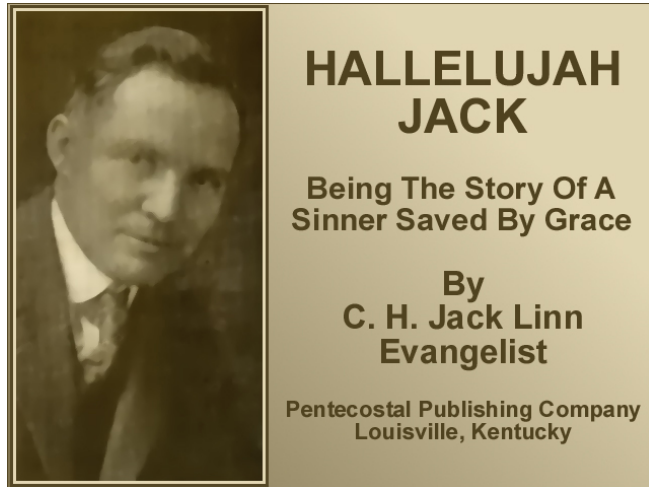


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**HALLELUJAH JACK**  
By Clement H. "Jack" Linn



**Being The Story  
Of A Sinner Saved By Grace**

**Pentecostal Publishing Company  
Louisville, Kentucky**

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Rev. Jack Linn**

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**Digital Edition 06-22-09  
By Holiness Data Ministry**

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## **ABOUT THIS DIGITAL PUBLICATION**

This autobiography, published in 1917, is one of the most unusual Christian testimonies you will ever read! Before telling of his glorious conversion on October 17, 1912, the writer candidly confesses much about his sin-darkened past, and, in that they both faced the possibility of going to the penitentiary after being saved,

the stories of "Bulldog Charlie Wireman" and "Hallelujah Jack" Linn are similar. That said, the two stories are uniquely different, and the conversion, call to preach, and autobiography of the author simply will not fit into the usual mold. However, though it is extraordinary, the testimony of "Hallelujah Jack" is very convincing.

The author does not attempt to fully explain the uncommon order of occurrences following his conversion, nor does he reveal every detail about how God worked matters out for him. His story is an exceptional example of how God leads each of His children individually, step by step, and this account is an illustration of Proverbs 4:18 -- "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The dawn of conversion is real, but the light of the new convert is not that which later comes during the blazing meridian of the spiritual, noon-day sun. Further, God's ways are "past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). He "works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform." Thus it was with C. H. "Hallelujah Jack" Linn.

I have taken his "Notice To The Reader" -- which was at the end of the book -- and placed it near the beginning of this file, directly below this section -- not to make the book anticlimactic, but to show any reader, who may entertain some doubts about the authenticity of the author's earlier testimony, that his post-conversion walk with Christ really did develop from the dimmer "dawn-light" of his New Birth into "the blazing splendor" and noon-day sun of "Holiness Unto The Lord."

Also, as per above, I have repositioned the Table of Contents to the top of the file, including in it the author's Dedication and Preface. The chapters of this little autobiography are brief; the book is short -- only 120, rather small, pages in its printed form. Read this testimony, marvel, be convinced, be blessed, and I think you may even find yourself shedding some tears as you praise the Lord. -- Duane V. Maxey, Holiness Data Ministry, Surprise, Arizona, June 23, 2009.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### **NOTICE TO READER!**

Since this book was written and published I have received light on Holiness, and God has sanctified me wholly. The account of my Second Blessing is given in my other book, "THE LETTERS OF A CONVERTED BOY TO HIS MOTHER," price 50 cents. Order from Rev. Jack Linn, Oregon, Wis.

[Of course this offer is not current. I DID do an online search to see if I might be able to purchase and digitize a copy of "The Letters of a Converted Boy to His Mother," but I could not find the book. However, I DID succeed in finding another publication by C. H. Jack Linn, titled "The Garden of Love," which was published in 1921, and I bought it. Hopefully, I will have it soon, so as to be able to add it also to the HDM Library. -- DVM]

\* \* \* \* \*

## DEDICATION

All that I am (humanly speaking) I owe to to my dear mother. To her, the best woman in the world, this book is affectionately dedicated.

\* \* \* \* \*

## PREFACE

In many places in the United States I have told my experience in the Lord. God has always blessed my story. At the close of the services, when I gave the invitation, I have seen numbers make their decision for Christ.

Not infrequently there are those who ask for my experience in the printed form. These requests have taken me to my knees. After earnest and specific prayer I feel that God can be honored by the publication of this book.

One friend, from whom I sought advice, wrote: "If a single soul can be turned to Jesus Christ by your book, by all means it should be published."

There is very little profit in the sales of a book of this character. This is my plan for the profits, if there be any: First: I shall pay all my legitimate debts which were incurred by my conversion. (It cost very much to "make my crooked paths straight.") Second: When debts are all paid, I shall give every penny to the cause of Jesus Christ.

Will you join me in praying that God will use for His glory the story of "Hallelujah Jack?"

C. H. Jack Linn

\* \* \* \* \*

## 01 -- HALLELUJAH JACK

Less than five years ago I was a prisoner in jail. Less than five years ago I was a fugitive from justice. Less than five years ago I was living under an assumed name. Less than five years ago I was hunted and wanted by the police.

Today I am a saved man. Today I am an ordained minister of the Gospel. Today I am an evangelist. (Previous to my work in the evangelistic field I was pastor of a growing church.)

**And this day, moved by the power of the Holy Spirit, I have set about to record how this great change came about.**

**King David said of himself, "I am as a wonder to many, but Thou art my strong refuge." I, too, am as a wonder to many, and God is my strong refuge.**

**If I know my own heart, I am writing this experience for the glory of God and for the salvation of men.**

**I have chosen to entitle my book "Hallelujah Jack." I could have selected another title; for instance, "From Prison Cell to Pulpit," "From Stage to Preacher," "From Newsboy to Evangelist," or, "From Hell to Heaven."**

**I will not compromise with the latter statement. I have been saved from hell to heaven, from misery to happiness, from despair to joy and peace. When God found me I was wandering along the devil's highway. The Blessed Saviour "turned" me. I am now journeying, as a stranger and pilgrim, along the beautiful road which leads to my eternal abode -- heaven.**

**I am really writing a Gospel. Gospel means "good news," "glad tidings." And it is good news and glad tidings to know one has been born anew from above. That is, transformed, body, soul, and spirit, by Power Divine.**

**"I was blind, but now I see." Jesus did it. "Jesus, wherefore hath God highly exalted Him and given Him a name above all other names."**

**My heart and all there is in me exclaims: "Hallelujah!" Hallelujah means "Praise ye the Lord." I am known every place as "Hallelujah Jack" And I shall not be afraid to use this great word in the story which follows.**

**\* \* \* \* \***

## **02 -- A HOME WITHOUT CHRIST**

**I can easily remember when I was five years of age. Yet I do not remember a time when I did not lie and steal and smoke. I was known as a "bad" boy. I grew up in a home where Jesus Christ was not known. What a dark picture it is! A home -- with children -- and no reverence for God Almighty. I never saw my mother or father read the Bible. I never heard them pray. I do not recall that they ever sent me to Sunday-school.**

**I love my mother and father. I am not recording these details to humiliate them. But it is a truth, I was raised in a dark, dark home, which was given up to sin.**

**My father at the time of which I write was a railroad man. He lost his position, and the times were very hard. Search as he would, he could find no work. I recollect**

how he went to work in a lumber-yard, laboring twelve hours a day, for ninety cents. And my mother became a washer-woman.

I have two brothers and one sister, and they, too, were raised in sin. My father and mother loved enough to slave for us; but they did not know God, and they did not realize we were slipping away.

My parents have since been converted, and are now living Christian lives. Praise God! I have told this experience while they sat in the congregation, and their hearts have bled. The remorse is something terrible. It is another proof of the Scripture, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

I have begun with a home without Christ. My desire now is to show to the world that salvation saves from something to something. Therefore in the several chapters which shall follow it will be necessary to tell how the devil dragged me to the bottom.

It is not a matter of personal desire to record these things. It is a conviction that in this way God will receive praise. For this reason, and this reason alone, I shall uncover the secrets of my heart.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 03 -- AS A NEWSBOY

I do not believe I was a day older than six when I went out into the great city to sell newspapers. In this work I associated with older boys, who knew more about sin than I did, but it was not long before I learned all they knew.

It would have been better for me, if, after I came home from the streets, I had had a mother to caution me about the ways of this world. But my mother never told me about sin and about Jesus who loves little boys who are compelled to work.

As a newsboy I learned the first sins -- stealing, lying, swearing, smoking. The older boys did these things, and I thought I had to do them also. Many times I would hear the boys telling how they had "fleeced" a customer out of some money.

It was this way. The papers we sold cost to the customer two and three cents, respectively. When a man would give the boy a nickel or dime, he would say he did not have the change, but would return with it in a moment. He darted away, not to return.

The other boys made a practice of this deception, and I had to pick up the "tricks of the trade." (I do not wonder now that I afterward became a criminal.)

Most of the boys smoked cigarettes. We never bought tobacco, but there always were men who smoked a cigarette until it was about half gone, then they would throw it to the pavement. We used to "shoot" them before the fire would even go out. I was especially adept in this maneuver.

If men must smoke cigarettes, I do wish they would crush the discarded part of the tobacco under their feet so no little boy can pick it up and become a cigarette fiend.

In the last day when the final reckoning of all things comes, I wonder who will be responsible for the cigarette fiends. "Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face." The Judgment will throw an X-ray upon many things which will surprise us. Indeed, we might call the Judgment Day "The Day of Surprise."

As for swearing and dirty stories, none of us street urchins believed we had to learn those things. They were gifts, and when a boy was not proficient in "cussing," he was considered a sissy. I was not considered a sissy. Would to God I had been.

I want to record one incident which happened when I was a newsboy. At one time I went to Sunday-school -- just for one Sunday, mind you. Some of the boys told me the teacher was going to give a Christmas present to each boy in the class. I joined the class the Sunday before Christmas. The present was a secret opening pocket-book. I shall never forget it.

I remember that Sunday the preacher noticed me. I do not think it occurred to him I should ever be a preacher myself. In fact, it would have been easier for him to close his eyes and in a picture see me in prison clothes. Anyway, he noticed me.

One evening I was standing on the corner selling papers. This preacher came out of a cigar-store with a stogy in his mouth. (Surely he did not encourage me to stop smoking.) He saw me. He put his hand upon my head and asked: "Say, bub, what's the latest miracle?"

"Miracle!" I looked at him wild-eyed. I did not have the least idea what he meant, or what the word "miracle" meant. But for some strange reason, that question is as fresh in my mind as it was the day he asked it, nearly twenty-five years ago.

I know now the latest miracle. The latest miracle occurred the moment I gave my heart to God and He forgave my sins for Christ's sake. The next person who gives his heart to God -- that, too, will be the latest miracle.

As a newsboy it was a common occurrence to go in and out of saloons. Many times I would go into a saloon with the pretension of selling my papers, but in reality to steal free-lunch.

Before my head could reach the top of the bar, I would find my dirty, bare feet taking me into a saloon, and my dirty hands sneaking up to "swipe" free-lunch. Often I would have to stand on the railing in order to reach the pretzels or the cheese and crackers.

How many years I sold papers I do not remember. In all that time, I did not have one man or woman to stop me and appeal to anything which might be good in me. No one, as they bought a paper, said a word about Jesus, or God, or being good.

The next time you buy a paper from a newsboy, ask him if he knows Jesus. It may help him, and it may help you.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 04 -- AS A BOOTBLACK

According to the reckonings of the newsboy.gang, I was quite "clever." I learned things easily. So, it was no great wonder to the gang when they heard of my promotion. No longer now a newsboy, but a bootblack.

I made my own shining-box. I am a grandson of a carpenter, but that did not aid me much in cabinet-making. Anyway, it was a pretty good box. I found an old piece of a broken mirror. This piece of "looking-glass" neatly surrounded with brass-headed tacks, embellished my first bootblack outfit.

Everybody may not understand, but I can say truthfully, it was a happy day when I swung the box over my shoulder and started out in my new vocation.

As a bootblack I visited saloons and the hotels and the cigar-stores, and I heard many conversations which no one should ever hear. Bootblacks just had to be tough -- and I was.

I learned in this profession new ways of overcharging the "rubes," and better ways of purloining the free-lunch.

One man was wearing tan shoes. They were not common in those days. He wanted to know if I could polish them. I have always had a daring which sometimes has even baffled me, myself. I would try anything. I did not have any tan polish, but I did not want to lose that dime.

I undertook the job. I knew I did not dare apply black polish to the shoes, but it never occurred to me that my black brushes would make streaks on the shoes. The man saw what I was doing. He jerked his foot from my box; he gave a savage



kick, which went wild, and then he let out a volley of oaths. He was pretty good at swearing, but I was a past-master.

When he had finished, I began to back fire. I told him everything he said I was, he was too. Only I used different language than I am using here.

In my shining-box I carried a piece of carpet. All the boys did this. When I found a customer, I carefully spread out the carpet upon the sidewalk, and then knelt upon it. My legs were bare and my knees were dirty. I did not need the carpet, but I used it anyway.

Would it not have been far better, and of infinite more value, if I had learned to kneel in prayer instead of kneeling to shine some man's shoes?

Oh, God, help the boys who haven't got a chance!

\* \* \* \* \*

## 05 -- AS A MESSENGER-BOY

As a newsboy and bootblack I learned many things about sin. And I also learned to know the city. In a moment's time I could locate most every street and every important building or place. Not content to be a mere bootblack all my life, I aspired to that high position of messenger-boy. To the Postal Telegraph Company I made application, and was employed.

Say, if it was a happy day when I threw my shining-box over my shoulder, it was a glad day when I put on the messenger's uniform. I had some pride about me, and I made the brass plate on the front of the cap shine.

I do not say messenger-boys cannot be good. I say I wasn't and the others of my associates were not. We matched pennies, smoked cigarettes, swore, lied, "knocked down" ["drank liquor"] when we could, read blood-and-thunder novels, and I do not know what else.

One thing I learned as messenger which my other vocations had not taught me. How shall I tell about it?

Very frequently was I called upon to deliver a note or telegram to a house of ill-fame. We called them "sporting-houses." They were legalized then. Thank God, some reform has since come into our cities.

It was considered a favorite place to go, and when we found a message for one of those haunts of sin, it always brought a cheer to our hearts.

At an age when I should have been tied to my mother's apron string, I knew the reason and purpose of a house of ill-fame.

"Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap." And it does not make any difference if he sows in ignorance, the law is universal and it must be so.

I heard things and saw things in those places. To this day, even as I write, I can see the same things and hear the same words of twenty years ago. They flooded my mind with morbid curiosity and appealed to passions which should never have been awakened. I would not record the above facts if the red-light districts were still in operation. Thank God, they have practically been outlawed in most of our cities, and messenger boys are no longer in the peril in which I was placed.\*

[\*What Hallelujah Jack stated to be the case when he wrote this book in 1917 is certainly NOT the case NOW -- in the year 2009 -- nor has it been for many years in many large cities of the U.S. -- DVM]

There was nothing in the life of a messenger-boy's career which appealed to my aesthetic taste. And I was arriving at that point in life where I delighted to wear a white collar and tie, and to comb my hair with a part.

And so, with the burning desire to have my shoes carry a shine, I cast about for a "position" which would permit me to be dressed up. I found it in a department store as cash-boy. Here I had the chance of wearing my best clothing, and also to put into practice some of the sins I had learned.

It was very difficult for me to keep my hands off the pretty things in the store. There were so many of them, and surely they would not miss all I would take. Or should I say "steal?"

Most of the other boys had never sold papers, or shined shoes, or carried messages -- but they knew how to be dishonest just the same. If there was a real honest boy in our crowd I am sure I never discovered him.

Young ladies, between the ages of seventeen and up, were the clerks. How many times, when customers were not in evidence, and the floor-walker was out of sight, did they get me into their midst and tell filthy stories. It surprised me at first, but I soon was as bold as they. I can see their faces this moment, and I can hear their words. Would to God I could destroy these pictures.

So much for the cash-boy. I lost my job because I ran away one pretty afternoon and went to a circus. O you elephants, peanuts, and red lemonade!

\* \* \* \* \*

## 06 -- AS A BELL-BOY

From the first time I went into the fine hotels as newsboy and bootblack, I wanted to be employed as a bell-boy. I was too young at first, but as the years went by I waited for my chance. It came. I was regularly scheduled as a bell-boy in one of the finest hotels of the city.

The duties of a bell-boy are to answer calls and to wait on guests generally. Many times guests would call for drinks. They came oftentimes from newly-married couples on their honeymoon. Fine way, indeed, to spend a honeymoon!

I soon learned the names of different kinds of drinks. And when I would carry the glasses back to the bar-room, I usually found they had not been drained. A little liquor still remained, and we boys drank it.

Those were the first seeds. The harvest years afterward brought forth a dissipated life. Again, I ask, who was to blame?

The hours of a bell-boy are twelve hours on and twelve hours off. That is, he works one day from six in the morning till noon, and then comes back at six and works to twelve -- midnight. The following day he works from twelve noon till six in the evening.

When on the night shift we were allowed to gather in the bar about midnight, and eat the free-lunch which remained. Sometimes we had nearly a whole roast chicken. The chicken was all right, but the sights we saw and the things we heard were not all right, save for the devil's purpose. The devil knows -- much better than we do -- if he can get the boy, he will have the man.

I got in bad with the head clerk the day I fell up the stairs with a full tray of drinks. I apologized to him, but it was of no avail. He never forgave. He watched his opportunity to "cut off my head."

Sometimes the bell-boy acted as check-boy. This work was to check hats and coats, and grips. I always, by force of habit, ran my hands into all the pockets. In one pocket I discovered a brand-new pair of gloves.

My aesthetic taste was developing. I wanted those gloves. I wanted them bad enough to steal them. I did.

The man came from the dining-room. He missed the gloves. He raised a fuss. They searched me, and the gloves came forth. I lost my position.

I began to cry. I was sorry. Sorry for what? Sorry because I had sinned? No! Because my sins had found me out.

I went to the clerk who had it "in" for me. I sobbed pitifully. Never shall I forget. I said, "Will you please give me a recommendation so I can get another job?"

What an awful look he gave me. It was like an ice-berg. "A recommendation for what? Stealing?"

My head was clipped off. Good-night to the bell-hop job. Exit bell-boy.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 07 -- AS A RUNAWAY BOY

It was about the time I "resigned" as bell-boy that I ran away from home. Father gave my brother and me an awful beating with a "black-snake" which we had found. Somehow or other I could not always agree with father.

This was one of the times. And since he wanted to be boss, I took a trip. I went to the railroad yards, and waited for a blind-baggage. I jumped it, and was soon speeding away.

I have always heard of the rashness and daring of a youth, and I was displaying much of it. Remember, I was just a boy.

I fell in with some tramps or hobos. They did not scare me. In fact, I welcomed the opportunity to be in their company. (I am sure what I am writing is the truth, but it makes me shudder now to even think of it.)

I distinctly remember this incident. The brakeman on the passenger wanted to put us off his train. We climbed on top of the baggage-car, and lay at full length. All we had to cling to was the tin air-pipe which protruded from the top of the car. The train flew over the country at the rate of forty miles an hour. So fast that my feet went from side to side, while I firmly clutched the air-pipe. The red-hot cinders which came out of the smoke-stack embedded themselves in my hair, went down my neck, and up my sleeves. All I could do was to let them burn. I tell you, it was a dare-devil trick. But I was not alarmed in the least.

Another incident I want to record, and give it to the world for what it is worth.

While on my way to Cincinnati I met a big, burly tramp. If I would see a man like him now I would be suspicious. Then I was glad to meet him. I reasoned he knew some tricks of the hobo profession. I was ambitious to learn them.

We were both hungry -- very hungry. He had fifteen cents, and I was "broke."

A certain bakery and restaurant was selling their goods at reduced prices. My friend and I saw a great big blackberry pie in the window. Did it make our mouths water? Well, I reckon. The price of it was fifteen cents. My friend looked at his dime and five-cent piece and then he looked at me, and then one long look at that pie.

Yes, he bought it, and he gave me half. There was nothing stingy about him. He was no tight-wad. He was a tramp and a sinner, but he was generous. (In my few years' experience as a Christian, I have met some church people who will do well to ponder the pie-tale, as herein recorded.)

We were both broke now. At about nine, we looked for a place to sleep. We found some sawdust along the Ohio River. We buried ourselves in that and slept until morning, at which time we went to the water's edge, and carefully and daintily made our toilet.

I could write a large volume on my experiences as a hobo. But my first experience must suffice.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 08 -- AS A PRISONER

While on one of my runaway trips I was thrown into jail. This was the first time. It did not frighten me much. In fact, I seemed to enjoy it. An awful confession this; but it is true.

I had left Chicago via the blind-baggage. In Huntington, Indiana, with two other young men, we were "ditched." While sitting about the depot waiting for a train, a man wearing a long rain-coat approached us, and asked:

"Where are you going?" "Going to get out of town." "When?" "First train." "I guess not. Get up and march."

We knew we were pinched. It was a funny jail -- that one in Huntington. I trust there is a better one there now. It was a single cell, made of iron lattice work, which stood in the middle of what I thought was a livery stable.

The cop searched us. He found a blackjack on one of the suspects, and then on me he found a skeleton key. These looked suspicious.

All three of us were crammed into the little cell. We could not lie down -- just room enough to sit down. A single electric light burned about fifteen feet away.

In my pocket was a copy of Happy Days, a cheap blood-and-thunder novel. I jerked it from my coat and was prepared to spend a comfortable night. I had to move the paper up and down, every few sentences, because the light shone only in

the little squares made by the lattice work. Many times as I read I was provoked to swearing. Just when I was at an interesting place, I had to move in order to see.

We were released the next morning, and given ten minutes to get out of town. I believe we walked seven miles up the railroad before we were able to catch a freight train.

I am trusting that all who are reading this story are convinced by this time that God saved me from something.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 09 -- AS A GAMBLER

As far back as I can remember we played cards in our home. My father taught us to play as soon as we were old enough to tell one card from another. He was a very severe teacher. If he had taught me about the Bible half as well, I should never have turned out to be a gambler. It was nothing unusual to be sent to bed because I made a bad play. Sometimes the punishment was of a different type. I was compelled to stand in the corner of the room and make a certain kind of a face for a given number of minutes. Sometimes I was made to sit under the table.

Knowing punishment was sure to follow every bad play, it was not long before I could play cards like a man. I could play most every game and stack the cards before I was twelve years of age.

In truth, before I had discarded short pants I was gambling. At first for matches, then pennies, and later a "no-limit" game.

My parents belonged to card clubs. It was a common occurrence to have the club meet at our home. When I would see mother cleaning up the front room and putting the house in ship-shape condition, I knew there was to be a card party that night.

If perchance any of the crowd did not show up I was pressed into service. Sometimes it was my brother or sister. Often, before we were twelve we won a prize. It was gambling.

Statistics tell us ninety per cent of all gamblers learn to play cards in their homes. I did. An awful accusation to make against an "innocent" pastime.

It was inevitable I should become a gambler. Oh, those sinful and wasted hours I have sat around a gambling table, where vice and corruption was at its worst.

I know now that a gambler is either a fool or a thief. If he loses he is a fool; if he wins he is a thief because he gets something which does not rightly belong to him. Many times I was a fool. I could lose a hundred and never bat an eye. And many times I was a thief. I won money. I got it for nothing.

God pity the poor gambler. Doubtless, many started as I did, in their parents' home.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 10 -- MOTHER AND FATHER CONVERTED

This is a chapter of Good News. My father repented of his sins and by faith took Jesus Christ into his heart. Let me tell you about it. I was thirteen years of age, as near as I can remember.

My father was taken sick. He had an attack of lumbago. He would get on his back and could not get up. He began to think of eternity, and where he would spend it. When he was well again, much to our surprise, he went to church. The people saw he was interested, and they became interested in him.

One day mother began to clean up the house. I wondered if a card party was to be held. No -- it was a different crowd which came. I could tell by their faces they were not card-players. It is funny how a sinner can tell the difference, isn't it?

It was a cottage prayer-meeting. Thank God for cottage prayer-meetings. They began to sing, and read out of the Bible, and then testify. When they prayed, all the people would get on their knees, and we children did likewise. It reminded me of my boot-black days. I could not keep my eyes closed. I did not know what might happen, so I watched. The Bible says "watch and pray."

I was ignorant of the things of God. I remember hearing one man say something about "Satan." I asked my brother what "Satan" was. He said, "Search me."

The meeting was about to close. They were on their knees. My father spoke up, "Let me pray." He did. Before he had spoken a half dozen sentences, he jumped to his feet and began to jump and shout. He nearly knocked down the gas chandeliers with his head.

I was scared. I thought sure dad had gone daffy. I learned afterward he had been converted -- whatever that was -- I did not know then.

I did know, however, from that moment he was a changed man. He didn't swear any more. No more booze came into the house. The cards were destroyed

and his name dropped from the card club. He began to read the Bible and pray, and he coaxed us children to go to Sunday-school and church.

Well, I had the idea only sissies and goody-goodies went to church, and it was quite a task to get me to go. I remember one Sunday when I was mad and cried, father gave me his beautiful gold watch-chain because I promised to go to Sunday-school. I went. But it was a mighty dry place.

About the same time, or a week or two afterward, my dear mother was converted. She is not demonstrative like father, but she was sweetly and soundly converted. From the moment they were saved, they began to pray for us children. My mother prayed for me thirteen years. I was raised in sin. It took a long while to change me. But, thank God, the change did come. Subsequent chapters will tell about it.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 11 -- AS PRINTER'S DEVIL

My father is a Linotype machinist. At the time of his conversion he was employed on a large daily newspaper. His conversion brought with it a new interest in his children.

I could not go to school. The teachers would not have me in their classes. Therefore, my father persuaded me to accept a position as apprentice to the printing art.

I liked the work. I applied myself diligently, and I learned rapidly. I soon realized how little I knew, and then regret for not having attended school enveloped me.

I began to study. I read everything. I really was ambitious. The same spirit that dominated me in my meanness controlled me now. It is remarkable how much one can learn in a short time if they "dig." I was a "digger." When I was eighteen years of age I had learned the printer's trade. I could set type, job-work, or ads. And I was learning to operate a Linotype machine. I joined the Typographical Union, and earned twenty-four dollars a week.

It is a long story to tell. I worked many places. I was a "barn-stormer." I knew I was not proficient as a Linotype operator, but I would accept a position, and work until I got "fired." I worked in newspaper and job offices from New York to San Francisco.

My worst failing was lack of education, spelling especially. I knew my failing. I studied the dictionaries. I took special courses in grammar, English and rhetoric, and journalism by correspondence. I asked thousands of questions.



I studied -- studied -- studied. It counted. I learned, and I was considered when I was twenty an expert Linotype operator, and in many branches I had the equivalent of a college education.

I had learned a good trade, but I was deep in sin all the time. The seeds I sowed as a boy were bringing forth the harvest. I had money. I could now buy my own cigarettes, cigars and tobacco. I could now wear fine clothes, go into the saloons and cabarets, and theaters, and spend my money and strength in dissipation.

Printers and newspaper men, as a rule, are anything but Christians. Some statistics say printers lead as drinkers. I know there were very few "tee-totalers" in the offices where I worked.

From coast to coast I traveled with these men, until I became a writer and an actor.

Surely I am a wonder to myself. When I think of the marvelous things God has done for me, I just want to shout. If I wasn't a Congregationalist I believe I would shout this very moment.

I am saved -- saved -- saved. Saved by the blood of the Crucified One! Glory to His name!! Hallelujah!!!

The preceding paragraph may not be very accurate as far as rhetoric is concerned, but it is just the way I feel. So there!

(To make myself perfectly understood, let me make this statement in parenthesis: I was enabled to go to school, more or less, until I was in the seventh grade. Then, because the teacher could not get along with me, or I could not get along with her, and because my father was tired of whipping me and sending me back to school after the teacher sent me home, I stopped going to school. I was no dummy in my classes; I was too stubborn and would not obey.)

\* \* \* \* \*

## 12 -- AS AN ACTOR

Until my mother and father were converted, they were regular attendants upon the theaters. And so was I. I dare say there were few boys in the United States who had seen more shows than I had. Every show that would come to town, I was there. Sometimes I "suped" upon the stage, sometimes passed bills, or carried a banner in the parade in order to get a ticket. And many times I bought a ticket into the gallery. As a boy, if a show would come to town and I did not see it, my heart would be broken.

[\*By "suped" he means that he acted as a "supernumerary" which, according to one of my Webster computer dictionaries is: "a person who appears in a play, opera, etc., without speaking lines or as part of a crowd; extra."]

Of course, like many boys and girls, I was stage-struck. I wanted to be an actor. I guess I did have a little talent -- or had I better say nerve. I would tackle any part. I would have tried to play one of the dogs in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," if I had been so requested.

But I never had the opportunity to give vent to my "great ability" on the professional stage until I was nineteen years of age. I played in many amateur plays and usually had a leading part. I did get a telegram one time from Ringling Brothers' circus to join the Holloway Trio as a tight-wire walker. But when I sent my answer in the affirmative, they failed to send railroad fare, and I never joined the circus.

I was working as Linotype operator in Chicago. I earned, as I have said, twenty-four dollars a week. A great desire possessed me to go on the stage.

How could I manage to get a place? I had lots of fashionable clothes, and the thought struck me one day to go to a dramatic agency, and make a bluff. I did. I went to the Bennett Dramatic Agency in Chicago.

The clerk in the office informed me it would cost five dollars to register with their office. I pulled out a roll of bills and peeled off a five-spot.

He looked at me out of the corner of his eyes. He saw my fine panama hat; my sporty tailor-made suit, and my nifty tan shoes, not to mention other dress accessories.

He took my name. "What can you do?" "Anything," I replied, confidently. "Juvenile leads?" "You bet?" "Under-study?" "Just my line." "Light comedy?" "That's where I shine." I was some "four-flusher." But then I wanted a job. I knew they could not put me in jail for lying.

The clerk said he'd send for me in a few days. They were sure they could place me. Sure enough, in about a week's time, I received a card from the agency, and was asked to call at their office at 2 o'clock. I was there -- all dolled up in my glad rags.

While I was in the office waiting, a man came in. He looked me over. He went to the clerk, and said: "There's a man in the waiting-room who would just suit me. What about him?" The clerk called me in to his desk. It was quite a coincidence. He had sent for me as a prospective for this man, and the man immediately sized me up as one who could please him.

In ten minutes the deal was settled. I was employed to play a dude part in a vaudeville sketch. We were to open in Winnipeg, Canada, on the following Monday. It was then Thursday. I must learn my "lines" on the train, and rehearse in the hotel before the first matinee.

Some young men, differently constituted than I was, might have gotten cold feet. But I had started, and I was not going to "welsh".

The sketch was a farce entitled "Slick Dick." I was to impersonate Georgie Worthington, a sissy sweetheart of a beautiful young lady.

I learned the lines. My mind was active, and everything stuck. I went on for the matinee and never missed a cue.

I was ignorant of the actor's vernacular and the terms of the stage. I kept my mouth closed and my eyes and ears open. In a week's time I was a "regular" actor. There was not a man on Broadway who could have done better than I did. At least, I was conceited and vain enough to think that way. Since Jesus has come into my life I have lost a lot of my big-headedness.

The stage. What shall I say about it? My experience was not of great duration, but crowded into the year during which I was on the stage there were many experiences.

All I had learned as newsboy, bootblack, messenger-boy, cash-boy, bell-boy, was now in the harvest. God has forgiven -- man must -- but to be honest in my experience, I cannot refrain from saying the stage was rotten. I never met a Christian actor, and if there were any moral actors I never learned to know them.

I do not want to make any false accusations against the stage. I do not condemn it as an institution. I condemn it for what it stands for and because it caters to the lower nature of man.

It is impossible to take Jesus into a theater and let immoral people entertain Him. He won't go.

But I am writing my experience and not preaching. Forgive me.

What takes place behind the scenes? Well, it depends. If you have lost all sense of manhood or womanhood, or modesty, nothing which is wrong takes place.

I am not judging all actors and actresses by my experience, although I do not think it would be altogether unfair. Maybe a man gets what he is looking for, and maybe I was looking for the wrong things. Anyway, the stage capped the climax in my sinful career.

I found the devil Master of Ceremonies. Dissipation of every kind had right of way, and in the high places, which, to me, is far worse than the gutter.

But I have said enough. Except to add, the Bohemian life which goes with the glitter of the stage does not savor of the Christ. It is no place to look for a "mourner's bench."

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### 13 -- THAT WHICH LED TO CONVERSION

I was in New York City. I had made the acquaintance of many actors. I was living with them on the Great White Way. I know Maxims' and Rectors' and Sherry's and Churchill's. The gay life, with the dazzle of the lights, was what I lived for. But the lights were becoming dim. What was the matter with me? My heart was hungry. It was yearning and searching for something.

What was that something? When I was a boy working in the newspaper office as apprentice I remember I said if I could ever make as much money as the foreman I should be perfectly satisfied with life. He earned five dollars a day. The day came when I made more. But it did not satisfy the cravings.

I was sure as a boy if I could be a real actor on the stage I would be in heaven. Well, I was an actor, with fine prospects -- but satisfaction did not come with the stage career.

I always, from my youth, wanted to be a journalist, a newspaperman and a story writer. I worked hard, and I fully believe if my name could ever grace the magazines as a fictionist, my contentment would be assured. Success came as a writer -- but not contentment.

There was a yearning, I say, in my soul. I wanted something to satisfy. Everybody is searching for that which will permanently satisfy. "What is it?" I ask again. I know what it is. It is God. But when I was on Broadway if some one had told me I wanted God, I should have sneered. Many people would do the same today. But it is God they want, just the same.

I wandered in sin. Many times it was a life of wild dissipation. What was life anyhow? A failure. One night -- oh, many nights -- with others we would go up one side of Broadway and back the other, and visit every saloon and cabaret. It was a high time -- but the awful state of mind the next day.

I was raised in sin. I had been in sin all my life. But I was disgusted. What was the matter? Mother was praying for me back there in Chicago. God was hearing mother's prayers.

I never darkened a church door in New York or any other city. I never read the Bible. I never thought of God.

Well -- how shall I tell it -- in the restlessness and bitterness of my life, I committed a crime. It was done on the impulse -- but it was done. It was the fruition of the devil's work.

I fled from New York. I wanted to bury myself. It is cowardly to record, but I could have ended it all from the Brooklyn Bridge. No, not ended it all -- it would have just begun.

I went first to Chicago. I was on my way to New Orleans. The police caught me in Chicago. I was thrown into a dirty cell of a jail. Four times I was moved, until I finally landed in Cook County Jail.

I wish I did not have to tell these things. Paul told his experience for the glory of God. I must tell mine. Oh, my Jesus is an Uttermost Saviour. Praise His name!

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 14 -- IN A LONELY JAIL CELL

Sometimes God has to throw one upon his back before He can get him to think. With my father it was lumbago; with me it was a cell. I felt sorry for my mother. I was killing her by degrees. The poor mothers of this world! How much they have to bear. God bless them!

I did not remember of anyone in all my life asking me to accept Jesus as my Personal Saviour. I was then about twenty-four. But when alone in the cell, I had time to think. Mother's prayers were winning their way. I thought about God, and my relationship to Him.

Mother did not go back on her boy. He was in jail, but she loved him still. Among other things she sent for my comfort was a small Bible. In all my life before I never had a Bible.

The Lord did His best to work upon my heart. I was sorry for my sins, but I believe I was more sorry because I was found out. I did resolve in my heart, and I wrote in my diary, that if I escaped the penitentiary I would turn over a new leaf. Resolutions may have their place, but they are not repentance.

Things may have been different had I been left to myself. I was thrown into a place where hardened criminals of every kind were all about me.

I soon forgot my Bible and mother and all thoughts of God. What an awful thing to confess.

I had several cell-mates. The jail was pretty well filled, and we were crowded together in the cells.

One man was a notorious pickpocket. He taught me how to steal a man's pocketbook under his very eyes, and yet he would not know about it. My, that man was shrewd. The devil was working. "What an easy way to make money," I thought.

Another inmate of my cell was a forger. When they caught him and opened his suitcase, he had eight hundred or more blank checks. He could write my name better than I could myself. He got a hold on me. The temptations he threw before me gripped me like a vice. We planned how we would easily get rich once out of jail.

I met many other criminals. I must not mention all of them here. Two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon, the prisoners were turned out of the cells, and allowed to exercise in what was known as the "bull-pen." No one seemed to mind, very much, about being a prisoner. There is a fascination about it, when thrown together, which I can neither explain or describe.

I was in the jail awaiting orders from the police of another state. My father worked hard to get me out on bond, and he finally succeeded.

Once out of jail, the freedom of God's open world broke upon me, and the thoughts of jail were hideous. I did not want to go to the penitentiary.

I jumped my bond. My father lost all the money. I was gone. Until I was converted I lived as a fugitive from justice, hunted by the police. Of course, I changed my name.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 15 -- IN ARKANSAS

I left Chicago. I laid plans to evade the police. It was no fun to be a fugitive. Every time I saw a man looking at me, I thought I was a "goner." It gets on a fellow's conscience.

I planned a trip to New Orleans. I bought a ticket to St. Louis. From St. Louis I went to Memphis. In Memphis I met a young man who knew all about the Mississippi River.

I tried to hire out as a cotton-picker. Prospective employees looked at me out of suspicious eyes. I surely did not look like one who could make much headway in the cotton fields.

The young fellow I met did not have any money, but he said he could board a river steamer and go to New Orleans, steerage, for a few dollars, provided we relayed the trip.

I did not relish the idea of steerage because one time on the Pacific Coast I went from Seattle to Frisco, second-class, and it was pretty raw. But after meditation I thought steerage was the best way for a fugitive to travel.

It cost a dollar a ticket from Memphis to Arkansas City, Arkansas. We boarded the "Kate Adams," and were soon steaming down the river. We had to buy what we got to eat from the little lunch-grand on the boat, and we slept on the bales of cotton, with one eye open. The "roust-about" would steal everything they could.

From Arkansas City it was my intention to take the "Sadie Lee," another river packet, and on her go to Vicksburg, Mississippi, and thence to New Orleans.

After a long and eventful trip on the river, during which time I learned much about the great Mississippi, one evening about six we arrived at Arkansas City.

I can now see the great nose of the "Kate Adams" sticking itself into the levee, and the pilot giving orders to tie the ropes.

The first thing I did was to size up everybody and try to ascertain if any "cops" were looking for me. I thought back of every mustache or beard was a detective. But no one bothered me, and we found a hotel where we could stay that night.

When supper was over, I made my way to the newspaper office. It was only a country weekly, but being a newspaperman I wanted to see it. I found a little woman in the office. I said, "Where is the boss?" She smiled and replied, "I'm the boss." I told her I was a printer, and looking for a job. "You're just the man I want," she exclaimed.

It happened that the editor and manager of the paper had died a few months previously. This little woman was the owner now. She had been unable to find a satisfactory man to manage the plant. After a long interview, she finally agreed to employ me as editor and business manager.

The remuneration was not as much as I had earned on other papers, but I had never been an editor, and the offer tickled my vanity, and I accepted. So it was that when the next edition of the Arkansas City Democrat came out, above the editorial column appeared my new name, "Blane Hunt Wendell, Editor."

The first editorial was a salutatory telling about the new editor. It was a novelty to have a city man running a country weekly, and from the start I made a "hit."

**It was not long before I was known all over the state. Other papers often quoted from "my paper." In a few months I was a member of the Arkansas Press Association and correspondent for the Arkansas Gazette at Little Rock, and for the Commercial-Appeal at Memphis, Tennessee.**

**I worked diligently for the first few months. The paper took on new growth, circulation increased, advertising revived, and job-work was more plentiful. Indeed, the people received me royally, even though I was a Northerner in a Southern town.**

**From the time I left Chicago I knew I could not write home. The first place the police try to trace a fugitive is in the post office. I refrained from writing. For months and months my dear mother did not know where I was.**

**\* \* \* \* \***

## **16 -- IN BAD COMPANY AGAIN**

**I think Arkansas City, Arkansas, is the best place in the world. It was there I found the Christ. Hallelujah! Arkansas City, Arkansas, is an old town. It is a river town. The main street runs parallel with the levee. The population then was about fifteen hundred, with two blacks to one white.**

**It is the county seat of Desha County. Sin of every kind abounded there, but some of the best people I have ever known lived in Arkansas City. The colored people respected the whites in the typical Southern way. I liked that river town. It was a great place to me.**

**For the first few months I was busy on the paper, and I was very cautious. As a consequence I was on my good behavior. However, that yearning was still gnawing in my heart, and I began to get dissatisfied. It was the same dissatisfaction I experienced in New York City.**

**I looked for excitement. I found it in gambling and dissipating. My good resolutions collapsed, and it was not long before I was worse than I ever was. It was nothing unusual to sit upon night, gambling and dissipating. I got into pretty bad company, although I can truthfully say some of those "bad" people had hearts as big as buckets. (What powers their could be for God.)**

**I was elected manager of the baseball team. Our big games were on Sundays. We ran in excursions and had "great times." Some of the church people objected to the desecration of the Sabbath, but in a debate I argued and won for recreation on Sunday. After I was converted I took my own arguments and knocked them to smithereens.**



Four churches were located in that town: Methodist South, Episcopalian, Baptist, and Catholic. None of them flourished in any high degree. I knew most of the members, and was not especially struck with any spiritual avalanche.

Always in The Democrat I inserted church notices. The Methodist Church had the only active pastor. He used to come to the office and talk to me.

He was a little man in stature. His name was J. B. Sims (at the time I write, 1917, he is pastor at Mena, Arkansas). I learned to love him. He would talk to me, but I argued against him, and he would get pretty well tangled up. Any fool can ask a lot of questions which a wise man cannot answer. I was the "fool."

But he was patient. Always when he left me, he would leave a trail behind him. And that trail seemed to say, "That Methodist preacher has got what your heart is searching for."

I was better educated than he. I had more money. I had traveled more. But he had something I did not have. After every talk, he would leave me a better man, but I would not then have admitted it for gold.

He was aiming at my conversion. I know he prayed for me. He thought I could be something if I were a Christian. He reasoned if I could organize a gambling game, or manage a Sunday baseball team, and run a paper -- what could I do for God, if consecrated. He was a "little" man -- but yet how "big."

I do not remember that he ever asked me to accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour. Doubtless this is where he made a mistake. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

It has been my practice to come right out and ask people to accept Jesus.

Time went on. I was getting worse. I was reckless and less cautious. Sin was having full course with me. I cannot record the things I did.

That yearning never left my heart. I was searching for something which the world could not give. I tried to drown it in drink and sin -- but my conscience stood true to truth and to God and to mother's prayers. The feeling always returned with added force.

I never will know why I did not lose my position. The work was more or less neglected. God had a purpose in it all. The "boss" -- that little woman, I believe, prayed for me, too.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 17 -- A REVIVAL MEETING

One day my preacher friend came into the office and told me they were planning to hold a "protracted meeting" in his church. He wanted to know if I would give him an extra write-up in The Democrat, and also print him some six-by-nine dodgers. Of course, I accommodated him. I liked him, and when I liked a person I did anything I could for them.

The thought of a revival meeting in Arkansas City tickled me. I do not remember exactly what I told the Rev. Mr. Sims, but I know I sneered at his plans. "Going to paint the town red with religion?" I asked. "Going to try," he replied, with a smile. It was that smile which always got a hold on me.

The services were to begin on the following Monday night. The Evangelist, who was a pastor in Warren, a little town not many miles away, was to arrive at noon on Monday.

I had studied the psychology of a weekly newspaper, and I knew the best way to boom the paper was to pad it with locals. I met all the trains in order to get all the news.

I was at the noon train on Monday when the Evangelist arrived. I looked him over from head to foot. I took his name and asked a few questions. He looked to me like any other ordinary human being, I had conceived an idea that he must be a sort of superhuman fellow to come into that town and try to get people "converted."

When the reverend gentlemen, J. B. Sims and W. C. Watson, left the depot they were discussing me. Sims was telling the Evangelist, "Wendell ought to be saved."

I thought nothing more about the meeting except as a matter of news for my paper. Of course, I realized they were tackling a hard proposition if they expected to infuse much religion into the people of that town. I was carnal, and I could not discern spiritual things. God was still on the throne, but I did not know anything about Him.

I was not at the service the first night. No one expected me to be there. But I did walk by the building and look through the window. There were no more than a dozen people present. I felt sorry for them. But they did not need my sympathy.

Those preachers believed in prayer, and God blessed them for it. They were serving a God who would hear and answer their petitions.

Prayer-lists were circulated. Strange enough, my name was on the first line. They were interested in me. Mother was praying back yonder in Chicago. She had been praying for years, and now those people prayed for me.

**Oh, the power of prayer! I was then ignorant of the power, but in these years since I have been saved, God has revealed wonderful things to me.**

**\* \* \* \* \***

## **18 -- GO TO CHURCH FOR FIRST TIME**

**The morning after the first night I began to get invitations to go to church. Some invited me personally, some called me on the phone, and some sent a note through the post office. It was real funny to me at first, and then it began to get me hot under the collar. "Why are they picking on me?" I thought.**

**I had no more intention of going to church than I had of jumping over the moon. But yet I had a great desire to go. I thought maybe it would help me get away from that yearning which kept burning in my soul. I had searched for many years to find that which would satisfy. Could it be found in that little church which stood so modestly on the corner?**

**I was in the congregation that night. How did it come about? Don't ask me. I cannot tell. My feet took me there -- that's all I know. I went late, and I sat away back near the door. I was determined if anyone came and talked religion to me I would get up and "beat" it. (I have "cut out" slang since I have been converted. Get me, Steve?)**

**The sermon went home. My! how did he know so much about me? He told of the great love of God and the awfulness of sin which makes for misery, unhappiness, dissatisfaction, and damnation. He said in plain language that one could be happy in Christ Jesus, and all their sins would be blotted out. He did not mean me. How could he? He did not know my sins. He did not know I was a criminal -- a fugitive from justice. He did not know I was living under an assumed name.**

**But listen to what he said! "It does not matter how bad you are or have been. If you have raked in the very kennels of hell, God will save you, if you surrender to Him."**

**At the close of the sermon, the preacher gave an invitation to the sin-sick to come forward and accept Jesus as Personal Saviour. I arose -- and left the church.**

**I was mad and bitter. My little preacher friend had watched me closely throughout the service. His eyes had in them that "something" for which I was searching.**

**I did not go to my room in the hotel. I went out into the night, and gambled till the daylight came. I tried to sleep that morning. I could not. I was possessed with a**

**grouch which was cruel. Some guinea-hens in a yard near by were making their hideous noise. I cursed them.**

**I was miserable that day. Someone reminded me of my being at church. It brought up the temper. Oh, how can I tell how bitter I was.**

**I was invited back to the service that night. My answers were cutting and showed the grossest kind of manners. I swore I would never go to that church again. I meant it. I would not go.**

**\* \* \* \* \***

## **19 -- GO TO CHURCH FOR SECOND TIME**

**When the first bell of the little church rang at 7 o'clock, I felt something pulling me to the service. When the second bell rang at 7:30, I found my feet taking me in the direction of that church. I had vowed I should not go again -- but I went.**

**Services began a little late. I sat a few seats nearer the front. I was mad at myself for going, and I wanted to get up and dart out of the door -- but I could not do so.**

**Suddenly, it seemed, a lady arose from the choir. She came down the aisle and stopped where I was sitting.**

**"Mr. Wendell, we want you to come up in the choir and help us sing. Will you come?"**

**"What!" I exclaimed, surprised. I spoke out loud and all heard me.**

**I couldn't sing. But I accepted her invitation and in a few moments had my place in the choir, back of the pulpit.**

**Why did they ask me? They knew I was a sinner. They knew all the bad things I was doing. Why did they ask me? Well, mother was praying for me back yonder in Chicago and they had my name on the top of their prayer-lists. Why did they ask me to sing in that choir? God was working. That is all I know.**

**After the song service in which I had helped, Rev. Mr. Watson began to preach. He seemed to put more energy into his sermon this night. I listened.**

**The more I listened, the more I realized the sermon was directed at me. I thought I was the only one in the world whom that sermon could hit. If his sermon the first night struck me, this one bombarded me. And there was no getting away.**

I was a wretched sinner, doomed and damned. Why had I been so mean? God was showing me the awfulness of sin, and was opening up hell and damnation to me.

No, I was not afraid. It was not fear. I was disgusted with myself. Look what I had done, when I could have lived for God and for truth. Was there any forgiveness for a sinner like me? The preacher, in his sermon, said there was, but I could not believe.

He was again extending his invitation for sinners to get right with God. I was in the the choir and could not leave the church.

I did not want to go away. I wanted to accept that invitation, but I did not think he meant me. I did not have the courage to step out, and no one said a word. No -- he could not mean me; I had gone down too low.

The meeting was over. My heart was broken. I wanted to be something, but it was too late. Hurriedly I left the church. I went immediately to my room. But I could not sleep. I tossed and turned, and twisted. It was a long, miserable night.

I had very little to say the next morning. It was a morbid curiosity which possessed me. I cannot tell what passed through my mind. But of one thing I was certain. I would never return to the church.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 20 -- THE SINNER CONVERTED

All day long I was in a wretched state of mind. The devil told me to forget my foolishness, and go out and have a good time. I was tempted to dissipate, but something kept me from it.

I was continually asking myself: "Could I be forgiven?" I knew if I had the least desire to get right with God I must be willing to go back and face the criminal charge which hung over me. Could I do it? Yes, I was willing. In fact, the penitentiary had no horrors to equal the misery I was suffering.

And then one sweet, sweet thought flooded my heart which was heaven itself to me. The thought was this, perhaps I could find in that little church what my heart had yearned for all those years. It was peace.

As usual, I was invited to the services. Sometimes I was glad for the invitation; other times I was maddened.

I did not know what I should do. But I was in the church before the second bell rang, and was again asked to sing in the choir. Both the preachers heartily greeted me as if I were somebody. I could not look them in the face.

The singing was over, the preaching began. What a wonderful message it was. Oh, I wanted to be right with God. Sin was losing its fascination for me. But the devil kept saying: "It is not for you. You are past redemption."

The sermon was driven into my heart with pile-driver effects. It searched me through and through. The Evangelist told a story which did its work in my heart. He said, in effect:

"A noted preacher was holding a meeting in a certain college. Nearly all the young men gave their hearts to God. One big fellow whom the preacher hoped to win, could not be persuaded.

"He was captain of the football team, and an all-round athlete. He was, in fact, the hero of the campus. One night the evangelist went to this young man's room and asked him why he did not accept Jesus Christ and live for God. For a few moments the big football player hung his head, and then he said, 'Because I haven't got the moral courage.'"

That was all I heard of the story. It was enough. I wanted to accept Jesus Christ, but I was not brave enough to do so. Yes, I was a coward. I had a yellow streak. And the yellow streak was mastering me.

The preacher, Rev. Mr. Watson, was giving the invitation. "Come to Jesus. Publicly confess Him and own Him Lord and Master of your life." Some stepped out and fell down at the altar. I did not think he meant me. No one said a word about my soul. It seemed no one cared. I wanted to accept that invitation. It burned its way into my heart. An invitation to dine with the President would not have been so fascinating. But he did not mean me, so I thought.

We were singing that beautiful song, "Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling." I had a great lump in my throat, and tears were in my eyes. "He doesn't mean me -- he doesn't mean me!" My heart was crushed. If some one would speak to me I would go. If I could be sure God's mercy was for me. (Some people do not like to be spoken to; I wanted a personal invitation.)

We were singing the last verse. The meeting would soon be closed and I would not be saved. The idea sent daggers to my heart.

Hallelujah! Rev. Mr. Watson turned to me. "What about you, Wendell?"

"I'll go," I cried. I dropped my song-book, left the choir, and was soon on my knees, crying out to God. It was a prayer, mingled with ignorance and sincerity, "Oh, God, if you can save a fellow like me, I'm willing." He did.

No one may be able to understand, but it all happened instantly. I was there. I know. It seemed I had been bound, hand and foot, with great chains. They fell to the floor, and I was free! free! free! My sins were washed away. I knew it. The assurance came. Happy -- Oh, I thought my heart would burst with joy. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!! Hallelujah!!!

I felt I could fly. I was sure I was so light since the burden left that I could have walked on eggs and not have broken a one. Glory to God! I was saved!

"There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner who repents." There was joy in my heart and there was joy in that church.

I made a testimony. I told the people, whose faces were shining, that God had saved me, and I purposed from that moment to make my life count for God. I was sincere.

My conversion occurred on the 17th day of October, 1912, at fifteen minutes after nine. I was then 26.

Before retiring I knelt at my bedside and prayed. It was my first real prayer. How sweet it was -- just like honey! If there were no other joys in the Christian life other than communion with God in prayer, it would pay to be a Christian.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 21 -- DAY AFTER CONVERSION

I awoke in the morning with the bright sun streaming in at my window. I had a smile on my face, and the great peace in my heart. I could hardly believe it was true. A whole night had passed and I still had salvation. My logical mind began to work. "If you can have it for a night," I reasoned, "you can have it forever." How true that is.

I got down on my knees, and in a prayer, again mingled with ignorance and sincerity, I asked God to keep me that day. And I was just trustful enough to believe He would.

I dressed and went into the dining-room. Instead of the usual grouch I had a smile and a cheery "good-morning" for everybody. The waitress looked at me in wonderment.

Well, I started for the printing office. The Democrat was located on the front street which ran parallel with the Mississippi River and the levee. I walked on top of the levee.

I had seen the mighty Mississippi many times, but this morning it was a new river. It came down singing and prancing gleefully, and what do you suppose were the words of its song? These, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

I noticed the sky, and it was different. In the beautiful white clouds I could spell out the letters, "H-a-l-l-e-l-u-j-a-h!" My heart responded to what my eyes saw, and I said aloud, "Hallelujah!" Oh, I was happy!

The trees were fresher and greener, and the birds were singing the same song which flooded my heart, "Hallelujah!"

Over in the field where the guinea-hens were (the same which had caused me many times to lose my patience and to utter oaths) -- well, to be honest, that morning they made sweet music. And the music was "Hallelujah music."

I arrived at the printing office. Mrs. Allen, the lady who owned it, and the colored boy who worked for us, were both there. Mrs. Allen was setting "straight matter," while the boy was sweeping the floor.

They knew immediately something had happened to me (and that's the beauty of salvation, isn't it? -- folks can tell it). They looked at me in strange astonishment.

To this day I have always thought that they thought I had been out gambling all night and won two or three hundred in gold. (The truth is, there had been many nights I had stayed up all night playing stud-poker in one of the dives of the town.)

But I had won more than a few hundred dollars in gold. I had won a new heart from Jesus Christ, and no one in this world can win a better prize. Hallelujah to God! Praise His Holy Name!

I soon told them the reason for the great change in me. Mrs. Allen was glad (she had once been a sincere Christian; was familiar with the Bible, but was then in a backslidden condition). The colored boy seemed to take my experience as a huge joke. A broad smile spread over his dark face.

From that moment I began to live my new life. The river had not changed; nor the trees; nor the guinea-hens. My heart had changed.

Oh, God, I thank Thee for having given to me that which is of infinite more worth than mountains of gold. Amen!



\* \* \* \* \*

## **22 -- A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST**

**No one could ever make me believe the Bible is not true. I believe in the verbal inspiration of the Sacred Book. I know it is true because of what it claims will happen in a life when Jesus comes into the heart.**

**Second Corinthians five seventeen says: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."**

**Bless God for that verse, and bless God for the experience in my life. I was a new creature. I was a man all made over.**

**I looked at my hands; they were new hands. Never again would they convey a glass of liquor to my lips; never again would they shuffle a deck of cards; never again would they take a thing which did not belong to me; never again would they roll or hold a cigarette, a pipe, or a cigar.**

**I looked at my feet; they were new feet. Never again would they take me into a saloon; never again would they take me into a gambling den, or a house of ill-fame, or any place where I could not take Jesus with me! I put my tongue between my teeth and slightly bit it. It was a new tongue. God helping, no more lies would come from it; no more cursing; no more malicious gossiping; no more filthy stories.**

**I winked my eyes; they were new eyes. Never again would they look upon an obscene picture, or read an immoral story, or look after a woman to lust, or read a trashy novel.**

**I put my hand over my heart and felt it beat. It was a new heart. Never again would it beat for Satan, but would beat for Jesus and His cause.**

**I was a new creation. What I once loved, I hated; what I hated, I loved.**

**This part of my changed life was instantaneous. I know we grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. And I am growing (how much and how fast, God knows best). But instantly, I was a new creation.**

**And so, what the Word of God says will happen, did happen in my life. "Old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new."**

**I know it is not the best literary style to end every chapter with "hallelujah," but I must this one.**

**Here it is, HALLELUJAH, with capital letters.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## 23 -- A LETTER TO MOTHER

When I awoke to God's love, I awoke to my mother's love. Call it sentiment if you will, but it seems to me a mother is more than human. My dear mother began to pray for me the moment she was converted, and for thirteen years she continued.

What faith! But she never grew weary, impatient, or faint-hearted. She believed God.

With tears in my eyes I had told her of my crime. With a brave heart she saw two detectives (large men in stature) take me away to jail. How she felt when she learned I had forfeited my bond and skipped the country, God alone knows.

"When I think of mother it is only a step to Calvary" someone has written. It is not so hard for me to understand this now. Mother never thought of my sins or my crimes. She thought only of what I could be if Jesus came into my heart.

And so she prayed. Tenaciously she held on to God. A mother who knows how to "pray through" is the greatest power for good in this world.

Just as soon as I was saved I wanted to write home and tell it. I knew it was taking fearful chances. My letter might fall into the hands of the police -- then what?

I was saved, but the devil made me doubt God's protecting care. I did write the letter, but I boarded a train, and mailed it from another town, a hundred miles distant. I was afraid to post it from Arkansas City.

It seemed Uncle Sam had prepared a special tube to bring me an answer. It came in two days. It was strange and almost ghastly to get a letter from home addressed "Blane Hunt Wendell."

I tore open the envelope with trembling fingers. It was my mother's handwriting. Yes -- I still have that letter; I shall always keep it.

"My Dear Clement:

"I am so thankful to God because He saved you. Praise His Name forever! He alone knows the awful hours I have gone through. Every day my heart was breaking, but I kept on praying. You will never know the anguish and pain your sins have caused me.

"When I did not know where you were for all these months, all I could do was to pray. Sometimes I would go out at nights, and look up into the sky and see the

stars and moon. Then I would say, 'Oh God, the same stars and the same moon are above my boy wherever he is. Won't you find him and save him, Jesus?'

"And He has. Oh, I knew He would. . . . And now, my boy, trust God. Keep humble. Do not get puffed up."

"From Your Mamma."

How many times have I read that precious letter? The angels may have kept the count. I have not. I know it is a sacred letter to me. It lifts me up out of myself. It makes me resolve new things for God and mother. May God bless all Christian mothers, and if there are any who are not Christians, may He save them.

Pray on, mother, God will yet hear your cry for that son, for that daughter!

\* \* \* \* \*

## 24 -- THE CALL TO PREACH

The Bible gives some wonderful accounts of the ways by which men were called into the active work of the ministry. And I have heard and read of the startling calls which came to ministers and evangelists, but my call to preach came in a simple way. It was simultaneous with my conversion -- or, I had better say, immediately following my conversion.

In the strange new joy which was flooding my soul, my heart went out to the thousands and thousands who did not have the sweet peace which I had found by accepting Jesus and turning from my sins.

My first thought was, "Everybody the world over is searching for this marvelous happiness." I had been searching for it a goodly number of years and found it in such a simple way.

I tried to recall all the gamblers I knew; the men and women on the stage; the men in the newspaper offices where I had worked. My mind went back to the newsboys, the messenger-boys, the bootblacks, the bell-hops -- all of them were searching for that which permanently satisfies the cravings of the soul.

"How will they ever know about Jesus?" I asked myself. Someone said to me very plainly, "You go and tell them of Jesus." I was startled.

I looked about. There was no one near me. I had heard the voice in my heart. It was the Master Himself speaking to me.

"Yes, Jesus," I answered. "You have done it for me; you can do it for others. I'll preach -- anywhere, everywhere."

It was a definite call to me. Added to my already wonderful joy, something surged through me that made me tremble with ecstasy. How can I explain it? I cannot. It passeth understanding.

Unlike many others of whom I had heard, I did not run away from the call. Rather I ran to it.

I remember the next day when the Evil One tried to make me doubt my call for definite Christian work (he told me my past sins were too black; that I might be forgiven but I could never preach), I found myself praying this prayer:

"O Jesus, if you have not called me to preach, won't you call me. I want to help others to know Thee."

He gave the answer. It was unmistakable. Since then I have never doubted. God helping me, I shall devote my entire life to the work of telling the sweet story about Jesus.

"O for a thousand tongues to sing,  
My great Redeemer's praise;  
The glories of my God and King,  
The triumphs of His grace."

And so it was that an erstwhile newsboy, bootblack, bell-hop and an actor became a preacher.

I was called of God to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A higher commission can come to no man.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 25 -- THE LICENSE TO PREACH

About five weeks after my conversion, I received a license to preach. I had read the Bible during every possible spare moment, and I remembered nearly everything I read. Many nights I spent long hours over the Book. Also, I asked many questions from nearly everybody.

My experience on the stage and as a newspaper man and writer, gave me an advantage over many who start out to preach.

This is how I procured my license. I left Arkansas City at noon, and remained a couple of hours in McGehee, at which place my pastor, J. B. Sims, prompted me on the Discipline.

From McGehee I went to Monticello, and with my heart in my mouth, but with trust in the same Jesus who saved me, I went before the Examining Board. They asked me many questions, but, praise God, most of them had to do with my conversion. I was sure of that glorious experience.

Before I knew it they had written out and handed to me the following license:

"Local Preacher's License. The bearer hereof, Blane Hunt Wendell, having been duly recommended by the Quarterly Conference of Arkansas City Circuit, and having been examined, as the Discipline directs, by a committee of the District Conference of Monticello District of the Little Rock Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is hereby authorized to preach the Gospel, according to the rules and regulations of said Church. Signed in behalf of said District Conference. R. W. McKay, President. M. B. Corrigan, Secretary. Date, November 30, 1912."

Why did I not give them my correct name? I do not know. It would have been better -- far better, as I afterward learned.

Yes, I was converted. I was a new man. But many things there were which I did not know. I had many rough corners on me, and they had to be smoothed away. Even today as I write -- nearly five years since the above experience -- I am praying, "Take off the rough edges, Jesus."

I was proud of my license. I told about it everywhere. I let many look at it with their own eyes. Being a newspaper man I was able to gather some publicity for what I had done. It was published all over the State of Arkansas where I was well known among the journalists. Some editors made favorable editorial mention of the "converted editor," while others took occasion to be sarcastic.

A paper in Hot Springs had a black headline which read, "Lays Down Pen to Take Up Pulpit." And then followed such a glowing account of my magnetic personality and special gifts that I began to swell up. I remembered my dear mother's advice, "Don't get puffed up," and I went to God in prayer. I have had to do the same thing many times since.

Well, I preached at every opportunity. Sometimes in a church, many times on the street, in stores, in homes, in pool-rooms -- every place. I had learned the great secret -- one person constitutes a congregation.

In subsequent chapters will be recorded the details of getting back to my right name.

\* \* \* \* \*

Everybody in town knew I was saved. It spread like wild-fire. "Ye editor had got religion." Hardly a mouth in town that did not repeat that sentence. (Someone nick-named me "Ye Editor," and so I was called.)

"How does it feel to get religion?" some would sneeringly ask. I always told them it felt mighty good, and it did. Hallelujah!

Others would say, "Pray for me; I want to go crazy too." Yes, they thought I was crazy. I told them if I was crazy I had a good Keeper (Jesus) and a good asylum to go to some day (Heaven).

Instead of shaking my faith, every sneering remark made me stronger for Jesus and more determined to serve Him. I used every opportunity to speak for the Master. I did not know much about God or about the Bible, but I did know I was gloriously transformed.

"Ain't you going to play poker any more?" some would ask. "Nothing doing," I answered. "Christians don't have anything to do with cards." And that's true.

"What about Sunday baseball?" "I'm done with it," I returned.

I was manager of the team. I was the one who argued in defence of Sunday baseball. All the people in town knew it, and now they ridiculed me. But, as I have said, I could take the arguments I used for Sunday baseball and knock them all to smithereens.

Many times I was "cussed out" by some half-intoxicated person. Time and time again they offered me cigarettes and would purposely blow the smoke in my face. I had smoked for years, but when Jesus came into my heart I quit. Tobacco has never touched my lips since.

From a child I was possessed with a fierce temper. They called me "bull-headed." I was. I would fight at the least provocation. But now with Jesus in my life that fighting spirit was gone.

I remember one day I was in the barbershop. The barber was cursing in every sentence. I asked him if he could not have respect for others if he had none for himself. He flew off the handle. He called me and my mother everything under the sun that was vile.

"You blankety-blank sissy; think you can come around with your sissy ways, profess religion, and then want to run everybody. For half a cent I'd punch your \_\_\_ face."

I did not care what he called me, but the names he called my dear mother hurt. I felt the old flesh in me coming up, and I was getting hot under the collar. My! I did want to whip that barber.

Then a voice seemed to whisper, "Be careful; remember you are a Christian now." Then I breathed a mighty prayer to God. All the others in the barber-shop were waiting expectantly to see what would happen. They all thought it was a strain on my religion to hear vile things said of my mother.

One man remarked, "Religion may be all right, but you can be religious and grow in grace by punching the face of a coward who curses your mother!"

You see I had some friends. In fact, most all who sneered, down deep in their hearts they admired me for the stand I was taking in a town where I had been the ring-leader of meanness.

In my prayer I said very quickly, "God, let Jesus assert Himself in my heart now, or there will be trouble here in this shop." The barber held his razor in his hand and was glaring at me with eyes popping out of their sockets.

In a sweet and controlled voice, I spoke: "Bud, my mother is a lady. She is a sweet Christian woman. Those names you called her are not true. Therefore you have lied, and by lying you have become a liar. I am a Christian. I became one when Jesus saved me. If I am a Christian I am high above a liar, and if I were to fight with a liar I would have to lower myself to his level. That I will not do. I forgive you for what you have said, and I shall pray for you."

I turned about and quietly left the barbershop.

The persecutions never ceased as long as I remained in Arkansas City. It was a delight of many to get me into a crowd and then begin to tell a dirty story. I would always dart away, and then a great laugh would ring out. But I knew every time I left and the crowd laughed, I was preaching a great sermon for Jesus Christ.

One man, whom I had not seen for a long while, came to me and said:

"Wendell, they tell me you don't drink any more." I told him I did not. "And you don't smoke, or play cards, or dance, or go out with the girls?" I was glad to tell him all he had heard was true. "All you do, they say, is to go to Church and Sunday-school, and prayer-meeting, and read the Bible, and talk about your Jesus."

"Yes, sir, Tom. Every word you have said is true."

"Well, tell me, Wendell" -- a smile was spreading across his face -- "what kind of a man are you?"

**"I am a Christian man; Tom. A man after God's own heart. A man who is sorry for all his sins; a man who is thankful to God for having been forgiven. In fact, Tom, I am a real man now. Before my conversion I was only an imitation man -- just like you, Tom."**

**I wheeled and left. The crowd laughed at Tom.**

**\* \* \* \* \***

## **27 -- ON WAY TO SEMINARY**

**I had a great burning in my heart to be a preacher. I knew I must go to school and study. I loved God and I wanted to get all the knowledge I could. I talked of my ambition to Presiding Elder R. W. McKay. We sat on the levee and watched the river, and I opened up my heart to him. He said there were many schools, but Vanderbilt was a Methodist University, and many a strong man had received the foundation for his life work in Wesley Hall.**

**I entered into correspondence with Dean Tillett, and, although it was unusual, I made arrangements to enter at the beginning of the third term.**

**I had about two hundred dollars in money and a large diamond stud, valued at about two hundred dollars. I knew that was not enough. I prayed about the matter of money, and God wonderfully answered my prayer.**

**I am not permitted to tell who gave me the money, but a certain lady gave me outright \$350.00. She extracted a promise from me that I should never divulge her name. She had faith in my change and wanted to be instrumental in educating one man at least for the ministry. I asked her why she was so much interested, and this is her confession:**

**"Years ago, when I was young, God called me to be a missionary, but I would not listen to His call. I have not had the joy of God since my rejection of the call. I am too old now to go as a missionary, but I want to make some reparation by helping someone to take up the active work for God."**

**I accepted the money because I believed God directed.**

**The third term began in March. I had been in Arkansas now nearly two years, and before leaving I was advised to go to Hot Springs, and take a course of baths. The purpose of this was to get rid of any malaria which might be in my system.**

**I had been in Hot Springs before my conversion. I trembled when I got off the train, for I knew sin was in the great resort. However, I believed God would keep me. I remembered the wonderful verse in First Corinthians 10:13, where Paul says: "God will provide a way of escape for every temptation."**



I went to one of the leading hotels for the first night. I was sorely tempted before I had my grip unpacked. The colored maid noticed that I was, a young man (and I guess I did not -- or do not now -- look like a preacher), and she immediately took it upon herself to inform an immoral woman on the same floor of my arrival.

Before I knew it this attractive woman of sin was in my room. But, glory to God, "He did provide a way of escape." I was frightened until the perspiration stood out on my forehead and I shook like a leaf. I was tempted beyond description. The devil, it seemed, used all his power on me. But Jesus broke the power. A few months before I would not have rejected the woman's advances, but now it was different. "I was a new man in Christ Jesus."

I left the hotel to get my supper. While walking up the street I noticed a big sign on a street car. It read, "Minges Meetings at Christian Church." I breathed a prayer of thankfulness. I would go to the church immediately after eating supper.

When I arrived at the church where Evangelist Minges was preaching, I found it quite crowded. A young man at the door was very cordial. I proudly told him I was a local preacher in the Methodist Church.

He said, "Come and I'll introduce you to another Methodist preacher." He led the way to the front of the church and introduced me to David B. Bulkley, pastor of the Malvern Ave. M. E. Church, South.

He gripped my heart the same time he gripped my hand. God had led me to him. I soon told him the story of my conversion -- I told it every time I could -- and saw his heart was warmed. He asked me where I was staying while in Hot Springs. I told him at the hotel, but was ashamed to tell him of my awful temptation an hour or two before.

I had intended to remain in Hot Springs only a couple of weeks. But God had other plans. My new friend -- I have always called him Brother Bulkley -- invited me to visit with him in the parsonage while I was in the city. He lived alone with his beautiful mother, and had plenty of room for me.

I felt it was an imposition, but I accepted. And for six weeks -- possibly the most helpful weeks of my life -- I lived with that man of God. With him I had my first lesson in serving God Almighty. He walked with God, and he was a mighty man in prayer. His home was a heaven to me.

During those blessed six weeks I learned things which will be helpful to me through this life and throughout eternity.

Now, as I write, tears are in my eyes. How wonderfully God had led me. It is all so clear now.

**I praise Him from my heart, and I must say "Hallelujah!"**

**\* \* \* \* \***

## **28 -- WINNING THE FIRST SOUL**

**In these years since I have given my heart and service to God, He has permitted me many times of having the great joy of winning souls for him. But the first soul is the one I want to tell about. It has meant much to me.**

**In the Minges meetings I had the opportunity of testifying for Jesus. A woman was impressed with my testimony. She came to me after the service and introduced herself. She was a beautiful woman, whose name I now have forgotten; but she was the president of the Florence Crittenden Home for fallen women, which was located in Hot Springs.**

**She asked me if I would not come out and lead a prayer-meeting in the home. I was made nervous at the very thought, but I consented. I had promised God previously that I would avail myself of every opportunity to work for Him.**

**I went to the home. The parlor was full of people, many of whom were inmates. I do not recall what I talked about, but I do know I told of what God's grace had done for me.**

**While I was talking one of the girls who had wandered from God and was in the home because of her sins, began to shriek and scream. It frightened me and all the others. She was led from the room. All of us thought she had suffered pain, and it had caused her strange actions.**

**To my surprise, but to my great and abounding joy, I afterward learned she had given her heart to God, and when the burden left her soul, she cried out with joy and not pain.**

**In heaven I shall see that woman, and we can talk over the meeting which I held at the Florence Crittenden Home.**

**\* \* \* \* \***

## **29 -- ENTER VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**

**Leaving Hot Springs -- and it was mighty hard to say good-bye to my friend, Brother Bulkley -- I arrived in due time in Nashville, Tennessee. The first night I stayed in a hotel. I cannot tell you what was in my heart. I had many, many times spent nights in the biggest hotels, but it was all so different now. In the morning I**

was to look up Dean Tillett, and enter a theological seminary and prepare myself for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I found a Gideon Bible on the stand. God bless the Gideons! I picked it up and read several chapters. Then I knelt in prayer, and jumped into bed, dreaming about the time when I could preach and persuade men and women, boys and girls, to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

Bright and early I made my way to the University campus. I inquired my way to Wesley Hall, and was soon mounting the flight of stone steps leading into the large building. I found Dean Tillett's office, and was soon in conversation with him.

At first he did not see how I could enter the Seminary. I had no schooling. (I had gone only to the seventh grade in common school.) I told him I had read and studied very much by correspondence, and I had been in the newspaper business and magazine work, and had been an actor.

After some thought, he decided to accept me as a student and give me a chance. I entered under the name of Blane Hunt Wendell, and it never occurred to me I was doing anything wrong or dishonest.

In the catalogues of the University for 1913 and 1914 my name is so printed.

I became a member and officer in one of the literary societies, and again my name is so recorded. I was elected to act as representative of the first year class in Wesley Hall of the Annual, called the Commodore. My picture is in the 1914 edition and under it the name of Blane Hunt Wendell.

Why did I do all this? I do not know, except I did not trust God or did not have the light. It would doubtless have been better if I had given my correct name.

I have read some place the following words. They have helped me: "The spiritually blinded man does not, upon conversion, receive clearness of vision, but is in a perturbed state wherein he 'sees men as trees walking.' The regenerated soul does not step out of gross darkness directly into the full light of truth. On the contrary, the path of the justified man is rather 'as the light of dawn, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.'"

The latter phrase is from Proverbs. I would not advise anyone to pursue the course I did. I can truthfully say I have learned many things since my conversion. I can look back over my mistakes, but I try to forget them, except to profit, and use them as stepping stones to something better for God.

Did I get along with the other young men, in the way of studies? Yes. They had college degrees and had been to the schools practically all their lives. But God has given me a quick mind, and I had the colors of black and blue earned in the

great school of experience, and then I had a burning in my heart for the things of God. I learned. I stood high in my classes. So high that it caused Dean Tillett to marvel. I wasted no time, but studied, studied, studied, and asked the great God who saved me for wisdom, and He gave it.

I do not want to be unfair to anyone in this book of my experience, but to be true to my convictions I must note this sad fact. Wesley Hall, when I was a student, taught destructive criticism. The Bible, the Book I loved and revered, they taught me was a man-made book; that we must approach it in study the same as we would any other book of literature.

But praise God, the Book had a hold on me that could not be shaken. I attended the classes, but they never made me believe the Bible was other than the very Word of God. I did believe, and I now believe, in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

I kept my soul fed and grew in grace by constant devotion to the Book and prayer. I always prayed out loud in my room, and many times other students would tell me they stood outside my door and listened, sometimes with tears in their eyes. They would give anything, they said, for my faith and earnestness.

I am speaking the truth when I say many of the boys who were my fellow-students left Vanderbilt University not believing the Bible or its account about the Virgin Birth, or the miracles Jesus wrought.

While in the seminary every Saturday night a number of the spiritual boys would go down in the slums of Nashville and preach and sing and testify. God blessed us with many souls and much good.

Some of the students were above street preaching, but I was not. Glory to God. We stood on a corner right in the red-light district, and sang Gospel songs. How many hearts of young men we touched God alone knows. Sometimes we were permitted to go into houses of ill-fame and hold a prayermeeting. It was a blessed work, and it kept my soul on fire. Working for Jesus in soulwinning is the best way to keep the heart right with God.

W. E. Hawkins, a consecrated young man, a class-mate, was a source of great help to me, and I shall never, never forget him. God bless you, Sunshine Bill!

\* \* \* \* \*

### 30 -- GIVING UP ASSUMED NAME

This is a hard chapter to write. There are so many things involved that I fear I shall be misunderstood. I am especially asking the guidance of the Holy Spirit as I write.

I have already stated that I dropped my real name of "Linn" and took to myself the name of "Blane Hunt Wendell," all because of my sins. I was a fugitive from justice. I had evaded the law, and the police were searching the country for me.

I have not thought it wisdom in this volume to tell of my crimes or my jail experience. Suffice it to say, when I jumped my bond and fled from justice, I assumed an alias name so as to render my capture more difficult.

When I went to the altar and asked God to save me, I promised Him I would make the crooked paths straight just as soon as I could. I was converted, but the devil made me fear the terror of a penitentiary sentence.

However, I did promise God I would go and serve my sentence in the penitentiary if it were His will; but I never believed it was. And to this day, I believe in my heart, God kept me from [immediately] going to the authorities and saying, "Here I am."

I was licensed to preach under my assumed name; my bank-book, my insurance, and everything I possessed, was in that name.

I matriculated in Vanderbilt University under the name of Wendell; I preached and held meetings, and everybody knew me as "B. H. Wendell."

Gradually I received light. And there came a day when God said, "Go, make it all right."

The first person I confessed to was my room-mate, Rufus Rose, whose home is in Covington, Tennessee. We were bosom friends. We slept together, ate together, worked together, and prayed together.

Strange to relate, he was so startled by my revelation that it seemed he became suspicious. It hurt me very much, and I was tempted by the evil one to say nothing to anyone else. Yet I could not bear the thought (since I received the light) of longer masquerading under an assumed name.

The next person I went to with my confession was Dr. Carter, professor of Greek, in Wesley Hall. He was very kind and told me there were many worse things which I could have done. We had prayer together, but somehow he did not help me much in planning a way out of my difficulty.

Dean W. F. Tillett was the head of the Seminary, but somehow I could not muster courage enough to go to him. I thought he would send me away from the University as an impostor, and as I was learning so many things and had made so many friends, it would have broken my heart to have been expelled.

But I did go to Dr. Carre, professor of Biblical literature, and he, in a fatherly way, advised me to go to Dean Tillett with a full confession. I made an engagement with him, and at the appointed time, with my heart swelling in my throat, I told him all.

Dear old man, he was lovely to me. He advised me to be patient, and at the end of the term I could make a full statement to the student-body, and during my vacation go back and face the charges and indictments which were against me.

My heart was now more at ease. I kept myself in constant communion with God, and asked if there be a way to escape jail sentence that He open it up for me.

I did not wait until the end of the term. I would go around to the different rooms in Wesley Hall, and make individual confessions. All the boys were kind to me.

I wanted my license changed. I procured a letter from Dean Tillett, and then wrote out a full confession myself, and sent it to Rev. R. M. McKay, the presiding elder. He is a man of God. He told me he was sorry I had waited so long, but they had licensed the man and not the name, so he simply erased the name of "Blane Hunt Wendell" and inserted "C. H. Linn."

I also wrote to Rev. J. B. Sims, who was my pastor when I was converted, and to my friend D. B. Bulkley, whom I met in Hot Springs, but who was at that time in Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.

Sidney R. Anderson, now missionary in China, was student-manager of Wesley Hall. I had told him my story. About a month before the term closed, when most of the students were in the dining-room, Mr. Anderson, according to arrangements, arose and said, "Mr. Wendell has an announcement to make. Let every one be quiet while he speaks."

With a prayer in my heart to God for help, I arose, and said:

"Let me announce that from this moment Blane Hunt Wendell is dead and C. H. Linn is resurrected in his place." And then I made the explanation which I thought was necessary.

From that time I have been living under my right name. To say a great burden had rolled away from my heart is to put it lightly. God says he will "keep us from falling," and will "provide a way of escape," and how well He does what He promises.

I was converted; I was restored to my right name; but there was another burden over me. I was still a fugitive from justice. It might be necessary to spend long years in the penitentiary. Even then I could say, "Hallelujah!"

\* \* \* \* \*

### 31 -- FIRST TRIP HOME

From the moment I was converted I wanted to see my mother. And I wanted her to see me. I was changed. But for several reasons I did not go home until after I had been in the University for quite a while.

The main reason was this: The police were looking for me, and some way God had revealed in my heart that it was not yet the proper time to give myself up. Another reason: It cost considerable money to make the round trip and I was not possessed of any too much of the "filthy lucre."

But now in the providence of God the time was ripe. I boarded a train at Nashville one night, and awoke in Chicago the next morning. Mother knew I was coming, but not the exact hour. I left the train at LaSalle Street Station, boarded a car on Van Buren Street, and went west to 2500.

Was I frightened to be in Chicago? Yes. I am honest about it. I thought every moment a detective would grab me and say, "At last we have you, Linn." But that was not God's plan.

I arrived at the home of mother who lived on Jackson Boulevard. I rang the bell with a trembling hand. My heart was beating loudly, and my eyes I know were filled with an expectancy unusual to them.

I heard some steps on the stairs. "O, they are mother's steps," my heart cried out, while tears came into my eyes. She opened the door. My precious mother, who had prayed for me for thirteen years.

"My boy," she cried, and would have embraced me.

"Don't, mother. Not now." A second's pause seemed an eternity.

"Mother, I cannot come into your home, your arms, your heart, until I ask you to forgive me for all my sins against you. Forgive me, my mother, for I am sorry -- sorry."

Did that mother of mine keep me waiting at the door until I went through a long string of prayers, and promises, and did penance? No! Instantly she forgave and I was in her arms -- and she kissed me.

I say she kissed me on my lips. My mother did. Yes, they were new lips. They had been cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus. He -- Jesus -- does His work well. My lips were clean.

Why did my mother forgive me? It is simple -- just as simple as the Gospel, and yet so deep and unfathomable. She forgave me instantly because I asked and because she loved.

And that is what God had done. It is what He will do for anyone. Forgive because the sinner asks and because He loves.

Do not ask me to explain, or even try to explain, the feast which followed when mother and her saved boy were alone with God. We talked, we cried, we prayed. Do not misunderstand me. It was a "Hallelujah time!"

I saw the gray hairs in her head. Yes, they glowed with God's love. I, because of my prodigality, helped put them there. I saw her hollow cheeks and the new wrinkles in her beautiful face. They, too, shone forth with great love. And I saw that indescribable, wonderful love in her eyes.

They said: "How happy I am, my boy. You're Saved. We shall be in eternity -- heaven -- forever, because of Jesus. Is it not wonderful?"

Then I sobbed. I thought my heart would truly break.

Why? Because it came to me that the greatest desire of my mother's heart -- the burden of her life -- the yearning and longing of her soul -- was to have me give myself to God and accept Jesus as my personal Saviour.

And for all those years I had denied to her that which would make her heart happy.

If I could have given her a lump of gold worth a million, it could not have done for her heart what my conversion had done.

Between her sobs she whispered: "I would rather have you be a Christian and walk with God than to be President of the United States."

Like many other boys I always believed I loved my mother. But I did not. I could not have so denied her aching heart had I really loved her.

God has forgiven me, and mother has forgiven me, but I can never forgive myself. I shall suffer the awful remorse and regret forever.\*

[\*No, if he remained true to God, that remorse forever ended at the time of his home-going to be with Jesus. -- DVM]



And so it is that God has given me boldness to tell boys and girls that they do not love their mother in any real sense unless they have accepted Jesus and are Christians.

"Oh, God, definitely anoint me with Thy Spirit to always possess this boldness."

\* \* \* \* \*

## 32 -- MOTHER HEARS FIRST SERMON

In what I have thus far written not much has been said of my father. In one line let me say this: Since his conversion to Jesus Christ he has been a true father to me.

The one person I wanted to see, outside of my own family, was my dear friend, Brother Bulkley, who had been so kind and generous to me in Hot Springs, Arkansas. He was now in Chicago, attending the Moody Bible Institute. He was also student-pastor of the Mayfair Congregational Church, located but a few miles from Chicago. He invited me to preach for him. I accepted, and my mother and father were overjoyed.

It was New Years' eve, 1913. They were to have Watch Night, with preaching first on the program. A large crowd was present. My sermon was called "The Tempting Tempter." And he is. How well I knew it then; and how well I know it now.

My father, as I have said, is a demonstrative man. My mother calm and quiet - her emotion is in her heart. All during my sermon father kept saying, "Amen!" "Praise God!" My mother never took her eyes off me, even when they filled with tears.

God helped me preach. I had freedom.

Because of my experience on the stage and in newspaper work, writing and traveling, I have a popular vein which I cannot refrain from striking. I sent home God's truth, but the hurt was taken off. I tried to cut with a sharp knife, rather than a rugged one.

When I had finished my father was sure I was the best and biggest preacher in the world and he had no hesitancy in telling me of my "cleverness." He is just that sort.

Mother never said a word. Many said pretty things, and Brother Bulkley warmly congratulated me. I was anxious to hear from my dear mother. And I strained my ears, but to no avail.

Was she not pleased? What could be the matter? I knew her eyes shone with approbation, and each tear that had rolled down her cheeks spoke louder than words. But I wanted words. All other compliments could not make up for words of encouragement from mother.

We left the church and boarded the street car, bound for home. We had turned the seats in the car so we sat facing one another. For a long while mother had nothing to say. It was torturing suspense to me. Then suddenly she spoke up:

"My boy, you were just born to be a preacher."

Her words started my tears and her tears flowing anew. How much like God were her words. She forgot the past years of sin; of heartaches, of troubled days. She remembered only the present and the future. "I was born to be a preacher."

God had done the same thing. It is the promise of His Word. He forgot and forgave all my sins. They were buried in the depths of the sea. They were removed from me as far as the east is from the west. They were under the blood, and God cannot see sins through Jesus' blood.

Do you wonder, then, when I say, all I am I owe to my dear mother.

Hallelujah to God for Christian mothers! And God save the mothers who are not Christians.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 33 -- FACE PENITENTIARY CHARGE

I cannot tell all. I do not feel led to do so. I shall tell enough to show how wonderfully God works. I was a fugitive from justice. I had committed a crime. I was guilty. I do not deny these facts.

In my studies in sociology I was especially interested in the subject of "Crime and Punishment," under Professor Dyer of Vanderbilt. While we studied, none of the boys ever suspected there was a criminal in their midst. Neither did it occur to them when they found me so interested in all discussions. Part of the work was practical, and I had to visit the penitentiary located in Nashville. Later I taught a Sunday-school in that penitentiary, and I knew that perhaps in a few months I would be an inmate of a similar institution.

The theory of punishment, I learned, was reformation. I made much of that. Why? Because I had reformed. Then why should I serve a term in a penal institution?

**But I was depending more upon God. From the first I prayed very definitely about my crime. I told God I was ready to go back and be imprisoned if it were His will, but I always put in this provision, "Lord, you must let me preach and write religious articles if I go to jail."**

**Mother at home was praying. And she has power with God. All my loved ones who were Christians prayed, and many friends prayed. And God was working.**

**When I was determined to face it all my father went to a lawyer in Chicago. (I refrain from giving his name.) When he heard the details, he said he would not take the case because a man who had done what I did deserved to suffer.**

**"But he is converted now," my father said. How mysteriously God lays His plans. Those words changed the lawyer. He was not a Christian man, but he now became interested. He asked many questions, and said he would start work immediately. It was all in answer to prayer. His expense would not be very much, and he would personally go to the State and the city where the indictment was made.**

**My father said the lawyer laughed when he heard I was in the seminary studying to be a preacher. "The last place in the world the police would look for him." I can see how it would make one smile.**

**The attorney entered into correspondence with the officials and the parties interested. After much planning, and concessions had been made for a money consideration, it was arranged to settle the case.**

**This was very unusual. The case was against the State. The extreme penalty was ten years imprisonment and a fine. The parties concerned could not have withdrawn without the sanction of the State.**

**There is no use explaining. It was purely of God. No one could understand. Not even the officials. I knew. Mother knew. Those who had prayed knew. It was a clever piece of work. But the lawyer would take no credit to himself. "Beyond me," he said. "You're free. The indictment has been squashed. That's about all I know."**

**But before this occurred there was an ordeal and a test for me. I had to go back to the State with my attorney. And we were not sure what the outcome would be. We distrusted those who had made concessions so readily and I was afraid to trust God.**

**So many details. Better stop now. All through those days this verse was ever in my mind, "To live is Christ; to die is gain."**

**I was no longer a fugitive. Think of the burden which was lifted. I am sure I ought to say "Hallelujah!"**

\* \* \* \* \*

## 34 -- ENTER MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE

Well, the old score was all settled -- I mean I had done all in my power to make the crooked paths straight. No one who sins can altogether alleviate the pain and undo the wrong.\*

[\*I believe the author is saying here that there are some wrongs which simply cannot be made right after one is converted -- because the one wronged is no longer living, or because something else makes restitution or restoration to the wronged one impossible. In such cases, God does not require of a penitent and converted person that which cannot be done, and 2 Corinthians 8:12 applies: -- "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." This is far different from intentionally ignoring and omitting to make a restitution and restoration of things that can, and must be done. -- DVM]

But I had faced the past. I had not covered up anything. There is a great sorrow in my heart for my sins, but I am endeavoring to take the Apostle Paul's advice, "Forgetting the things which are behind." I believe in my heart no one can be genuinely saved unless they go back and make everything right as far as it is in their power to do so.

I have been criticized and misrepresented and misjudged since my conversion to Christ. Some say I am a fraud; others a grafter, and some say I played the coward to get out of my trouble. "Why don't you face it like a man?" is hurled at me. I did my very best. If there is anything more I can do, I shall be glad to do it.

If any I have wronged -- and there are many -- should chance to read these lines, I say to them, "I am sorry, as God is my judge." More than that I cannot be. I shall live the remainder of my life so as to prove my sincerity. I have repented, God knows it. And I believe that repentance without reparation is wasted.

I have said in previous chapters I was called to preach. The devil many times discouraged me, and I was about to give up. But in every instance in prayer I would hear the Still Small Voice, and it ever bade me do the will of God.

I had heard many good reports about the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. I learned the only text-book they used was the Bible. I was tired of learning about the Bible. I wanted to study the book.

To enroll as a student in the Institute one must have good references. Would they take me? I began to pray about it. I asked God to open up the way.

While in the Pacific Garden Rescue Mission one night, I met a young man who was a student at the Institute. I told him of my ambition. He said he would hand my name in at the Fellowship Meeting and have them pray for me. They believe in praying through at Moody's.

So when I went before Rev. Howard W. Pope, who was superintendent of men at that time, and lay the facts of my conversion before him, he was somewhat startled, but said he would take the matter before the Faculty. In a few days I had a letter from him, in which I was notified I had been accepted as a student. I entered the Institute in September, 1914.

I studied much and learned rapidly. I loved to go about in Rescue Missions and on street corners, in shops and in hospitals, in jails and churches, and do Christian work. One of the best features of the course in Moody for me was the practical work.

Rev. W. W. Ketchum was in charge of this department. He soon learned of my experience and would assign me to different pulpits to tell my story. The same story I am recording in this book.

While thus a student I engaged in four evangelistic campaigns. They were in the following places: Methodist Church, Diamond Lake, Illinois; St. Paul Congregational Church, Onward Presbyterian Church, and the Asbury M. E. Church, all in Chicago. God blessed mightily in each meeting.

How marvelous it all is. A sinner -- a deep, deep sinner -- saved by grace, now preaching the Gospel of Jesus. I was sincere; everybody knew it. That is what counts. But why should I not be? God had worked a miracle in my life. Praise His name!

I am sure I have been called to be an Evangelist. All who know me confirm this call. God puts His seal of approval on it, as is manifested in all meetings I have conducted.

But as my student days grew to a close at Moody, I felt led to accept a pastorate. I wanted that experience. It would help me as an Evangelist. It would give me a sympathy with and for the pastor which I would not possess otherwise.

I listed my name in the Extension Department at Moody. And I prayed God to provide. He has never failed. One day while in a missionary class, I received a call to go to Mr. Buckalew's office. I did so. A committee was there from Monona, Iowa. They were seeking a pastor for their church. I was interviewed. I told the truth. Hallelujah for that.

"We'll give you a chance," they said, after due deliberation. A date was set when I should go to Monona and preach a trial sermon. If the people liked me, they

would call me for their pastor. I took it to God in prayer. I did everything. I had learned to trust Him. He proved Himself. He was absolutely dependable.

"Hallelujah" is a good way to end this chapter.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 35 -- CALL TO PASTORATE

The day came for me to go to Monona and preach my trial sermon. I left Chicago Saturday night and arrived in Monona at 2:30 a.m. A member of the church met me, and escorted me to the home where I was to be entertained. It was a strange home. Everybody was in bed. I was directed to my room, and that was all. Oh, I was lonesome. I wanted to scream and run. I was a stranger in a strange home, in a strange town, on a strange mission. The devil worked mightily. He always does; but he seemed to concentrate all his forces upon me at that time.

I was to arise the next morning, go downstairs to breakfast, and meet the people. I do not believe I was bashful, but that seemed an ordeal I could not face. But it was more than that. In the morning I was to stand in a strange pulpit and preach a trial sermon. I did not think I could do it. The thought sent pains to my heart. All of this, I now know, was the devil's work. No one but God will ever know how near I came to taking my suitcase and stealing silently out of that home. But the Blessed Saviour came to my rescue. I opened my suitcase to get my nightshirt. My hand fell upon my Bible. I picked it up, and with tears in my eyes I prayed: "Lord, show Thyself to Thy servant. Give me a verse which will comfort my heart and prepare me for the morrow."

I opened the precious Book. If all the people in the world had been there to comfort me, their combined words could not have done for me what that single verse did. It was the first one my eyes fell upon as I opened the Book. It was God's voice.

I read from Matthew 10:20, "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Not another fear entered my mind. I knelt and had sweet prayer, and then jumped into bed, not to awaken until time to arise in the morning.

When I went downstairs I was met by a motherly woman who made things pleasant for me. I went to the church at Sunday-school time and was asked to teach a class. In this God gave me freedom.

Then I was in the pulpit, every eye upon me. How little and unworthy I did feel. A thousand thoughts passed through my mind. I managed to get through two songs and the Lord's prayer, and then after reading the Scripture lesson, I asked all to bow for the morning prayer. After my second or third sentence I knew I was

breaking down. I was sure I could not utter another word. Like a flash the verse came to me -- the same one God gave me before retiring early that morning. It was better than a tonic. Instantly I was all right. I prayed in the Spirit of God. Isn't He good? "His mercy endureth forever and ever."

The subject of my sermon was "The Garden of Love."\* [\*This is the name of another publication by C. H. Jack Linn published in 1921, which I have purchased online, and which I hope to later receive, digitize, and publish in the HDM Library with this book. -- DVM] I am still preaching the same sermon. Galatians 5:22 and 23 was my text. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." I likened the fruits unto flowers that grew in a garden. The garden was called love and the heart was the garden-bed.

Well, I think I never preached better. I was depending entirely upon God. I told Him I had failed in my own strength and that He must speak through me. He did. Hallelujah!

At night I preached an evangelistic sermon, entitled, "Drifting Away From God," from the text, "How shall you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" I tried to tell of the awfulness of rejecting Jesus Christ and the terrors of judgment. I am sure God was in the service. The attention was undivided and conviction was written upon many faces.

A business meeting was announced to be held immediately after the night service, at which the congregation would consider my candidacy. When we had sung the closing hymn and the benediction was pronounced, I went from the church, and walked up and down the street. I wondered what they would do with me. Would they call me to be their pastor, or would they inform me I was not just the man they wanted.

The devil was busy. He was working hard in my heart. But I kept saying to God, "Thy will be done. Whatever the decision is, O God, let me receive it as direct from Thee!" When I was asked to come into the church my heart was in a condition before God where I could have received a "no" as well as a "yes."

As I stepped through the door every eye beamed upon me. I could tell by the expressions upon the faces what the decision had been. The one who acted as Moderator said: "You have been unanimously called to be pastor of this church. Will you accept?" I was positive God's hand had arranged every detail, and so I quickly answered, "Yes, I will, if you let me preach God's Word as it is found in the Bible."

There was no objection. And that was all. I was to be a pastor. I believe in my heart if I could have had the liberty of choosing a place, I could not have done nearly so well as God did. They say it is half the battle to be content with one's work. I was content. I was as happy as a canary bird in the sunshine.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **36 -- ORDAINED AS MINISTER**

**"I was as a wonder to the people." And I was a wonder to myself. I was a pastor of a church -- a real church to which people belonged. They paid me a salary for being their pastor. Just think of it! A few years before in jail, a fugitive, a sinner, a blasphemer -- and now a pastor of a church dedicated to God.**

**It amazes me as I write. But God is wonderful. "His ways are past finding out."**

**God blessed me in Monona. I was working for Jesus. Making friends for the Saviour was my business. I hit sin hard, and held up the One Altogether Lovely and the One who is a Saviour to the Uttermost.**

**From the beginning of my ministry I wanted to be ordained. The very thought of ordination meant much to me. The church at Monona was a member of the Northeastern Association of Congregational Churches. About a month after I accepted the pastorate I attended the fall meeting of the Association at Shell Rock and was licensed to preach.**

**One of the examiners who had heard of my testimony in which I said, "I was only a sinner saved by grace," wanted to know if I had done anything that would bring reproach upon the ministry of Jesus Christ. I told him -- and I say it today -- all my sins are under the blood, and God has called me to preach.**

**In the Spring meeting, which was held at Earlville, Iowa, on April 10, 1916, I was ordained.**

**To be ordained in the Congregational Church is no easy matter, so they say. But God took care of it for me. The examination is held in public before all the people. The candidate must give a statement of his religious experience, and answer questions as directed by the committee. I was glad of the opportunity to tell of my conversion. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." I did.**

**Many questions, some of which I thought were very unfair, were hurled at me. God gave me a ready answer, and in nearly every instance I answered by Scriptures. "The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit."**

**After I had gone through the "third degree," for that was what it seemed, one last question must be answered. One of the best-known pastors in the Association said, "Brother Linn, if we ordain you what are you going to preach about?" There seemed to be a bit of sarcasm in his tones. Without any hesitancy I replied, "Jesus Christ." That was all. But it is my prayer to God that I shall always preach Jesus**



**Christ. He saves. The true and the beautiful do not. Social service may have its place, but it can never be substituted for the Gospel.**

**It takes the Word of God, the Gospel, to convict. What is the Gospel? Paul answers in 1 Cor. 15:3-4, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."**

**I was asked to retire from the church while the members of the Association voted. It was a favorable vote. And so I was ordained. Praise God. Rev. H. E. Parr, of Waterloo, gave me the charge; Rev. H. F. Milligan of Dubuque, made the ordination prayer; Roy. Walter Metcalf of Cedar Falls, gave me right hand of fellowship.**

**The following is my certificate of ordination:**

**"To the Churches and Ministers of Christ. Greeting: This is to certify that at a regular meeting of the Northeastern Association of the Congregational Churches held at Earlville, Iowa, April 10 and 11, 1916, Rev. C. H. Linn was duly examined as to his fitness for the Gospel Ministry, and his examination was by vote sustained. The Association thereupon appointed a committee to conduct the formal services of ordination.**

**"In accordance with the foregoing instructions, the candidate was duly ordained by the laying on of hands at the meeting of the Association, April 11. Rev. C. H. Linn is hereby commended to the churches and ministers of Christ. John F. Childress, Moderator. C. E. Cushman, Scribe."**

**And so my heart says, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."**

**\* \* \* \* \***

### **37 -- AS AN EVANGELIST**

**I was pastor at Monona from August 29, 1915, to October 8, 1916. During that year the Lord gave me much to do. I faithfully preached Jesus and Him crucified, and He gave me souls. I believe during that year fifty were added to the church, and for the first time in the history of the church all moneys were raised and paid.**

**Many were the mistakes I made. But God knows they were mistakes of the head and not of the heart.**

**Friends were raised up in Monona, and I cannot say anything which would adequately describe my feeling for the people in that little town, the scene of my first pastorate. They were noble.**

**There were plenty of enemies. Always will there be when the pure Gospel is preached in simplicity. But I am forgetting and forgiving enemies and thinking of friends.**

**Monona shall ever be a garden spot of my heart because of the beautiful friends.**

**A day came when Jesus spoke to me in a definite way, and I was asked to go into evangelistic work. It was not an easy matter to resign. Many people cried, and some begged me to stay. I told them, however, that it was God's leading. He must have right of way.**

**At the end of the fiscal year a business meeting was held. I was again called as pastor, but I felt led by God to decline.**

**Here is a statement the church gave me:**

**"Monona, Iowa, Sept. 20, 1916. Rev. C. H. Linn was invited to continue his pastorate with the Congregational Church of this place, by unanimous vote with an increase in salary. The decision made known to the church was that after much thought and prayer on the matter, he concluded he was led to the evangelistic work as the field where he could be most useful.**

**"In his work with us, the evangelistic work has received special emphasis. While sincerely regretting the loss of our pastor, we, as members of this church, desire to express our belief in the fitness of Mr. Linn for his chosen work.**

**"May God's blessing attend him in his field of labor. Etta E. Fonda, Clerk of Monona Congregational Church. This statement adopted by unanimous vote."**

**I am an Evangelist. Paul was one; Timothy was one, and so was Philip, and many, many others.**

**While writing this I am now in Georgetown, a little town in Indiana. It is a union meeting. The United Brethren, the Methodist and the Christian churches co-operating. God is giving us His seal of approval. Yesterday, February 25, twenty-seven precious souls were saved.**

**Here endeth the story of "Hallelujah Jack" as far as this book is concerned. May the story of this twice-born man never end until he, the man, can say with Paul:**

**"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."**

**"Hallelujah Jack" shouts "Hallelujah!"**

**\* \* \* \* \***

**THE END**