

"Dear Brother: At a meeting of the San Francisco Ministerial Union, this week, it was voted unanimously to invite you to visit this city to hold a protracted meeting under the auspices of the Union.

"This Ministerial Union embraces the ministers in this city and vicinity of most of the evangelical churches.

"The circumstances that have led to this invitation are as follows: Two months ago the subject proposed for the consideration of the Union was, 'Our duty, as gospel ministers, to the masses of the city who are unreached by the gospel.'

"This subject was earnestly considered, and, in view of its importance, postponed one month; again thoroughly discussed- and then referred to this committee, to report to the Union some definite plan of action.

"This week a report was submitted to the Union, embracing the following recommendations: That a daily union noonday prayer meeting be at once established; that all the churches represented in the Union be recommended to establish additional neighborhood prayer meetings; that the ministers in those churches give special prominence, in their pulpit ministrations, to such subjects as seem best adapted to prepare the way of the Lord; and that Rev. A. B. Earle be invited to hold a protracted meeting as mentioned above.

"After a very full and fraternal conference, these recommendations were severally adopted.

"Should you respond to our call, you may expect the cordial cooperation of pastors and people, though the percentage of evangelical Christians is lamentably small.

"No evangelist has ever labored here. While revival seasons have been enjoyed to a greater or less extent in all our churches, there has never been any general religious movement such as has been experienced in so many cities of the East.

"We pray that the Lord will guide you.

"Committee:

"D. B. Cheney,

"E. C. Bissell,

"O. C. Wheeler"

Such were the first apparent steps of this work; small and insignificant they may seem, yet the religious movement that has grown out of them ranks, for universality of interest and power, among the "great awakenings" of these latter times.

These recommendations were immediately put in operation; extra meetings were commenced; special effort made by many pastors and churches; and the call forwarded to me.

At once it was a disturbing element in my path, a new force introduced, and one that very soon was felt to be drawing me towards a new and unexpected region. Till then my work seemed plainly to be among the Atlantic States; calls numberless were before me; engagements already made. Why, then, go away? Why leave a broad and promising home field for one so far away? Could duty be in that direction? For a time it seemed not; but something began to change convictions; friends, too, began to say, "God is in it; Dr. Kirk, Dr. Bright, Dr. Backus, and others who are wont to watch the leadings of Providence from a high standpoint, said, "Go." At length, on my knees, in my study, in prayer, with my wife, the answer came -- light from the golden gates of the New Jerusalem fell upon the path over the seas into the "golden gates" of the Pacific, -- my way was clear, and without hesitation I telegraphed, "I will come. Will sail September 11."

Grateful I shall ever be that my wife accompanied me; for whatever success attended my labors was due, in no small measure, to her cheerful presence, her faith ever bright and strong, her clear and comprehensive views of truth, and her serene and close communion with God.

Farewell services were held in Strong Place church, Brooklyn, N. Y., on the evening previous to our departure. Tender words of sympathy and love were spoken by assembled friends and followers of the Redeemer.

Dr. Armitage, pastor of the Fifth Avenue Baptist church, was there to say, "Early last spring we made an engagement with brother Earle to help us; that engagement is temporarily broken; tonight I bid him God-speed, willingly surrendering my claim for the present.

"Our brother has asked us to pray for him. Let us ask him to pray for us. His prayer ascending from the Pacific, ours from the Atlantic, shall meet and form the bow or faith which shall span the continent."

Dr. Taylor, pastor of one of the Congregational churches in Brooklyn, said many things in his own kind, eloquent way, -- among them, "I was reared to feel a prejudice against evangelists. I remember coming to brother Earle hesitatingly, doubtingly, when I asked him to preach to my people. As far as brother Earle is concerned, I have no questions to ask, for God has answered them all."

Such was the character of expressions that fell from many lips that evening.

My own words of farewell came from the depths of a heart, sorrowful at parting, yet hushed into peace, that I was going sustained by such benedictions.

A report, in one of the New York papers, says of the close of this service, "Brother Earle led in a closing prayer, and with a hymn of parting the assembly was dismissed. Not to the doors, but to the pulpit, the people crowded.

"We stood near the man who wins souls to Christ, and heard the expressions of love and anxiety which each uttered.

"Young converts said to their friend, 'Pray for us,' while the older pilgrims said to him, 'We shall pray for you.' How many times 'God bless you' was uttered!"

The importance which Christians in the Atlantic States attached to this work, and the prayerful interest with which they followed my own connection with it, are so well expressed in an article in the "New York Examiner and Chronicle," I cannot do better than give some extracts: "At the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, in England, Mr. Fuller said, 'There is a gold mine in India, but it seems almost as deep as the center of the earth. Who will explore it?' 'I will go down,' said Mr. Cary, 'but remember that you must hold the ropes.'

"There is gold in California mines more precious than any that have yet been worked, -- mines deep and inexhaustible, that have been sadly neglected in the search for less precious treasure.

"The question has been asked, anxiously and repeatedly, Who will venture to explore them?"

"At last, Rev. Mr. Earle, an honored evangelist, in answer to an invitation from Christians of various denominations, says, 'I will go.' And in leaving, he has turned to his brethren of the east, and said, 'Remember that you must hold the ropes.'

"Few, we think, present at the farewell meeting on the eve of Mr. Earle's departure, were not deeply impressed with the faith of this good man. It was simple and childlike, but so strong as to be truly sublime.

"He confidently expects great things; but like Paul, his expectation rests, in a great measure, on the prayers of his brethren.

"He goes down to explore the mine, but he expects us to hold the ropes; and it cannot be denied that Christians in the Atlantic States owe vast responsibilities to the Pacific coast. We have not sent the gospel to California as promptly and as liberally as she has sent gold to us: the balance of account is sadly against us. Now is the time to settle this long standing account. Let us meet our obligations; let us follow this eastern evangelist on his mission with our prayers; let us anticipate his arrival with telegraphic messages, by the way of the mercy seat, heaven, and the throne of God....

"Let every church, then, to which the cause of the Redeemer generally is dear, and every Christian who has a husband, brother, son, or friend on that coast, not fail to send up their prayers to God for a blessing upon brother Earle, that he may, indeed, be an evangelist of Christ to the people of California.

"Remember, brethren, we hold the ropes."

When, on the day following this farewell service, the steamer lifted her moorings from the Atlantic coast, -- the home of my youth and manhood, and the scene of my labors hitherto, -- and bore me away towards the distant Pacific shores, my heart was comforted by the thought of those

prayers that were sure to follow me; and during all my absence are blessings from morning and evening sacrifices, in which my name was remembered, in homes from St. John to Washington, fell upon me as the benediction of heaven.

My welcome at San Francisco was warm and hearty, making me sure the promise of cooperation would be carried out to the fullest extent.

The harvest had already commenced; the special means proposed by the Union had been followed by the blessing of God; many souls were rejoicing in hope, others were inquiring, and I doubt not the work would have gone on had the vessel in which I traversed the sea gone down to the bottom with all its human freight.

Immediately on my arrival, one common union meeting was established as the working ground and rallying point for the various denominations and churches connected with the Ministerial Union. For this purpose the Union had secured Platt's Hall as the regular place of meeting, and the occasional use of Union Hall, because these were much larger than any of the churches; and the expense of hiring these halls -- some fifteen hundred dollars gives an idea of the heartiness with which the people entered into the work. The same spirit was manifest in all they did; in the crowded attendance, in their thoughtfulness as "hearers," and promptness as "doers of the word." Very soon deep, quiet feeling was manifest over the entire city. Men were awakened to the solemn issues of life as never before; the "unseen" seemed to sweep over and sink out of sight the "seen;" people felt they were living for eternity.

Some idea of the extent of the work, even at the end of the first two weeks, may be obtained from the following extracts from an article in one of the daily papers, "The Alta:" "A religious revival, such as has never before been experienced on this coast, is now in progress in this city.

"Mr. Earle arrived in this city a little over two weeks ago ... He commenced his services on Sunday, October seventh, in Dr. A. L. Stone's church. On Monday, the eighth, he preached in Dr. Scudder's church. On Tuesday, in Dr. Cheney's, and most of the time since has been preaching in Platt's Hall, twice each day; on Sunday, at Union Hall.

"The congregation which assembled, on Sunday evening last, at Union Hall, was the largest ever collected under one roof on this coast; every available space for standing room was occupied; there could not have been less than three thousand auditors present, and there were at least one thousand who could not get into the hall, and were obliged to leave without hearing Mr. Earle.

"But the number attending these services is the least remarkable thing about them. The interest pervading the assemblage, amounting even to solemnity of devotion, is extraordinary, and the quiet, order, and reverence displayed is astonishing

"Without any attempt at the graces of the pulpit, the effect produced by his preaching is beyond comparison the greatest that has come within our experience ... To listen to him once attracts your attention; the second time increases it; the third time deepens it to interest; and further attendance renders it absorbing.

"The feeling which has been aroused by his preaching and services is deepening, and extending, and widening every day. The members of the various churches appear to be deeply exercised; and many of those who are not members, who have attended these services, have come under deep conviction; and some, of a class and position which would popularly be supposed the last to come under such influences, have yielded to the influences surrounding them, and are seeking forgiveness of their sins.

"Yet there is no excitement, nor endeavor to create excitement, but calm expositions of the gospel and appeals to the judgment.

"There are in this city now a number of ministers from the interior, who have been daily attendants on Mr. Earle's ministrations, and their unanimous verdict is: 'His heart is in this work; he is truly a servant of God, filled with his love, and wholly given to his service; and if we will go to our flocks, lay our hands on God's altar and submit our wills to him, and preach the love of God as displayed in the gospel, with the simplicity, and plainness, and fervor of Mr. Earle, such a blessing will come down from heaven that there shall not be room enough to contain it.'

Thus were the operations of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men, all over the city, manifesting themselves. It was not the work of man. While I gratefully appreciate the kindness and esteem expressed towards myself in this and other similar articles in the different papers, the glory of the work is God's. I was only one out of many used by him in bestowing his blessing.

Christians, either under the leadership of the earnest pastors, or singly, and alone, went everywhere about the city working for Christ; their ranks, too, rapidly filled up; every convert, every returned wanderer, was at once an addition, -- a new center from which good was radiating into surrounding masses. The first impulse of the young convert is to try and do something for his Savior, and this, if led into wise channels and encouraged by older disciples, becomes a great source of additional power in any revival. The love of Christ in the heart is ever a controlling power in the life, the great wheel at the foundation, that turns the endless and diverse machinery of the outward life.

The name of Christ was above every other: to the sinner it told of a full atonement, a safe hiding place, while all the sweetest and dearest associations gathered about it anew to those who had fled to him for refuge. It was above every denominational name, -- Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Methodist, or Baptist; this was the watchword that opened the door of every Christian heart to all other believers; all were marshaled under this one banner.

This was true of all the meetings in which I was engaged on the coast; everywhere it was a common, united effort for Christ.

I continued my labors here five weeks, preaching twice each day; on Sunday, three times.

The Spirit reached, with his convicting, converting power, people of every age and condition, in every part of the city; converts multiplied by hundreds.

Saturday afternoons I usually met the children from the schools in some place where all could come together. Sweet is the memory of those seasons; and I think I shall never see anything so beautiful as to make me forget the sea of bright, youthful faces, there upturned towards mine, eager to catch the words that told them about Jesus; or those occasions when several hundred of them came forward and knelt together at Jesus' feet, asking him to bless them, as he did children when he was upon the earth.

At the end of the time mentioned I left the work at San Francisco in the hands of the pastors and people, and turned towards other fields.

My time for returning to the east was given up; the reaping time on the Pacific coast had come. Calls, urgent and beseeching, were daily coming from every part of the coast, and I dare not leave.

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Chapter 22

THE WORK ON THE PACIFIC COAST -- CONTINUED

SONORA AND COLUMBIA, CALIFORNIA -- These cities, only a few miles apart, quiet, and not large, situated in the interior of the state, in the midst of an extensive mining region, were my next field of labor.

Meetings were commenced and carried on in both places at the same time. I preached, generally, in one city in the afternoon, and in the evening in the other, many of the people also going back and forth to each service.

There was no other way to meet the demand in both places.

If, as we sometimes hear, mining communities are more careless about the things of religion the other people, I did not discover it, either here or elsewhere. The interest in the meetings was general and hearty, and the truth as instrumental in conversion of sinners as in other places. And, indeed, I have never found any great distinction in this respect among different classes of individuals.

To every heart there is an avenue for the truth and if we only have the clear eye and loving heart to discover the porter at the gate, an entrance is nearly as free and easy, and the road about as short and direct, in one case as another.

Out of the sinking mire and thick darkness of our fallen, unrenewed state, we are ever stretching a helpless hand up towards the light; and that band the earnest, loving Christian may grasp, and thereby, under God, save the soul from death.

The work daily grew in power, giving continually new and striking proof that "the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

At an evening meeting in Columbia there were present four praying wives, sitting by the side of their unconverted husbands. The Spirit was moving upon the whole congregation. Before long those wives rose and requested prayer for their husbands. This melted the hearts of those strong men, and, before the meeting closed, their burden of sin had become so heavy they were on their knees, with their wives, in agonizing prayer.

The scene moved many to tears. Christians silently joined in the petition.

God heard and forgave, and they went home rejoicing in hope; and four happier households are rarely found.

On one occasion, at Sonora, after I had been talking to the Sunday school children, all of them, with the exception of one little lad, came forward, in response to a request that all who loved, or desired to love Jesus, would take the front seats.

That little boy afterwards came to me, with tears on his face, and asked me to pray that Jesus would forgive and save him; and it was not long before he, too, was numbered among the rejoicing ones.

The interest was now becoming very deep; the number of converts rapidly increasing, when, at the end of eight days, I was compelled to say good-bye to the much loved people of Sonora and Columbia.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA -- Across the bay from San Francisco, at this attractive town, -- the educational center of that region, and the home of many of the business and professional men of San Francisco, -- I spent the next ten days in a delightful season of labor with the different denominations.

The windows of heaven were opened wide; the revival spread not only among the permanent inhabitants of the town, but also through the schools and seminaries, bringing many of the scholars to the feet of the Great Teacher, where they learned the alphabet of all true knowledge -- "the fear of the Lord," which "is the beginning of wisdom."

In one school thirty boys believed they had met with this change of heart; and testimony to like happy experiences came from various other schools. This added a very important result to the work, in extending its influence into other places -- often quite distant -- where these converted scholars resided. A single instance will be given in another chapter.

The churches of Oakland, and many of its pleasant homes, will long be remembered for varied and marvelous displays of God's sovereignty in the conversion of sinners. Many persons were lifted to the heights of joy and peace, after long days of wandering in the depths of despair; others, who had, at the time, no particular anxiety of mind, heard the invitation, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," believed was meant for them, and, without waiting for more feeling, came at once, and found Jesus. One found pardon while surrounded by a group of praying friends, another alone in his room; one in his store, another in the inquiry meeting; one on the street, another while listening to a sermon; and so through the whole long list of new experiences where were

touched almost hourly these and other widely differing chords, all, however, vibrating in harmony with one single keynote -- Salvation through the blood of Jesus.

After ten days I departed, leaving the people grateful for the past, and strong in heart for the future.

STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA -- Winding along between the banks of the San Joaquin River to Stockton, a county seat and charming city in the midst of a luxuriant farming region, I there saw, during a stay of twelve days, one of the most powerful revivals I have ever passed through in so short a time.

The whole city seemed shaken by the mighty power of the Spirit. Men were stricken down under conviction for sin, in the very streets and places of business. The bitterest enemies of Christ were ready to renounce anything and everything for the most humble place among his children.

The meetings became the common theme of conversation, and the common place of resort.

Such was the unity and love among Christians of every name; the impenitent were overcome by the very sight, and constrained to seek admission into such a family. Love made religion attractive.

A prominent physician, who had long been an infidel, and had led many young men into the bewildering mazes of that soul-destroying error, said, when he saw the love between the different denominations, "I cannot stand this; I must believe and share in such a religion."

Before long he rose in a crowded meeting asked permission to speak, and then calling the attention of the young men in whose minds he had sown the seeds of infidelity, said he wanted to take back every word he had ever uttered in support of infidelity, and to acknowledge the truth of the Bible and Christianity, and urge all to seek an interest in the atonement of Christ. Not only believers, but his companions in infidelity, were much affected by the appeal.

He soon found hope in Christ, and has since been an active Christian laborer, doing what he can to undo his former infidel teachings.

The little ones from the Sunday Schools and the public schools looked up in my face, with sweet confidence, and said, "We don't want you to go away, for since you came we have learned to love Jesus." The poor and the aged grasped my hand, saying, "Thank you for coming; through you we have found Jesus and happiness; life no longer seems dreary."

People surrounded with an abundance of the good things of this life said, "We never knew how to enjoy our mercies until these meetings were held; now we love the Giver, and enjoy them as coming from his hand; his service sweetens them all, and gives a charm to life, unknown till now."

Blessed work! -- to bring men, through Christ, into communication with the heart of our Father, yearning with unutterable love over our fallen race!

Thus richly did the blessings of salvation fall upon Stockton, bringing pardon to the condemned sinner, hope to the wandering, peace to the sorrowing, light to those in darkness, purer faith and love to the older disciples, and better purposes into all the channels of business and social life, making the city glad with the presence, and vocal with the praises of Jesus.

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA -- From thence I went on, by a stage route of half a hundred miles, over muddy roads, and under rainy skies, to Sacramento, the capital of the state.

The "rainy season," which had also prevailed during the meeting at Stockton, was now at its height; and an imperious, though fitful sway it was, that the storm-king was holding: now giving way for a while to the sunshine, and now again gathering his dark battalions in greater strength, and rushing back to the contest suddenly and angrily, deluging town and country, sometimes marking his path with the debris of ruined roads, crops, fences, and even dwellings, and always until he again left the field -- making men shun his presence, and seek a covert from his missiles.

Surely not a promising time, from the standpoint of mere reason, to labor for a revival, especially in the midst of the very worldly influences connected with a seat of government. But faith looks upon the clouds only as the chariot of her God, who in carrying out his purposes,

"Plants his footsteps on the sea,
And rides upon the storm;"

and rests as calmly on his promises, in rain and cloud, as in sunshine; in summer's heat as in winter's cold.

In the exercise of this faith, work was commenced. It was not, indeed, a light task: labor, hard and unyielding, was demanded. Far into the night God's faithful children wrestled in prayer; but the promises were found sure; the blessing came. The spiritual rain was more abundant and more powerful than the natural. Men could escape the latter under their roofs, but the former reached them even there, and sweeping from them their confidence in all earthly foundations, constrained them to flee for safety to the "Rock of Ages," and to hide themselves under the covert of the Almighty.

An unconverted lawyer, writing for one of the daily papers, -- "The Bee," -- says, "It was supposed Rev. Mr. Earle would close, Tuesday evening, but so great and universal is the interest awakened in our community by the unexampled success resulting from the joint efforts of himself and the several energetic ministers cooperating with him, he has finally yielded to the united solicitation of the pastors and people to postpone his appointment for Petaluma, and stay until next week.

"Never before, I think, in this city, have there been so large meetings and manifestations of such deep and earnest feeling on religious subjects.

"It is curious to hear the various views expressed by different persons regarding Mr. Earle.

"One class says, 'He is not an eloquent man another, 'He is the embodiment of eloquence itself.' One says, 'He is not logical at all;' another, 'He is the most logical and convincing man I ever heard.'

"In one conclusion nearly all seem to agree: his perfect sincerity in the truth of his utterances, and the possession of wonderful power. This is evidenced by the attendance of representatives of nearly all the mechanical, laboring, and professional classes, who, yielding homage at the shrine of intellect and goodness, listen with extreme delight, and many of whom have embraced his faith.

"That he is doing a vast amount of good none will deny ..."

Throughout the city there was great joy few went empty from the great feast which divine Love had spread.

One of the pastors spoke for many hearts, when he wrote me, after this meeting, "I live in a new world. The sun shines all the time. I have nightless day in my soul. I now rest in Jesus."

Thus while dark clouds overhang the earth, may the believer dwell in the Sunshine, whose light will be undimmed when sun, moon, and stars are no more.

Twenty days passed, and I took my leave of the kind people of this busy, prosperous city, rejoicing over scores and hundreds of new born souls, and the peace bestowed on Christians; and all this during the mud and storm of the California "rainy season."

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head."

PETALUMA -- This genial city, attractively situated near the bay, seemed like the rest of the coast, ready for the work of the Lord; and the opening of the meeting there moved the machinery of the social and individual life of the whole city, as "raising the gate" of one of our mills sets the countless looms and hands at work, and fills every room and story within, and the place around, with the sound of busy activity. Attendance upon, and interest in the meetings, were almost universal. A single evident shows this fact. The hall, in which, because of its superior size, the meetings were held, had been engaged by a theatrical company. When the evening for the performance came, we went -- with no word of fault-finding -- to one of the churches. Only eight persons attended the theater; the performance was given up; and two of the actors came into the meeting, and there believed they found hope in Christ.

Events and expressions, apparently of slight importance; were sufficient, under the great pressure of the Spirit's presence, to lead men to seek an interest in Christ.

The judge of one of the judicial courts -- a thorough man of the world -- was converted through the instrumentality of his little son, who, in the meeting at Oakland, while at school there,

had found the Savior. Vacation brought him home, his heart full of love to Jesus; and at once he was at work for his father's conversion.

Returning from meeting one evening, he asked his father to pray. "I will kneel and you may pray," said he, unable to resist his only child. "No, father; I want you to pray," was the reply. At length the worldly man kneeled down by the side of the young pleader, and, as he told us, "offered some sort of a prayer." In a few days, after a severe conflict, he fully gave up his will to Christ, and found peace in believing.

He has since been an earnest Christian; sometimes presiding at the sessions of the court during the day, and in the evening preaching in one of the churches, with his brethren of the bar in front of him among his hearers.

Those thirteen days at Petaluma were full of rejoicing; the blessings of salvation were bestowed in free and rich abundance; the peace of heaven fell upon the hearts of God's people, and its glory upon their faces.

The judge, of whose conversion I have spoken, has written me: "... Everything goes on finely in this city; no jingling of consequences between the different denominations, as to unfair means in procuring additions to their churches; all get a fair share, and all seem satisfied.

"O, such a change in this place! If you could see it as it appears to me and to others, I know you would not regret your labor of love among us."

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA -- From Petaluma, a route winding along steamboat and railroad lines, by way of San Francisco, -- the connecting link between many of the inland cities and towns, -- brought me to San Jose, a most delightful city, the seat of the county government, and situated in a rich farming region, charming with woodland, plain, and hill.

I well remember, as we drew near the city, asking a fellow passenger, with whom I was conversing about the city and the anticipated meetings, the size of the churches. "O," said he, "you will find the smallest church in San Jose plenty large enough for all who will care to attend." Such was the judgment he had drawn from what he had seen in years past. Perhaps he could not say, "the lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places." Be that as it may, the meetings were hardly under way before no church could accommodate the throngs.

Nearly every person in the city was in some way moved by the meetings; some, indeed, only to derision, others to curiosity; but the greater part to thoughtful, growing interest.

Men could refuse to yield to the strivings of the Spirit; but whatever their calling or condition they could not bar them from their hearts.

One of the hotel keepers -- a man I could but esteem for many generous and honorable traits of character was fully convinced of his lost condition and his need of Christ; frankly admitted it all; "But," said he, "I cannot sell rum and be a Christian and as I shall be unable to carry on my hotel if I give up rum selling, and so, perhaps, be unable to support my family, I must give up

becoming a Christian." O, how my heart ached for him, lest because of that decision I should, at the judgment, see him going away "on the left hand" -- forever lost!

Another man in the same business was brought to the same test, but, with a courage worthy the imitation of any among believers or impenitent who are engaged in callings that stand in the way of the welfare of their souls, he met it unflinchingly. One Saturday evening he went home from the meeting determined to make the sacrifice of anything that risked the salvation of his soul, and before midnight had removed his bar and put away his stock of liquors! In a few days he was rejoicing in hope, and not long after connected with one of the churches.

Here, also, occurred one of those peculiarly interesting incidents I was often permitted to meet with during my stay on the coast -- the conversion of people once known to me at the east, or of those whose friends had given me special entreaty to try and lead them to Christ.

A husband and wife, and wife's brother, all of whom had been, long years before, residents of the same village as myself, and had there been unreached by all their religious privileges, were now living in this city; and here, so far from our old home, we again met, and they, through the preaching of their former fellow townsman, in this distant city, were at length reached by the sovereign power of God, and led to Jesus. Well may the poet sing, --

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

God's sovereignty was also remarkably displayed in the conversion of a leader among pleasure seekers:

This man, for some reason, rose in the meeting and asked prayers for four persons, purely in derision.

He sat down; but the sport was gone; deep conviction of sin seized him; and now, in honest agony of soul, he cried for mercy for himself. His companions, too, who had thought to share in the pleasure, shared instead, the burden of conviction. At length he, with some of them, found "the Way," and obtained pardon and peace.

In a general revival, like this, the Spirit moves upon more hearts than we are wont to think, and were people honest to the impressions thus produced, few would pass through such a season unconverted. Perhaps the following incident will help bring out this truth, so alarming to those who have gone through revivals and are still impenitent, and so encouraging to Christian faith and effort:

A prominent teacher, an unbeliever in the divinity of Christ and in portions of the Bible, came to my room, at the request of his friends, with no apparent concern for himself.

Courteously, but firmly, he spoke of his views. We did not argue much; but before leaving he promised he would not knowingly grieve the Spirit, by disobeying his voice. He felt safe in making such a promise, as he was not aware of being the subject of the Spirit's operations; but in

the course of three days he rose in the meeting, and acknowledged that the Spirit was striving with him, and had shown him he was a sinner, and might find pardon through an almighty Savior, and therefore, his promise as well as his burdened heart, constrained him to ask for prayer.

A few days more and he again spoke in the public assembly, but no longer in doubt of the divinity of Christ; all was peace, as with a heart overflowing with love to his Savior, he told how he had found Him, and been pardoned through His blood.

Since returning east I have had the pleasure of receiving an official letter informing me of my election as an honorary member of a Young Men's Christian Association in San Jose -- an organization not in existence there at the time of the meeting, but which has since grown up as one of its fruits. Already it has rooms fitted up and supplied with reading matter, at an expense of two thousand dollars; has three mission schools under its care; and, like most of these blessed organizations, which are so often the children or parents of revivals, is a warm, living power for good.

But I must linger no longer over San Jose; the picture of those thirteen days, if filled out, would present the varied experiences of some hundreds of young converts, and of a still larger number of older Christians who were quickened, and an entire city made glad and bright.

SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA -- Seven days were spent at Santa Clara, a city only four miles distant, surrounded with the same lovely scenery, and presenting the comfortable look of a New England town.

A good work was begun; spiritual forces operated rapidly; the showers of grace fell, and seed newly sown or long slumbering burst into life, and gave considerable of a harvest even in those few days. The churches were revived, and made earnest in the Master's service, and a goodly number of the impenitent brought into the kingdom of Christ; among them were men respected for their honorable lives, others hardened in sin; women, who seemed only to lack the one blessing which the loving Mary of Bethany chose for her part; and children, some of pious parents, others from homes where Christ was not welcomed.

The shortness of the time tended to prompt decision and resolute action. The work advanced so rapidly, under these quickening influences, that on the seventh and last day of my stay two hundred unconverted men, women, and children rose in the meeting, asking the prayers of Christians.

MARYSVILLE, CALIFORNIA -- With sorrow did I leave the work at Santa Clara, while God's people were trembling under such responsibilities; but there was no other course, and commending them to God, I departed for Marysville, a flourishing city at the junction of the Feather and Yuba rivers, and near the terminus of one of the inland railroads.

The rainy season was still pouring down its floods. The place, too, had been represented as one of uncommon spiritual inactivity and barrenness. One of the pastors had written, "I dare not say there is any special religious interest manifested ... I should say the indications are not yet even

of the size of a man's hand. Right views of the Christian religion and of the character of Christians seem impossible to the generality of the people of this city.

"The membership of the churches being small, and working male members very few, we shall not muster in all a very strong force to aid you; but there are a few faithful women and praying men who may be relied on, I think.

"I dare not say I am sanguine of great results. The truth has been plainly preached ... God is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. I do not see, I confess, how the truth, ineffectual heretofore in converting, is to be made effectual just now, because coming from other lips.

"And I say to you, in all candor, my desire for your coming arises from the same motive which leads a fond parent to send for an eminent physician from afar, with the hope that a beloved child may be saved through his skill, -- resident physicians having failed.

Here, perhaps, the question again comes up, "How could you be willing to enter such a field, or undertake a case that was considered so hopeless?" The natural heart says, "Such a step is presumption." But faith says, "It is reasonable -- nothing is ever more reasonable than to take God at his word; the same power that brought together and clothed with life and beauty the dry bones, in the vision of Ezekiel, has promised to raise those who are 'dead in trespasses and sins,' wherever and whenever the means -- no matter how feeble -- are used; and he will keep his promise."

Faith was honored, as it always is. I have labored longer in other places, and seen many more conventions, but never among three hundred converts have I known so many mature business and professional men. Those holding the highest positions in the city were among the first to seek the Savior. The mayor, the sheriff, several physicians, lawyers, and business men, came forward, at one time, under deep conviction, and knelt with the anxious.

The whole city was stirred. The largest places were sought for the meetings; but none were large enough. Says the "Marysville Appeal," "The largest religious congregation ever assembled in this city met at the Marysville Theater, on Sunday evening, to hear Rev. Mr. Earle's sermon on the 'Unpardonable Sin' ... The parquet [parquet = the stalls of a theater -- Oxford Dict.], dress circle, stage, and gallery were filled, and hundreds present were without seats.

Only those who have borne an active part in such a revival can know how severe and wearing is the labor. I remember leaving the church, one afternoon, by the side door, for a quiet walk outside the city, that I might, if possible, avoid seeing any one, so completely exhausted was I in body and mind. On my way, I saw a lady at the gate of an elegant residence, apparently waiting for me. I could not avoid meeting her, and as I came up, she said, "Mr. Earle, will you not come in and pray for me?" Just then her sister crossed the street, and made the same request. Surprised, I said, "What, are you not Christians?" "We are not, but feel we must be." "Will you both give your hearts to Jesus, if I will go in and pray for you?" We will." And so, going into the house, we kneeled in believing prayer, and the beautiful parlor was honored with the presence of Jesus, who came and spoke peace to those sisters; and I went to my room, more weary perhaps, yet after all glad that, while "a man's heart deviseth his way, the Lord directeth his steps."

PLACERVILLE, CALIFORNIA -- Seventeen days in that delightful field, each crowned with blessing! and then on to Placerville, a city built up by the once rich placer diggings, and now again starting ahead under the impetus of quartz mining.

Well do I recall our first meeting here; the unpleasantness connected with this, as every other change from the scenes of a revival to those of a new place of labor, was at once dispelled. The Spirit seemed to shed down upon us the atmosphere of heaven. And at the close, the brethren and sisters gathered around me, grasping my hand heartily, and welcoming me, with kindling eye and smiling face, until I felt myself no more among strangers but in the presence of my Father's family.

This goodwill and sympathy soon pervaded the city, so abundant were "the fruits of the Spirit."

Here as elsewhere, though people in every condition, and from all the evangelical denominations, were working together, not a discordant note was heard during my entire stay.

All other interests seemed absorbed in this one: merchants left their stores; mechanics turned the key upon the shop door; miners left the mills and the mines; women their homes; children their play and their study, -- and all, with one accord, sought the meetings. And back from these meetings many of them went, rejoicing in Jesus, to work for the salvation of their impenitent friends.

Men who had been digging -- not always with the best success -- for "corruptible" treasure, now, at last, found contentment in the possession of an "inheritance incorruptible, and eternal in the heavens." Discouragements and losses were crowded out of mind by these satisfying portions God was so freely bestowing.

Blessed religion, that can carry peace and happiness wherever it goes! Christian, be earnest, seize every opportunity to carry its hopes to the homes of sorrow and despair! Lift up disheartened men and women with the story of the cross, the promises of the gospel!

One whom God blessed here, writes, "My heart is so full of gratitude towards God for sending you, and you for coming among us, with such, O, such words of light and life, I cannot keep silence."

The influence of this work was marked in the outward life of the whole community. That individuality -- that sort of personality, in which all cities share, and which differs in each, seemed transformed, and irradiated with the light and beauty of religion.

O, how many cities and villages in our land need the implanting in their hearts of this germ of a new and better life! There are places, pleasant in situation and general appearance, where I should be loath to make my home, because they have become formal, and selfish, or given up to sin and amusements, through excessive worldliness, or neglect of the inner life and power of religion.

Writes one of the pastors, "The people of our city feel under lasting obligations to you, and will, at least during the present generation, keep your memory green.

Friends in Placerville, I do not doubt your regard, nor can I forget you. Your pastors, your churches, your hundreds of rejoicing converts, your people generally, are warmly remembered!

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Chapter 23

THE WORK ON THE PACIFIC COAST -- CONTINUED

PORTLAND, OREGON -- On into this great, ripe field, beyond the boundaries of California, and within those of Oregon, God seemed plainly to call me.

In the fall, while at San Francisco, a request came from the pastors in Portland, urging the importance of that city, and its need of God's reviving word. Others followed; to all, my replies were favorable, but not enough so, perhaps, to make my coming sure. Accordingly a good deacon made up his mind to lay the case before me in person. And so, leaving a large business, down the coast he came, a thousand miles, to where I was then laboring, presented anew the wants of his city, and informed me he was not going back until I went with him.

Faithfully did he keep his word. Through the rest of my stay at Marysville, and during the entire meeting at Placerville, he remained with me, strong in faith, and unyielding in purpose, until at length the way was open for me to go on with him to Portland.

On our way, while the steamer was taking on wood and water at Astoria, a sort of trading post, solitary and alone, among the forests and mountains of the coast, I saw a man, with care-worn face, anxiously looking over the passengers, and at length fixing his eye upon me. In a moment my hand was grasped, and the man I had been watching said, "Are you brother Earle, the evangelist?" Finding I was, he said, "I have been watching the boats in hopes to meet you, and have you preach here while the boat was waiting; I can find no minister within a hundred miles who can come and cheer and help me. I feel almost alone."

The people were soon called together in a hall, where he usually ministered. Many of the passengers left the boat and joined in the service. Jesus met us and warmed our hearts with his love. Much feeling was manifested, and at the close an intense desire was expressed for me to remain, and it was almost impossible for me not to do so. My heart ached that I could not.

Glad was the welcome at Portland. There were tears of joy that God had answered their prayers and sent them help.

The importance of this city, as a field for Christian labor, had not been overrated. It was the center of business and travel for the northwestern portion of our Pacific coast, as was San Francisco for more extensive regions in the southern limits, and was like a great heart, sending pulsations along the large arteries far into the interior, and along the coast. Work done for Christ in

Portland was felt far and wide, and gave extraordinary opportunity for shaping the future of an entire state.

We felt that a great work must, and because our Master was divine, would be accomplished. Like Basil of old, standing before the barred gates of the cathedral, and commanding them, in the name of Christ, to open to the waiting believers, there were Christians in Portland who feared not to knock at the strongholds of sin and unbelief, and demand their capitulation in the name of their Almighty Savior. Nor were we put to shame. The victory was on the Lord's side.

My own labors were necessarily limited to seventeen days. Yet at the end of that time the triumph for the cause of Christ was great; sinners had been brought into his kingdom by hundreds; Christians were awake and active, and an interest in the meetings manifest all over the city.

The Oregonian," one of the daily papers of Portland, says, "... It is remarkable that, go where you will, on the street, into business houses, down upon the wharf, among families, everywhere, the subject of 'Rev. Mr. Earle' and the revival meetings is sure to be broached and discussed. The talk is not confined to church going people. Everybody is discussing the matter, each one from his own special standpoint.

"There can certainly be no complaint about a lack of interest in religion in Portland."

The fruits of this interest were abundantly seen in the crowded attendance upon the meetings, the close attention and deep feeling there manifest.

The inquiry meetings were places of great interest. The aged came, with but the remnant of a wasted life, and tremblingly, as they felt their earthly tabernacle dissolving, asked God to give them one of the "many mansions." In great mercy he heard them, pardoned their sins, and gave them the desire of their hearts. The little ones, just starting on the journey of life, came to Jesus, asking him to take them, and lead them safely through the dangers and duties of the way; and tenderly they were received, and taken under his special watch-care and love. Prodigal sons," feeding on husks, bethought them of the plenty in their Father's house, and arose, and came to him, and were welcomed with all that love which, through Jesus, forgives and blots out our sins.

Christians confessed their unfaithfulness to their unconverted friends. A loved pastor visited a former settlement, took many of the impenitent by the hand, and told them he had not done his duty to them when settled among them; and then with such holy peace upon his countenance that one of them said, "Pastor, you don't look as you used to," urged them to seek an interest in the atonement; and, through that simple sermon, men who had for years sat unmoved by his most studied preaching were convicted and converted.

The "Pacific Christian Advocate" says of this work, "... The interest has increased from day to day. The evening congregations have crowded the Presbyterian church, the aisles and gallery being filled, and very many persons have been compelled to stand during the services.

"On Saturday evening last an opportunity was given for Christians to give, in a few words, a reason for being on the Lord's side; and in less than an hour and a half over two hundred persons had spoken.

"On Sunday the congregation again occupied the large court-room, which was densely packed on the several occasions of worship. A deep solemnity pervaded the entire audience. Christians were happy in the Lord; and the falling tears, seen on every hand, gave evidence of penitence and contrition of spirit on the part of scores of unconverted persons ... Very many have professed conversion. Believers have been wonderfully quickened and refreshed in spirit.

"The members of the different churches have cooperated as brethren; names have been forgotten; all are one in Christ Jesus. We never witnessed greater harmony and clearer exhibitions of brotherly love.

"A wonderful calmness has characterized the services generally ... There has been nothing of vehemence, frenzy, or fanaticism. [Vehemence for God is certainly not wrong! "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Here again, sentiments are expressed that seem to me to be indicative of this writer's hostility toward spiritual demonstration in the Spirit. -- DVM]

"This glorious work in our midst has surely the seal of God's approbation ..."

Here I met a noble Christian woman, whose experience taught me anew the preciousness of our religion:

She was an old lady, the widow of a Baptist clergyman. God had given them eleven children, many, if not all of whom, had grown to years of maturity.

Then, one after another, he had taken ten of them and the father to himself, -- two or more while serving their country in the late war. [Apparently the Civil War -- DVM]

Her last surviving child, a daughter living in San Francisco, urged her to come and live with her. She consented, sold her home in Ohio, took the proceeds, some three thousand dollars, and started. On the steamer, while sick, she was robbed of all she had, and left in poverty.

On her arrival at San Francisco she found her daughter had been dead three days, and just buried.

Thus was she bereft of all, and left alone and penniless among entire strangers. Her case, however, becoming known, means were raised for her to start for Idaho, where she hoped to meet her daughter's husband. On her way Christian women in Portland became interested in her, and offered her a home among them. There I met her. She loved the meetings. In one of them she said, with a face calm and beautiful with holy peace and content, "I don't think any one can have so much to be grateful to God for as I have." Then she recounted, not afflictions, but mercies received all through her life; among them, she said, one of the greatest had been that all her children gave evidence of a preparation for heaven; there she hoped soon to meet them and her loved husband, to

part no more forever. And while the summons across the river waits, this seems the daily language of her heart:--

"So I am watching quietly
Every day.
Whenever the sun shines brightly,
I rise and say,
Surely it is the shining of His face!
And look unto the gates of His high place Beyond the sea:
For I know He is coming shortly
To summon me.
And when a shadow falls across the window
Of my room,
Where I am working my appointed task,
I lift my head to watch the door and ask
If He is come;
And the angel answers sweetly
In my home,
'Only a few more shadows,
And He will come.'"

Blessed is the Christian's hope that thus sustains under such an experience of bereavement and affliction! To Jesus, who gives it, be everlasting love and service!

Here I must leave the record of this work; and with the exception of the one from the pastors given in another chapter, turn my pen away from the many precious letters which tell of its blessings.

OREGON CITY, OREGON -- On my way to Salem, where I had promised to labor for a season, I was almost compelled so urgent was the solicitation for help -- to stop at Oregon city, "the Lowell of the Pacific coast," and whose magnificent waterpower promises to make it worthy the comparison with that famous manufacturing city.

Two days were here crowded with work for the Master, and crowned with his favor. Earnest, praying souls were here, -- those burdened for Zion, whose hearts and lives ran sweetly in the poet's lines:--

"I love thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of thine abode,
The church our blest Redeemer saved
With his own precious blood.

"For her my tears shall fall;
For her my prayers ascend;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end."

The desire for a revival was most intense; hardly surpassed anywhere on the coast. The people were ready to work, and very pleasant indeed to work with.

Yet I could not prolong my stay, and was therefore limited in my preaching to three sermons on the day of my arrival, three on the following A day, and one early on the morning of my departure.

Yet much good was felt to have been done in that short time. It seemed, in the spiritual life of that place, like the rain that falls on the dry and parched earth, purifying the face of nature, and reviving and quickening vegetation. Christians were greatly refreshed, and were led to a still more loving and active service. Deep feeling was awakened among the impenitent, some of whom found peace in believing.

SALEM, OREGON -- In this flourishing city -- the capital of the state -- the people quite generally were looking forward to the meetings with large desires and expectations. Nor was this feeling confined to the city and vicinity: persons were boarding there who had come twenty, thirty, and forty miles, solely to attend the meetings. Some thirty ministers, many of them weary with toil in large and difficult parishes, were present; and very pleasant was it for us to labor with and for one another.

There were those, among all classes, who were ready to do any work for Jesus.

Men and women of the highest standing counted the lowliest service for him a privilege.

Governor Woods brought to the work the influence of his official position, as well as private character as a Christian man. Well may the state feel proud of this man, who, instead of fearing to be known, in his high office, as a follower of Jesus, accounts the badge of that discipleship the highest of all honors!

Business men took their employees into the counting room, and, with closed doors, urged them to give their hearts to Jesus. At home men gathered the whole family together, from the drawing room and the kitchen, and there read the Bible, spoke of Jesus, and prayed with so much unction from on high, that the service became more like an inquiry meeting.

The tide of religious feeling swept over the entire city, carrying away the refuge of hardened sinners, moralists, infidels; men, women, and children, of almost every condition of life and character found in our cities, daily fled, by scores, to the Ark of Safety. Blessed Ark! in it there is room for all, and safety for all from the coming storm of divine wrath.

Very large was the number of those who were enabled, by this meeting, to say to some Christian laborer, as a little boy wrote me, "If I meet you in heaven I shall take you by the hand and tell Jesus you were the means of bringing me to him."

Thirteen days went by, leaving behind them, as the fruit of this work, rejoicing converts, working churches, happy homes, and great joy throughout the city.

Other engagements prevented my remaining longer. The urgent calls from the entire coast forbade my staying long in one place, and I was accustomed to leave while yet the sun of the spiritual harvest day was mounting the heavens towards the zenith.

I was now so worn it was plainly a necessity for me to leave the field so promisingly spread before me in Oregon and vicinity, and after meeting engagements already made, return home for rest as soon as possible.

On my way to Portland, where I was to take the boat for San Francisco, I preached once more at Oregon city.

Reaching Portland, the interest seemed not to have abated. The meetings, for the one day I could remain, were something like the glad family reunions of our New England "Thanksgiving." Young converts, and Christians longer in the way of life, told what great things God had done for them, and, through their labors, for others.

On the next day the steamer for San Francisco bore me away from the warm-hearted people of Oregon, from the cities and villages among its majestic mountains and smiling valleys, and from those in neighboring regions where hands were still outstretched for help; and while the ocean leagues were rapidly increasing between us, my thoughts still lingered among them, sorrowful, and loath to depart.

And still, beloved friends, far away though you are, as I recall the sweet seasons of labor for the Master with some of you, and the wants of God's cause among others of your number, my heart warms with the old love towards you, and turning to the only sure Reliance, "I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified."

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Chapter 24

THE WORK ON THE PACIFIC COAST CONTINUED

Four days upon the water, and we were once more in San Francisco. But not to tarry: on, through California meadows, fragrant with new-mown hay, and tempting with flowers and ripened fruits, up the steep and rugged Sierra Nevada Mountains, over the deep snows that crown them with perpetual winter, and down their western slope, wound my path, bringing me at length to the young and rapidly growing state of Nevada.

VIRGINIA CITY AND GOLD HILL, NEVADA. My labors here began with the united churches of Virginia City and Gold Hill, cities lying side by side, thriving and busy, and presenting -- especially because of the position of the former -- a field of rare importance. One of the pastors gave in his letters so graphic a description of the character of that city, and the feeling there, and one which presented so admirably some of the general features of the most important Pacific cities, it may be well to give free extracts: "... I have longed, and plead, and prayed for some Pentecostal

evangelist to come over and help us. No portion of our land has been so wanting in faith and the power of the Spirit. The ministers and churches have never witnessed a great awakening on this coast, and have been unwilling to try God. Once aroused they will trust the source of their strength.

"The seed has been sown, and the time has arrived when the reaping should commence."

In another letter he wrote: "... No city on this coast has such need of a spiritual blessing as Virginia [City, Nevada]. The great bullion center of the Pacific, it calls together all classes -- capitalists, mechanics, laboring and professional men.

As a wealth producing, instead of a mere trading community, it is the heart which gives the throbbing current of vitality to all financial and business interests.

"Virginia [City, Nevada] has been equally the fountain of demoralizing power ... The Spirit of God has prepared the way and the time for its conquest, and we look with joy and hope to see the banner of Jehovah-Jesus floating in triumph over it.

"Matters are evidently ripening for a work of real power and prevalence in this community. Prayer for Virginia [City] has been evidently answered. The Episcopal clergyman -- a truly evangelical man -- is in earnest to have your assistance in view of the evident presence of the Spirit.

"There are other indications in the earnest desires of leading representative business men, that show a special influence of the Spirit preparing the way for a harvest work which will bring great glory to the Lord of the harvest. A leading merchant remarked, a few days since, that the mass of his class were never in a state of such readiness to be influenced and won to Christ. Some, whose business or professional engagements call them away, seem very sad in view of the possibility of not being able to attend on your services.

"Many of these impressions are the result of appeals from relatives and friends in other cities, who have been subjects of the Spirit's operations in connection with your labors, -- many, the life-long subjects of prayer on the part of pious friends, and now looking for a work strong enough to carry them beyond the partial and unsuccessful endeavors of other occasions.

"All the ministering brethren, with God's people, and many of our first-class non-professing men, are intensely anxious for you to come immediately...

"The future of this metallic state must now be made, and will be more affected by the mighty outpouring of the Spirit on your visit than any and all other efforts. This city and state must be saved. We must all put our hearts and strength with yours in the hopeful endeavor..."

As soon as the meeting here was opened, all that had been said of the interest, and more, was apparent; people of every name, age, and condition came, quiet and earnest, crowding every seat, aisle, and corner of the house of God.

The busy, driving throng were moved by the Spirit's power. The Spirit reached men's hearts, in the mines, in the crushing-mills, on the street, in the noisy marts of trade, in their quiet homes, as well as in the sanctuary.

In the latter place God honored most the faith and labors of his people, and there displayed the riches of his grace in daily bringing many into his kingdom.

An editorial in one of the daily papers of Virginia City, "The Trespass," says, "This city never before witnessed so profound an interest in religion, as is now evident under a single week's labors of Rev. Mr. Earle.

"Six services were held yesterday. All were thronged. The preaching service of the morning was one of uncommon tenderness; there was scarcely a dry eye in the house; stalwart men were melted under the winning representations of the truth.

"The evening sermon on the 'Unpardonable Sin' reached a culmination of impressiveness which can be realized only by those who witnessed it. The church was crowded inside and out by assembled multitudes: no effort for excitement, no strange, startling statements; but the simple, conclusive setting forth of the subject brought the whole mass, almost without an exception, to their feet, in a most solemn testimony of a fixed purpose to cherish the interest each felt in his personal salvation.

"The community seemed to be there almost in a body; and yet so thoughtful and quiet, the ticking of a clock could have been heard.

"At the conference meeting, scores of men and women, heads of families, -- husbands and wives, came forward for prayer.

"Many submitted to Christ on the spot ..."

Here, among these large-hearted people, occurred one of those "never to be forgotten" episodes in the minister's life, which turn towards him the silver lining of the cloud that may have gathered over him.

It was in the very solid and substantial form of a silver brick, weighing some thirty pounds, "Presented" -- as was engraved upon its polished surface -- "to Rev. A. B. Earle, by his friends in Story County, Nevada."

I was then, and am now, unable to express my appreciation of this gift, which so generously represents not only the business of these people, among whom this meeting was held, and the great wealth of their mines, but, especially and above all, the wealth and the greatness of their hearts; yet my thanks -- if I cannot express them as I would are none the less warm and fervent in my heart.

Through the kindness of "Wells, Fargo, & Co." the brick was forwarded to New York free of charge.

Kind donors, each and all, may He who sits on the circle of the heavens, and "keeps count," repay you with that "loving favor, which is to be chosen rather than silver and gold."

CARSON CITY, NEVADA. Seventeen days, filled with work from morning to midnight, and rich in heavenly blessings, went their rapid round, and I passed on to Carson City, the capital of the state, the center of much refinement and wealth, and not lacking in worldliness.

My home was with Governor Blasdell; a man to whose excellences as a statesman there is added the crowning glory and qualification of a Christian character.

There was the same craving for special revival labors as elsewhere. People came long distances to attend the meetings, sacrificing money and the comforts of home, with the hope of receiving better treasure.

The blessings of mercy and love were bestowed abundantly on every hand, on all who came to the cross and submitted to Jesus.

The multitudes that came, thronging the places of meeting, were sometimes moved, as one man, by the Spirit's power, and, when the opportunity was given, would rise, with one consent, to express not merely an interest in the things of religion, but a purpose to share in its hopes and enjoyments.

Christians came to be refreshed, and, having received the coveted blessing, almost invariably went out to work for Jesus, -- to such activity does the enjoyment of religion ever tend. And I rejoice that there is this working side so closely connected with the rejoicing side of our religion. Herein is its outward, aggressive, and progressive power.

Christian, go work, not repiningly, but gladly, -- thanking God every night that each day is a day of work; be content, though here we toil, "there's sweet rest in heaven;" here the sowing and the reaping, -- afterwards the thanksgiving feast in our Father's house on high.

"Beyond the gathering and the strowing,
I shall be soon;
Beyond the ebbing and the flowing,
Beyond the coming and the going,
I shall be soon.
Love, rest, and home! Sweet hope!
Lord, tarry not, but come!"

The work prevailed in every part of the city: where life was busiest and most crowded; in quiet avenues and suburbs; in store and office, and in dwelling, -- so that in every neighborhood and street, and almost in every family, there was the light of an earnest, loving, Christian life; and thus that "leaven," of which our Savior spoke, was at work in all the city, leavening and transforming the outer, and much of the inner life of the city.

Said one of the pastors, in a letter some time after the meeting, "Our town life has changed ..."

Governor Blasdell, with his peculiar advantages for discovering the real condition of the city, also wrote me, "... The good done is not confined to those who have united with the churches, for a different spirit pervades the entire community..."

This was my last meeting in Nevada, though the call was almost universal for me to remain, and the field one of great promise and attractiveness.

Professors of religion and non-professors stood side by side to welcome me. Let me give a single illustration -- the case of Austin, a city ranking high in importance and influence. Among the requests from this place was one signed by ninety nine of its principal men, quite a large number of them in the legal profession. The clerk of the District court, who circulated the petition, said he believed every man in the city would have signed it had there been an opportunity. The governor also urged the case, and even offered to accompany me. But I could not go. Such were the fields spread out before me through the state.

Friends in Nevada, in heart I reach out my hand towards you, and grasp yours in loving greeting; and I beseech you, do not give up the work. Consecrate to it the riches of your material resources, the activity of your hands, and the earnestness of your hearts, which you have already so well employed in building up the temporal interests of your state. Then will you, by the blessing of God, in like manner secure that spiritual prosperity you so much desire. May God help and richly bless you all!

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Chapter 25 THE WORK ON THE PACIFIC COAST -- CONTINUED

Over the Sierras again! Now riding, and now walking to lighten the stage! One hour blinded with the drifting dust, and another, slowly toiling through the drifted snow! So was the twenty hours' ride from Nevada back to California diversified, until, at early morn, I found myself once more in the familiar streets of Placerville.

And at seven and a half o'clock on that summer morning I had the pleasure of meeting the people again in one of the churches. Warm were the greetings. The whole service, -- the attendance, the interest, the spirit manifested, -- carried us vividly back to former meetings. I was preaching to the same ready hearers, listening to the same voices. In that brief hour we lived over the past, and, with brighter hopes and stronger faith, looked across the dark river, --

"To the spring-embosomed shore,
Where the sweet light shineth ever."

NEVADA CITY, CALIFORNIA -- Only a few hours at Placerville, then on through Sacramento to Nevada City, -- an active business place, the noise of whose manufactories and quartz mills greets the ear by day and by night.

Prosperous as was the city in material things, in spiritual it was represented as very barren. One of the pastors wrote me, "... Nevada City is emphatically a hard place ... There is no time to entertain the blessed Savior ... Ordinary means are powerless to awaken the people here. If you can come, they will hear you. Some who never see the inside of a church are inquiring for you.

But whatever the indifference had been in the past, the Spirit seemed to have dispelled it at the opening of this meeting. From the first there was no lack of interest. The largest places in which we assembled were filled with attentive hearers. The work was deep and thorough; the foundations of men's hopes were tried as by fire. Some in the church saw they had been building "on the sand." One of the pastors was almost ready to assert, positively, he had never known anything about religion, by experience, until that meeting.

Skeptics threw aside their infidelity, and fled to the cross; miners left their unsatisfying search after gold and silver, and sought with success enduring riches, and clasped to their hearts, with an everlasting hope, a title to boundless wealth, and a happy home above; and many a man, far away from loved ones, took up his hitherto wearisome, lonely round of daily toil with zest and pleasure, because now it was done for Jesus.

Christians were at work as though they had never thrown off the harness, or allowed the rust to gather on their armor. The converts, too, were a large company of active, rejoicing laborers.

GRASS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA -- At the end of fourteen days duty called me away from that pleasant field of labor to Grass Valley, a city four miles distant, presenting many attractions, -- a happy home, where one may be sure of warm friends.

The city was waiting for the work, -- looking for the opening of the "windows of heaven." The blessing seemed already on its way, and when it came there was abundance of work for all to do. Some faithful ones were ready for work; but the great mass, as in every revival, had first to build over against their own houses before they could help others.

The congregations crowded the church within and without, presenting an appearance something like those of John Foster, in England, who, it is said, "was accustomed to have two audiences, one within the church and the other without, listening eagerly through the open windows."

The hardest hearts and the most tender were alike touched by the Spirit. Men grown gray in sin, and children who nightly lisped that simple prayer of childhood, "Now I lay me down to sleep," kneeled together among the anxious, seeking Jesus, and none were turned away because too young or too old:

"Over the city went the cry,

'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by!'

and as it was in those days, when he was on the earth in human form, so now the multitudes thronged about him, and were healed by him, not indeed of bodily, but of spiritual diseases.

The expressions and letters of these rejoicing ones are full of interest. A little girl, who, though young in years, had drunk deep of the cup of sorrow, wrote me a letter, containing this little sermon, and bit of experience: "Tell the little children about the Savior; tell them how a young girl found him while she was the chief of sinners. Tell the girls, in your travels, not to wait till they get to be as old as I am. I have no father, and am starting out on God's mission alone; no one to guide or take me by the hand, and say, 'Come, my daughter, come to Jesus;' but I think Christ may bring me through ..."

In his own artless way, a little boy wrote me, "I want you to pray that I may grow up to be a true Christian. If I die before you do, I would like to hold a light in the window for you; and if you die before I do, I should like for you to be the one to hold it for me."

One who had long been a Christian wrote, "I thank God for a brighter sky, and stronger faith, through your preaching."

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA -- After twelve days, I left this wide and growing work, to meet an engagement of long standing with the churches of Santa Cruz, a favorite resort of those seeking rest and recreation at the sea shore, and not inappropriately called "the Newport of the Pacific."

My stay was very limited, as the time for sailing homeward was near at hand. Yet, brief as it was, I was permitted to see a quickening of religious thought and feeling through the city.

"What shall I do, then, with Jesus?" was the frequent inquiry. Some rejected him, others embraced him.

The clouds were lifted from many hearts and homes where Jesus was welcomed as a guest.

O, how his presence lights up and beautifies any dwelling, be it lowly or elegant! Then does it become truly a home.

"For aye, by day and night,
He keeps the portal; suffers nought
Defile the temple he has bought,
And filled with joy and light."

Those few days at Santa Cruz will ever furnish a pleasing retrospect; not simply because of the attractions of that lovely watering place, much as they were prized, but chiefly because the thanks of pastors and their people, and of rejoicing converts, assure me that Jesus was honored in the awakening of the careless, the salvation of souls, and the reviving of his love among his disciples.

On my way thence to San Francisco, the people of San Jose had arranged for me to preach once more in their city.

The church was crowded with familiar faces. The ties of Christian love seemed stronger than ever.

The work had gone on; new testimony was given of pardoning love; converts had grown strong, working for Jesus.

We parted sadly; yet most of us, as Christians, only for "a little while," --

A little while to tell the joyful story
Of Him who made our guilt and curse his own;
A little while, ere we behold the glory,
To gain fresh jewels for our heavenly crown."

From San Jose I went on, directly through San Francisco to Oakland, where a service similar to the last had been appointed.

It was a delightful reunion of hearts endeared in a common and holy cause. The peace that Jesus gives was with us.

There was much to be told of God's dealings with us since our separation.

The hour was much too short; but at its close we could look up and sing,

"We shall meet beyond the river,
Where the surges cease to roll."

On the morrow I went back to San Francisco to take my leave of the Pacific coast, arrangements having been made by the Ministerial Union for farewell services on that evening in the large and handsome church just built by Dr. Scudder's society.

My heart was growing sorrowful, -- the realization that my work there was drawing to a close could not be kept back.

Ministers, brethren and sisters, young converts, and the impenitent, whom we had learned to love, were calling upon us, and expressing their sorrow at our departure.

Sweet memories of the past mingled with sad thoughts of the regions still asking and entreating help.

Nine and a half months before, I had landed on those shores, a stranger; sent for to work with the pastors and churches for the Savior, and not knowing what was before me. Some, timid and unbelieving, had whispered of failure, and consequent dishonor to Jesus: "The field is

difficult; men become indifferent to spiritual things in the search for gold; the ablest pastors are there, and yet say they fail to reach the masses." True, abler pastors than were laboring on the Pacific coast could not be found; and had success depended on mere human power I should never have gone, for I could do no better work than the pastors. But as God had said, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," I was ready to go in his name, believing his promises were as reliable on the Pacific coast as in the most favored cities of the Atlantic.

And so putting my trust in God, I had obeyed the call, and entered on the part of the work assigned me.

The pastors had done their part. The results some of which are here given -- can only be known fully in eternity.

And now, though that work was still going on, my part therein was done; no more was I to share in its cares, its joys, and its sorrows. I was now going away, -- no more, however, a stranger; -- tender chords of friendship bound me to unnumbered hearts and homes, and everywhere I was welcomed as a brother beloved.

We were now to meet -- pastors and people of San Francisco, and of other places where I had labored -- to recount God's doings on the coast, and utter the sad farewells.

The hour came. Up to the courts of the Lord came his people, a victorious host. My heart was moved at the sight of such a general and hearty tribute to one whose services had been so imperfect. I could only say, down in my heart, "Jesus, thou hast used me as thou hast many others of these brethren -- as a channel for conveying thy blessings upon these people: for the warm place this has given me in their hearts, I thank thee; but the glory all belongs to thee!"

The exercises were tender and melting; pastors and other brethren spoke out of warm hearts, I am sure, and their kind words are not forgotten.

Amid such scenes and crowding memories I preached my farewell sermon; gathering into it some account of the work over the coast, which the brethren had desired to hear and I could find no other opportunity to give.

The meeting closed; but long we lingered, pressing into the dying moments those last and sweetest expressions of friendship which live in the heart through life and beyond the grave.

In the morning our friends again surrounded us this time, at the wharf where we were about to embark. Hurried but tender were the words, quick but hearty the grasping of hands, -- until the steamier loosened her fastenings from the Pacific shore, and bore us out over the beautiful bay to the sea. With tearful eyes we watched those loved friends, the receding city and shore, until at length, a dim speck in the distance, they faded from sight, ours thereafter, only in memory's watch and ward.

Our voyage was cheered by the company of several of our Pacific friends: among them Rev. William M. Martin, of Virginia City, -- a man whose large heart, genial culture, and Christian

nobility have forever endeared him to the people of Nevada; also, Rev. D. B. Cheney, D. D., of San Francisco, -- an able pastor, and one whose rare executive ability had given him a wide and molding influence on that coast, and who was now, with his family, reluctantly leaving his post, compelled by physical prostration to seek a change of climate.

The thoughtful kindness and Christian care and courtesy of captain Farnsworth, the commander of our steamer on the Pacific, made for him a host of friends of those who, like ourselves, were so fortunate as to secure a passage in his vessel.

Daily, at the twilight hour, our Father's watch-care was publicly acknowledged and invoked; and, perhaps, never did such worship seem more precious than there amid the dangers of the ocean.

On a quiet Sabbath evening, under the light of August's full moon, our vessel glided to her wharf, and we stepped once more on the familiar shores of New York, grateful for the care and blessing vouchsafed to us during our absence.

Many who had bid us "God-speed" on our departure, had assembled in Strong Place church, Brooklyn, to welcome us home; but an unexpected delay of the steamer in quarantine prevented our reaching the city in time to meet them.

On the morrow we hastened towards home and children; and, at length, welcome came the cry, "Home at last!"

Very soon a reaction came on, -- I had overworked, -- and for weeks I was under the physician's care, in a very dangerous and suffering condition.

With the return of health, the brethren in New York and Brooklyn again arranged for a reception. We met in the same church where the farewell services had been held but now all was rejoicing. Fervent and loving was the welcome. Some account of the work on the Pacific coast was given; and, together, we praised God for his great goodness.

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Chapter 26

THE WORK ON THE PACIFIC COAST CONTINUED

Go with me, in the swift, silent tread of thought, once more along my Pacific pathway. Bright and sunny it winds among the lands and cities of three states, a full five thousand miles, bridging almost a year, and linking two ocean journeys of six thousand miles each.

Scattered here mid there over this route are eleven different denominations, many times this number of churches, and more than three hundred ministers, with whom I labored, receiving the most unbounded confidence and cooperation; and at least one hundred thousand people who heard from me the glad news of salvation, as it fell from my lips in more than five hundred sermons, and which was again repeated mid testified to by believers, in almost as many prayer and inquiry

meetings. Here, among these people, it was believed I was permitted to see five thousand souls born into the kingdom of Christ; and a work not far behind the in importance, in the increase of religious fervor and activity among Christians.

People who, after a long absence, have visited some of these cities since the meetings, have said to me, "I hardly knew the place; old acquaintances, who used to care only for pleasure or moneymaking, began at once to talk about religion, everybody seemed different."

As this work was invariably carried on by the united efforts of different denominations, it permanently increased the love and sympathy between them.

It was seen that differences of creed among Christians need not be walls of separation, and sources of distrust and envy; that the Christian church, under whatever name, in its mission on earth, is a means, not an end, -- the staging of the one great spiritual temple, whose foundation is Christ.

Said Gen. R., "There has been no revival like this since the days of Whitefield."

The following extract from a communication made by a committee of ministers of Virginia City and Gold Hill, Nevada, repeats a sentiment often expressed in other places: "... Mr. Earle's labors have resulted in a lasting blessing to these cities, to the ministers, to the churches, to public and private morals to families, to individuals, to children, and to strangers. He will never be forgotten by these people; hundreds will bless him, in the New Jerusalem, who, but for his labors, never would have entered there. The following, from a pastor in San Jose, represents a class of letters that reach me from the coast:

San Jose, December 13, 1867

"Dear Brother Earle: Your works and labors of love meet us in the prayer meeting, the Sunday School, and in social life ... Thus far not one of the converts here, so far as I know, has gone away backward ... No man need hope for a warmer reception, this side of heaven, than the people of San Jose would give you, if they had an opportunity ... You know something of my deep interest in your meetings in California. But really I had, at the time of your leaving, by no means an adequate idea of the greatness and glory of the work, even to human view ..."

None of us can take credit to ourselves in this work, -- the way was so thoroughly prepared by the Spirit, and all was so plainly carried on by him. He seemed to have left no portion of the coast unreached by his special influences; and the people, thus aroused, were ready to enter into the meetings with that whole-heartedness so characteristic of them.

With too little confidence in their own unaided efforts, they turned to me from every quarter, when I landed among them, as one divinely sent to do the work of an evangelist.

The call waxed louder during all my stay. From all parts of the three states to which my labors were confined, and from Idaho, Colorado, and Washington, came the most urgent appeals, signed by representative men in the churches, irrespective of denomination, and by representative

men out of the churches. One of the requests from Oregon, for instance, asking me to visit the county seats, was signed by the governor, by twenty pastors, and by men in other positions.

And wherever I went, whatever the business of the people, whatever the weather, there was an enthusiasm and an interest in the meetings almost unlimited.

The services were invariably quiet and orderly; never was there the slightest disturbance; and the treatment shown me was always kind, cordial, and generous.

There was no time or place for rest. Only a single day did I take for recreation or visiting the natural wonders with which the creator has so richly furnished that coast.

On my way to a meeting in the region of the "big trees" of California, I could not resist the temptation to make a pilgrimage of a few hours to those monuments of the past [A. B. Earle apparently refers here to the giant Sequoias], -- trees whose infant branches may have been stirred by winds that had hardly been hushed since they bore towards heaven the last incense from the altars of the Jewish Temple, or hurried Paul on his way to Rome!

There they stood in silent grandeur! From a throne four thousand feet above the sea, they towered up beyond, towards the blue sky, three hundred and four hundred feet in height, and in circumference nearly one quarter as great!

I have listened to the thundering voices of Niagara; have gazed on mountain peaks forever buried in snow; have looked upon the majestic, speaking ocean, bounded only by the blue sky; but among them all nothing has so hushed my soul into silence, with a sense of the majestic presence of the Infinite, and the place of his dwelling, as did these mighty, untitled peers of the forest, -- these living witnesses of unnumbered generations of the dead.

We have now glanced over this work, the memories of which are among the sweetest of my life; have together visited some of its scenes; heard some of its records of joy, and gathered up some of its results: we have made but a flying visit, when it needed to have been like that of the tourist who spends days and weeks at each point of interest along his route, -- so crowded with incident and thrilling with interest is the history of every day of this work, every meeting, and every place in which it was carried on. But we can no longer linger: and turning away from the retrospect, while standing, as it were, among the wonders and glories of Nature just mentioned, we could wish the place were some Pisgah, from which we could, with reverent hand, lift the veil of the future, and look upon the full, garnered harvest of this work of grace, whose beginning only, we hope, is herein traced, -- but such a vision is not for mortal eyes.

But when "this mortal shall have put on immortality," -- when time shall be no more, what is unknown here will be known; what is unfinished here, finished; and then we shall have an eternity in which to talk of these and all the wonders of redeeming love.

To you, in these Atlantic States, whose hearts were with us in this work, I turn, in the name of our Pacific brethren, to thank you for your interest and your prayers.

You did "hold the ropes." Your messages over the "spiritual telegraph" reached the throne of grace, and thence those for whom they were sent; for them and for myself I heartily thank you.

Some time before my departure from the coast, the Ministerial Union sent me the following kind letter:--

"San Francisco, May, 1867

Rev. A. B. Earle

"Esteemed Brother: At the regular meeting of the San Francisco Ministerial Union, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted, and ordered to be sent to you...

"Whereas, This Union, one year ago, entered upon the consideration of "our duty as gospel ministers to the masses of this city, who are unreached by the gospel," which consideration resulted in calling to this coast Rev. A. B. Earle to labor as an evangelist; and,

"Whereas, The labors of Mr. Earle have been most signally blessed of God, in promoting revivals of religion, and in leading sinners to the Savior; and,

"Whereas, There is the fullest reason to believe that the continuance of his labors here would be productive of great good to the cause of evangelical religion; therefore,

"Resolved, That we gratefully recognize the guiding hand and abounding mercy of our heavenly Father in leading his servant hither, and in giving him so great success in his chosen sphere of labor, and that we express to Mr. Earle our full and cordial approbation of his labors in this city and on the coast.

"Resolved, That we earnestly invite Mr. Earle to prolong his stay on the coast, at least another season, to labor with such church or churches as may invite him in city or country, resuming his labors here as soon as may be after completing his present engagements, and securing to himself a suitable season of relaxation and rest.'

"A. L. Stone, Chairman

"H. A. Sawtelle, Secretary."

Brethren of the Ministerial Union, this letter, so full of confidence and good will, only adds another to your many and constant acts of kindness and cooperation. From the spirit of your call, from my knowledge of some of your number, who, like your chairman, -- the former loved and honored pastor of Park Street church, Boston, -- are known and esteemed here at the east, I knew I might expect much from you: but so much as you were ever ready to do I had hardly anticipated. I thank you most sincerely for it all. I am still in the hands of the Master who sent me to you, and whatever his bidding in the future, I shall joyfully obey, and none the less so if it be to visit your coast again.

And now, brethren and sisters on the Pacific coast, over the wide separating lands of a continent my thoughts hasten, and linger among you. For your confidence in me, for your open hearts and homes, for your generous support, I thank you. For your willing minds and hands, for the promptness with which you sprang to the work, for your union of hearts, for the honor you have added to the cause of our Savior, in the name of the church, and, above all, in the name of Christ, I thank you. Go on; be not weary in well doing. It is for you to say where the work you have so well begun shall end.

"O, watch, and fight, and pray;
The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore."

Young converts, you have a warm place in my heart; I saw you when the burden of sin lay heavy upon you, and afterwards when Jesus had rolled it away, and you were at peace; I saw you at work for the Master, and learned to lean upon you. Keep near Jesus; visit no place, engage in no pursuit or pleasure where Jesus cannot go with you; cultivate his love; let that be the controlling power of your life; it will never lead you to do wrong. Trust Jesus to keep you; you cannot keep yourself: but he is able to keep your heart, and the streams that flow from it.

"Man's weakness waiting upon God,
Its end can never miss;
For men on earth no work can do
More angel-like than this."

My unconverted friends, you gave me a cordial welcome; you were kind and generous; you manifested a deep interest in the meetings, and seemed to stand almost on the threshold of the open door of mercy, yet you did not enter, and there I left you. The parting was a sad one to me; not simply because I loved you and prized your friendship, but chiefly because you had no hope in Jesus. I could better have borne the brief separation here had there only been the assurance that, at the judgment day, we should not be compelled to say "farewell" forever. O, how could I see any of you turning away "on the left hand!"

"The Spirit calls today;
Yield to his power;
O, grieve him not away,
'Tis, Mercy's hour."

Brother ministers, -- fellow laborers in a work sometimes trying, often toilsome and self-denying, and yet with a bright side ever sweet and delightful, -- above the noisy dashing of two oceans I seem, even now, to hear your bold, clear, unmistakable trumpet blasts from the walls of Zion. I believe still greater victories are before you. For the confidence you gave me, for your forbearance with my faults and mistakes, for your kindness, I thank you. For your unwearied labors during all the days and months of the work among you, the whole church honor and thank you.

I have wanted to mention each of you by name, and tell the worth and character of each, and the affection I have towards you, but I have been compelled to forego that pleasure.

Nowhere have I found more devoted and more able pastors, more genial companions, than among you; and, though you labor under peculiar difficulties, nowhere on our continent have ministers such opportunities for molding states, and laying the foundations of social and civil life.

With the completion of that bond of national life and strength, that route for a world's commerce and travel, -- the Pacific Railroad, -- your coast is destined to march with giant strides to one of the proudest and most influential positions on the face of the globe; and for the teeming life, the new and manifold wants of that hastening period, you, under God, are to be the leaders towards a true Christian development and character.

May God help you, and prepare you for the great and noble work!

Just now, here in my New England home, as my pen is finishing this sketch, I turn my eyes towards the far west, where the setting sun is hiding itself from the gathering darkness, behind its curtains of crimson and gold: and in heart I follow the waning light over the distant hills to the rich, warm shores of the Pacific; and there, with my eye upon your faces, my loved friends, one and all, and my hand in yours, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named; that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that ye may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

And as the last rays of the sun glimmer and die on the western horizon, I seem, with you, and with the long line of saints whom Christ has ransomed out of every nation and people, to catch the glad strains of the imprisoned apostle's ascription of praise: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

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Chapter 27 THE REST OF FAITH

Christ's children, in different parts of the country, are earnestly inquiring how they can abide in the fullness of his love. The Holy Spirit is moving the whole Christian church in this direction. Many think there is a place of rest "here," where the soul can enjoy, without interruption, the fullness of Christ's love. They are seeking light on this subject; they seem to be asking for "the old paths," "where is the good way," that they "may find rest to their souls," and, like Enoch, walk with God.

In this hungering after Christ, this inward unrest, this longing for the fullness of Christ's love, I see signs of great promise to the church and the world. Christ is saying to his church, "Come up higher;" and she is coming.

Christians in the past have felt the need of this blessing, and sought and found it.

Dr. Payson says, "Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy resident.

"The celestial city is full in my view; its glories beam upon me; its breezes fan me; its odors are wafted to me; its sounds strike my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but as an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step whenever God gives permission.

"The Sun of righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached, and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun, exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze upon this excessive brightness, and wondering, with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a simple worm."

After experiencing this great increase of faith, Dr. Payson cried out, in view of his former distressing doubts, and the great loss he had thereby sustained in his own enjoyment and usefulness, "O that I had known this twenty years ago!"

Mrs. Edwards, wife of President Edwards, says, "In 1742 I sought and obtained the full assurance of faith. I cannot find language to express how certain the everlasting love of God appeared: the everlasting mountains and hills were but shadows to it. My safety and happiness, and eternal enjoyment of God's immutable love, seemed as durable and unchangeable as God himself. Melted and overcome by the sweetness of this assurance, I fell into a great flow of tears, and could not forbear weeping aloud.

"The presence of God was so near and so real, that I seemed scarcely conscious of anything else. My soul was filled and overwhelmed with light, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and seemed just ready to go away from the body. This exaltation of soul subsided into a heavenly calm and a rest of soul in God, which was even sweeter than what preceded it."

I could give a great cloud of witnesses, all testifying to the same thing: that is, after receiving evidence of regeneration, they felt a longing of heart for something higher -- a fullness of love a state of heart that would enable them to abide in Christ without interruption.

This they sought and found, and many of them after ten or twenty years, are still enjoying the same blessing with increasing sweetness.

The anxious inquiry presents itself, "How can I reach this state of rest in Christ?"

You must believe such a state is attainable. To ask and search for a thing you do not believe can be obtained, is solemn mockery. "What thing soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

The first thing, then, to be settled in your own mind, is this: "Do I fully believe Christ has made provision for me to abide -- without interruption -- in the fullness of his love?"

If one doubt remains in your mind about this, you will not obtain it, however anxious or earnest you are in your efforts.

This blessing, as well as all others, must be received through Jesus. There is no other name or way through which any soul can find rest. "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it;" that is, any promise, with Christ's name on it as the indorser, the Father will honor. So that every promise in the Bible is "yea and amen in Christ Jesus." Nothing is too good or great for the Father to give you for the Son's sake. "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Jesus is the pledge of all you need, or that Infinite Love can bestow.

Yea must come to Jesus by a simple, childlike faith, believing just what he has said. When he says to you, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," your immediate reply should be, --

"Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe, --
O Lamb of God, I come, I come."

This rest will be found only when you seek it with an undivided heart.

"And ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

You will need to trust God in all things, temporal and spiritual.

If he hides his face from you, and all appears dark, you need not be troubled;

"God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

If you have no emotion, no joy, no light for the present -- no matter, trust God in the dark. Let your faith look to the other side of the cloud for the "silver lining."

"Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

Having consecrated all to Jesus, take nothing from the altar; but expect him to give you the evidence of your acceptance, without one doubt, just when and as he pleases, with or without emotions, whether you realize any change in your feelings or not.

Do not stagger at the promise: "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry;" that is, it will not tarry a moment after you are prepared for its reception.

This rest is retained by faith alone -- not by faith and works. Christ needs no assistance from you or any one else, to keep your heart in perfect peace, but asks you to leave it all to him, and says, "Only believe." Then you can say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him against that day."

Be faithful and watchful; but do not depend on either. Your own promises and resolutions, so far as keeping you in the love of Christ is concerned, are ropes of sand. "We are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." Christ says to you in this matter, "Only believe." Your faith, like Abraham's, is counted to you for righteousness.

If your faith in Christ is unwavering, nothing can interrupt your peace and rest. The darkness and the light are both alike to faith. If your way seems dark and hedged up for the present, you need not be troubled.

"Faith is the brightest evidence
Of things beyond our sight;
It pierces through the veil of sense,
And dwells in heavenly light."

There is one way by which we may know when we are resting in Christ by faith. It is when we are bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." If we do not bear this fruit, we are not abiding in the fullness or Christ's love, no matter what we profess. It is well for every one to test himself by this rule.

I am very sorry to find persons claiming to live near the Savior, who manifest a harsh, unkind, and even a fault-finding spirit; and in some instances their lives are unChristian. In this way Christ is greatly dishonored, and many anxious Christians, who long to get up higher and abide in Him, are hindered and kept back. A Christian, sweetly resting in Christ, will have great patience; will speak kindly even to those he thinks are wrong; will have warm and glowing love for Christ and his people, and will walk in the light. If he lacks these things, he is not right, and Jesus says, "Friend, come up higher."

He may have severe trials of his faith, but will say, "It is the Lord, let him do what he will."

His emotions may be changeable. The wind may ruffle the surface water, but the deep fountain beneath is calm and peaceful.

He, no doubt, will keenly feel the trials that remove loved ones from him, yet will say, "The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away blessed be the name of the Lord." Christ's own finger takes up the bleeding veins severed by these afflictions.

This state will prevent gloomy and distressing fears about the future. It teaches the Christian the great lesson: In whatever situation Providence places him, therewith to be content. The fear of death is greatly removed; he knows he has not dying grace now, and does not need it,

but believes Christ's word, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." He sweetly rests in Jesus, expecting grace and help just when needed.

"Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste, e'en here, the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home."

MY OWN EXPERIENCE

About ten years ago [1859], I began to feel an inexpressible hungering and longing for the fullness of Christ's love. I had often had seasons of great joy and peace in Christ, and in his service. I had seen many precious souls brought into the fold of Christ. I fully believe I then belonged to Christ -- that my name was in his family record.

I loved the work of the ministry, but had long felt an inward unrest, a void in my soul that was not filled. Seasons of great joy would be followed by seasons of darkness and doubt. If I had peace, I feared it would not continue, and it did not.

Many anxious Christians came to me, complaining of the same thing. How could I help them on that point, when I did not know how to get right myself? I took them to the seventh chapter of Romans, and there left them, saying, "O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I was there myself, and supposed I must live and die there.

In this state I was exposed to severe temptations and attacks of the enemy. I made strong and repeated resolutions that I would be faithful, but could not keep them. Then I sought and found forgiveness again, and was happy, and said, "O, that I could always enjoy such peace!" But it was soon disturbed by some word, or act, or heart wandering.

Thus I lived on for many years: now happy in my Christian experience, and now unhappy; sometimes doubting and fearing, and sometimes resting. God gave me success in winning souls, and granted me many hours of sweet communion with my Savior, for which I am truly grateful; still I was unsatisfied -- I wanted an uninterrupted rest and peace.

I often read those precious words, uttered by our Savior, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." I longed and prayed to be there, but knew not the way. O, that some one had then taught me the way of rest in Jesus!

At last I felt that the question for me to settle was this:-- can an imperfect Christian sweetly and constantly rest in a perfect Savior, without condemnation?

This I revolved in my mind for a long time. I read, as far as I could, the experiences of those who seemed to live nearest to Christ. I searched the Scriptures for light, and asked such as I believed had power with God, to pray with and for me, that I might be led aright on this great question. At length I became satisfied that Christ had made provision for me and all his children to abide in the fullness of his love without one moment's interruption.

Having settled this, I said:-- I need this; I long for it; I cannot truly represent religion without it, and Christ is dishonored by me every day I live without it.

I, therefore, -- deliberately resolved, by the help of my Redeemer, to obtain it at any sacrifice; little realizing how unlike Christ I then was, or how much would be needed to bring me there.

I first procured a blank book, which I called my "Consecration Book," and slowly and solemnly, on my knees, wrote in it the following dedication: "Andover, February 10, 1859.

"This day I make a new consecration of my all to Christ.

"Jesus, I now and forever give myself to thee; my soul to be washed in thy blood and saved in heaven at last; my whole body to be used for thy glory; my mouth to speak for thee at all times; my eyes to weep over lost sinners, or to be used for any purpose for thy glory; my feet to carry me where thou shalt wish me to go; my heart to be burdened for souls, or used for thee anywhere; my intellect to be employed at all times for thy cause and glory. I give to thee my wife, my children, my property, all I have, and all that ever shall be mine. I will obey thee in every known duty. -- A. B. E."

I then asked for grace to enable me to carry out that vow, and that I might take nothing from the altar. I supposed, with this consecration, entire as far as knowledge went, I should soon receive all that my longing heart could contain; but in this I was sadly mistaken.

I think I then came nearer to Christ. But as clearer light began to shine into my heart, I saw more of its vileness.

I find in my journal the following:

"Boston, December 22, 1859

"The last three weeks have been weeks of great searching of heart. I never had my heart so searched before. I detect pride, envy, self-will, a great deal of unbelief, my love to the Savior to be very weak. Yet I have consecrated all to Christ, and cannot withdraw it from the altar. O, can a worm so vile be like Christ? I know it is possible; and if I am ever to be like him, why not now, while I am where I can do good in leading others to him?"

I felt like a patient who, though in the hands of a skillful physician, groans and writhes under the severe treatment which has been found necessary in order to save his life. But my constant prayer was, "Be thorough with me, Jesus; be thorough." Many a discouraging day followed this consecration and these heart-searchings. I grew weak, and small, and unworthy, in my own estimation.

At times my joy and peace were almost unbounded. Sometimes I felt that I grasped the prize so earnestly sought, but was shown some hidden sin in my heart which greatly humbled and

distressed me. How fully I realized the words of J. B. Taylor, who said, while seeking this blessing, "Notwithstanding my profession that I had crucified the world, the flesh, and the devil, I have had keener sorrows for indwelling sin than I ever experienced before conversion.

"O, the distress which I have felt on account of pride, envy, love of the world, and other evil passions which have risen up and disturbed my peace, and separated between God and my soul!" How many have realized all this, and even more, in their struggles after abiding rest in Jesus.

One sin that troubled me most, and was the hardest to overcome, was a strong will, -- a desire, and almost a determination, to have my own way; and thus -- even in regard to little things, or any little injury or supposed wrong to speak without reflection, and sometimes severely, even to those I knew were my friends; to say, "I will do this," and "I will not do that."

This I clearly saw must be overcome, if I would become a consistent and useful Christian. As I could not do it myself, I gave it over to Jesus: he could give me grace to overcome even this. But I found I gave nothing into the hands of Jesus, except by a simple faith. My faith was very deficient and weak: to believe the promises fully was not so easy. I believed the theory of religion, but to have my heart grasp the reality, without wavering, was more difficult. Yet I found my faith growing stronger until at last I came to believe just what God has said in his word. I found first the blade of faith, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. No rest could be obtained until I could believe just what God had said, and trust him fully.

I felt that I must have in my heart something I did not then possess. Before I could be filled with the fullness of Christ's love I must be emptied of self. O, the longing of my heart for what I then believed, and now believe, to be sweet and constant rest in Jesus! I believed I should receive it, and thought it was near.

I soon found it easier to resist temptation. I began to trust Christ and his promises more fully.

With this mingling of faith, desire, and expectation, I commenced a meeting on Cape Cod. After re-dedicating myself, in company with others, anew to God, I was in my room alone, pleading for the fullness of Christ's love, when all at once a sweet, heavenly peace filled all the vacuum in my soul, leaving no longing, no unrest, no dissatisfied feeling in my bosom. I felt, I knew that I was accepted fully of Jesus. A calm, simple, childlike trust took possession of my whole being. I felt that if I had a thousand hearts and lives, I would give them all to the Savior; my grateful love to him found expression in those glowing lines, --

"O, for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!"

Then, for the first time in my life, I had that rest which is more than peace. I had felt peace before, but feared I should not retain it; now I had peace without fear, which really became rest.

That night I retired to sleep without one fear, much like a tired babe resting in its mother's arms. I believed Jesus had received me, and would keep me. I had no fear of losing that happy state; the fear which had so disturbed my rest was taken away. I seemed in a new world; my burden was gone, my cup was full, and Jesus was present with me. I felt not only that I was forgiven and cleansed, but that Jesus would hereafter keep me; that I should not have to help him keep me, as I had been vainly trying to do, but could trust it all to him; that now I had two hands instead of one to work with. I was a Christian before. I loved Christ, and his people, and his cause; yet did not, could not, trust myself without fear in his hands. But now I seemed all at once to lose a great burden of care and anxiety.

I found that much of my care had been not only useless, but a hindrance to my success, rendering my work in Christ's cause much harder and less pleasant to myself. I had been like the traveler with a heavy burden on his back, who, when invited by a friend to ride in his carriage and rest himself, took his seat with his burden still weighing him down. When asked to lay his burden off while riding, and rest, he replied, "O, sir, you have been so kind to let me ride, I will carry my burden myself." I had not learned to lay my burden on Jesus while toiling in his vineyard, which would have rendered my work comparatively light and easy.

The Bible seemed like a new book. I had, as it were, read with a veil before my eyes. All through the week I labored on without fear of losing the long sought, and now so highly prized, blessing. I believed, in the hour of temptation, Christ would keep me, and I should not lose that happy state.

This change occurred about five o'clock on the evening of the second day of November, 1863; and although I never felt so weak and small, yet Jesus has been my all since then. There has not been one hour of conscious doubt or darkness since that time. A heaven of peace and rest fills my soul. Day and night the Savior seems by me. Preaching is a luxury, -- it is a glorious work. In prayer Christ does not seem far away, but near and with me. The Bible still appears like a new book. All Christians are dearer to me than ever before. All earthly ties are more precious to me; -- home, friends, all blessings, temporal or spiritual, are dearer and brighter than ever before. That terrible fear and torment about death is in a great measure gone. Thought is quickened. My views of truth are much clearer than before. I have come to believe just what God says. I can trust him, and go forward, even "with sealed orders."

My success in leading souls to Jesus has been much greater than before. My joy in telling the world of Christ and his goodness constantly increases. And as I realize more and more the greatness of his love, and the perfection of his character, my swelling heart often cries out,

"O, could I speak the matchless worth,
O, could I sound the glories forth,
Which in my Savior shine!"

O, that I had an angel's tongue, or could in some way express to others the love I bear to Jesus!

"I'd sing the characters he bears,
And all the forms of love he wears,
Exalted on his throne."

I feel very imperfect and weak, yet I am enabled to believe and trust Jesus; and he is so near that I have realized, in several instances of little inconsistencies, that before the dark wave reached my soul to produce condemnation, Jesus said, "Peace, be still."

Temptation is presented, but the power of it is broken. I seem to have a present Savior in every time of need; so that for several years I have done the trusting and Jesus the keeping; it is much easier now to resist temptation than it was before.

I feared the crosses would be much heavier if I was nearer Jesus; but they are much lighter now so that I can sum it all up in a few words, and call it -- the rest of faith, -- a calm, sweet resting all with Christ. This state of heart is reached only by faith, and retained only by faith -- not by helping Christ take care of us, but by trusting him to do it all.

Does any one ask how an imperfect Christian can rest in a perfect Savior, and feel no condemnation?

I answer, It is by Christ's meeting all the demands of the law for us, in such a way that the soul realizes no condemnation.

Suppose you had a great many debts coming due every day -- a constant source of grief and pain because you were unable to meet the demands, though they were just. After a long season of distress and worrying, a kind, rich friend says to you, "I know all about your indebtedness, and your inability to meet it, but if you will come to my house and trust all to me, I promise you undisturbed rest as long as you choose to remain with me; no one shall trouble you." You fully believe and trust him, and go to his home. A short time after reaching his home, you hear his bell ring. He goes to the door. Some one inquires if you are in the house; your friend replies that you are, and asks what is wanted. The creditor at the door says, "I have a bill of fifty dollars I would like to have him settle." The bill is promptly paid by your friend, without disturbing you. Thus your rich friend continues to meet all just demands brought against you during your stay with him. He knew, before he made the offer, just what he was undertaking to do, and that he had all needed means to do with.

Do you not see how you could rest, and yet know that your rich friend was daily meeting demands that you were entirely unable to pay, while his means were unbounded?

This rich, precious friend is Jesus, who said to me long ago, when I was worrying over my inability to keep myself, or atone for one sin, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "All power in heaven and in earth is given into my hands." "I came into this world to help just such sinners as you are." But I did not, and seemingly could not, believe it, and continued to worry. But, at last, I was enabled to believe just what Jesus said, and trust him entirely, and at once he gave me rest, not fear -- not torment, -- but sweet, constant, abiding rest.

Thus, while I believe and trust Christ entirely, nothing wavering, he gives me rest -- not Jesus and my faithfulness, but Jesus alone, gives me rest. So that Christ is made, at this very point, to those who trust all to him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Christ meets at first, and all along the way, the demands of the law against us, on the simple condition that we fully believe, and trust all to him.

In this way, an imperfect Christian can, by a firm, unwavering faith, rest in a perfect Savior without condemnation. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In this way unwavering faith is counted (as it was to Abraham) for perfect satisfaction for every claim the perfect law of God brings against the soul. So that we are saved from eternal death by faith, and saved now from fear and condemnation by faith; and those who thus believe do (not shall) enter into rest.

The difference between his experience before and after this rest in Jesus, is this: Before, he was complaining, and confessing his departures from Christ; now, he is joyful, and sweetly resting in Christ: before, when he was happy, he was fearful he should lose his happiness; now, he is very happy, and has no fear of losing it. The very steps by which he has reached this state show him how to retain it.

There is no change in his doctrines or opinions -- his sentiments were never dearer to him. The difference is in his faith -- he has let go of all but Jesus, and relies on him alone for peace and rest, and is not disappointed.

Reader, are you sweetly resting in Christ by faith? If so, make an effort to lead all around you there; but if not, let me urge you, at once, without dismissing the subject from your thoughts, to give yourself to the Savior anew, and do not cease your importunity until you are filled with all the fullness of his love.

You then are just prepared to grow in divine things. The roots of your faith can strike deep into the soil of truth and love, and need not be disturbed again until transplanted into heavenly soil, there to continue to grow and flourish in the garden of the Lord.

"Then shall I see, and hear, and know,
All I desire or wish below,
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy."

* * * * *

THE END