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KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN OUTLAW TRANSFORMED

By Charles Little Wireman
("Bulldog Charlie")

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[This publication contains the story of the marvelous conversion of "Bulldog Charlie" and
the account of his call to preach and early work in the ministry.]

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COMMENTS

"He is a Son of Thunder and the Beacon of the mountains. --Dr. W. B. Godbey.

"Wireman is a wild man, but we need some wild men." --H. C. Morrison.

"There is none like him in all the world." --Bud Robinson.

"He has the greatest moral courage of any man I have ever seen or read about since I read
about Daniel in the lion's den and the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace." --Seth C. Rees.

"He is one of the best known and the most fearless defenders of the truth in our nation."
--Rev. A. L. Vess.

"Every church in the Wesleyan Methodist connection should have him for a revival
meeting." --Dr. Roy S. Nicholson.

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INTRODUCTION

It gives us a peculiar sense of pleasure to introduce to the many who will read this booklet, one of the most notable and noble characters we have ever met. The Rev. Charlie L. Wireman was born and reared in the Kentucky mountains where fearless courage was the most coveted quality of character, though often blighted by hate and revenge. Having heard the charming story of Rev. Wireman's life, we, with many others, have often insisted that he put this unequalled story in print, which is being done herewith.

As you read these fascinating pages you will be moved again and again with mixed and mingled emotions all the way from laughter to tears. You will behold, both the depth and degradation of sin over against God's marvelous infinite transforming grace. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the fearless Romans expresses the true character of this notable man when he said, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

As you trace this life story from the childhood of this noble man, up and down through the years, midst great sin, trials and conflicts, you will be impressed by the unpretentious humility and noble simplicity of this unusual character. Any spirit that would magnify, or seek to aggrandize the writer, will be conspicuous for its absence. However, those acquainted with true history will again be faced with the fact, that from among the hills and mountains of old Kentucky and other parts of the Southland, have come some of the keenest minds and greatest men of our nation. Among them are leading preachers, writers, musicians, artists, singers, financiers and world renowned statesmen and orators.

But it was only by the grace of God that Rev. Wireman emerged from the mountains of Kentucky and a life of terrible sin, to become one of the leading preachers and evangelists of the Holiness Movement. If the ministers of the glorious gospel everywhere would follow the example and emulate his fearless but tender spirit in preaching, the historic tendency of all denominations to finally drift back to the world and compromise with sin, would be reversed into a tide of love and loyalty to truth that would sweep us onward and ever upward toward truth and righteousness. Then let those who read these pages be both rebuked and inspired to "defend the faith once delivered to the saints" in love without fear. "And when they saw their boldness, they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

Now let us all here begin to read one of the most fascinating and inspiring stories known to the religious world in this generation.

Arthur L. Vess, President
Southern Wesleyan Bible College

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FOREWORD

This blood curdling challenging book written by the noted "Bull Dog" Charlie Wireman of the Wesleyan Methodist Church is enough to make one's hair stand on end. His marvelous and, we might say, miraculous conversion, under the powerful, pungent preaching, of the tireless and

unterrified Tom Roberts, called "Night Hawk Tom" marks an event in the annals of twice-born men. It is a thrilling story how "Night Hawk Tom" won "Bull Dog Charlie."

Rev. Andrew Johnson, D.D., Ph.D.

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PART I

Kentucky has long been known as, "The dark and bloody ground," and has been called, "The Fighting State," since the days of Indian fighting by the celebrated Daniel Boone and others.

Until a few years ago there was an abandoned log cabin standing on the east bank of the Tug river, near the mouth of Peter Creek, in the mountain country of West Virginia where it abuts on Kentucky. The cabin was far gone in decay. Its ridgepole was broken and the roof gone in decay. But in one of its rooms, above the crumbling stone fireplace, was a gaudy lithograph which read:

THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE OUR HOME

And underneath in the crude scrawl of a mountaineer, was written:

LEASTWISE THIS SIDE OF HELL

That cabin was once the home of Devil Anse Hatfield, the pappy of the feuding Hatfields, the leader of one side of the most celebrated mountain vendetta in the history of this nation.

As far back as 1856 they were hunting one another with rifles and revolvers, and their doings for the next half century became a matter of national interest and comment.

It all started over a couple of hogs. Pretty worthless hogs they were, too. Long legged, lean bellied, crooked snouted animals of the type known in the mountain as razorbacks, they would not have brought much money in any livestock market. But hogs were hogs in the mountains, and as a result of these two porkers, men bushwhacked each other for half a century or more and many died, both men and women.

The Hatfields lived in West Virginia, and just across the line resided the McCoys. They were neighbors, living according to the patriarchal habit of the mountaineers. The head of the Hatfield clan was Capt. Anderson (Devil Anse) Hatfield, born 1839, died 1921, whose wife was Levicy Chafin, and the leader of his opposition was Randolph (Rand'l) McCoy, patriarch of the Kentucky Feudists.

Rand'l refused to surrender the critters and Hawg Floyd took the case to court. It was heard by Matt Hatfield, justice of the peace, who promptly awarded them to his kinsman. At this the McCoys set up an indignant uproar charging that the decision was biased. That started the feud.

In reprisal Jim and Bud McCoy and Frank Phillips killed two of the Hatfield clan--Mose Christian and Selkirk Hatfield.

Devil Anse led a gang of his kinsmen to attack the house of old Rand'l McCoy, the "he-coon" himself. It was a double cabin, with Rand'l and Calvin McCoy sleeping in one side, old Mammy McCoy, Rose Ann, her son Jonce, and Allaphare sleeping in the other.

The Hatfields broke into the women's wing and shot Allaphare. They beat Mammy into unconsciousness.

Meantime old Rand'l and Calvin McCoy had been putting up a good fight. Calvin shot Ellison Mounts-- the illegitimate son of Deacon Ellison Hatfield-- through an arm but was himself killed when he broke for freedom in his shirttail.

Chivalrous Kentuckians resented the Hatfield attack, not because of what happened to the men but because of the killing of the girl and the beating of Mammy McCoy. From the mountains a crowd of them went into West Virginia. Uncle Jim Vance and Cap Hatfield were sighted. Cap ran but Uncle Jim stood his ground, and Phillips shot the top of his head off.

DREADFUL LOVE FEAST

In 1882, for once, the Hatfields and McCoys united in a common cause. Tom Stafford was running for justice of the peace in Kentucky, and the McCoys were for him. Stafford had married one of Devil Anse's daughters, and so the Hatfields were for him, too.

The night after election, Stafford held what he planned to be a love feast. The trouble was that he mixed his liquor. Three forms of stimulant were regarded with favor in that community--the pure distillation of corn, the hardened juice of the apple, and fermented blackberry wine.

Talbot McCoy and Elias Hatfield, son of old Hawg Floyd, started the argument. When the smoke had cleared away, Talbot exhibited a cut which nearly circled his head, and Deacon Ellison Hatfield was dying with stab wounds and a bullet hole through his lungs.

The deacon was a hardy mountaineer, prized for his preaching, as well as for other activities, but even he could not survive such wounds as he had suffered. He died in the night, and the next day the Hatfields seized three McCoys--Talbot, Farmer and Rand'l, Jr., a boy of 11 led them over into West Virginia, and shot them to death.

From that time on Hatfields and McCoys ambushed each other all over the hills. It was a real war. With collateral relatives, each side could muster about 100 men.

The Hatfields seemed to get rather the better of it at first. Cap and Jonce, sons of Devil Anse, waylaid John and Hense Scott and Sam McCoy. They wounded but did not kill the Scott boys. Then the McCoys were told of another raid by the Hatfields and the Hatfields blamed Bill Daniels for the tip-off. They went to Daniel's cabin and whipped his wife and another woman.

Shortly afterwards, Jeff McCoy, by some oversight, got on the wrong side of the river; Cap and Jonce Hatfield and Tom Wallace found him. Jeff did some fancy running and dodging, but after missing two shots Cap got the range and killed him. Cap was quite put out about these two shots he missed.

HOW MANY WERE KILLED

Time was, and not in the too remote past, when the name Hatfield or McCoy showed in newspaper headlines there was the immediate question, "How many were killed?"

We have known Hatfields and McCoy's since earliest childhood. Mixed with these were the Hargis, Callahan, Marcum, Ball, Mason, Taylor, Powers, Tolivers and Martins. Each had a side with the McCoy-Hatfield contestants or had a nice feud of their own.

Often we have thought of those ancient feuds. There was a time when they were not confined to the mountains but reached down into the Bluegrass country. But mountain or Bluegrass they were fought the same way. There would be a case of ambush. After that there would be a meeting between members of opposite clans when they would shoot, or cut out, their differences.

WHAT ARE FEUDS?

These were feuds. Feuds, says Mr. Webster, are "inveterate strife between families, clans and the like." We have read so much in Eastern and Northern papers as to our feuds that we rather boast the definition of Mr. Webster. "Inveterate strife"--not the killings of dope-ridden gangsters. Clean killings where it was expected that for each there must be an equivalent settlement. Feuds, if you will, where the accurate marksman was at a premium. Where "fighting talk" resulted in a fight and not in a gang massacre. Now they are about over and there is a reason--many reasons.

Let the first credit for stilling the rifle crack of the feud families go to "Uncle Ben" Biggerstaff. A circuit riding minister of the gospel. A veteran of Morgan's regiment during the War Between the States. He had seen enough of killing and useless murder. He rode the creek beds and climbed the ridges to preach a gospel of peace to those who had inherited the belief that judgments in their own affairs were strictly their own affairs.

Following "Uncle Ben" was dramatic and courageous Edward O. Guerrand, another circuit rider. Another who had ridden the weary miles with Morgan's Legionnaires. A little man with the force of a giant. Dramatic, inspired, brilliant, he might have gone to the greatest churches in the land. Instead he went into the footsteps of "Uncle Ben." Where they went was the wildest of the mountain country. They went to "shoot-in' matches" where they outdid the mountaineers. They talked the mountain language. They built a faith in themselves which was followed by a faith in what they taught.

They were followed by J. J. Dickey, J. W. West, T. P. Roberts, Sister O'Conner, Sister McConel, and Brother and Sister Blanchard of our own Zion Hill in Bloody Breathitt County.

There is not enough of praise for these. These men and women led lonely lives at first and were not kindly received. They fought off ignorance. They fought off disease. They plodded the valleys and the hills. They gave of themselves. They have no reward except knowing that their native kindness has joined with the mighty efforts of "Uncle Ben" Biggerstaff and "Dr. Guerrand." Ignorance no longer controls mountain lives. Disease is defeated by their ministrations. The McCoy's and Hatfield's play games together. There is balm in Gilead!

BALM IN GILEAD

I was born in Wolfe County, Ky., on the unlucky day (13) of the windy month, March, 1890, the beginning of the "Gay Nineties." The place of my birth was about eighteen miles, as the crow flies, from where our Zion's Hill Mission is now located in "bloody Breathitt" County, Ky.

A number of my relatives were shot down and died with their boots on. My parents were typical mountaineers and of course I was a typical mountain boy, and a boy will the "teen" age in that part in those days was looked upon as a sissy if he did not own and carry a pistol. We mountain boys cared nothing for Washington or Lincoln, or men of like character; we admired bad men, and the one who had the most notches in his pistol handle, denoting the number of men he had made bite the dust, was our hero and the man, in our ignorance, we longed to be like. I had three cousins killed in cold blood and that feud spirit entered my heart when a small boy, until I fairly hated any one who bore the name of those murderers. The "bottle" was passed to old and young alike, and I was a confirmed drunkard at an early age. I suffered hell on earth with delirium tremens for four days at a time while yet in my teens. My left shoulder is lower than my right yet, caused by a heavy pistol on it in a strap holster as I grew up.

People everywhere in that section made moon-shine whiskey and of course I indulged both in the illicit manufacture and sale of the "mountain dew." I eventually got so low as to become a deputy sheriff. This position was so dangerous that respectful men who valued their lives would not serve. The high sheriff of the county was compelled to resort to cutthroats etc., for deputies. I finally went so low and became so steeped in drunken debauchery, I was fired off the job. I then turned outlaw, run a loose joint, gambling den, etc., in open violation of the law. I had engaged in many bloody gun battles seeing some of my fellow men shot down around me. By this time I only weighed 118 pounds and it looked as if my time was short even if I escaped the wrath of my enemies.

About this time after prayer was offered in the entire town in every home except one, they began a revival in the old Methodist Church. They decided if they could only get the "bad man" of the town converted it would mean the salvation of many others so they entered into a covenant of prayer for the "bad man" and PRAYER CHANGED THINGS. They prayed me under a nightmare of conviction for sin, prayed me into the church, then to the mourner's bench, and in seven days helped me to pray through to victory.

Let me say that back in the vineclad mountains of old Kentucky in that dark bloody ground are "Diamonds in the Rough" and through the veins of those rugged mountaineers flows the purest Anglo Saxon blood to be found in the American Continent, and I pray for them daily. The devil said to me when I was called to preach there was no place in the ministry, or demand for poor

unlettered, ignorant mountaineers; nevertheless for years no grass has grown under my feet. I have preached in every state and in Canada and old Mexico. I have engaged in more than 500 revivals and camp meetings and have seen more than 25,000 pray through at the mourner's bench. Amen!

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PART II

First of all I would like to disabuse your mind of any idea you may have that I give my testimony in any braggadocious spirit, or with any thought of putting a premium on sin. I only refer to the dark side of my life in order to make the bright side shine brighter and show the power of God to save from the depths of sin.

There are a few Scriptures I would like to remind you of. One is. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Another is: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And yet another "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his trouble." And one more, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."

On the 13th day of March, 1890, in a little two-room mountain hut in a remote section of the mountains of eastern Kentucky, a pretty little baby was born. Now that was the 13th day, the unlucky day, of March, the windy month, in the beginning of the gay 90's. I was born into an average home of that section in those days.

My parents were very poor. My father was a laboring man working at hard labor for meager wages to support my mother and us nine children. In those days there was no Red Cross or relief of any kind for the poor, and every man had to scratch gravel for himself. If he could not support his family that was just his bad luck.

So our home was very destitute. We had the old fashioned clap board loft and punchin floor. Our wall paper was readable. We had no carpets but mother I always said that cleanliness was next to Godliness, and while we might have some excuse for being poor, we had none for being unclean. And she put me in the manufacturing business when I was a mere lad, manufacturing scouring powder out of sand stone with a hammer. My mother would take my product and spread it much more lavishly than I thought necessary and take the old hickory scrub mop that my father had made out of a hickory sapling and apply some water and stay at the job until her floors were immaculately clean, almost as white as snow.

My mother was very strict with her children. Though she was a typical mountain woman she did not believe in fighting. She said that cats and dogs, and not human beings, were supposed to do the fighting. My father, on the other hand did not look for trouble, but if the other fellow was looking for it, he never had to pass my dad up for an accommodation. And I always admired him, and longed to be like him.

Now my mother never allowed us to go next door to play with the neighbor children without her consent. We lived in the outskirts of a small county seat town, and when we went

down the street to the post office or elsewhere on an errand, it was with strict orders to go to that particular place and come immediately back, without any loitering on the way; with a further warning, if we got into trouble with any of the neighbor children, she would punish us severely. My mother never investigated a brawl to see who started it. All she needed to know was that one of hers took part in it and he got what was coming to him. I had an old fashioned ma and pa. The world is about ruined now with new fangled papas and mamas.

Some bad boys who were allowed to run wild would take advantage of my not being allowed to defend myself and would chase me, brick bat me, and if they got hold of me pummel me considerably and I resented that and thought, how I wish I was allowed to take my own part.

Now we only had three months of school during the year in those days. I got to go about half that time and the rest of the time I had to stay home and dig taters and pull fodder to help keep the wolf from the door. My clothes were hand me downs. When my dad got through with his lumber jacket, etc., what was left, mother made our clothes of it. I sometimes went bare footed when snow was on the ground. There were no free text books or rental books in those days, and father, not being able to buy books for all of his children, I was obliged to borrow from others and study with others. And that is the way I got my "book learning"--for the most part.

I was about 12 years of age when school opened in the fall. I did not want to go and thus expressed myself to mother. She insisted that I must go. I gave as my reasons for not wanting to go to school, that I did not have clothing like some others did. That was embarrassing. I had no books; and that was embarrassing. And the leader of the rough gang in town abused me all through the school term, and I dreaded that. Mother insisted that I must go, and of course I did. But I said to my mother, "The first thing I will do when I get on the school ground this morning will be to hunt up that bad boy, take him by surprise and give him the worst whipping he has ever had in his life." Mother said, "If you do and I hear about it," (and I knew she would because I had sisters in school), "I will give you one of the worst whippings you ever had."

I took that boy by surprise and beat him until he bled profusely at the nose, ears and mouth, and was carried home in a semi-conscious condition. The doctor all but despaired of his life. When I got home and sister broke the news to mother, she took me off behind the old woodshed, (and those familiar scenes linger with me still), and she broke off a peach tree switch. She could handle one to the greatest perfection of any human being I ever knew. Having nine children to practice on, and practiced on some of us almost every day until she got it down to perfection.

I cried like a good fellow while she was whipping me, but felt better when she got through. Now some folks have an idea that crying and feeling better is getting religion, but I know better than that. If that had been so I would have been one of the most religious boys in the country.

When she finished with me that day I said, "Now, Mother, tomorrow I will give him a worse one than I did today." She said, "If you do I will give you a worse one than I did today." I did, and so did Ma. When she finished with me that time, I said, "Now, Mother, tomorrow I will just barely leave life in that rascal, and if he gets over what I am going to give him tomorrow, and I ever see him again, I will kill him." I intended to do that. Mother was convinced that I meant business. When I got through with that boy the last time he was all but dead again.

When we got home, I did not wait for sister to break the news. I told mother what I did. They chimed in and told how awful it was. And I said, "Now Mother, come on if you are going to whip me and get it over with, but, remember, if you do, and I ever see that fellow I will kill him." Mother had sense enough not to whip me to save the boy's life. A few years ago I met up with him on the street of Winchester, Ky., and had a long conversation with him and learned that he lived happily ever after. But that was the beginning of a bloody fighting career.

If a boy reached the age of 13 or 14 in that part without carrying a pistol, he was looked upon as a sissy. No mountain boy wanted to be called a sissy. Some of us were not able to buy a pistol. There was a young rascal about as mean as I was, about my age. We got our heads together and decided that we would resort to any kind of chicanery or skullduggery to get money enough to buy a partnership pistol. We finally did that. This pistol was a very appropriate pistol for a partnership pistol because it had two barrels. It was the same kind of a gun that Mr. McKinley was assassinated with. The fellow who sold us the gun told us that we could not buy ammunition to fit it, but we could take .32 rifle cartridges and fit them into the pistol and it would shoot--not so accurately or hard as if the ammunition had fit the gun, but it would shoot.

This boy and I had an agreement that we would carry that pistol in turns--take time about. I was to carry it so many days and then he would carry it so many days, with the further understanding that if the one with the pistol happened along when the other fellow got into trouble he must take the pistol and shoot the partner out of trouble.

Not long after, two big rough-necked fellows had me down and doing plenty to me when my gun-toting pal happened on the scene with the pistol. He kicked one in the ribs and told him to let me go. When he swore that he wouldn't, he shot him just as plumb between the eyes as you could put your finger, but fortunately the ammunition did not fit the gun so that the bullet went under the hide and stopped in a pump knot on top of his head, and was very easily extracted by the doctor. Only the fact that the ammunition did not fit the gun saved me from being implicated in a killing at that early age.

I carried, from the time I was in my early teens, a single action .45 caliber revolver in my shoulder holster on my left shoulder, which is lower today than my right, probably because of growing up with that heavy pistol weighing down on that shoulder. I also carried a double action, improved Smith & Wesson in my pocket.

We mountain boys had no use for men of high caliber. They didn't appeal to us. Our ideal was the man who had the most notches on his pistol handle, denoting the number of men he had made to bite the dust. Our warped minds looked upon them as heroes and we wanted to be like them--ambitious to be bad.

There was among us a man who was looked upon as about the worst. I envied him when I was around 17 years of age. I thought if I could get in combat with him and win the fight it would put a feather in my cap and other men would sit up and take notice. The time came when he and I fought. No shots were fired. He was striking me with a bottle of liquor and I was striking him with a revolver, and broke the trigger guard, and the next lick the trigger stuck into his head and he

fell bleeding, so far as anyone knew, dying. I was so filled with the venom of hell that I walked over wearing hobnailed boots and stomped him in the face as you would a snake. And that put a feather in my cap. It was the talk of the town that I had whipped the bully.

He had a good friend. He also was a bad man who had killed two men and one woman, and one was his own brother. He and my enemy were boon companions. They were all around bad men living in the country a few miles out of town. My companion, or pal, was about two years my senior. He was tall, about 6 feet 1 inch in his stocking feet. One of the coolest men I ever saw. He and one of these men were avowed enemies as was the other man and I.

One day my pal and I sat in the lobby of the Hotel, talking with the proprietor and his wife and son, a young man about my age, but not in my class. He was an upright, clean, moral young man. But on one occasion some bad men were abusing him when I came on the scene, put them to flight, took him out of their hands and, he thought, saved his life from the hands of those ruffians. He always wanted to do something to accommodate me because he appreciated what I did for him.

As we were talking there, a handy man around the town who was later killed in a drunken brawl, came in and said, "Bulldog," for that was what they called me over all that part for some time before I got saved.-- "Bulldog Charlie, those two men have just ridden into town and hitched their horses and making no bones about enquiring about the whereabouts of you and your pal. They are on the war path." When he said that, the devil rose up in me and I said, "We will go and see what they are looking for."

And, as we started out. This young man insisted on going with us thinking, I believe, that he could perhaps keep me out of trouble and he went along. We came into the front of a store building. It was a liquor shop--bootleg joint. As we stepped in the door, these men were in the rear of the room. The shooting began. Pistol smoke so dense you could not recognize a man at arm's length. I heard a window raise in the rear and could see enough to see the bulk of a man go out of the window. Thinking perhaps it was one of those men already wounded I whirled and made for the door intent upon running out and heading him off and finishing the score with him outside. When I got to the door, there was this fine young man with a shotgun blast in his throat and bleeding like a stuck hog. He reached for me and fell. I ran over his dying body in my effort to finish the score with the man who jumped through the window. My friend had all the fingers shot off one hand. Another man was wounded; never got over it; died in the insane asylum. I was not touched with a bullet.

Time went on and this career was getting worse as I was led captive at the devil's will, until one day--I had been down at the creek fishing below the little county seat town, when I heard shooting on the streets. It was nothing uncommon to hear many shots fired on the streets at night by men shooting at random under the influence of mountain dew, but when you heard shooting in the day time, it usually meant serious trouble. I rushed to town, thinking perhaps some of my friends might be in trouble. When I got to town the streets were deserted except a little group on the porch of the hotel. As I walked toward them I saw it was part of a certain gang.

The leader had a number of henchmen; among them one of the most unreasonable men I ever saw. He and I had a few words some time before, and as I drew near he came walking out

with his pistol visible in the front cursing me. I said, "You know if I had my gun you wouldn't talk that way to me." He said, "You go home and get your gun. I have been wanting to shoot it out with you for some time." I said, "I will soon be back to accommodate you."

Across the street was a general mercantile store, the glass was shot out in front. As I crossed the street going toward my father's home I remembered having seen a pistol in the show case in the store and I went up and shook the door, and the proprietor came out of his hiding in the rear of the store when he saw who it was and let me in. He said, "Bulldog, what do you want?" I said, "Do you have a good pistol?" He said, "Yes, I have a brand new .38 Special." And I said, "That is a good one. I would like to borrow it a little while if you don't mind." He said, "It all depends on what you want with it." "I want it to kill a certain man with." "In that case," he said, "you are more than welcome to my pistol," and gave it to me.

Now in addition to having my own pistol, well loaded, I carried extra ammunition. But today I rushed out with that strange gun and only one round of ammunition. Getting about half way across the street those men began to shoot at me, but the only bullets that took effect were from my own gun, shooting the leader. But, if he was in three miles of this place and knew that I was going to give my testimony or preach the Gospel he would come to hear me, and you will know the secret of that before I am through tonight.

I finally got low down enough to become a deputy sheriff. Now that is no reflection upon some men who occupied that position, but in that part of the mountains in those days, a man who put any premium on life, his own life or others, did not accept a place as deputy sheriff. The man who was elected to the high sheriff's office had to depend upon the rough necks to serve as his deputies. If you were to go into the Kentucky mountains today, and things are mild compared with what they were in those days of which I am speaking, you would find a man coming down the street with a big pistol buckled on him. You might ask who that man is and they would tell you that it is a deputy sheriff and then they would go on to tell you how many men he had killed and how much time he had served in the penitentiary. For the most part, those are the men who act as deputies in those mountain counties. I happened to be heading the posse that arrested some of the men that came out of the feuds in bloody Breathitt County. While serving as deputy sheriff I witnessed many gun battles and participated in some of those battles myself. I do not believe I would be exaggerating if I would tell you that I had my hands full of bullets shot at me but never was touched. How do you account for that, preacher?

I believe with all my heart, that the infinite God of all wisdom saw the day coming down the road when I would repent and be saved and go up and down this land shooting the old Gospel guns as fearlessly for God as I ever fought for the devil.

Now, I drank until I had delirium tremens three or four days in succession--in hell on earth. Seeing everything imaginable that would torture my soul other than snakes. Most victims see snakes; I did not. I saw a monster that would come out of its hiding place with gleaming eyes. Comparing it to a hedge-hog it had prongs more like a porcupine. It would creep toward my bed where I was bound hand and foot and while I would plead with my friends to protect me from it, they would try to persuade me there was nothing there to hurt me. I recognized my friends. But to my drink crazed mind those things were just as real. It would pounce upon me, shake itself to get

loose and run back to its place of hiding with my blood dripping from its prongs. While I would be watching for its return, I would see it coming down the wall to drop on me from above and then scale the wall with my flesh hanging on and blood dripping from it. What was that? Just a foretaste of a drunkard's hell that he will go through forever, unless he is saved from sin. I could hear my enemies on the outside threatening my life. I would plead for my gun to protect myself. They would try to persuade me that there was no one around. They were just as real as the faces of my friends.

Now, this career went on from bad to worse, down through the years. Finally, I got too low down to be a deputy sheriff and they fired me off the job. Then I turned outlaw proper; running whiskey joints, dancing and gambling and all that goes with the hell hole of vices like that, and I defied the officers. The sheriff and his deputies would not undertake to arrest me though they had warrants in their pockets for me. One time the sheriff did slip in behind me in a feed store and grabbed me, but I threw him between two sacks of feed stuff, took his pistol away from him, piled several bags of feed on him, gave him the horse laugh and left him squirming under the feed stuff.

Now, they decided they would clean up the town and they sent to another part of the country and got a man and made him marshal--a great big red headed, freckled faced man. They said he was fearless and would clean up the town and begin with Bulldog Charlie. The night after he was sworn in I asked some of the boys if they would like to witness some fun. I hunted up that marshal, took his pistol and black jack away from him, shot under his feet and told him it was his bed time, and he sneaked off and went to bed. Ever after that, anytime I wanted the keys of the town all I had to do was say "It's your bed time now," and he would go to his dug-out and be seen no more that night.

This wild career of sin and folly was destined to meet its waterloo in coming in contact with the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The Methodist Church decided to have a revival meeting and they went about it like they intended business. That was in the days when the Methodists believed in revivals and their women wore hair and clothes. They organized prayer bands and fasted, and prayed in every home except one in that entire county seat town. One old infidel judge would not permit them to pray in his home. They got a mail order evangelist and his name was T. P. Roberts from Wilmore, Kentucky. In those days they called him "Night Hawk Tom." They claimed that he could go into town and stay three days and tell all the meanness that was going on in the town and the sinners did not realize that God could reveal things to this man and they thought he snooped around town at night and got his information, so they dubbed him "Night Hawk Tom."

He came for a revival. My place of business was on the corner of Main Street and the street that ran about a block back to the Methodist Church. Brother Roberts was entertained about two blocks up Main Street from my place in the Connoy home. Brother Connoy was a fine Christian and Sister Connoy was one of the most saintly women I have ever known. Well, the talk of the town was the revival meeting and we discussed it around the drink table and the card tables. Some of the boys would go to the revival, come back after the service and tell us about what had gone on, and what the preacher had said. And one night he paid his respects to the bootleggers and they told me about it. That night they said, "Now, if you want to get a squint at the evangelist, he is coming down the street." It was a cold November night, a big white snow was on the ground. The moon was shining almost as bright as day. We had places arranged where we could look out and

see what was going on outside without being seen on the inside. I went to one of those places and down the street came a little sawed-off, hammered-down fellow and I said, "Is that it? I won't kill it but I will brick-bat it out of town." And it went out that the bad man was going to run the good man out of town. And people generally believed that I was mean enough to do it and didn't expect anything else.

One night, Sister Connoy was called from the service before it was over and informed that her son was on a drunk, threatening to leave his wife, etc. She had gone home. A blinding snow storm was raging. That night, Brother Roberts, on his way home met her coming through the storm. He asked her where she was going. She said, "Going to try to get my boy who is drunk and threatening to leave his wife and take him home and effect a reconciliation." "Shall I accompany you in searching for your boy?" "No it wouldn't do for you to go where I will have to find my boy. That man that runs that place would kill you if he would catch you around other than passing by. You go home and pray that God will help me find my boy."

She came that night to the side door, rapped on the door. When I responded, standing there with tears in her eyes, she said, "Charlie, is my Willie in there?" If I was in the right humor I would get him and make him go home with her. If I was in a bad humor I would not get him for her, thinking she was my enemy because she was opposed to that business of mine. Isn't it strange how the devil has a way of making sinners believe that their enemies are their friends and their friends are their enemies? This night however, I happened to be in the right humor. I got her boy and made him go home. When she put him to bed and got his promise to stay, she returned home and found Brother Roberts still on his knees. He arose to his feet and said, "Sister Connoy, did you find your boy?" "Yes, I got him home and got his promise to stay." He said, "I have just been thinking there are so many young people in this town, I wondered if it would be at all possible, in any way, to reach them with a revival." And here is the sad indictment that good Christian brought against me. She said, "Brother Roberts, this man they call Bulldog Charlie at this awful joint on the corner is being used as a handy man of the devil as no other man in town. He has an influence over the young people, and he is wrecking homes and blighting the lives of our young people. If we could only get that man converted, it would mean the turning of the town toward God."

The man of faith said, "There is nothing too hard for our God. Our God is able. Suppose that you and I enter into a covenant of prayer, and call others into the covenant in the day service tomorrow, and fast, and pray, until God either saves that wicked young man or moves him out of the way of a revival in this town." Others entered into the covenant the next day. I knew nothing about that.

But, one day as I was going about that awful business, all at once seemingly something settled down over me--the most miserable sensation I had ever experienced. I did not recognize what it was. I knew nothing about Holy Ghost conviction for sin. I knew nothing about the covenant of prayer and that all over that town the saints of God with burdened hearts and weeping eyes, were calling on God in behalf of my poor hellward bent soul. I carried on as best I could and that evening just a little after dark, it was a rainy, dark night, I said, "Now Jack, take over; I am going home." He said, "You have been acting strange today." I said, "I feel bad and I am going home." I went home, but on the way I had to pass the home of a sister whose husband and his cousin had come in my place not many days before and bought some drinks and then bought a bottle

to take with them and said, "We are going down below the town this afternoon." They were my entertainers. One of them had the finest high tenor voice I ever heard and beautiful soprano voice. The other had the best bass voice I have ever heard before or since. They were both drink addicts. They would entertain us by singing in that place. I said, "Now, I am expecting you back tonight." They said, "We will be back." But that afternoon while under the influence of that damnable stuff they got into a drunken brawl and one knocked the other's brains out. The killer was arrested, charged with murder, put in jail. His wife was one of the best women in this world. She could not attend the night service because of the care of the children. But she went to the day service and entered into the covenant to pray for the bad man. I had to pass their home on my way home.

At this time I only weighed 118 pounds, was just a walking skeleton. They said I would be in the insane asylum or in my grave in a little while. I could only walk a little ways without either having to sit down or lean against something till I regained my strength. This night I stopped at the gate post of that home and leaned on the gate post and inside was the Christian woman and her little children getting ready for family prayer. I could see them as plain as I can see these on this front seat. I was that close to her. It was so dark on the outside she did not know anyone was near. When she knelt to pray, she faced that window and I could hear everything she uttered. I could not move away. She prayed earnestly for her family and God's protection for her children and that they might be saved in early life and live for God. Then she prayed so tenderly for her poor husband in jail charged with murder, that God would show mercy, and save him before it was too late. Then she prayed so tenderly and earnestly for the widow and orphans of the man whom her husband had killed; claiming God's promise to be a husband and a father. Then she lifted her voice and in desperation prayed out, "Oh, God, we now remember our covenant to pray for poor, sinful, wicked, Charlie."

If you would have shot me, it would not have affected me more. I thought, is it possible that I am the subject of that good woman's prayer? I was soon convinced I was the poor guilty wretch for whom she was crying to God for mercy. When she finished, I staggered on to my father's home. All night long I tossed to and fro, afraid to go to sleep; afraid I would wake up in hell.

I went down the next day to my business to carry on, but not with the interest I had had heretofore. That afternoon just about dark, I said, "Jack, take over; I am going home again." He said, "there are two factions to be here tonight. There might be serious trouble; you better stay on the job tonight." I said, "No, I am going home. If you see it brewing send a horseman for me and I will come as quickly as I can."

I got home that night just as the family was sitting at the supper table, but my appetite was gone. I went into the bedroom and threw myself across the bed and thought I must get some sleep. It seemed I would smother to death if I did not get up out of that bed and into the fresh air. I walked out on the front porch and I was walking back and forth like a lion in his cage. I was between the two opposing spirits. All Heaven moved me toward the house of God where the revival was in progress, and all hell was marshalled to hinder. That day, as I stood on the street, the evangelist came down the other side of the street and turned and walked across to where I was, and taking me by the hand not knowing who I was, he said, "I am holding a revival in the Methodist Church. I don't believe I have noticed you in the revival. Won't you come and be with us?" But

now I opened not my mouth. There was a feeling of admiration came up in my mind for that man and I wondered why a good man would cross the street to shake hands with a man like me. I found the secret in this Book. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord." And conviction deepened.

I only had that kind of conviction once before, not a long time before. I fought a man in a gun battle, giving him just a flesh wound on his face, but one week to a day later a man killed him in a gun battle. Both men had notches in their own pistol handles. It was customary for bad men to attend funerals of other bad men, and when I passed around the casket and saw the wound from my pistol in the face of that dead man, there was a feeling came up in my heart that I ought to change my way of living, ought to be a better man. That feeling was soon crowded out. It came up again when Brother Roberts spoke to me that day, on the street.

That night as I was walking the porch I swore vengeance against the churches, but prayer changes things. While the great spirit was pulling me toward the house of God, all the forces of hell were against me. But the first thing I knew, the old church bell began to toll, and with every toll of the old bell, the arrow of conviction went deeper into my soul. If I were to build a thousand churches in the village, country, or city, I would insist on putting an old fashioned bell on each one of them. Thank God for the old church bell. Then, the first thing I found myself going toward the house of God.

When I entered, Sister Connoy, who was sitting where she could see, let out a war whoop of victory and said, "Thank God, Brother Roberts, He has answered prayer." He did not know who I was. Others looked about to see who it was and when they saw that it was me, some of them left the church, went out and sent it around town that the bad man had gone up to the house of God to run the good man out, and a great company of people gathered around the church to see the good man run out, but I had come for a better purpose than that.

That man got up and began to preach. I never heard such a sin-scathing sermon. He read my pedigree. If he had known all about me he could not have read my history more clearly than he did with the old Gospel that night. Before he was half way through, I was feeling like the Samaritan woman who said, "Come, see a Man which told me all things that ever I did." I am so glad he wasn't a compromiser; wasn't afraid to preach the truth with no uncertain sound. I am so glad that he fearlessly preached the truth, and was no mush mouth, pussy footer.

I began to wonder before he got through if he would ever give me a chance to get to the mourner's bench. Finally they started to sing and I started down that aisle. One woman said, "He is going after the evangelist." I went to the altar a penitent sinner before God and began to get religion. I found it a bigger job than I anticipated. Listen, brother, if you are teaching that a man can live for years in sin and repent of it all in a twinkling of an eye, you go tell it to someone who is more narrow between the eyes than this old Kentucky preacher. Every man lives his life over sometime, somewhere. Some men's sins go before them to judgment; others follow after. Those whose sins go before them to judgment are those who live their lives over in repentance. Those whose sins follow after will live their lives over in hell.

There I was at the altar getting religion. I had no more than got on my knees until God said, "Back there is a man you mistreated. You go back and apologize and ask that man's forgiveness." I got up and went back and said, "I am sorry about the way I treated you. I want you to forgive me if you can." He said, "Charlie, that is perfectly all right." He has told me often times since, he never was so glad to see any man at the mourner's bench. That night after service I was busy pouring out my whiskey and burning up the cards. The town was stirred and people came from far and wide, driving old buggies that every wheel started in a different direction. Men and women who hadn't been inside a church for years, came to that revival meeting when they heard that the bad man was trying to get religion. I got on the job and went at it like I meant business.

The next day I went to the sheriff's office, walked in. He turned as white as a corpse and said, "What do you want?" I said, "I want to surrender." Pulling back my coat he saw I had no gun. I said, "I mean it." He said, "guess you are doing the right thing. What has come over you?" I said, "I am trying to get religion, trying to be a good man." He said, "We have a strange judge from another part of the state."

There were thirteen murder cases in that small county, and our own judge was indisposed for some reason, and the governor had appointed another man and he had read the commonwealth of Kentucky against Charlie Wireman. They had other prisoners at the bar. When he would say to the sheriff, "Where is this man Wireman you have so much against," he would say, "We haven't caught him yet." The sheriff said, "I don't know anything to do but to take you up before the new judge." I said, "Let's go and have it done with." The devil told me that I would spend time in the penitentiary, but I knew I must be right with my fellow men, and with the Lord.

When we went into the presence of the new judge, he said, "Are you Charlie Wireman?" I said, "Yes, sir." He said to the sheriff, "Where did you get him?" "He surrendered in my office." It is often known that men hide out in the mountains months and years without as much against them. The judge could not understand when he told him I had given up. "You know what we have against you?" I said, "Judge, I am trying to get religion in the Methodist revival and I want to be right with the law and my fellowmen." He said, "You know what we have against you. I think we have enough to put you in the place where the dogs won't bite you for a long time. Can you give bond?" "I am sorry, judge; there isn't a man in this town that would sign my bond." "I don't know what else to do but to commit you to jail." I said, "If there is any way that you can make it so I can go back to the revival I would be glad." Talk about running away from a revival meeting; I thought I would die if I could not get back to that meeting.

By that time the sheriff was weeping like a child. He said, "Judge, may I speak with you privately?" They held a muffled voice conversation and when they broke away, I heard the sheriff say, "I am sure he will." The judge said, "The sheriff knows your father and knew you from the time you were in swaddling clothes, and he knows you well enough that he believes you mean business and if I would take your recognizance that you would come back the day after the revival is over. Will you do that?" I said, "I will." He then recognized me to come back. I felt now like I was converted, almost; but I wasn't.

I walked out of that court house and went down the street and got a horse. I said, "I am going to make friends with a man who had threatened my life." We never passed each other on the

street that we did not have our hands on our guns and men would turn their backs, expecting one or both of us to die with our boots on. I said, "I am going to try to make friends with him." He was a big man and had a roaring voice. He was a desperate character. My father stood by the side of the horse and said, "Son, don't go about that man. If he knew you were unarmed he would kill you on sight." I rode away and my father said, "We will never see him alive again." I rode up to the gate that was about thirty yards from the house and hollered "Hello." He saw who it was, seized a high powered rifle and stepped to the door. I put up my hands and said, "If you shoot me, you will shoot a man who is helpless. I want us to be friends. I am sorry I shot your brother. Will you forgive me and let us be friends?" He dropped that gun in one hand and came cautiously down the path to the gate, opened it and stepped up beside the horse and said, "Bulldog, do you mean that?" After showing him that I was at his mercy, I said, "I am trying to get religion; I want to be a good man." The tears came up and he has told me repeatedly since, the first tears that had dimmed his eyes in thirty years. And he stepped back and set that old rifle down against the fence and reached up and clasped my hand with his big hand and said, "Charlie, if you want to be a good man I am telling you here and now that I will be the last man in this world to lay a straw in your way. You go on and be a good man, if you can." I fell over on his neck and wept like a baby and told him goodbye and went over to his father's and mother's home.

They had said they would like to tie me to a stake, strike a match and set me on fire and laugh at me while I burned at the stake. I walked up the path to that country home, rapped on the door. The mother came to the door. She turned pale and said, "What are you doing here?" thinking that I was looking for some of the boys. I said, "I want to ask you to forgive me for shooting your son. I am trying to get religion. If I could exchange places with him I would, but all I can do is to repent and ask forgiveness. Will you forgive me for shooting your boy?" She closed the door in my face but let me digress here long enough to tell you among the first converts God ever gave me was the dear woman who wanted to burn me at the stake.

I went on and on, making one confession and restitution after another. The first at the altar in the day service and the last to go away in the night service, until one night, one never to be forgotten night, thank God when I made an end of resistance, was lying flat on my back and they were singing, "I'd rather walk with Jesus alone," when my faith took hold. Pardon was written upon my wicked heart. The glorious salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ broke into my sin-benighted soul, dispelling the darkness with such splendor and grandeur that it made the chandeliers in that old Methodist church hide their faces in shame, thank God. I was a new creature in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Now, there are two spots I always visit when I go back home. I go up to the graveyard in the outskirts of the little town and get on my knees between two mounds that hold all that is mortal of my father and mother. I held their hands as they crossed the great divide, and there on my knees I long for the eastern skies to split and these graves give up their dead that I might be changed in the twinkling of the eye and join them in the rapture. And then, I go and hunt up the janitor of the old Methodist church and borrow the key. On one occasion I took my precious boys and showed them the spot and told them about the great transaction. But usually I go alone and turn the key gently in the door, and walk softly down that aisle, for I am treading on holy ground and down to that old mourner's bench where I find

"A spot to me more dear
Than native vale or mountain,
A spot for which affection's tear
Springs grateful from its fountain.
'Tis not where kindred soul's abound,
Tho' that is almost heaven,
But where I first my Saviour found,
And felt my sins forgiven."

"O sacred hour! O hallowed spot!
Where love divine first found me;
Wherever falls my distant lot,
My heart shall linger round thee.
And when from earth I rise, to soar
Up to my home in heaven,
Down will I cast my eyes once more,
Where I was first forgiven."

Thank God, if it is possible I could take old split foot and rub his dirty nose on the very spot where God for Christ's sake pardoned my sins.

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PART III

We are taking up where we left off last night. I told you that I would tell you how I came out with the judge. On the day after the meeting closed, I went to see him. When I entered his office he had some papers in his hand which looked like some kind of legal documents, and he asked me how I came out in the meeting. He had heard all about it, but he wanted me to tell him--and I was glad to do that. I told him how God had forgiven all of my sins, cast them into the sea of His forgetfulness to be remembered against me no more, and that forever.

He said, "Are you ready to go to the Penitentiary?" I said, "I am ready to go anywhere. If I do go to the penitentiary and spend my life there, I will go to heaven from the penitentiary, for my mind is made up to go to Heaven at any cost." He said, "Do you know what I have in my hand? I have a certificate signed by the Commonwealth attorney asking me to do exactly what you say God has done. Just throw everything up! Give you a clean slate!" Now you cannot get ahead of God. And then came the shock of my life.

A few days after my conversion God stooped down and laid His hand upon me, as it were, and called me to the most exalted position that any man can occupy in this world--that of preaching His glorious Gospel.

But I grieved Him by fighting the call. I was the most unlikely man in all the world to become a preacher; didn't have the first qualification for a preacher. But God's call to preach was just as definite, and just as epochal, and unmistakable, as my conversion. I am not a preacher by

choice. If I had my way I would have been anything but a preacher. But God called me "Woe unto me, if I preach not the Gospel!" And I felt that in my heart.

On Sunday morning while the pastor was preaching from the text, "Thyself hath decided it," I had been arguing the question with God. I had told Him if He would take the call from me and put it on someone who had some preaching ability, that I would work, if need be, with my hands and support that one while they preached the Gospel, but God is not arbitrary but He held me to the call.

And that Sunday morning while the preacher was preaching, I stuck up the white flag of unconditional surrender and said, "Live or die, sink or swim, survive or perish, if I can do nothing more than go out and face a gainsaying world and cry, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world,' I will do it." And God flooded my soul with ecstasy and joy.

Just about one month after I had been converted-- but let me go back just a little and tell you that I became a home missionary immediately after my conversion. I did not know anything about the Bible, only that Adam was the first man, Methuselah the oldest man, and that Noah built the ark and I had that all second handed. I had never read that for myself. But the preacher said that the Bible said, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." The next day after my conversion I was home. We gathered around the supper table where we were in the habit of partaking of the good things that came from the bountiful hands of God like so many hogs eating acorns, never looking up to see where they came from. I said to my father, "Let us grace the table." He bowed his head; so did the other members of the family. I had never seen my father bow his head in prayer; I had never heard my mother list the name of Jesus in prayer. As far as I knew that was the first prayer that was prayed in our home. I bowed my head and in a stammering way thanked God for His mercy. Father excused himself; brothers and sisters left the table; mother pushed back without eating and I was eating meat that they knew not of.

When no one could eat, I asked about the Bible. I knew there was one somewhere in the home. I had never seen it on display but one time, and that was when I was a child and when little Elvie, my sister died. They took the big, old family Bible out of its hiding place. I learned later it had been given to my parents as a wedding present when they were married, and they made a record of little Elvie's death. We took her down to the old Methodist Church. I had heard something about heaven and in my child's mind I thought Heaven was an especially prepared place for rich folks. I didn't know that poor folks could go to Heaven. As we sat in that funeral service the preacher preached and turned to us children, and the other members of the family, he said, "Little Elvie cannot come back to you, but you can give your hearts to God and see little Elvie in a better world than this." My little heart leaped for joy, for that was news to me and I said, "I will meet her; I will see her again."

My parents did not often go to Church. The following Sunday I slipped away in my little tattered garments and bare feet and went down to the Baptist Church where the preacher who had preached my sister's funeral in the Methodist Church was pastor. I sat down in the back to hear something more about how I might meet my little sister in Heaven, and that day while that man was preaching I was able to comprehend sufficiently in my child's mind to repent as best I knew how and be converted, and Jesus came into my heart, at that time about eight or nine years of age, if I

remember correctly. I went home expecting to be punished for slipping off and told mother where I had been and what had happened, and she said, "You are too little to know anything about that." Oh, what a responsibility fathers and mothers have. I believe, had my mother known God and had she known how to teach me and instruct me, that I would have been saved from that awful life, the depths of sin. But I drifted away, of course, and then came back as we told you last evening, and now I have yielded to the call to preach.

A few days after I received a letter, for the newspapers had heralded the fact of my conversion being a mountain outlaw and that I had been called to preach and would become an evangelist. A Presbyterian preacher several hundred miles away had been visiting in my home town while I was carrying on for the devil, and I had been pointed out to him as the bad man of the town, and when he read in the papers of my conversion and call to preach and that I would enter the evangelistic work he wrote me a letter and gave me my first call.

I got the letter and went immediately to my mother and told her. "Why," she said, "You can't go. It is a long ways; you don't have any money. You have been making restitutions with every dollar you could get hold of. You do not have clothes to preach in, and no money to pay your fare. So I would just forget it if I were you." I do not believe that my mother meant to discourage me, but she had never had a call to preach. You be careful about the attitude you take toward those whom God has called to His Gospel.

I went into a room and got on my knees and said, Now, Lord, here is a call to hold a revival meeting. I know you have called me to preach. If you want me to go to this particular meeting, make it plain in some way." Committing this matter into His hands I said "Amen." Upon opening my eyes, hanging on the wall before me was a motto. My sister told me it had been there eight months, and I had never noticed it until this time, and this is what it said: "My presence shall go with thee." I said, "Amen, that is all that I wanted." I went in and told my mother that I would go and hold the meeting in the Presbyterian Church, I went to the depot and asked the price of the ticket to that place, walked back down the street, met a fellow that I had gambled with and never had known him to have much money, always took all I would have away from me with the cards, and he noticed as I talked with him, there was something preying upon my mind. He asked me what it was, and I told him that I had received a call to hold a meeting and did not have money to pay my fare and I was praying and thinking about it. He said, "Charlie, how much would it take, do you know?" I was prepared to tell him. He ran his hand in his pocket, pulled out the amount and gave me thirty cents extra. I said, "I will pay you back some day." With tears in his eyes, wicked man that he was, he said, "No Charlie, you will not pay me back. I want the honor of being the first contributor to your ministry." God will see us through, even if He does have to make some old gambler or drunkard pay our bills.

I went home and went out to a neighbor's and out where they threw their garbage and waste. In that pile of junk I found an old, dilapidated suit case; it would not fasten. I took it to the house and cleaned it up the best I could, and put in the new books that I had and a few belongings in that suit case, had to tie it together with string, and putting on the only suit that I had in this world--a little brown summer suit. That was in December! The breeches were too short at one end, and they were patched. I had a cotton made shirt and heavy brogan shoes, and that was my wardrobe. Someone had given me a Bible about half as thick again as this songbook and about as

big with only one back. But I was proud of that Bible and I packed my Bible, mother fixed me a lunch and I kissed her good-by and started out on my first evangelistic trip. It grieves me to find young men over the country claiming to be called to preach who have to have a number of changes of raiment before they will go, and about the first thing they will ask is what salary that church pays, or how much money they will get? I didn't take that into consideration. I knew God had called me to preach and all I wanted was a place to preach.

A snow storm impeded my progress toward that city and I had to lay over one night in a depot. The next night just about dark I arrived in that city, got off the train, inquired about the minister of the Presbyterian Church and was told that he was forty miles away and the telephone wires were down in the storm and there was no way to contact him. I had thirty cents. I saw a sign hanging at half mast on an old drab hotel which said, "Rooms, 25 cents per night." I made up my mind to spend the night in that hotel. I went in and paid my quarter and had my nickel left. I went to bed. I preached against lodges, but found upon retiring that I had joined the Red Men. I have slept on better beds, but got through the night.

The next morning I asked permission to leave my suit case in the lobby. When I was asked if I was not going to stay for breakfast, I told them no, but I did not tell why. I hadn't eaten anything the day before except the lunch mother had prepared for me and nothing that day. Along about dark, after I had walked the streets all day with the collar of my little brown summer suit turned up around my neck, wearing my calico cap and being the gazing stock of the people, I suppose they thought another bum had hit town. They didn't know that royalty had hit the town. I want you to know that I am no slouch; it is just the way my clothes fit me.

About dark that night I contacted the pastor by phone and he was surprised that I was there. We had had a misunderstanding in our correspondence and he wasn't expecting me for a week. I was in plenty of time for my first combat. He said, "Now Brother Wireman, you go to a certain home on a certain street and tell them that I sent you to begin the meetings tomorrow." (That was two nights before Christmas.) "And I will be there as soon as I can get there. But go on with the meetings until I come." I got my suit-case, walked several blocks to this number, rang the door bell and a little boy about twelve years of age came to the door. I said, "Is this where so and so lives?" He said it was. "Well," I said, "I am the evangelist that is to hold your meeting and Rev. Kirk told me to come up here and you folks would take care of me." He turned and walked back through the house and a little sedate, prim, well dressed woman came to the door and looking me over, said, "What is it?" I said, "It is an evangelist. Your p astor told me by phone to come up here and you would take care of me." She said, "He did?" I said, "He certainly did." "Well," she said, "come in." Not a very warm reception, but I got out of the storm. She asked me a few questions, where I was from and so on and then said, "Since you are tired, having come so far she didn't know I had come only a few blocks that day) you will occupy this room around here. My husband won't be in until later on tonight, as he is the mayor of the city." And there I was in the little brown summer suit with the breeches too short at one end, my calico cap, cotton made shirt and brogan shoes and one-backed Bible, being entertained in my first meeting, in the mayor's home.

The next day we gave it out by phone and otherwise that the meetings would begin that night. The time came for service and I went over to that nice Presbyterian Church. I went in, walked over the plush carpet, sat down in an easy chair on the platform; I went in, it seemed,

almost to my ears, before I stopped; looked about but had to pinch myself for identification in a place like that. Just a few people came, maybe a dozen folks.

The man in charge of the devotions finally finished and said, "Our evangelist will now take charge." Every eye was upon me. I walked up behind the pulpit stand, and it dawned upon me that if I was going to preach I ought to have some kind of text. I opened my one-backed Bible and here's the first thing I saw: "If so be," and that was my first text. Open your mouth and the Lord will fill it--if He has to. I said, "You will find my text in such and such a place and it reads, 'If so be.' And I preached like a house on fire from, "If so be." If so be that we will pray God will hear us. If so be that we will work, God will honor us. If so be that we will have faith, God will give us victory. Glory! Just like a house on fire. They went out and told over town that there was the strangest, most eccentric and peculiar preacher up at the Presbyterian Church that had ever been heard of since John the Baptist came dressed in camel's hair in the hills of Judea.

All the next day I spent in prayer reading the Bible without finding my text. The second night when I stood up and opened my Bible this was the text, "Looking for and hastening unto." "Now," I said, "we have looked and hastened to this occasion, and that we are looking forward and hastening to the great judgment bar of God and we better get ready." And preached like a house afire from the text, "Looking for and hastening unto."

Now the crowds came. One of the leading members of that church, one of the official members, was a congressman and he was the money man of that church and city. He was building a dance hall and was an elder in that Presbyterian Church. I heard about him and one night the Lord came upon me and I set my jaw and came right down his alley. I said, "Any man that professes religion and would build a dance hall is as sure of hell as a nickel is a gingersnap, unless he repents and gets right with God." When we went home that night the mayor's wife said, "It is all over now. There is not telling what the Congressman will do as he is the big fellow in our church." And the devil tantalized my mind tremendously about that and the next day as I walked down the street I made it a point to walk opposite his law office. But, as I was walking down the street, he stood in the door and recognized me, hailed me, and asked me to come over. The devil said, "Here is where you are going to get in bad." When he invited me into his office and gave me a seat, he said, "Preacher, I didn't sleep well last night. I had a bad conscience. I want to thank you for that message that you brought last night. That awakened my slumbering conscience and made me realize the awfulness of a church member building a dance hall." He said, "I want to give you this information, and I want you to give it to others, that that building now in progress, will not be a dance hall as was first intended; it will be converted into a legitimate business house." He said, "I like your preaching. I admire your courage. How do you write your name?" I told him. He wrote a check, said, "Perhaps you need a little change," and handed me a check for fifty dollars. I went immediately and bought the nicest suit I could find, a lovely hat, nice pair of shoes, a good overcoat and when I got dressed up in that outfit I was about the prettiest thing you ever saw???

While praying one day in the church, I discovered an old bench under the platform and drug it out. A rough old bench. I carried it into the main auditorium and set it down in front of the pulpit stand on their beautiful plush carpet. That night as people came in, they would look at me, and look at the old bench and at one another. The first mourner's bench so far as I know that had ever been erected in a Presbyterian Church. That night I preached on the new birth. The altar

filled. Among the seekers was the Congressman. So in my first revival meeting I had a congressman gloriously converted, along with many others who were just as precious to my Lord as was the Congressman.

The mayor's wife had not come to the service that night and the little boy, about twelve years of age, was there and as the people were repenting and beating the mourner's bench and beating the floor and crying for mercy I said, "We are going to stay here all night unless these people get through." The little boy ran home, woke up his mother and said, "Go to the church; you never saw anything like it. The Congressman and a lot of people are down at an old bench that preacher has over there, and, some of them are beating the floor, and the preacher said they would stay all night if they didn't go through." He thought they were trying to go through the floor.

Now, I got home with enough money to nearly pay all my restitutions and had some money left out of the first meeting. The devil said to me, that I would spend my days, if I preached, preaching in the country school houses in the mountains of Kentucky. I gave him to understand that I was perfectly willing to do it. But God has seen fit to let me travel with this glorious gospel in every state in these United States and in Canada and Old Mexico. I have preached in big camp meetings, big churches, and little churches, city churches, country churches, village churches, tents, brush arbors, mission halls, Salvation Army citadels, and from the curb stone on the street. I have never been a popular preacher, but have always been a prominent preacher.

I will give you some idea of how prominent I was when I belonged to a big denomination. (I was on a great TITANIC when she struck an ice-berg of modernism and communism, and sprang a leak and started down, and hopped off onto a little Holiness lifeboat). When we would have our annual conference, the preachers of the city in which the conference was held would ask the bishop to appoint preachers to preach in the various churches in the city. Well, on Friday the bishop would read those appointments off. He would read, "Dr. So and So will preach in the First Presbyterian Church, and Dr. So and So in the First Baptist Church, and Dr. So and So in the First Christian Church, and Dr. So and So in the First Methodist Church, and Rev. So and So in the Second Baptist Church, and Rev. So and So in the Presbyterian Church, and C. L. Wireman will preach Saturday night on the street corner."--The most prominent preacher in all of that big congregation of preachers. (?)

Now, it has been my privilege to conduct more than seven hundred revivals, conventions and campmeetings, and to preach more than twelve thousand times. One preacher heard me say that, and in advertising my meetings he said I had preached more than ten thousand sermons. When I read that, I said, "Brother, you have made a serious mistake." He said, "I thought you preached more than ten thousand sermons." "You heard me say I preached more than ten thousand times." I don't have many sermons, so I have to preach what few I have everywhere I go. One reason I don't get some more is I have put about all the TEETH I can get hold of in the few messages that I have and you will find more TEETH in one of my messages than you will in twenty-five messages preached by the average evangelist in the Holiness movement in this country today. Now that is so. Bless God! All these years, without one single compromise, without showing the white feather to the devil on any occasion. Not one. I have preached the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Whether people want to hear it or not, I just preached what they needed to hear. I have seen twenty dollar bills go back in the pocket book and ten dollar bills and five dollar bills that

would have been mine if I would just keep my big mouth shut and not mention certain things or sins.

My cousin is editor of the Masonic Home Journal, published at St. Mathew's, a suburb of Louisville, Kentucky. He said to me, "Charlie, about how much do you make a year preaching?" "Oh," I said, "about five thousand dollars." "That much! Why," he said, "I am surprised. I had no idea that you got that much money." "Oh, I don't get paid in money altogether. I get about fifteen or eighteen hundred dollars a year in money." But I consider it worth more than four thousand dollars a year for the privilege of preaching second blessing Holiness. God has promised to supply all my needs. So I get all I need, and need all I get, and go on my way rejoicing. Amen!

All right. "Go home to thy friends, tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee." I saw my mother and father die in victory, and every brother and sister I had saved soon after I was converted. Time went on, and one day I received a telegram to come home, that father was dangerously ill. I reached his bedside and saw him fast sinking with pneumonia and on a bright April Sunday morning when the judge, a life long friend and a neighbor had called to see him not knowing he was in the throes of death stood at the bed, (mother, brothers and sisters had left the room, and left me alone with my dying father), I grasped his hand as he breathed his last and whispered the sweet name of Jesus in his ear, and his face lit up with a peculiar smile. We put him away with that smile on his face. As I looked into his face at the funeral for the last time this side of eternity, I said, "Thank God, father, that I ever came home to tell you how great things the Lord had done for me." My sister Myrtle died suddenly while I was away. I could not get home in time for the funeral, but a few days after she was buried I visited the old country graveyard on her father-in-law's farm, and there looked upon that new-made grave, and as the wind blew on that chilly March day, I got on my knees by the side of the mound and said, "Sister Myrtle, I didn't get to say good night to you here but I will say good morning to you over yonder." And as I turned to leave that grave I thanked God that I had ever gone home to tell my sister Myrtle how great things the Lord had done for me.

Five years passed by. I was called home. Had to cancel my meetings for the winter on account of my mother's serious illness. She lingered for weeks and one evening as the sun was setting in the west, the sun went down with my precious mother. She had embraced every member of the family, and told them goodbye and they had left the room, and I was left alone with my dying mother. She was saying over and over again, "Oh death, where is thy sting; Oh grave, where is thy victory," as long as she could whisper. I held her hand and saw her breathe her last. Alone with my dead mother in that room, I straightened out her precious form and closed her eyes with my own hand and folded her hands and looked in her face and said, "Thank God, Mother, that I ever did come home to tell you how great things the Lord had done for me." And one of these days, I will meet my loved ones over there and hear them say, "Thank God, Charlie, that you ever came home and told us how great things the Lord had done for you."

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THE END