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**THE EXPERIENCES OF A BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN EVANGELIST**  
**By John A. Clement**

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## DEDICATION

DEDICATED to Cleo Young Clement, my loyal helpmeet, who has devoted the strength of her life and the love of her heart to the lost at home and abroad, and who now, though suffering in body, still has for her life's motto: OTHERS!

\* \* \* \* \*

## INTRODUCTION

For a number of years it has been my pleasure to know and to be associated with Rev. John A. Clement, the author of this book. As a student who listened to his messages they came with interest and inspiration; his illustrations were so vivid that they gripped and made the truth he was preaching so much more impressive. Upon entering the ministry it was my privilege to belong to the same Conference as did the author, and my associations with him in this capacity served to make me further appreciate his worth. If young ministers ever had a friend, Rev. John A. Clement is one. He has done as much, if not more than any other man to bring into the Conference worthy young men and to encourage them to be what God would have them to be. He has not only given his best, he has given himself and his all for the work that is so dear to his heart.

It has also been my privilege to labor under him while he served as President of the Conference in two of his administrations. He is a man whose ideas are worthy of one's consideration, and his administrations have been instrumental in building up the work and putting it on a secure foundation.

In no phase of the work is he so much at home as in the field of evangelism, and those who have come under his influence when he was in this field will need no word of mine to interest them in this volume. As an evangelist he is direct and positive in his dealings and preaching; he hews to the line and lets the chips fall where they may; he is "old-fashioned" enough not to care whether the crowd endorses his preaching or not; what he is after is souls, and his wisdom and tact, coupled with his years of experience, have made him a great soul-winner. He is a man whose decisions are

rendered with impartiality, whose ability to comprehend a situation makes him a most valuable assistant on a hard field, and whose wit helps out of many a tense situation. He is a man of prayer, who knows how to lay hold of God, and his messages are very practical. Born in a section where people were used to hardships and discomforts, he early learned the secret of doing without many of the things that others call "necessities" and while he has served on a small salary, when many in a less important position were being paid more than he, he and his good wife have supported native workers in our mission fields of Africa, India and Japan.

As these pages are read one will find himself experiencing a variety of emotions. There will be times when he no doubt will be melted to tears; again he may be smiling with satisfaction that God's way is always the best way; at other times he may be laughing heartily at some tense situation which was relieved by his homely wit. As he reads some of the close calls this man had as a pioneer preacher in hostile territory, he may wonder how it happened that opposition to the Gospel was so great at this late date; and maybe as one reads some of God's marvelous answers to prayer, or how souls have been won to God by this devoted man of God and servant of the Cross, there may be shouts of praise ascending to God for His marvelous dealings.

But -- the record that has been herein recorded for your help and use is the true story, reflecting the true nature of the man who has written. It might have been that another would have done and said things differently, but this is how it was done. God has used this man despite his handicaps; why not let Him use you?

The prayer of my heart is that our noble young people, to whom I most heartily commend this book, will read this and appreciate the heritage that has been given them by our fathers in the faith. The book has a message for young and for old, for the minister and for the layman; for the saved and the unsaved. May it be that, long after the tongue is silent and the pen of the man who wrote these lines is still, this record will be inspiring the followers of Christ to carry on with courage.

Yours in His Name,  
Roy S. Nicholson

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## PREFACE

For many years my brethren in the ministry have pressed me hard to write a sketch of my life, and give a few sermon outlines. For a number of years Rev. E. W. Black tried to prevail on me to allow him to write out the story of my life, since I didn't do it myself; but his health failed him, and I gave up all hope of ever getting it out.

Rev. Roy S. Nicholson, our esteemed Conference Secretary, and our efficient Connectional Sunday School Editor, a man well qualified for the work, who had himself written a history of "Wesleyan Methodism in the South," offered to copy and correct the manuscript and prepare the material for publication if I would set it down for him. This seemed to be another call on me for this, and for that reason I consented to write a sketch of my thirty-five years' work in the ministry. I

am indebted to Brother Nicholson for all the hard work he has done on this, to make possible its publication. I haven't kept an accurate diary all the time, so I have had to resort to memory for these incidents. Many more might have been given that would have been of interest and helpful, but these will suffice.

This book is not being sent forth for the critic, but for that army of men who, like myself, have had to work under a handicap all their lives. I pray as I write that God will make this book a blessing to some struggling preacher. And allow me to say that if there are outlines or illustrations that you care to use, I give my hearty consent for you to make them your own. I lay no claim to originality; there are but few original men in the world, and they are mostly failures.

May God bless the preachers that are uncompromisingly spreading Scriptural holiness all over these lands. This book is dedicated to that great Cause, and for the purpose of spreading holiness I have given the best part of my manhood.

Yours in Him,  
John Clement

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## 01 -- FROM CHILDHOOD TO YOUNG MANHOOD

The subject of this sketch first saw the light of day on October 3rd, 1881. I was born in a one-room log house on a red hill in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Western North Carolina; the hill was so red that it was called "Red Hill" and is located near Black Mountain, N. C. My parents were G. W. and S. E. Clement, and there were eight of us children.

Times were hard in those days and it was a constant struggle to live. Although my father was a fine carpenter the wages paid were from one dollar to one dollar and twenty-five cents per day; and it was nothing unusual for this meager sum to have to be taken in corn-meal and sorghum molasses.

Much of my time, when a child, was spent fishing in the mountain streams or hunting game in the mountain forest. A mess of fish or a rabbit was a wonderful improvement on corn-bread and fat-back and white gravy, such as we commonly had for breakfast. As there were not many churches in the country at that time we spent most of our Sundays fishing or hunting rabbits instead of going to Sunday School. and church.

There were a few old log schoolhouses scattered around through the mountains, where school was held two or three months of the year. The school teacher was not always chosen for his superior learning but very often because he was "too lazy" to do anything else. There were no grades or standards, and the most customary thing was for one to study out of whatever books he might chance to have, or be able to get.

I very well remember the first Sunday School that we ever had in our community which started about the time I was twelve years old. As there was not a Christian in the whole school we

had to open and close it without prayer. Since none of the people knew much, if anything, about the Bible there were many amusing and strange arguments that arose in the School.

The first sermon I ever heard was by a "Hard Shell". We walked about eight or ten miles to get to service and he preached with that peculiar tone which they called the "holy tone" and believe it or not, unto this day I cannot remember one word that he said. Religion was a rare article in the mountains in those days and whiskey could be had for sale almost anywhere. Nowadays, I hear the arguments of the younger people who say that more whiskey was used under prohibition than when it was made and sold at every crossroads. To that, I just say: "You are not properly informed, or you are crooked; one or the other!"

I grew up to love drink and play cards, and many Sundays have been spent in the woods where we played all day for a drink or a smell. The ones who won the game drank the whiskey, while the ones who got beat were only allowed to smell the bottle. It was not the will of my parents for me to do those things. Father was a hard worker and always did his best to provide for us. Mother was a philosopher. I marvel yet at how she managed to pilot the family through those stringent times and kept our heads above the waves. She was strong on discipline and was an expert with a black-gum" switch. God bless her memory!

At an early age I craved to know something, consequently I went to a boarding school which was conducted by the Presbyterians. Telling them why I had come they next asked me how much money I had with me. There was but one thing I could say: "None." I soon added: "But if you have any work that you want done I will gladly do it." They took me in and for three years I worked my way through school. That is the sum total of my education, as far as schools go. During these three years I was without underclothes or socks. But I let no opportunity to learn slip past me. Through the years, however, I have given myself to reading and observation. What I know has been learned on the battle-field. That is why my preaching now smells of gunpowder.

From childhood I was backward and timid, and the only remedy that could have ever cured me of that condition was the Holy Ghost. As there were no barber shops and pressing clubs in my boyhood days, neither were there any "beauty parlors" then -we didn't need them -- we let our hair grow until we must have looked comical; our appearance must have reminded one of a Nazarite or a Benjamite. Our clothes were home-made and often instead of the seam going down the leg of a garment it might run around it like an auger. Yet those were care-free days.

There were no newspapers much in those days and as we didn't know what the outside world was doing it did not bother us. We didn't know whether the country was on the gold standard or free silver. We didn't have either of it so what did it matter to us! We did know that we had plenty of fresh air and good mountain water. Sometimes we had more air than we actually needed, for it came in the cracks between the logs and it was often very cold. It was also possible for us to study astronomy through the cracks in the roof of our one-room home.

Being without automobiles in those days, when one wished to make a trip it was either walk or ride a mule; or most likely, go on a sled which was a "popular vehicle in those days. It was our usual custom to go barefooted until Christmas, then we would get a pair of brogan shoes

and it was understood by all that they must last the remainder of the year. A few times we got a rare treat -- red-topped boots.

I once worked a week for a man who was clearing a "new ground." It fell to my lot to chop and haul wood a whole week for the use of the mule and wagon for one day. This day was used in hauling gravel out of the river for which I was paid the sum of one dollar, which was in turn spent for a pair of brogan shoes. Nowadays young men would scoff at the idea of wearing that sort of shoes, much less working seven days for one dollar. There were no strikes or walkouts then; if we had walked out, it would have been in our bare feet.

The team I drove for this man was a very comical one made up of an old, oversized mule and a very small, long-eared donkey. As I would drive through the village I was the clown of the town. But through those days of hardship and privation God was laying the foundation of a pioneer Holiness preacher that was to go through hardships to help bring the Gospel of full salvation to hundreds of poor lost souls.

When our family was compelled to move out of the country into the city so that father could earn more money with which to support his family, it was the saddest day of my life in so far as my morals were concerned. I seemed to go wild. I drank, fought, gambled and cursed by note. An old Scotchman for whom I worked awhile told me that he was afraid to look at the morning paper for fear that he would see a notice that I had been killed somewhere. One officer said that he had eleven warrants for my arrest. He started to arrest me once and it so angered me that I knocked him down and walked off. He did not bother me again. In those days when the liquor business was in full sway, it was a reckless time. Oh, how near it came to ruining me! But now I hate it with a passion and wouldn't vote for any man for any office if I knew that he favored the liquor business or liquor.

The majority of the young men with whom I associated in those days are dead and in eternity without God. Whiskey was their ruin. It grieves me to tell of these dark days; there is but one thing that impels it: That thereby the grace of God may be magnified.

I drank, cursed, and did almost every mean thing except that I never was mean enough to chew tobacco. I tried it once and at first I thought I might die, and then later got so sick that I feared I might not die. It would have been a relief to me then to have died.

Why people will poison themselves just to keep up with an ungodly custom is a mystery to me. I once bought ten cents' worth of Star tobacco and went to the woods below the schoolhouse to learn to chew. I cut off a big chew but don't know whether I swallowed it or what ever became of it. I must have swallowed it for it came so near killing me. I think all that was within me must have come out. That was my last effort at chewing tobacco. But when I would get about two-thirds drunk I would buy me a big cigar and light it and puff away at it, thinking that it made me look big. But I have since been sorry for the cigar with fire on it at one end and a fool at the other.

\* \* \* \* \*

While still a young man just in my teens I attended a revival in a nice brick church. This was after we had moved into the city, and while I was not in the habit of going to church, news had got about that the preacher was a fine man, so I went to hear him for myself. This was on Sunday morning, and he was the only man whom I have ever heard that preached on The Judgment Day at a morning service. To me his message was wonderful and I went forward and knelt at the altar next to the corner of the pulpit.

A preacher came to me and asked me if I believed in Jesus. My reply was that I believed that there was such a man as Jesus. He then said to me: "Get up, you have made a bright profession." Not knowing what to do, I got up and stood there condemned. My feeling at that moment was that if it had been possible to have got out of there I would have run a mile to get away from that preacher. But the same preacher came to me and asked me if I didn't want to join the church. He urged me, saying, "You are such a bright convert that you ought to get into the Church." I confess to you that I felt more like a convict than a convert. But, I thought that if joining would relieve the tension I ought to join. But I felt like the old mountaineer who was joining the church and the minister asked him if he had religion and he replied that he thought he did. Not quite satisfied the minister asked him how he felt and to this he answered, "I never felt so bad in all my life." That is how I was feeling then. But I told him I would join. His next question was to ask me how I wanted to be baptized. I asked him how many ways he had, and he told me that since this was a union meeting they could give it to me by either sprinkling, pouring or immersing. As it looked like it might be the easiest way out of it I let him sprinkle me. He put about three or four drops of water on my head and that was all I got out of the transaction. Here I was: a full-fledged church-member, on my way to hell. But I was not by myself. To me it appears that this is deception. What will the Judgment be? Millions today think they are saved when they have no more grace than I had then. I am afraid of deception. I had rather see people dig down and pray through and get the Witness of the Spirit; then the devil will have to work overtime if he gets that soul. I have sat in the Sunday School class and smelled whiskey on the breath of the Sunday School teacher.

I have worked on the same job with them and they could curse, smoke, chew and drink a little whiskey for their stomach's sake; then on Sunday they were very religious. That is damning more souls today than anything I know.

For four years I was a member of that church in such a condition. It almost turned me into an infidel. To me I saw nothing in such a religious profession. Those were the darkest days of my life. The church building was paid for in those four years with oyster stews and ice cream suppers and "shindigs" and "fandangos". I went to one box supper and had only twenty-five cents. You could pay your quarter and fish over a curtain and whose box you got you had to eat with that girl. I was afraid to try but they persuaded me and I got the box of a girl whom I did not know and whom I had never seen before. Since they sold lemonade and candy and ice cream on the side, and I was broke, I knew I was up against it, so I slipped out with my little box. How humiliated I felt! But my humiliation was not as great as will be theirs at the Judgment for trying to run a church on such methods.

One night we got mad with the whole arrangement of one of the suppers of the church, and got in the dark and threw a watermelon rind into the mouth of the bass horn. Those were days of low spirituality and, as I look back on it now, I doubt if any of them knew what real conversion was.

God's Word says, "Take heed that no man deceive you." "Many false prophets will arise and deceive many." John Wesley's definition of a false prophet is: "A preacher who preaches a broad way to Heaven and a narrow way to hell." The false prophet reverses God's order. God wants preachers who will thunder the old-fashioned truth with such power that hypocrites and false professors will feel miserable while he is preaching.

"Be not deceived, God is not mocked." I have rolled on my bed at night and wondered if I were to die whether I would be lost. A man that lives four years in that condition will surely believe in hell. Let's not make religion a cloak for one's meanness. Be what you profess to be.

If it had not been for an old-time Holiness preacher, Rev. H. P. Rich, I might probably have been lost. I might have died deceived. His preaching hit me all over and cut me to mincemeat. But, thank God, I got in under such preaching when I did finally get from under the spell of deception. Brother Rich is in Heaven now, but when I get there I want to hug his neck and thank him again, as I have many times while he was here, that he broke the awful spell of deception in my life.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 03 -- MY CONVERSION

After I had been kept deceived for four years while a member of the church, I drifted deeper into sin, and lost confidence in religion. But I attended a revival meeting for fifteen nights, Rev. H. P. Rich was conducting it, but as yet I had not been converted, although powerfully convicted. In this meeting I got some truth from which I did not escape. I saw that there was something real in religion after all. His preaching knocked my skepticism to pieces.

One night I drifted into a prayer meeting which was being held in an old schoolhouse. I listened to old Uncle Billie West talk on the Bible while tears streamed down his face and dampened his gray beard. That scene surely got hold of me and when he asked for all who wanted him to pray for them to come and take him by the hand, I wondered if he would pray for a poor lost sinner such as I was. Making up my mind to try it I went up, and he didn't let go of my hand, but held on to me and prayed the first prayer that I ever heard prayed for me. Going out, I tried to throw off that conviction, but could not. I went away from home, and tried to run away from God. He will follow you wherever you may go. He will follow you a long ways down the road toward hell.

There I was -- away from home, sick in body and not a friend anywhere near me. I had no money. And sitting on the end of a foot-log, leaning against a sycamore tree, with the world as dark as could be, and none to help me, it looked to me that hope had fled. My sins rolled up before me like mountains: they were high and wide. I could not get over them or around them, and for the first time in my life I cried on account of my sad condition.



My heart had hitherto been as hard as a stone. While I was in sin I had seen a man with his head burst open and his brains dashed out. This only moved me to laughter. Nothing seemed to touch me. But that day my heart broke, tears flowed, and as I looked up through those scalding tears, I said, "Lord, canst Thou do anything for me in this condition?" Then Mercy looked over those mountains of sin with a big smile on her face and said: "Son, thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee." Right then and there I changed worlds.

The world that had been as black as midnight was as light as the day; the brook seemed to burst out to singing God's praises; the trees appeared to be shouting, and everything was praising God. Glory to God! God is so good. Those mountains of sin melted away and I haven't seen them since. He said that He would bury them in the sea of His forgetfulness. I was on a ship out in the Pacific Ocean once, and asked one of the sailors how deep the water was where we then were. His reply was that it was two miles deep. I shouted out, "Praise God!" Seeing his bewildered look I told him of God's promise, and said: "If God has buried them two miles deep the devil hasn't got a shovel with a handle long enough to dig them out with." He said that He would take them as "far as the East is from the West, and remember them against us no more forever." That is so far that I'm sure if they started back now I would be in Heaven a thousand years before they could get back.

Hallelujah! How happy I was the day God saved me. I leaped off that foot-log and started down the road shouting like a wild Indian. I did not know where I was going, but I was on my way. I had started out for Heaven. Going down the road I met a man and began to tell him "what great things the Lord had done" for me. I shall never forget how he backed away from me, then broke into a run, and went down through the woods like he had a trip to make and was three hours late. The last time I saw him he was surely breaking the speed limit. If he kept that pace for long he surely covered some ground.

Those were happy days to me. I never have liked this long-faced, cold, dead religion. It never did appeal to me. It never appeals to others, either. "Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing." Be sure you have a real conversion. "Ye must be born again," John 3 says. Would it not be a calamity for a person to be born and never find it out? My friends, Regeneration is a great transaction and when it takes place you will know it. Some will say: "I think I have it, but I don't know." If that's how they feel about it they may lose what they've got and never know it either. When you get converted you'll sing: "Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away." "O happy day that fixed my choice." If we showed our religion in our face we would not need so much argument to convince people that we had it.

Don't let the devil push this long-faced religion off on you. Some religious professors look like they'd had a long spell of the toothache. Be happy and free and scatter sunshine wherever you go. You may ask: "Did you get saved without repentance?" I was ignorant of God's Word and only knew to surrender to Him. He saved me and then showed me what I had to do. I paid for things I had stolen, and for old striped-backed watermelons and old store-bills I had made. I went to one man and confessed to him that I had stolen his melons. He turned pale and trembled all over and said: "We have all stolen melons and let's let it go at that." I told him that I was going to pay for mine, but that I didn't know what he was going to do about those he had stolen.

I went back to our old home town and united with a church that was almost as dead as an Egyptian mummy. This caused me to drift away from God, but I was later reclaimed at an old country church while I was working on the Vanderbilt Estate. On the job with me (for I was a carpenter) was a man who boasted of his infidelity. The night I was reclaimed he had come into that old church to argue He was the first one I got my arms around when I got through, and told him: "John, God has saved me." He was trembling all over like an aspen leaf in a storm and muttered out to me: "It does look like something has happened to you." That spiked his guns and he never said anything to me against religion from that day onward. A real experience of salvation is the best argument to make against infidelity.

My advice to all young converts is to find a good, live Holiness church and get into it and stand by it. My ambition is to be more than a nominal professor of religion, it is to be a spiritual Christian.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### 04 -- STRUGGLING AGAINST TIMIDITY -- SEEKING HOLINESS

I am sorry for a trembling, timid soul. I know what it is by experience. Born in the mountains in a time of disadvantage, I knew more about the haunts of animals and the habits of birds than the rules of etiquette and the rounds of society. Not having an education, and that coupled with natural backwardness, put me in an awkward position. I knew that God had saved me, but I was afraid to go into church and work for God as I ought to have. In one service I left the building three times for fear that someone would call on me to lead in prayer.

This experience left me feeling like the Irishman who went to war and was shot through just over his heart, and when asked why he wasn't killed, seeing he was shot over his heart, replied, "My heart was in my mouth." Many are the times I felt thus. I wanted to say something but was afraid to try it. Once in a meeting I made an effort to rise and say something, but was so scared that I dropped down on the bench so hard that I shook the house. They laughed at me so much that many times I wished to get out and leave the building.

But I kept on trying to do something, and one night they called on me to make a talk in a Mission. I jumped up and literally ran down the aisle and when I jumped to the platform commenced speaking as fast as I could because it appeared to me that when I stopped the devil would cheat me, and my determination was to do something. From then until now I cannot remember one word that was said, but it must have been all right for they appointed me to lead the next prayer meeting on the outer edge of the city at a place called "Slab Town."

The prayer meeting night came and for it I had spent much time in prayer. For a week my prayer had been that I would go through with it and live. That morning mother fixed my lunch for me and about daylight I left for work, but didn't go to my carpenter's job. I went to prayer meeting but it did not commence until night. There was a ten-acre woodland over which I had prayed before nightfall. By night I had got out of the woods into a graveyard and down behind a tombstone praying. To me it appeared that I was nearing the place where they would, have to put me in a grave when I had got through with the service. But there was a verse of Scripture on that tombstone

which I decided to use for the meeting. But a poor old drunkard" got saved that night and it was a boost to me. I was scared but would not run. My idea of a hero is a man who is scared half .to death, but who refuses to run.

My feeling was that I would die young if I were not rid of that fearful spirit, so going to my pastor I told him that in my heart there was a struggle which I felt was not one a Christian ought to have. I related to him how it would rise up and make me fearful. This pastor was the ugliest man I ever saw, it seemed to me, but he got uglier than ever as he drawled out: "Brother John, we all have that, and will have it as long as we live." What consolation from a man supposed to lead God's people out of the Egypt of sin into the Canaan of holiness! "Brother John" got rid of it about two or three weeks later, and then they got rid of "Brother John."

We were trying to resurrect a dead church (what a job!) and I went out into the woods to pray. Finding a pretty, mossy place I dropped to my knees and commenced praying. But a voice seemed to whisper to me, "Why don't you pray for yourself to get sanctified?" That started me to praying for myself and the longer I prayed the louder it got. I tell you, I got away from the devil that day. People who passed by looked out among the tree, to see what was going on, but that didn't stop me. I prayed and prayed, and then prayed some more. It appeared to me that the woods were on fire; it looked like the treetops had caught fire. The day of my Pentecost had come and I was sanctified wholly. My shouting and praising God ruined all that pretty moss, but Glory to God, I feel the fire burning yet! Man-fear was gone. Timidity was gone. Since then I have made lots of blunders and I feel my inability and know my needs better than anyone else knows them. But, thank God, I haven't been afraid to try to do what He has wanted me to do since that time.

Why will any Christian try to work for God without the Holy Ghost? The Baptism with the Holy Ghost is God's provision for Christians that they may succeed in the Christian life. No Christian can be what he should be without obedience to the Divine injunction, "Tarry ye until ye be endued with the Holy Ghost." "Ye shall have power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." I shall forever praise God for the blessed Holy Spirit which He gave me.

Perhaps I would never have preached the Gospel if I had not got sanctified. Some will argue that "Holiness limits a man's usefulness" but I am sure that it has broadened mine. Mine has been the privilege of preaching the Gospel from ocean to ocean, and from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, while some who have rejected holiness have never got out of a chicken's range from home. Holiness gives us both a Clean heart and power for service. What a great blessing! How can you reject it!

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## 05 -- A CALL TO PREACH

In God's Divine plan I believe that He has chosen vessels for specific work. The ministry is more than a profession: it is a "holy calling." A man is foolish to go into the ministry as he would into a profession such as Law, Medicine, or Teaching. He should be sure of God's call upon him. To me it appears that many fathers and mothers have ruined the life's work of their children by pushing them into the ministry without a call from God, when they would have been a greater

power for good, perhaps, as substantial laymen. A man that is sure of his position is hard to be moved by tests and trials that are certain to arise in a preacher's life. That was one of Paul's forts. He was conscious of the Divine Call.

From childhood I realized a call from God to work in the ministry. In my most wicked days I seemed to feel that if I obeyed God it would mean my being a preacher. I have expressed that opinion and have then gone away wondering how it would be possible for me to preach without education or training, and besides, I was very backward and timid. As a child I would preach to the children, and while we had no books in those days, we nevertheless, used chips for song books. As they would sing I would use a barrel for a pulpit. Standing in the barrel with my head barely above it I would speak on chickens, birds, cattle, and other natural things. I knew nothing of the great love of God or of religion. A preacher usually preaches what he knows, I have discovered, and some of them know very little about God. One sad calamity happened one day when the barrel turned over and spilled the preacher, and the service ended in confusion while the preacher went home in tears. This was not mimicry, as I did not attend church and did not know how they did. It seemed to be a very part of myself. I believe God had His hands on me then, but oh, how near I came to being ruined by sin. Thus I almost missed the calling of God.

How I wish that we had more men that felt, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." In those days I would preach the funeral of everything that died about the place -- rats, chickens, and ducks. Once a pet duck of ours died and I preached its funeral. The message was so stirring that the children cried until I had to stop preaching. To us children its death brought a sad day; it was one of our best pets. As those days come back to me now, I think surely God was dealing with my own childish heart. How necessary it is for parents to know God and to understand how He deals with children! As soon as I got to God the old-time feeling of a call to preach came back to me with fresh power. I may not know much, but I know one thing: God called me to preach. Bless His name! My desire is to obey that call, and be obedient to the heavenly vision.

When I see so many fakes and "tramp preachers," so many that are giving up the ministry, I do thank God for a definite call that He gave me, and for the seal that He has put on my ministry. I have seen men out of the work when they claimed to have a Divine call, and have asked some of them what they were doing, only to have them tell me: "Nothing." The saddest spectacle on earth is a preacher doing nothing, claiming the call of God on his heart. Money is the god that called a great many, who have commercialized the pulpit. I believe in a preacher being paid, but if conditions should get so bad that he did not get much pay he should preach anyway, because God has called him to do it.

I knew a pastor of a church that paid him eight hundred dollars salary and another church offered him a thousand dollars. He said that he felt called of God to go there. Another church offered him eleven hundred dollars to be its pastor and he said that God had called him to go there. The first church which he had left then offered him twelve hundred dollars a year to come back to them, and he said that God had called him back to them. You can easily see what his "god" was. Be sure that God has called you and then stick to it. Live or die, sink or swim, survive or perish; yet God will always take care of you in the pathway of duty.

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## Entering the Ministry

I suppose that as he looks back on it, one of the most amusing incidents of every preacher's life is his first sermon. Mine is no exception. I shall never forget it. An appointment was made for me way out in the mountains, and plenty of time given for preparation. But it seemed to me that all a preacher needed was a good text, so I searched and searched and finally decided to use, "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment." Since the service was a forenoon one, my subject and text may not have been very appropriate, but it seemed too good a one to slip by, so I used it.

Finally the day came, and I secured an old horse whose name ought to have been Napoleon, for he was "bony part". As no buggy harness was available it became necessary to use plow gears, and with trace chains, a rickety old buggy and a long blacksnake whip we set out for the place of meeting. It was indeed musical to hear the rattle of the trace chains and the creaking of the buggy, especially when going down a hill. Imagine my surprise on arriving at the place to see the grove full of buggies and wagons and horses, and the house was packed. My heart fluttered so much that it appeared that I was about to develop heart trouble. Can you imagine how a young preacher would feel as he walked into a church for his first sermon, clothed in a home-made shirt, no tie and his pants not pressed, and about four hundred pairs of eyes focused on him? And to add to my chagrin, as I stepped into the pulpit a giggle went up from many in the congregation.

They sang and prayed and the long-looked-for moment came, the hour for my first sermon. I arose to read my text and didn't know where to start. I felt like the Irishman who was digging a well and whose wife was helping him haul the dirt out of the well. A mistake caused it to fall in on him and she waited for a word from him. It delayed a while and she asked him if he were killed. His reply was, "No, but I am knocked speechless." I was almost speechless. At last I talked a little and perspired a lot, and brought the service to a conclusion. How glad I was to drive out of sight of that crowd. Really, it took me days to get over my first sermon. For a time it was a question whether I would ever try it again. But the second time I tried it the blessing of God was on me and I got much encouragement out of the service.

Soon after I was sanctified I happened to attend a District Conference of the Methodist Church at which forty-five preachers were present. Although I was not licensed to preach at that time, they asked me to preach to that Conference. I went to it and preached like they were all en route to hell, talking to them as if they were a bunch of sinners. God seemed to bless the effort and they cried. One of them offered me all the money he had -- one penny. From their reports these poor fellows were certainly having hard going of it.

One privilege which I esteemed in those days was that of working with Rev. L. B. Compton, who was a power for God. He was a spiritual giant, fearless and mighty in prayer. We had many hard-fought battles in those days, and, while I had no education, I was preaching to people who had no better advantages than I had. In fact, it appears likely that we lay more stress on our educational qualifications today than we do on the baptism with the Holy Ghost. When we run our preachers all through the same machine they will all be like axe handles: look and act alike. I believe in training, and believe that a trained man can do more, all things being equal, than an

untrained man, but I do know men who have taken the Course of Study and who met all the requirements for ordination, yet they were failures, apparently, in God's work. On the other hand, I know some who never got anywhere much in the Course of Study, never got along well enough to be ordained, yet they were powerful in the work.

I wish that we might come to the place where faithfulness would be recognized as one of the qualifications for ordination. When a man breaks out of the old rut and is not like other preachers it gives people a change that is wholesome. I have given myself to reading and study, and have read most of the current holiness literature, and have worked with some strong men and have associated with some wonderful saints who have greatly helped me. I like the motto of the Salvation Army: "Yon may be down, but you are never out." Rise above your environments; overcome your handicaps; make your disappointments into "His" appointments.

When the Holy Ghost is in you He will make your failures and blunders a blessing. I know one who cannot speak a sentence without making grammatical errors, but he lives under the anointing of God and can move a whole church full of people when he talks or prays.

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## 06 -- A MOUNTAIN MISSIONARY

What may be said here about the mountain people is not said in a critical spirit. I am one of them myself and am proud of it. The purest Anglo-Saxon blood flows in their veins. These people of the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina were not educated in those days; they had their peculiarities and spoke in a strange way. With their long whiskers and homespun clothes and rough manners you had to live among them to know them and to understand how to preach to them. Among them there are some of the finest characters to be found anywhere. Once these people are saved you do not have to pet and pamper them to keep them saved. They are not used to that. They had to rough it from childhood and they take things as they come their way.

If these folk love you they would die for you, and if they do not like you, it will soon be found out. They hate a coward, and if one ever showed the "white feather" he might as well leave, for he was sure to be sent away. The purest air that a man ever breathed is in those big mountains, and as good water as one could ever find to quench his thirst flows from under those big hills. I get homesick to preach again in those old log cabins and the old log churches and schoolhouses. Those were great days to me. Do you ask me who sent me out and hacked me up? God did it. He took care of me. I did not hang around Conference to get a church that some one else built up and then ask as my first question: "How much do they pay?" I went because God had called me to this field. The first year after I was saved I worked to get money to make restitution so as to be able to face the world without anything to pull me down.

While paying all my old scores I held a service somewhere every night that year, very often walking seven miles for the service and the same distance home afterwards, and then work ten hours the next day. Going back into these mountains I would preach and pray until midnight. We did not serve God by the clock then, and a service that didn't run three hours was a "poor service." I remember going way up on a mountain one night to have a service in an old dilapidated church.

The house was packed and the "moonshiners" who made and sold illicit liquor feared that the meeting would hurt their business, so set about to break up the service. Finding that they could not scare us off the place they went out and got poles to use as "pry poles", and tried to overturn the church house while we preached. The old house would rock back and forth and we would preach and pray that much harder. God surely did bless us there. One old moonshiner got converted, tore up his still and set it on a stake by the road with a sign on it saying: "I have salvation and have gone out of business."

There were three places where we had regular services each week. We worked and prayed until God gave some wonderful revivals in these mountains, some of the best I have ever been in. In one of these, an old abandoned church, there were ninety who got sanctified (and they really got the blessing, too). How it would cheer me to hear those old saints shout the victory once more! One old mountaineer got sanctified one night and I heard him coming a long way off. Every step his shout got louder, and how it echoed through those mountains! I heard him coming and thought to myself: "There'll be trouble here tonight." Soon he burst into the building. I can see him yet. He was a giant of a man with long brown beard and his eyes shining like diamonds. I think he was the happiest man I ever saw. What a service we had that night! Although that was almost thirty-five years ago that dear old man is pressing along up the way yet. He is getting old but the old-time fire still burns in his soul. The next day after this man was sanctified he went to town and as no one had told him that it was wrong to use tobacco, he laid in his week's supply. It took a dollar's worth to last a week. As he started back home he put a big chew in his mouth and all of a sudden it flew out of his mouth.

He thought it was strange and so put in another chew. It blew out again, and that was enough for him. He said: "Well, bless God, if I can't chew you I'll throw you into the river." Never again did he want it or touch it. I believe if people would really get the victory they would not want tobacco.

We had another revival at the other preaching point. God did bless us there. The crowds got so large that they pressed the walls of the church out and the sleepers slipped off the sill and let the floor fall down. It looked as if the church might fall in, but the service went right on without interruption. The enemy fought us and the persecution was strong, but some got through to victory.

One day I found a man of that community in a ditch. He was so drunk that I had to hire a man to haul him home. He was too drunk to talk to me. But the next day I went to see him and, while he was sobering up, he was not in much of a mood to visit. I stayed all day and talked and prayed with him. When dinner time came I ate some turnip greens out of a half-plate. It was a drunkard's home, but before I left he got wonderfully saved. I was at a place some time ago and up came a well-dressed man to speak to me, and taking my hand he said: "Hello! John." I confessed that he had the best of me, and he said: "This is Greel Taylor." I hugged his neck and asked as to his state. He told me that he still had old-time religion. He was saved nearly thirty-five years ago. I am glad that God can keep us saved. In the last third of a century there have been some great changes, even in the mountain section, but God's grace has never changed any, and bless God, some of those old mountain saints haven't changed, either.

During that first year a preacher took me out and said: "I am interested in you, but if you don't let up you'll soon wear out." Looking full at him I shot back: "I am glad that you are interested in me. I am interested in you, too; and if you don't go to work you'll rust out." Would it not be a delightful way to die: worked to death for the cause of God!

No doubt we wasted lots of energy, for we preached like the Irishman played the fiddle: with main strength and awkwardness. After all these years it still stays with me, and instead of wearing out my weight has gone from one hundred thirty pounds to two hundred seventy-five. Maybe I would have worn out but God was running the power house.

In a big camp meeting some time ago a preacher told me that I walked too much while I preached. My defense was that if I did like some, I would not be worth any more than they were. I have to be myself, and do not know anyone whom I had rather be than myself. At the end of the first year we had conducted three hundred and sixty-five services, worked every day, and had paid up all the old debts and had seen scores of souls saved and sanctified. Some have asked me how I got up my messages. To tell you the truth, I didn't get them up, I got them down.

I would work all day and pray as I worked. At noon I would eat my lunch and spend the rest of the time studying the Bible, for I made it a rule to carry one with me. It has been my life's companion. My sermons may not have measured up to man's ideals, but they have been the best that I could do, and God has helped me and has set His seal on them. Many have been the times that I have come in from the service tired and knowing that I had a hard day's work ahead of me on the morrow, but before retiring I would sit down to read a few passages from that dear old Book and the next morning at daybreak I would still be reading it.

The Bible has been so precious to me. I have kissed it in the darkness of the night and said that I wished it were possible for me to be reading it, but they had no lamps in many of those mountain homes, and they went to bed with the chickens and got up with them. But, strange as it may seem to you, I have gone about over those mountains, carrying a lamp with me so that I might be able to read the Bible at night. Those were care-free and happy days to me. Nothing was in my mind but to please God. I never thought of fine clothes or money, and I could get out and walk from appointment to appointment with no expense attached to this mode of travel. But as I look backward praises go up from my heart to God for those blessed days.

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## 07 -- CUTTING THE SHORE LINES

Having worked a whole year and got my restitution made, and spent each night in serving God, I got laid off my carpenter's job until some needed lumber came to the site. A preacher friend of mine was running a meeting a number of miles away, so during the time of waiting for my lumber to arrive, I decided to go and attend the meeting for a few days. Making ready I set out and upon arriving found the preacher very sick and praying for God to send someone along to continue the meeting. Upon seeing me he began rejoicing and saying that surely God had sent me that way. Desiring to be of whatever service I could, I began to preach and he got worse and it fell to me to close the meeting at the set time. But, as he had another meeting and would not be able to go to it,



he asked me to hold that one for him. Taking the old Gospel tent to this place I opened tip and held the meeting, and never did go back to see if the lumber came or if they desired my services longer. I never made any inquiry about my carpenter's tools, and do not know what became of them.

During the first meeting the devil got stirred and set in to break up the meeting. One night I counted seventy-five pistol shots about the tent. Men had to guard it. One night a mob came to burn the tent, and a battle royal ensued. Some of the mob got shot, but none were seriously wounded. But in spite of this mob God graciously gave us a glorious revival. At this place a young man sat on a porch across the street from the tent and picked a banjo and made sport while I preached, saying that he would draw the crowd away from the tent meeting. I preached on "Hell" one night and he came under the tent. Seeing that he was pale with conviction and under an awful burden, I stepped to him and invited him to the altar. But he ran out from under the tent, got to the road and fell. He uttered a scream that was terrifying, and when some of the workers got to him the blood was streaming from his mouth and nose. Taking him to the house some of them went over and asked if they might have me to come and pray for him, but his reply was: "It's too late now, for as I left that tent the Holy Spirit left me. I am doomed." He died without God.

The second meeting was great. Some souls got saved that kept true. During this meeting I was shaving in an old log house, and had no razor except one sent out as a premium to some who used Atbuckle Coffee. The razor was pulling the beard so that I told those in the room if they didn't wish to see me make an ugly face that they had better go into the next room. An old woman who was there said that if it would make me look any worse than what I usually did she believed she would go. They have a keen sense of humor. As a love offering for this meeting which I held they gave me a wagon load of pumpkins, and as I was unmarried and had no way to use them, they were given to the preacher who owned the tent. I was left out, but charged it all up to profit and loss and will get my pay by and by.

Going out into the mountains, I would often be gone for months. Then some of my friends would gather about me and ask how much money I got on that trip, and when I would tell them they would look so long-faced and pitiful that they seemed to want to say, "Poor fellow, he is wasting his life." One day I decided to tell them a different story. So the next time I told them that I was getting about two thousand dollars, but hastened to add (when I saw how they took it) that a preacher did not get all he got in cash, but that he got lots of it in glory and satisfaction. And when that is figured in I am a well-paid preacher. They never again bothered to ask me about my salary.

The next trip took me into the western part of the State where I held a number of meetings, one of which was for a Congregational preacher. The house was packed and the aisles were filled with hungry hearts. Opening up on tobacco one night I heard an awful commotion back of me and turning to see what it was all about saw that old tobacco-chewing preacher who, trying to get out at the window, had fallen backwards into a lumber pile. It surely was a comical scene. But the meeting kept on in spite of it, and every bench in the house became a mourner's bench that night and God sweetly swept a number into the Kingdom. One of these, a precious girl, got the victory that night and a short time later died shouting the praises of God. That preacher decided to close the meeting, but he assumed the responsibility for it, and died a little later. My hope and prayer is that he got right with God before he died.

On our way back home from that meeting we had a great service on the train. The conductor said: "It looks like the Holiness people have taken the train." A band of saints had come down to get us to go to Sylvia for a meeting, and surely God did give us a time there. The crowds got so large that the house would not hold them, so some took a part of the roof off the house so that they could climb on top and see and hear. One night as seven were praying through, a mob dynamited a carriage and ruined it. The devil got stirred sure enough. I went to Asheville and got Compton, and we returned with a big new tent. We opened up on the devil, and the foes cut that tent down and split it sixty-nine times from the top to the bottom. But, undaunted, the next morning he and I got on top of that canvas and praised God. Compton was leaping and shouting and rejoicing in God.

This scene got hold of the town and they came in and helped us to sew up the tent and we put it up and continued the meeting. The town hired men to guard the tent for us at night. The mob returned that night to burn it, but the guards drove them away and God gave us a mighty time of victory and glory. It was a great revival.

A poor girl got saved in that meeting and a traveling salesman's wife made fun of her. A few days later this same woman who scoffed at the girl's religion was in the great New Market train wreck at New Market, Tenn., where seventy-seven people were killed. This woman had her head cut from her body. It is dangerous to mock at salvation!

Compton went North for some meetings and left Uncle Henry Plemmons and me with the tent to go to the head of Pigeon River, where we pitched the tent right under Big Pisgah Mountain. The only place we could find to locate the tent was a little island out in the river. A Baptist preacher made fun of us and said that if he were shooting preachers he wouldn't shoot at me. But before that meeting was over I had shot him with the truth.

No one asked us to go home with them so we slept on the tent platform, covered with a piece of the tent curtain, and used the river for a wash basin, and ate cheese and crackers for a week; and had to fight the devil and the hogs. The hogs tried to take the tent. The seats were just high enough from the ground to be moved by the backs of the hogs as they would start running under them and rub against them, and disarrange them for us. This action at night would make a weird noise and often disturbed our slumber. It was rather risky for us to live there thus, but God's eye was on us. The snakes were plentiful and dangerous, but nothing harmed us. One night we saw a man's head peer through the tent curtains and as he walked away he muttered out with an oath: "I'll be back here tonight to burn this tent." But God frustrated this man's plans. In this place there were one hundred and fifty either saved or sanctified. Some of them are as true to God to this day as the needle is to the pole. Here was the place that people came for miles to see the "lamps" we had, which were the old-fashioned gasoline torches, but to them they were a curiosity.

One night a man asked us to go home with him. We asked how far it was. He said: "Well, it's just up the creek a ways." But when we got there it was just ten miles over the mountains. I thought we would never get there, but we did, found a typical mountain home with lots of hospitality, plenty of fresh water, and some good, old-time ginger bread, and plenty of fresh air. What a trip and what a wonderful time we had! Yet I wonder today what some of my nice little preacher friends would have done in a home like that! We were one of the family and took things

as they were, looked at the cattle and hogs, and the five or six hound dogs, talked religion, prayed, shouted and had a good time. One will never get anywhere making fun of the people and the customs of those to whom he preaches. Give them the Gospel.

The old fellow who was going to burn the tent is a good Christian today. His wife is a saint on earth, and great were the results of that meeting where we would not run from the devil's crowd. Some who got saved or sanctified have crossed over the river, but God knew best for them. You may ask: "How much money did you get out of that meeting?" I was about to forget that part of it, but you see. those folk had no way of getting money then; they were poor yet deserving people. God bless them! They are as pure gold as was ever dug out of any mine. The finances of that meeting were too small to be considered, but what is better I shall meet many of them at the Gate when I reach the City.

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## 08 -- WHY BATTLE WITH FREE-MASONRY

During the course of the wonderful revival on the head of Pigeon River where by the wonderful workings of God's power there were one hundred and fifty who prayed through and one hundred and fifty who quit the use of tobacco, I took dinner with a preacher. One of his questions to me was why we opposed secrecy. When my reply was that I could not harmonize it with religion or common sense and felt that it was opposed to good government, he got so mad at me that he called me a liar there at his table. I then asked him if they didn't kill William Morgan and if John Quincy Adams didn't say that a common cannibal would blush to take the oath of Free-Masonry. He ran out of the house and left me alone. But during the afternoon when he had time for more sober reflection he sent me a nice shirt and some collars with his compliments. He saw his mistake. But my observation is that a man with a good argument need not get angry; anger in an argument proves weakness.

I feel that the Lord knew best when He condemned secrecy. It is a form of religion, a man-made form, a substitute for the religion of Jesus Christ.

The old tent was moved to Clyde, N. C., where Compton joined me and there the fight centered about secrecy. The town got so stirred that matters looked rather dangerous, and for a time it did look as if our lives were in danger. However, we offered no compromise and fought it out on that line. An amusing thing took place in the midst of such a situation when one old man whose aim was to pour oil on the troubled waters got up in meeting and said that Masonry had been the golden cup in God's hands in leading the Israelites out of Egypt, but that now it was like the churches: in a backslidden condition. Our next query to him was if the order didn't kill Morgan. He admitted that it may have, but explained that it was very vile at that time. We countered with a question as to why Jesus' name was not mentioned in the lodge. He came back with the defense that it was older than Jesus. And not to be outdone we returned to the killing of Morgan and asked him what had been done about that murder. He felt secure in his answer: the lodge had been reorganized since that time, and now it was all right. But we had one other question to ask him, and so we asked, "If it has been reorganized since the killing of William Morgan, why did they not put

the name of Jesus in it?" That was the straw that broke the camel's back. All the pent-up fury broke loose, they began shooting pistols and raved terribly, but we continued to preach Holiness.

In this meeting God gave me a message on the text: "He brought us out that he might bring us in." The postmaster of the place who was out for the message stated that it did him a lot of good as he had often wondered what became of the children of Israel, for the majority of the preachers who spoke on them got them out into the wilderness and left them there. How true, but how sad! But the result of the meeting was a new church and numbers prayed through to precious victory.

There were plenty of battles with secrecy in those days. One night I heard them plotting my death. How I laid them out for that! After a week of preaching, no one would invite me home with him. Once while preaching in a South Carolina town I had to threaten to reveal the secrets of the lodge system to quiet the mob, and when I gave the distress signal they quieted down and no more was heard of the matter.

Much of the persecution is dodged today because the wickedness of men's lives and their idols are not bothered by the preachers. Paul's cries against Diana of the Ephesians divided his crowd, and while some believed the truth, others were clamoring for his life's blood. But praise God! they had a revival that stirred the town. Nowadays about all the dust that is raised reminds one of a little dry-weather whirlwind that flares up for a few feet and then dies down.

Let us get into the fight; let the Devil get stirred. I believe that if we had more persecution we would have a healthier type of religion. It was in the days of the martyrs that we had the best and purest types of Christians.

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## 09 -- IN LABORS ABUNDANT

We went far and near in the mountains telling the old, old story. It was considered a shame to wait for a promise of good entertainment and so much money in those days. Prayer was made and when it was felt that an opening came we pitched the battle regardless of the cost and sacrifice and sufferings involved.

"Uncle" Henry Plemmons and I went to South Turkey Creek and put up our tent and surely it was a "battle". They threw rocks at the tent, shot at it, and did everything possible to scare us away, but we battled on. Our stopping place was four miles from the tent, and we had to walk the entire distance for every service. But some prayed through in this meeting and our remuneration was one dollar in cash and a tanned groundhog skin. Not a complaint was heard, for we felt that we were in Divine order.

From this place the tent was taken across the mountains to Beaver Dam and just as we were getting ready for the meeting a mob burned the tent, for they were determined to stop us. This was the second tent which had been burned in this section. The anger was so great that they shot Brother Harley Pressley, but didn't kill him. During the meeting God saved and sanctified Brother

Dock Pressley and through the years he has led his entire family to God and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canton, N. C., is the outcome of it all.

Think of it! Service every night the year round and some days I have preached as high as four times on the streets. For fifteen years I kept an account of my labors and found that my average was one sermon a day for fifteen years. I then quit counting, but I didn't quit preaching. During the time that I was the pastor of Old Buxton Street Church we would commence our labors on Saturday night and visit every bar-room in the city and distribute tracts with invitations printed on them, urging the people to our church. And after praying and singing in these places, we would go to the bowling alleys where we would do the same type of work. This would be followed by several street meetings and at midnight we would take the group to the red-light sections where we would pray and sing the Gospel story and labor with those who made this their rendezvous. Maybe this would engage our attention until three or four o'clock in the morning on Sunday, but during the day it was quite likely that we would hold four or five services. It took lots of praying to keep up this sort of ministry and many are the cursings we would get for doing this work. But there are souls in glory that God gave us on these rounds. They could have been won in no other way. Today we are not going out into the highways and hedges as God has commanded us.

I have held all-night services and have prayed all night. God alone knows the hours I have spent begging Him for souls. As I prayed atop a mountain one morning before daybreak, my promise to God was that if He would give me souls for my hire and Heaven for my home all my efforts and energy would be His. I have endeavored to keep my part of the promise, and He has given me souls and I have the assurance of Heaven. He must have my whole life! I cannot stop. There is something within me that pushes me onward. I have no confidence in a lazy Christian (so-called).

My labors have taken me into all kinds of odd preaching places. I take every opportunity I have to preach whether it be in a jail, chain-gang, hospital, or on the streets, in a tent, in a schoolhouse, depot, waiting-room, or wherever. Once while waiting on a train in a rural section some folks asked me if I would preach to them while we waited on the train which was behind its schedule. My answer was that if they wanted me to preach to them they might gather outside. The ticket agent got interested and said that there would be no need of going outside; just preach inside the room. God honored the service and almost every seat in the waiting-room became a mourners' bench. The delay of that train did not prove irksome to the people. God used it to His glory, and to their salvation.

Some of my preaching has been done in the old log cabins of the mountains, and as I have stood before the fire, with my back to it as I faced the people, my legs would be almost blistered. My zeal to preach has led me to preach standing up, sitting down, and even from a cot on which I had to lie down while preaching. The devil never did outdo me in this. Often I have preached while propped on crutches while suffering attacks of rheumatism. I have had to preach in the dark, but what did that matter! God was with us. It was as much an opportunity to declare Jesus and His love in these places as from a camp meeting platform. God has called me to preach, I feel it, and know it; therefore, I must work at it. May God help that my work shall never stop as long as I have life in me. I want to hear Him say: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the

joys of thy Lord." Then, I must do well, be faithful, serve and suffer while here in this life His promises are yea and amen and cannot fail.

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## 10 -- EVANGELIZING IN THE MOUNTAINS

We went to Dillsboro, N. C., for a revival, and the battle started. The devil fought us hard in this meeting and tried in every way to get us locked out of places to conduct the meeting, but in this he failed. The smallpox broke out and it looked as if the whole town had it. People would come to meeting with the smallpox broke out all over them. The home in which I stayed had a number of cases in it, and the town was placed in quarantine; no one in it could leave, and strangers could not come into town. But all restrictions were lifted within the city, so the meeting went on. As it continued the power increased.

On Sunday night the Methodist preacher came down to fill his appointment at the place and treated us with indifference. We had to step aside for him, as the services were in his church. A holiness man had built the house and they hadn't paid him for it. He had a laborer's lien on it, and they feared that, if we were denied the use of the building for the services, he would close in on them for the money. This preacher used Romans 1:16 for a text: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth." He told us of the power of steam, the power of electricity, and finished his little sermonette in short order. He was confused, so turned the meeting over to me. This was my opportunity, so I told them I didn't know about steam and electricity but I did know about the power of the Holy Ghost. God surely helped me, and the fire fell. A man jumped over the front seat screaming for mercy. The people ran down the aisles crying for help from God and the scene which followed cannot be described on paper. One would have to witness it to get any idea of what it was like. The preacher left the place in high gear and I have never seen him since that time. But a few months ago I saw his name in the newspaper and it was suffixed by the title: "Doctor of Divinity." Unless he has improved greatly since the night he left that revival in such confusion and embarrassment, Divinity would die if it needed a doctor and he was the one for whom they sent.

After the epidemic of smallpox was over and the meeting closed, I received an invitation to go farther into the mountains and preach at a church. A friend of mine who owned a livery stable saddled two good horses and we set out for the place, only to arrive and find that the doors had been locked against us. They meant business for the doors were fastened with trace chains, locked with heavy padlocks. A large crowd had gathered. It was very dark; no lights of any sort were to be had, so I got out in the road and began to preach to the Gospel-hungry souls. But the enemy was not going to stop without a struggle, so some one began shooting at me. The bullets whizzed by me, but God was with us and they all missed me. I jumped up and shouted: "Glory to God, you missed me, you can't hit me until God gets through with me." The glory of God fell on that people there in the road and they got wonderfully blessed. That service in the road that dark night was like a great camp meeting.

As we drove homeward that night they rocked us, and my friend's horse was young and shy and became so excited that it ran away with him. My horse was old and gentle, so I turned and

rode in the direction from which the rocks were coming, and when I got close to the rock-throwers cried out: "I hope God saves you fellows." One of them impudently called out to me: "You go to \_\_\_\_." But in a flash I cried back at him: "You are the ones that are going to that place. I am on my way to Heaven." As I rode into the angry crowd they scattered like mules on a stampede. A few weeks later one of the mob got saved in a meeting which I was holding a little distance away and confessed his part of the opposition and begged forgiveness. I expect souls to meet us in Heaven from that revival.

This was late in the Fall of the year, but a woman took pity on me and decided to make me look more like a preacher than I did, so she bought me a long summer coat. It was of thin material and reached to my knees. To nay outfit she added a fiat top straw hat on the order of the old-fashioned sailor hats. I must have presented a dignified appearance in that ensemble. But after I got away from the place I had the coat cut shorter. It was taken off right to the pockets, so it made me funnier looking than ever. Many a free laugh I must have furnished the people with nay short-cut coat and straw hat that had to be worn out of season.

My next evangelistic journey took me into the mountains north of Asheville where I started a meeting in the Union Church. But when I arrived in that neck of the woods I made a mistake and sat down on the steps of the Methodist Episcopal Church, thinking I had arrived at the right place. But an official of the church lived next door and had heard that the revival was to commence at the Union Church. He proceeded to tell me something, and concluded his exhortation by ordering me off the church grounds. His talk was so mean that I lost confidence in his religion right there. My apologies were offered him. I tried to explain that it was a mistake -- my sitting on his church steps -- and that I was very sorry and wished forgiveness for the affair, as it must have been a very grave offense to him to see me there on their church steps. But the devil raged, and was assisted by a lot of church members. These folk would walk around and shoot their guns near the church, but the battle was pressed just that much harder. After a week of preaching conviction began to settle down on the folk. I got so hoarse that it was hardly possible for me to speak above a whisper, because I was wearing an old rubber collar. Don't ever wear one of them, preachers, it will ruin the glands of your throat.

The meeting had to be closed and I returned to Asheville. To me this was a step I could not understand. It was on the eve of a regular break, it seemed, but I had to do all the preaching and praying, and conduct the meetings without any singing. Three weeks later I started out to renew the battle at this place and met a man who was coming after me to hold a meeting in the church from which the man had driven me. But it didn't matter to me. I opened up on the devil with all my grins. It got very cold and snowed, but the folk came to the services, and ninety people got saved or sanctified in the meeting.

My pants gave out and I didn't know what to do. I had to borrow a pair to use over the last Sunday of the meeting. They were of light seersucker material, and made for summer use. They fitted me so tight that I was afraid to move in them for fear they would burst open. The pockets gaped wide open and I was so embarrassed that I did not preach as usual, as I knew there would be a serious wreck if I didn't go carefully. One good sister spoke to me and said: "Why did you stand so still today while you preached? That didn't seem natural to you." My pants were the center of attraction in that church that day.

The cash proceeds from that meeting amounted to \$2.26, and an old Methodist Episcopal preacher who was with me took half of that. We left, walking. Our next appointment was at Georgetown, N. C. But the question was whether we could get there or not. My pants were beyond use in a revival meeting. But I was determined not to let the devil cheat us out of the meeting, so my decision was to go on and if necessary I would preach with my overcoat on. It was not very good, but it would hide the holes in my pants. As we journeyed down the road we felt led to stop in a home and pray with the people. God wonderfully blessed this step. The husband was an old man who had been in bed. His wife and daughter and son-in-law got saved, as well as himself, and they gave us the grand total of \$4.50, the most money we had seen for a long time.

With this amount we each decided to buy us a pair of pants. They were cheap cotton ones. But the Methodist preacher could not find any that would fit him, so had to be content with a pair that was about four inches too short for him. He surely looked funny in them, but they were fine for use in wading the snow and mud as we had to do in those days.

But when we got to Georgetown they had locked us out of the Methodist Church, then out of the Baptist Church and finally denied us the privilege of preaching in the schoolhouse. An old woman had a little store and offered us the use of it. One night while preaching there it caught on fire and we had to quit preaching and fight the fire. There was but one lamp for the place, and it was owned by a man who used tobacco. One night, when I rapped tobacco, he reached for his light and walked out, leaving us in the dark. Some got blessed and the battle waxed warm. Our next move was to a schoolhouse, and although we had a large crowd each night, no one invited us home. So the two of us decided to make a long journey into Yancey county. As we had to walk and the way was muddy, it was a real job. As we marched through the mud carrying our suitcases, there would drive by us sinful people in fine carriages. The old preacher would ask me: "Why do we have to walk in the mud while sinners who care nothing for God ride in fine carriages?" It dawned on me, and I asked him if he had ever read the Scripture: "I saw servants riding on horses and princes walking like servants on the earth." He replied that he had read it but didn't know what it meant. I got some consolation from thinking that it meant the servants of the devil rode while the princes of Heaven walked.

While back in the mountains proper I met Rev. W. B. Clubb for the first time, and from that day until the day of his death we were great friends. He surely was a diamond dug out of the Blue Ridge Mountains. They closed us out of a church near his home so I went to visit him. He was having it hard and with no money to use for his family. He was the cause of my getting into the Wesleyan Methodist Church several years later.

Our next visit was to a place called Pumpkin Flat. Here we rested a few days and preached in an old log house. From here we resumed our journey into Yancey county's mountains. The road was muddy and my preacher friend slipped off a log and sprained both ankles and it was all he could do to walk. I had to carry his suitcase, as well as my own, and it was a load, with all the mud: The mud was our biggest load, as most of our clothes were on our backs.

But imagine our reception upon our arrival at this remote point! The man who had insisted that we come to this place denied having ever seen us, and by all that was good and bad affirmed



that our paths had never crossed. We had tramped mud all day, and I had lugged those two suitcases and the poor preacher had hobbled this distance. We had no dinner, no place to go -- knew not a soul -- and the man at whose request we had come not only denied knowing us but, when his friends began jeering him for inviting preachers into such a place, ran off and left us alone. There was nothing to do but set out and walk back to Pumpkin Flat.

Arriving back there we found that the people with whom we had stayed had gone away for a visit. But that didn't daunt us; we went in and took possession of the place, built a fire, and started a search for food. All we could find was a pot of cooked pumpkin, without seasoning or flavoring, and two hard biscuits. But this diet went well that night, for we had a good appetite after that day's journey.

My tooth had begun aching, and I felt that the journey in the weather was bringing me down with la grippe, so I made a pot of red pepper tea, and went to bed to toss and groan all that long, cold night with the toothache. Early the next morning I arose and walked twenty-five miles to Asheville to have the tooth extracted.

But that night it was my happy privilege to get back into another service at old Buxton Street Church. My! that was like Heaven to me after my mountain experiences. As I relate this it is with the prayer that some young preacher will read it and be helped by it. Hard knocks and tests develop character, so may God help us to bear them patiently.

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## 11 -- TAKING A WIFE

After I had been preaching for a number of years, it was my privilege one night to meet Miss Cora Merrill in one of the services at old Gasher's Creek Church. She was en route home from Greensboro Bible School. She was a native of Henderson county, N. C., and had been trained in the school of hard knocks. Her mother died when she was but three years old and Cora's life had been a struggle since that time. The times were hard and it was a proposition to make a living on a poor mountain farm. This girl had to plow and haul wood, as a man would; she also split rails and went barefooted until Christmas season. She had found life one round of hard trials, one after another, but God had wonderfully saved her and gloriously sanctified her, and had set her soul aflame with a passion for the lost. She was one of the greatest pray-ers I have ever known.

She was willing to share the hardships of a pioneer preacher's life, so we were married at Hendersonville, N. C., on May 21, 1905, by Rev. H. P. Rich. Our wedding ceremony was held at three o'clock in the afternoon, and I preached that night in the old Academy. Wife and I launched out in life with nothing. I have held my own beautifully ever since. Cora was a good companion, not easily discouraged, and knew how to get hold of God for our needs. She never complained that any hardships through which we passed were too heavy; she never urged me to come home from a battle by saying I had been away too long; and she offered no discouragement to me in my ministry. She stood by me in every conflict and was a real helpmate. Many were our hardships and many were the battles in which we joined hands to fight Satan.

We started housekeeping with two little old bedsteads that had no springs on them. I had paid five dollars for them. They had just straw-ticks thrown over slats. I attended court for eleven days as a witness against a mob that tried to break up a meeting for me, The judge offered me the opportunity of saying what punishment I thought should be given them. I asked him to give them a chance to make men of themselves. So he tacked a fine of \$257.00 against them, including the costs of the case, and let them go. That crowd surely respected me for that and said that if it had not been for me they would have gone to the penitentiary for the offense.

For this witness service I was paid \$11.30, with which I bought a cook stove. Although it was the least cook stove I ever saw, it served the purpose. My mother had given us two pillows; and, as Ada White was laboring with wife and me in our work, we needed pillows for the second bed, so ours was without pillows. "Where's there's a will there's a way." So we pulled crab grass and stuffed two pillow ticks and had two other pillows.

For three months we ran a Mission at Hendersonville and did not take a collection, but God met every need. God has been with me and has supplied my every need in trials and tests that seemed impossible for me to go through. Bless His name, He never fails!

To this union there were born five sons, our oldest son, George Franklin; John Wesley, our second; our third son, Alfred Burnett; the fourth, Joseph Walter; and our fifth, Willett Merrill.

Cora gave her life a sacrifice for her children. Most of my time after our marriage was spent in evangelistic work and the burden of raising the family fell on her shoulders; but how faithful she was to her charge! How she loved them and prayed for them! They have a rich heritage in the memory of a loving Christian mother. She was a good wife. May "God bless her memory!

We walked together for a quarter of a century. Those were very precious years, though beset with battles and hardships. A preacher needs a wife that can face the problems of life without complaining or murmuring.

When the devil gives a preacher one of these hand-painted, jewel-bedecked flappers for a wife, he has played a practical joke on him, and the preacher is damned before he dies.

One of the saddest days of my life was when Cora went to Heaven. She broke under the strain of taking care of a large family, and I was forced to take pastoral work. Everything was done that we thought possible to save that useful life, but God saw fit to take her to Heaven. I sat by her bed and held her hand and she said: "John, I am going to leave you. The time has come for me to go home. I am sure you will meet me in Heaven." I made my promise, and she said: "I am not uneasy about that, but I am concerned for the boys." Then she continued: "Won't you bring them when you come?" What a charge she left me! I promised to do my best, and I am trying to do it. I must be true to that charge. But she felt her nearness to the crossing and said: "Ask the saints not to pray for me to get well. I want to go."

Rev. A. L. Vess, who was then President of Central College, was at the parsonage where we resided, and he had brought the Quartet from the College near by to sing some Gospel songs for her. They sang two selections and offered prayer. Her face was shining with the glory of God upon

it, and she praised the Lord, saying that she never was more resigned to God's will in her life. Brother Vess said that he never saw such a shine on any face in his life. It was marvelous.

I stood by her bed and praised the Lord and asked Him that she might go without a struggle. She began smiling, pointed upward and with a heavenly smile on her face was gone -- not a struggle. She died triumphantly. We buried her at Colfax, N. C., on Easter Sunday, and to me it seemed that the light of my life had gone out. Not knowing what to do, I wound up my pastoral work as quickly as possible and plunged into evangelistic work again, after putting my two youngest boys in Central College. I almost worked myself to death trying to throw off the burdens that were on me. During this period of sorrow I held quite a number of meetings out in the Middle West.

In many ways life has been like a long dream to me, for God has been so good to me. I have no complaints to make. I have found it "an exceeding good land." Some day the last battle will be fought and I will take my vacation in Heaven. Well, praise the Lord!

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## 12 -- THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF A PIONEER PREACHER'S LIFE

I now desire to return for a few incidents on my pioneer work during my early ministry. During the meeting which we held at the old Academy in Hendersonville, N. C., about thirty years ago, God gave us gracious victory and much good resulted from it. One night while I preached from the Ten Commandments I majored on "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and paid my respects to the devilish divorce habit which is undermining homes and our government. As a result of this, a man's wife confessed to him that she had deceived him, and that she had another husband. He thereupon quit living with her, and that stirred the devil proper. This man's brother (who had two wives himself) got a mob and came to the home where I was staying and informed them that, if I was not out of town by two o'clock the next afternoon, I would be killed. Hearing the conversation, it dawned on me that it was time for me to take a hand in matters. So going to the porch, I told them that I would be there to preach over the next Sunday (this was on Monday) and that if they aimed to kill me, why wait until the next day. My message to that mob was that the devil had never driven me out of town for preaching the truth. The meetings went on all that week, and the next Sunday the mob-leader sat near me while I preached and cried all during the service. When the collection was taken in this revival he took out a handful of change and gave it, and came to me, offering me a room in his house and urging me to come and live with him. The financial proceeds from this meeting enabled me to buy a pair of cheap cotton pants and purchase a railroad ticket to Asheville, N. C., about twenty miles away.

About this time a Baptist preacher, George Davis, got sanctified. He was a firebrand for God and he and I fought many sore and hard battles together for God's glory. A record of the meetings we held together is impossible, but we were on the go for God day and night. We journeyed back into a wild part of the mountains and began a meeting in an old house, where the man of the house at which we stayed was a blessed man of God. He is now in glory. But his wife didn't like us and she made it very evident in her way of treating us. As much as I detested tobacco, I found a piece of it in my coffee one breakfast; she had put it there for spite. The weather was near

zero and we went home from meeting one night to find that she had taken all the cover off the bed on which we slept. Davis and I wrapped up in our overcoats and slept as close together as we could so as to not freeze. My, but it was cold that night! Sometime in the middle of the night she got under conviction for what she had done and awakened her husband and told him about it. He was badly grieved about it, but God surely blessed us that night.

In this same meeting a mob came one night intending to drive us away from the community. They surely were tough-looking customers; some of their whiskers looked like horses' tails. The leader cried: "Boys, rush in and drag them out!" But the blessing of God came on Davis and me until we shouted and jumped all over the house. The word was passed that we hypnotized the people and, while we were shouting the loudest, we ran into the midst of this mob. Their excitement was so great that they ran pell-mell into the near-by thicket like buffaloes on a stampede. Again we found the coast clear, and kept on with the meeting. Surely God will turn things about so that the wrath of man is made to praise Him.

A preacher from Ohio, named D. E. Miller, joined us then at Hendersonville and we had five in our party. We rented a house in the town and opened up for business against the devil and sin. Wife and I slept on the floor, as we had no bedstead to use. Feeling that we needed a tent and that God would be pleased for us to have it, I prayed much over the matter. I got up each morning at five o'clock to lay it before the Lord. Finally I accumulated one-half enough for that tent, and placed an order for it to be shipped to me, with bill of lading attached, and kept praying for the balance of the price. One day we were notified that the tent was in the depot and the bill was in the bank; but we didn't have a penny. We arose as usual at five o'clock and prayed until the glory fell on us. At noon that day a man walked in from a point twelve miles away, and said that he had fifty-five dollars he could let us have on the tent, and stated that if we would come and hold a meeting for them in a place known as "The Dark Corner," a point where the North and South Carolina state line met, he would give me the amount. The agreement was made, and we got the tent and prepared for a season in the field with it.

Our first meeting was in Hendersonville where we had to battle with the Tongues people. One day an old woman and her daughter tried to take the meeting away from us, and when we tried to get them to move back they made more noise than before. The tent was packed and we wished them to know our position on this matter, so I arose and told the congregation that we didn't endorse such teachings and practices as that, and denounced these women and exposed them as living crooked lives. The devil was stirred now! Her husband got out his big knife and walked around the tent and vowed that he would knife us when we came from under the tent. His actions stirred some wicked young men who knew better than some thought they did, so these boys got out their knives and ran the old fellow off, threatening him, if he so much as touched us.

I preached on "Hell" in this meeting and a group of colored folk who were sitting at the back of the tent got under such conviction that they dashed right along to the altar. Some felt that inasmuch as this had happened ill the South it might ruin the meeting, but it did not. The races surely got mixed about the altar that service. God surely gave us a gracious service. One of the colored men who got sanctified in the meeting became one of our best supporters and God later called him into the ministry.

Along with the serious things, there were some others which amuse. An old hen began laying in a box on our back porch. She belonged to a neighbor. When we informed our neighbor as to what was the case, she laughingly remarked: "You can have all the eggs that are laid on that back porch." God knew we were in need, and it did seem to me as if every hen in that section came to that porch to lay. I have seen two on the nest at once and four or five others standing about waiting for them to come off the nest. We actually got more eggs than we could use for ourselves. When we reported the unusual incident to the woman she said: "You are getting the best end of that bargain, but I will stick to my trade.'" God fed Elijah, why think it strange if He fed us? Those were days of answered prayer. I shall never forget them, for they were great days. A preacher got up in one of these meetings and said "that I made more sacrifices to preach the Gospel than any one he ever knew. I went home and looked up, the word "sacrifice" in the dictionary and felt that he had used the wrong word or that I had misunderstood it. I was having such a great time that I didn't know it was sacrifice.

From here we moved the tent to Green River where we had the time of our lives. This was a place where for years they had made moonshine liquor and several times had killed revenue officers. It seemed as if the law could do nothing with these people. We had a big tent under which we preached, and a tent in which Miller and his wife, and wife and I lived. One night as we conducted service in the big tent an angry mob cut the little tent all to pieces. It looked wild that night, but the end was not yet. On Saturday night I saw a man go by with a five-gallon jug of liquor on his back and felt that there was trouble brewing. The battle was in the air. As I preached the Gospel that night there were fifteen shotguns piled on the platform near me, for the mob planned to burn the tent and kill me in a church at some time later, I was told.

Their doctrine of Eternal Security (which they called "Once in Grace, Always in Grace") had been so drilled into them that they really thought it possible to make liquor, drink it, do as they pleased and yet be Christians. Preaching against this also helped to arouse the ire of the mob members. While I was preaching the mob came, forty-five members in it. The ones who were guarding the Gospel tent gave the signal for help and there was a scramble for the guns which were piled on the platform, and out they went to the battle. The battle was on, and it was a real battle. An officer drew a deadline and told them that if they crossed that line he had ordered his men to shoot them to kill. They cursed and raved, while we preached and shouted.

Two school-teachers got sanctified and Davis got so happy that he ran out into the mob and hugged some of their members. They tried all night to get at the tent, and those brave-men held them back. One time it came to a pitched battle and some were shot, but none fatally. At dawn Sunday morning some of our men began to sing a good old song, and the mob scattered. During the night someone had notified the sheriff and at daylight he arrived with all his deputies and swore in a number of special deputies to help preserve order. He caught two of the mob before they crossed the State line and found one of them to be a deacon in a church. There were services at eleven on Sunday morning and at three in the afternoon. It began to look dangerous; everyone you met had a gun on his shoulder. The officers told me that if I would leave the tent up they would post enough money to cover its cost and guaranteed to see that I was amply protected. But I saw that someone was going to get killed before the thing was over, and since there was but one more service in the meeting, rather than sacrifice life, it seemed the part of wisdom to lower the tent and roll it into the

house. The fact of the business was: these officers wanted to take this advantage to settle some old scores that existed between them and the members of the mob. But our meeting surely did much to break up the illicit liquor business in that section of the state.

Wife and I walked out of that place next day and when we arrived at the station found some of our friends who had become alarmed for our safety, and they marveled that we had not been killed. But God took care of us. Bless His name. We battled on like this for a number of years and the meetings were characterized by the power of God on the one hand and the opposition from the enemy who used mob tactics on the other hand. But God gave us souls that are now in Heaven, and it was worth all it cost us.

We had a great meeting at Fairview, N. C., after this one. The devil surely fought us there. I had to help a man gather his crop so that he would be free to sing for the meeting. We preached for ten days and didn't get a person to raise a hand for prayer. Then for two nights I preached on "Hell". That broke down the indifference and the altars were crowded with seekers. One night I stood on a hill above the tent and heard them praying all over the country. They got saved along the roads to and from the tent, as well as in their homes. Dear old John Cauble helped me in that meeting, and souls are now in Heaven as the result of it.

While I was in that meeting our second child was born. As they had no way to get me word, I didn't know of it until the next day when I arrived at home.

Rev. W. B. Clubb was pastor of the Wesleyan Church in Gastonia, N. C., and remembering a past kindness I had shown him, he called me to come and hold a meeting for him in both his churches. God gave us victory in both places. The offer was made to me that if I would join the Wesleyans they would call me to both churches. Since my family was growing and I could not support it on the receipts from the mountains (for I had preached six years and got seventy-five dollars during the entire time) I took the pastorate of those churches for three years. But the call was on and I had to return to the field of evangelism. I had rather see souls kneeling at an altar of prayer than gaze on lovely scenes of nature.

I love the big hills and enjoy preaching to the mountain people. This work lies near to my heart, I dislike the false and hate the veneer that is so often evidenced in the city. It is a hotbed of worldliness and vice. Oh! for the common folk that carry a big warm heart under an old overall jumper. God bless these humble mountain people! My heart longs to be with them again.

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### 13 -- WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF EVANGELISM

Having served in the pastorate for four years, three of them at Gastonia, N. C., and one year at Charlotte, N. C., and Rock Hill, S. C., I obtained some needed experience. Each evangelist should at some time be a pastor so that he might know how to assist the pastor better when he goes on his work for evangelistic labors. These were lessons in God's School of Experience, whereby He was preparing me for larger things. My pastoral labors being over, I moved to Central, S. C., where I might place my boys in our own school, for I had joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church

(and felt my obligation to her institutions). My service in the North Carolina Conference dates from 1907, as I joined the North Carolina Conference at Hickory, N. C.

I moved to Central just as the South Carolina Camp Meeting started. For some reason their evangelist did not come, so I held the camp for them that year, and started for Georgia to hold two camp meetings: one in Telfair county and the other at Little Rock Camp. At this place I had the battle with the Hard Shells and the Russellites. God helped me to preach on Missions while the Hard Shells raved. I preached on "Hell" one night, God giving me great liberty and power, and a doctor, who was a Russellite, got afraid to go home alone; so secured someone to accompany him to his residence.

My evangelistic journeys took me over a great section of the State of Georgia. The weather was so intensely hot that often I staggered under the burden and the heat. One old Russellite said that he had to ask God to forgive him for coming to hear me preach my doctrines. But I countered him with this query: "If there isn't any hell why do you need forgiveness?" He did not linger long enough to answer my question. People do not really believe as much of that doctrine as they profess to believe; they hope it to be so, but conscience smites them in that.

During the time of my residence at Central, I preached over a major part of the South Carolina Conference, and God surely did give us some excellent meetings. Calls began coming to me from Tennessee, so thither I went to declare the Gospel story. One of the meetings in this State was at a Tabernacle where some preachers had been run off for opposing secrecy. They suspected me on account of the way I opened up the meeting. One Sunday afternoon I preached on the compromises Pharaoh offered Moses, and developed them: One was to stay in the land and worship God. The leader of the lodge came around after the meeting and said: "You are a sly old fox; you didn't say lodge but you skinned us just the same." He gave me a dollar on the expense of the meeting. That night God surely did help me to preach on "The Judgment" and what a scene! People fell off their benches under conviction, and the aisles were filled with people prostrate under the convicting power of God, and the altar was crowded to its capacity. I don't recall having ever, before or since, seen such a manifestation of the power of God.

As calls kept coming in, I kept widening the circle until it took me into the Middle West where I did a great deal of preaching, more in Indiana, perhaps, than elsewhere. Indiana seems to be the Banner State for Holiness. Our work carried us into Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, New York, and Canada. How many interesting things could be recorded in some instances if we felt disposed to record them, but we let them pass by in silence.

A call came for a meeting in California, and so I left for the west coast with just enough money to get me there, and left behind a family that had to be supported. There lay behind me three thousand miles and I didn't have a cent. For three weeks we battled in Los Angeles, and went from there to San Pedro, where we conducted a tent meeting and battled with the Mexicans and Catholics and got the sum of \$2.25, and shouted the victory because God hadn't left me stranded so far from home. I wrote to the Ladies' Society back East for a tent for that section and they referred my letter to Rev. T. P. Baker, our dear Home Missionary Secretary at that time, and who has lately gone to Heaven. He sent us the money for a tent, and Rev. David Scott with whom I was working

out on the west coast, as he was at that time President of the California Conference, took the tent to Colton, California, where we started a battle for certain. Brother Baker had sent me a check for \$100.00, which came as a complete surprise to me. I bought a cot and wired it up with "hay wire" and Scott had an old arm) cot on which he slept, and we used the big tent for a rooming house during this campaign. As our finances were low we didn't live off the fat of the land, but twice a day went to a restaurant and bought a bowl of soup; that was our menu day in and day out. The devil surely did fight us here. They tried to bluff us away, threatened to use the law on us for disturbing the peace, but we fought it out and organized a class with thirty-five members, got a lot and they later erected a church on it.

Those were days of hard work and if I hadn't been prepared for them back in the mountains, where my nerves were seemingly made of iron, perhaps I might have broken under the strain. But my mountain labors had prepared me for such emergencies as these.

In one place where I was preaching, all the ministers of the town came out to have a conference with me. While we were in our conversation, one of them asked me at what school I studied Theology. He addressed me as "Doctor". Imagine it! The popular preachers (when they are friendly) and the Negroes give me that honor of being addressed as "Doctor". I looked as stern as possible and said: "I studied Theology in Brush Arbor College."

He looked puzzled and said: "I don't believe that I've ever heard of that institution," and continued, "Where is it located?" It was my time now, so I hastened to reply: "It is a laurel thicket near my father's mountain home. The Holy Ghost was the Teacher, the Bible was the textbook. I was the student, and the hours of study were from sunrise until sunset." He was plainly embarrassed. Thus my sermons and Theology were born on the battlefield, and consequently they smell of gunpowder.

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### Camp Meeting Preaching

While I was a mountain boy wearing such shabby clothes, and with my life handicapped because of no education, it never dawned on me that some day I would face thousands of people from every walk of life as I stood on some camp meeting platform and preached. Yet that has been my lot, and it has been a happy one, too.

Soon after leaving the mountains I was thrust onto the camp meeting platforms and for years I have kept up this ministry, going far and near, as the calls came. Camp work is the hardest work that a preacher ever had to do, but it is glorious work. I bless God that the Wesleyans have some of as good camps as are to be found in America. For twenty-nine years I have been a Wesleyan, and have given my life to the church of my choice. Why go outside when I have more calls in my own church than I can fill? I have never written to a camp or a church asking for the privilege of serving them. I never demanded a certain price for my services, and have gone when called to little meetings or to big meetings, little pay, big pay, or no pay; God has taken care of me until this good day.



For over twenty-five years I have held from one to six camps a year. It would be impossible to relate all the scenes about the sacred altars of the holy places, but there have been some of them most wonderful and noteworthy. Some of the largest camps in which I have worked are at Stoneboro, Pennsylvania, and Fairmount, Indiana.

If you have never been to Stoneboro Camp, by all means you should go there. You have missed much in life if you fail to get into this camp. I have been one of the workers there three times. God bless my dear Brother Campbell whose love and loyalty and labors have helped to keep that great camp to the old-time lines for all these years. He has been, and still is, assisted with an able corps of workers of his type. God bless them all, is my prayer!

For five times I have held the Indiana Camp at Fairmount. This is a great camp and has the most beautiful and one of the best equipped grounds that I ever saw. God bless those Indiana boys! We have labored and battled together and have won some great victories on that camp ground. My first appearance on that ground was the trial of my life. Rev. S. A. Mow was the direct cause of my being asked there, and he had been told by some that I could not preach with Rev. Fred De Weerd (a princely preacher, if ever there was one). The first night I preached a great crowd was out to hear the Blue Ridge Mountain Evangelist "blow up". I prayed all day. My old friend, Rev. L. L. Folger, told me that I had no one with me but God. But He was enough. If God ever did help this poor mountaineer, He did that night. Before me that night were such preachers as W. L. Thompson, Aaron Worth, and scores of others of like type, But God swept the deck that night, and from then on we have had a place in the hearts of the Indiana people.

God bless the camps of our land! They are great centers of power. We should never let them down. How I wish space and time would permit me to mention all of these camps, but I cannot; although none of them has been forgotten.

I have been used of the Lord in schools and colleges as well as in camp meetings. Once when going to a college for a revival, on the first night I used as a text the words of Peter in the house of Cornelius: "For what intent did ye send for me?" In the course of my message I remarked that I was neither a scholar, nor an orator, and certainly was not an entertainer. I knew only how to declare the old rugged truth. At the close of the service one bold young student came up to me and said: "I like old So-and-so," (referring to a great preacher of the section). When he preaches he takes us up into the heavenlies," I looked at him and gave him my reply: "I don't try to do that. If I took you to Heaven and you weren't ready to get in, I would have to bring you back, so I am just here to try to get you ready to go before we start for heaven." That ended my conflict with his type while there. Brethren! Keep the camp fires burning for God!

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## 14 -- IN THE FIELD OF EVANGELISM

As an evangelist I have never felt that I ought to be carried around and worshipped. Some evangelists are so hard to please that they make themselves a burden. The room in which they stay is never right, the bed doesn't suit them, and the food isn't prepared the way it is "at home." If an evangelist is from one section of the country and laboring in another section, don't compare and

criticize where you are. True, the customs of the people are different; but some preachers whom I know have failed to be as useful as they might have been because they seemed to feel, and make others feel, that they were from a better section than the one in which they were laboring. It takes little sense and no religion to criticize things that don't suit you. If, as you may feel, the conditions are not ideal, do not grumble and complain; co-operate towards making them better.

I have seen some evangelists who have reminded me of a big, old, overgrown and spoiled baby, and were such a burden that folk were glad when it was time for them to go. Some wonder why they never get a second call; it may be because some of them are far more interested in what they are going to get out of the meeting than in what they can put into it. Yet, I take my hat off to the army of holy men who are combing the world in their evangelistic efforts. They are sacrificing the comforts of home and the companionship of loved ones, and wearing themselves out and many of them die young because of the strain of this sort of work.

I believe that a man who is wearing out his life in the service of God deserves a better bed sometimes than I have found at some of our camp grounds. Often it is a bed that someone has discarded with springs that will not support the preacher, or a mattress that is lumpy, and the camp took it and set it apart for the "workers," and after the preacher has worn out his poor, tired body in a hard service he retires on a hard bed. Often it is found that the workers are placed under a group of young people, some of whom may be so thoughtless as to talk and giggle a big part of the night, and keep the evangelist and workers awake.

Sometimes I have gone for hundreds of miles to hold a camp and on arrival found no one there to meet me, and maybe would have to sit in the depot for hours, or walk out to the camp ground alone, with heavy luggage to carry. No one seemed to be responsible for this item, and no one seemed to care. It was taken as a matter-of-fact. Unless you are dead to conditions, you will die literally.

I have taken a great many degrees from the "red men" at night. By "red men" I mean bedbugs. It is a difficult thing to have to fight the devil till midnight and then fight bedbugs the rest of the night. One meeting where I was laboring will never be forgotten. Being very nervous, I lay down on the bed to read a little and get my nerves calmed, but the bedbugs made a raid on me. I fought that battle until two o'clock in the morning, and got so wearied that I picked out a soft plank in the floor and rested there until daylight. But, at that, it isn't as bad as having to combat with false brethren.

Maybe I haven't had my share of them. One night I was quoting a verse of Scripture and referred to Dr. Daniel Steele as one of the greatest Greek scholars in the world, and gave his interpretation of it. A fine looking man and his wife were sitting back in the audience, and he shook his head at me and said: "You are mistaken. Pastor Russell was the best Greek scholar." I asked him if he had ever read the records of the court proceedings in Canada where Russell was suing a preacher for slander and at which Russell was caught in a lie under oath. Russell had sworn that he was familiar with the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages, but on being handed a Greek book he didn't know the Greek alphabet. These interrupters went out right then. Often while preaching I have had people to attack me, but I let them down good and hard to teach them not to talk out in meeting.

How I wish it were possible for me to give a detailed account of the revivals which I have held in the past thirty-five years. There would be things amusing and distressing, humorous and pathetic. Some of the battles that were the hardest have been the most victorious. Some of the strangest conditions one could imagine have been turned into victories. At one place where we held meetings the crowds were good, but I preached something and they all stayed away. Of course, being anxious to know what was the trouble, I made investigation and lo! they were all Hard Shells and had got mad at my preaching. But I kept hammering away and they came back, and on the closing Sunday of the meeting, I sprinkled eleven who had formerly been Hard Shells. Don't tell me that the days of miracles are past when this happens.

Some of the pastors with whom I have worked have got scared when the truth came close and searching; others love to have it thundered out to their flocks; and some are afraid the evangelist will get more pay than he should, while others will work for the evangelist's love-offering. As a whole, the pastors of the Holiness Churches are big-hearted, self-sacrificing men. They are doing much to hold up the standards of purity; and tell me: What would the world do without the men and women of this type? .But, as I look back over the past thirty-five years of my life, with its hardships and trials, and having observed men in every walk of life, I had rather be a faithful preacher of the Gospel than anything else I know.

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## 15 -- THE SUNSHINE AND SHADOWS OF A CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

The only place for which I have ever sought was a place to preach the Gospel, be it church, schoolhouse, or wherever it might be. I have never been choicely about the place; if they need God, that is my opportunity to preach, and I will take it.

In the Conference of 1915, at Asheville, N. C., I was elected as President of the North Carolina Conference, and felt like shrinking from the place with its responsibility. But having promised God that I would not run from duty, I set out to make it go for the glory of God. As the salary was small and I lived at Central, S. C., and as it took something to support my family, it meant to forgo the pleasures of going home except on rare cases. Once I was away from my family for five months and fourteen days. My tenure of office that time was for four years, and during it the Conference took on new life. The work of the Storehouse Tithing system was launched during this first term of my presidency, and Rev. E. W. Black did much to get it before the people. It has since been boosted and given much attention through the labors of Revs. W. C. Lovin, C. A. Hendrix, E. L. Henderson, and Roy S. Nicholson, as well as a number of the other pastors, many of whom lent support to the system. In fact, I think almost every pastor in the conference is back of it now in this my third term as President of the Conference.

Having served the Conference for four years, the call to the field of General Evangelism got on me again, and so I declined for re-election and returned to the field as an evangelist. But in 1925 at the Conference in Gastonia, N. C., I was re-elected and found the Conference badly divided, so the work was hard and it was with difficulty that a break was averted. The breakdown in wife's health forced me to accept a pastorate again, and for one year it was our privilege to

serve the Loray (Gastonia, N. C.) Church. Wife died during this year's pastorate, but her illness did not cause me to be idle. I visited 950 homes and conducted two revivals in our own church and received seventy-eight members into the church, making it necessary to enlarge the building to accommodate the congregation. After wife died I again plunged into General Evangelism, and in 1933 was again elected President, beginning a third term. This election was against my wishes, and this, being the third year of this term, marks my eleventh year as a Conference President. Thus, I feel that I am conversant with the sunshine and shadows of his life.

The Conference President is a peculiar creature. I suppose more is expected of him than of anyone else. If he is true to his charge he has burdens to bear of which others do not and cannot know. They are shared only with the Lord on whom he must rely. Often when his mail arrives he is afraid to open it for fear of finding bad news from some charge, but when it turns out to be good news, how happy it makes him! He frequently has to travel a great deal at night, maybe forced to sleep in a different bed each night, and must eat a variety of cooking that may change as the days go by, and how many lonely hours he is forced to spend about depots and railroad junctions no one knows but himself. He needs to be a Solomon to know how to solve the problems that arise; he must assist in settling difficulties that arise in connection with the work, and if it isn't done as the brethren think it ought to be, he gets a reprimanding from all. His salary is not as large as some of the pastors' salaries, it is not expected to be that large; but yet he is expected to preach each night in the year and assist in every worthy cause throughout the length and breadth of the conference. His service is expected by the weaker charges, and any gifts for meetings there are expected by them to apply on his salary. One who has never had the place will discover that there is plenty of what the mountain folk call "larnin" in it for you.

But there is a lighter side of this, and I suppose that nay seeing the funny side to a situation has saved me lots of trouble and worry. A good laugh is a healthy matter. "It doeth good like a medicine," says the wise man. If people would laugh more (at the right things and in the right way) they wouldn't need so much medicine for some of their superinduced ailments. One in this place has the opportunity of meeting old friends, the changes at least help to keep things from becoming monotonous, and when an unpleasant situation arises at one place one can sing, "We won't be in here long." Our preachers in the North Carolina Conference are a fine bunch of big-hearted fellows that have helped me much. I love each one of them. God bless the Conference in the old North State! Come on, boys, let's make it bigger than the Indiana Conference. Our churches are pastored by some of God's noblemen, and those charges where the storehouse plan is in operation have shown remarkable progress in caring for the pastors and for every arm of the work.

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### Observations and Suggestions

A Conference President can succeed only as he may have the co-operation of the preachers in his Conference. There are many preachers but not so many real pastors as one would desire there should be. Many preachers who fail on a charge leave it and predict that nothing will ever come of it, but another pastor will get there and turn it into a successful church. Some of our best churches were once as poor prospects as any of the smaller charges are now.

The class at Kannapolis used to meet in an undesirable section for a church building in a little upstairs room, with only about a dozen attendants, Now it ranks as one of the best in the Conference, and holds its own with any ill the connection in many respects. The Loray class worshipped for almost two years in a man's home, now it is one of the strong churches of the Conference. Gastonia First Church had eight members, with not a one who owned his home; now God is using it as a mighty factor for righteousness in that section of the city. Colfax once paid only seven dollars a year for her pastor and all Conference claims, now there is a splendid new church there, and a nice plant. Rev. T. L. Hill did much to get this work where it is. I held a meeting for Rev. P. E. Baily, Sr., at Roanoke, Va., when they worshipped in a small shack. That was certainly a strange-looking place to be the birthplace of one of the best works in the South, but now it is a thriving and prosperous church. Asheville had a struggle to get a start for its present condition. Rev. A. E. Belk got it started and Revs. E. W. Black and E. L. Henderson have clone much to make it what it is today. Kings Mountain Church was once located in a hole, but finally got to the hilltop, and now we have an excellent church there. I might mention many others, but these are enough to convince that despite a poor start, able and consecrated leadership, and proper planning, and the blessings of God will enable our weak places to become mighty centers for God.

Some men have joined us and found the way too rugged, and have gone out from us, seeking taller timber; but today I take off my hat to those men who have stood by the guns through these years. Think of the men who have driven through the snowstorms and mud and cold, like Rev. E. W. Jones on the old Randolph charge. It would be impossible for me to name all of the old warriors who have labored with us, but their names are recorded in the Book of Life. I do thank God for raising up the host of young preachers who have the mettle in them for the making of real workers. May God help them to keep true to the principles of the Church!

When I hear a young preacher saying that some other denomination can and will do more for him than we, I frankly tell him that is just the place for him, and that he will never make a Wesleyan preacher, if he feels that way about it. My observation has shown me that young people brought up in Wesleyan homes, educated in our Wesleyan institutions, as a rule make the best Wesleyan workers. I agree that there are exceptions to this, and that we have some noble workers who have come to us from other places, but I state that, as a rule, this is what I have found to be true. I was neither raised nor trained a Wesleyan, unless they will lay claim to "Brush Arbor College," yet I shall never forget the first Wesleyan Methodist Church I ever attended. I whispered to my wife and said: "I have found us a Church home." And for twenty-nine years I have been a Wesleyan, and feel that the best years of my life have been given to the Church of my choice.

I dislike to see some pastor or evangelist who has never done much in other churches, and who has been given no consideration by the other denominations, come to the Wesleyans, and them put up with his blunders and failures, and help to make a strong man of him, and then after he gets in demand leave the church that made him and seek for bigger fields. My motto, brethren, has been this: "Stick to the bridge that brought you over the stream." Let us strive to make the Church bigger and better rather than endeavor to destroy that which another has builded.

A Conference President has an excellent opportunity to observe human nature and study character. If he stays in the office long enough he will obtain lots of valuable experience for he

must meet and solve problems that are very varied in nature. But one observation that has been impressed upon me as I have covered the connection for years has been that the churches that are missionary in both spirit and practice and stand by the conference and connectional programs are the ones that are usually most successful. But the preacher who never takes any interest in any of the general interests of the church is soon a back number and is laid on the shelf, while another takes his place and succeeds.

To me it appears that some pastors just seem to want a job. They never work it when they get it, and it fails and they are branded as failures. Many will tear a work up if everything is not up to their ideal. A successful pastor is not one who can tear up his work, but one who can take what he finds and build up a work out of it. Some preachers have hurt us by leaving us with a string of unpaid debts behind them, thus bringing a reproach on our church, when they and not the church are to blame for it. As President of the Conference I have striven to keep it out of debt and to give it an honorable standing in the eyes of the world. Living beyond one's income is disastrous for the conference or church as well as for the individual. My work with this aim in mind has compelled me to keep my traveling expenses very low, and it was impossible for me to travel in a sleeper and put up at fine hotels. I have never tried to "lord it over God's heritage," but I have tried to be one of the preachers and suffer with them who were trying to put it over for God. Many have been the times that in my rounds I have met a brother-preacher in distress and have taken out my pocketbook and emptied it to him, giving him every cent that I had.

Another observation is this: It is dangerous to push preachers to the top too quickly, for they cannot stand the strain and there are lots of men who cannot come down from the top and take a small place or a place of less prominence. I know some who have been ruined by too much and too rapid success.

I have decided that the strongest men are those who have, and will, come up gradually through the School of Hard Knocks. Yet, some have abilities and talents that demand recognition, and God can use them if they do not become inflated like a balloon and "blow up." Humility is a rare Christian grace, and shines more brightly and beautifully in a preacher, who having talents and gifts above his fellows, yet remains humble and holy.

I love the brethren of the Conference, and I hope we can keep it spiritual and growing. We have a definite place to fill and I believe it to be our mission to scatter Scriptural Holiness over the world.

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## 16 -- MY SECOND MARRIAGE

Being engaged in evangelistic work I was about to break under the strain, and needed a home, and longed for companionship. I felt my need of a counselor and some one who could and would understand my problems and be a help mate. Miss Cleo Young, an esteemed friend of the family for years, and who had a long and excellent record as a missionary on our African field; a saved and sanctified woman who had been schooled in the same hard way I had, came into my life. Her father had been killed when she was a girl and her family was large and demands were such

that she had labored to help support them. A meeting near her home at Caroleen, N. C. was the means of her conversion and sanctification and God laid a call to Africa on her heart. Her struggle to prepare herself to answer this call was a hard one, but finally she was privileged to go to labor in "The Dark Continent". She crossed the Atlantic Ocean eight times and spent more than twenty years in the service of our Mission Board. Her missionary career marked her as one of our most valuable missionaries to Africa. Her tours of the Conferences made her well acquainted with a host of people and she was used of God to raise much money and interest in behalf of missions. Her long life of service and sacrifice made her a wonderful character and well fitted for a preacher's wife. How grateful I have been to God for letting her come into my life, and for allowing me to have such an one as she to cheer me along the way and share my burdens and cares. As her health failed and she did not get back to her beloved Africa, it seemed providential that our paths and lives should meet thus. Our relationship had ripened into that which was closer than friendship, and she consented to unite her life with mine. She has fitted into my life and family wonderfully well. She is a fine wife to me and has been as a mother to my boys. She tries to carry out their mother's plans for their lives and they love her dearly. I am sure she was the one to come into my life at such a time. We see things alike, especially as regards the missionary activities of the Church, and we labor together in harmony, and God is using her greatly in her labors here in the homeland.

Cleo and I were married in Marion, Indiana, by a dear old friend of years and a partner in many battles, Rev. S. A. Mow. The preachers of the Indiana Conference (and dear Henry West, who has gone to Heaven since then) had a lot of fun at our expense when we were married. God bless them, I am glad that we could give them such a good time, at no expense to themselves. Wife and I then set out to South Bend, Indiana, for a meeting, on our honeymoon. We have been so busy ever since then that we haven't had time for a vacation. Life seems light and happy again since God gave me Cleo to share my joys and sorrows of life, and I hope in the good mercy of God that He will spare us a few years in His service before He comes again. She is a woman of prayer and lives close to God. What an encouragement she is to my life and ministry!

When God leads we make no mistake in following Him. His ways are always the best ways. I have never seen anyone that enjoyed going to services and taking her share of religious work, and seemed to get more out of it, than Cleo does. God bless her pure womanly life!

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## 17 -- AMUSING INCIDENTS AND SAYINGS

While at work in the mountains we learned to make ourselves at home and act like the family, and how odd that sometimes was. The service might last until late into the night, and then it was a long hike to the place where we would be invited to spend the night. The trip would have to be made up a steep and narrow path, or maybe along a plank or log road. And on arriving one would be put into a bed, minus springs and feathers. Those good mountain people would arise early, usually about four or five o'clock in the morning and a preacher that would stay in bed after they "got up" was a poor preacher, in their estimation.

Many have been the times that I have sat around an old log fire waiting for daylight and for breakfast, with a family of perhaps eight or ten crowding around the fire, and from two to six hound dogs wedged in between, and the good woman of the house trying to cook breakfast over the fire about which we were gathered. The conversations would run along the lines with which they were acquainted. There were no newspapers and such a few books that the great outside world was shut out. Strange and amusing were some of the turns that those conversations would take, and yet some of those people were true philosophers.

Often the breakfast would be one of corn-bread, fat-back meat, and black coffee, and believe me, it tasted good to a hungry man. There being no screens on the houses Pharaoh's pests (the flies) had to be "shooed away" with a brush. This duty usually fell to one of the smaller children in the family group. How it gets on me, yet, and how I wish I could go back into those coves for some of those old-time services. How they could shout and praise God when the glory came on them! There was no false modesty about them, and they detested hypocrisy. With them there were no frills and fashion, pride or put on. If they didn't like you, they told you so; and if they did like you, it was soon in evidence.

A preacher friend of mine went with me to an old log house and while there we went to prayer. He was praying as loud as he could with his eyes shut," and an old hound dog slipped in and as he passed this preacher gave him a lick in the mouth. That licked all the unction out of that prayer, too, I fear. Another preacher, with whom I worked a great deal, accompanied me to a place where we were to take dinner, and was called on to ask the blessing before the meal. While he was thanking the Lord for this food and for the hospitality of this cabin on the hillside there was a great commotion made about the table and, as we opened our eyes, what should we behold but a big hound go out of the window with the whole cake of bread, that had been prepared for dinner, in his mouth.

One Sunday morning during the service a woman came to the altar for prayer and no one would come and help me pray for her. But instead, one old man kept poking wood in the fire and making a noise at the stove, which was a small wood-stove. But the woman was under deep conviction and meant to pray through. Finally, she arose in great joy, started shouting down the aisle and began to run. In her joy she failed to see the old man working at the stove and struck him a broadside; and just as I looked up the old man went over the top of the hot stove, and all I saw was his brogan shoes sticking over the top and kicking. It was a comical sight, but I spoke out: "It's a safe hit, all right."

At this same church one night the altar was full and the fire of God was falling on the people. The Christians were invited to come up and pray for the seekers.. One man came up with great display and got down by a man, kneeling on one knee, and he called out in a shrill, piping voice: "Lord, come down here with hell fire and burn the inbred sin out of this gentleman." But I cut him short and said: "Wait, brother! there's too much of that kind of fire around here now, without praying for any more of it."

A man got up in one of our meetings and testified that he sinned every day in word and thought and deed. I said: "You've got it on the devil. He couldn't beat that." He tried to cry and



said: "Pray for my father to have the kind of religion I have." It got on me so I said: "I'd hate for my father to have to be afflicted with such religion as you've got."

One old, dirty-looking man was at one of our altar services praying to get religion. But I asked him if he was willing to go home and wash up and put on some clean clothes if God would save him. He replied that he would, and we urged him to try it. He went home and cleaned up, came back the next night and got saved, and went out to make good in life.

One man said that he had to ask God to forgive him for coining to hear me preach, as I preached on "Hell". I told him that if there were no hell why did he think he needed forgiveness? If you will watch the lives of most of the people who profess to believe that there is no hell, you will find out why they argue such doctrine as that.

A man once boastfully said: "I thank neither God nor man for the food I work to make." I told him that a man that refused to thank God for the food he was given was just eleven-tenths hog. Ignorance is appalling in all walks of life; some folk are so narrow between the eyes that they could look through a keyhole with both eyes at the same time.

An old woman and her two daughters came to my meeting dressed like millionaires, and wanted me to go home with them and dine. I was afraid that if, I went with them I would run into too much style to suit me, so got out of it the best way I could for a number of times, but finally it was "Go" or hurt their feelings. Mustering all the courage I had, I set out with them. We kept climbing hills and going around hills until we came to a rail fence and had to get through it by means of a slip gap (which cannot be intelligently described to you who have never seen one for yourself). There was ahead of us a little one-room log cabin, the door of which was so low that I had to stoop to get into the room. I was too high or it was too low, something was wrong. Inside the room there was but one chair, and it had but three whole legs and one piece, and no stove. They cooked over the fire. No furniture adorned this house, and there was no reason for them to dress and act as they did. But the result of this was that I promised myself never to get scared so again, for some people remind me of the turtle; everything they have is carried on their backs.

One night during one of my tent services eight or ten young men came in and sprawled out on the benches with their backs to me. I saw that it was a "put up job" and that they aimed to create a furor in the service. I kindly asked them if they would sit up, but they refused to hear me. Knowing that it would never do to give them the advantage they sought I said: "If you don't get up, I'll come back there and kick you down between the seats." They didn't budge until I started back to do it, and out they dashed like a herd of buffaloes on stampede. But that night they rocked the house where I was staying and it seemed as if they would knock the house down, but I just turned over and said: "God can take care of that bunch" and went to sleep and slept like a babe on its mother's breast. God did take care of them, and in a few months most of those young men were dead.

One man who was known as the champion Holiness fighter came to a place where I was holding a meeting. He went into a store where a crowd of men had gathered, and since I was preaching there, the topic of discussion was my sermons and doctrines. This Holiness fighter said that I had marked out part of the Bible, for he had peeped ill my Bible and saw it with his own

eyes. (I do mark my Bible!) One old man looked at him and said: "Well, now, that's sure funny. He has marked out some of it you say, yet he preaches more than you believe."

I was holding a meeting way back in the mountains and one day a mountaineer came along riding a white horse that was old and bony. He looked at me and said: "You're the parson, I guess." I replied that I was and he said: "I have a question I want to ask you, if I can." I said, "Ask it, brother." Then he started out: "I understand that you preaches against the use of tobacco. Now, why did God make it if He didn't aim for man to chew it?" I just pulled up a bunch of ragweed and said to him: "What did God make the ragweed for? Why don't you chew it? It will make your spit green." He said: "Ha! ha!" and rode off, convinced as to how we stood on the question. One other old man asked me: "Don't you think a man can be a Christian and use tobacco?" I replied: "If he is, he is a mighty nasty one, don't you think?"

A person once asked me, "Do you think we will know each other in Heaven?" I only asked if she thought we would be bigger fools in Heaven than we were down here, and remarked, "We know each other down here, do we not?"

I was preaching for the colored people once, and got in a big way, and was enjoying myself, as well as enjoying their demonstration in the Lord. A great big colored woman got happy and began to dance around me, and almost pinched a piece out of my arm. It made me writhe, and she looked at me and said: "I jest wanted to see if you all was a mortal man."

I was going along a road one day when a group of men came out cursing and threatening me. The glory of God rolled up in my soul and I began to praise the Lord right there in front of them. I never knew the meaning of that Scripture before, where it says: "In that day say, 'Praise the Lord!'" It becomes spontaneous.

A man said to me: "If you were to see a man pick up a rattlesnake and handle it without ill effects, would you admit that he had the Holy Ghost?" I said: "No! I would say that he was a fool or a snake charmer. I have seen people handle snakes in the shows, that make no claim to being Christians." How easily poor humanity can be duped by the devil.

During the time that I was conducting a revival in the mountains I went to a near-by store for something. A preacher came in while I was there (and the store was full of people) and got on the scales and weighed. His weight was one hundred eighty-two pounds. With an air of wisdom he got off the scales and said: "One hundred eighty-two pounds of sin." I knew he was throwing at me. But a traveling salesman who was there and heard his remarks said to him: "You must be a tough old cuss if you are all sin." I didn't know that this man was a preacher, but I said unto him, "Your wickedness shall return upon your own head: and your violent dealings shall come down on your own pate." He sneaked out and left.

One night as I preached under an old Gospel tent, an officer stood guard over it. He saw something moving down in the grass and dashed around to arrest him, and found it was a preacher who had slipped up to eavesdrop the message. He let the preacher off on one condition: that he would act a man and come under the tent. Afterwards this same man got the victory in his soul.

A lawyer once engaged me in controversy. He fought holiness, but I got him to reading Scripture references and asked him to explain them to me. He got confused and said: "I didn't know that was in the Bible." Seeing that I had him on the defensive I replied: "There's lots in it that you don't know." He got up and actually ran out from my presence. He later told a man that it was the worst licking he ever got. Don't argue with people who fight holiness and oppose the doctrines you preach. Get them to reading the Bible and trying to explain it. That fixes them much quicker, and much more thoroughly.

One hundred and fifty souls prayed through at one place. God was surely blessing us, but the enemies sent to Georgia for a Holiness fighter to come and oppose us. He told them in his sermon that we put powders on people and they were made to shout by this powder. He went so far as to say that he knew where the powders were on sale and could be bought. An old sinner who had never professed, but who knew this was a slander on the truth, yelled right out at him: "If that is so, you'd better order a carload and put them on this dead church."

I never went to but one dance after I was saved, and it came about this way. One night I went to a home and found the lady of the house out in the kitchen crying. She had invited us to her home and her husband had announced a dance in the front room that night. I was tired and hungry and told her that if she would just prepare me a little food I would handle the situation. So after supper I got a chair and sat down in the middle of the room. Around me were gathered the musicians and the dancers. I took out my Bible and read the fourteenth chapter of St. John and got down on my knees and prayed as long as I could think of anything to say. When I finished the prayer, every one of the dancers and the musicians was gone. The old man was lying in one corner acting like he was asleep. But I went to bed and slept well. The next morning bright and early he awakened me as he called out, "John, forgive me, please. I am ashamed of myself." I told him that it was all right, but that I got the best of it myself.

A Seventh-day Adventist got up in one of my meetings one night, and I saw that he was drunk. He began by saying: "I can prove to you that a man has no soul until after he is converted." So I took my aim at him and said: "Well, then, sit down there and hush. I am not talking to you. You have no soul. I am talking to man, not to animals." It cured him with one application.

My work has taken me into the missions of some of the larger cities where I have seen some of the old jailbirds led to the altar drunk as could be. But I have seen those same ones pray through and get up sober as well as saved. The next time they would come to meeting it would be in clean clothes, with a bath, hair combed, and in appearance so different that you would hardly know they were the same ones.

One man asked me once if I believed in a religion that would change men's hearts. My answer to this gentleman was: "Yes, I believe in a religion that will change a man from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. I believe in a religion that will change the color of his spit." He blushed and swallowed. In his mouth at that time was a big chew of tobacco.

I have always tried to make my preaching so simple that anyone with reasonable intelligence might understand it. One man got up and thought to embarrass me by saying: "I can't

understand your preaching." Unwilling to let his challenge go by, unheeded, it dawned on me to answer him thus: "Brother, God doesn't hold me responsible for your ignorance."

A street corner philosopher was sitting on a goods box, chewing tobacco, and whittling on white pine boards. The tobacco juice was all in his long whiskers, and as he gassed along he observed that he descended from some of the old "blue-blooded" families of England. I took a long look at him in his plight and asked: "Yes, and some people surely have descended a long ways, too, don't you think?"

One night in Knoxville, Tenn., where I was attending a convention, a man arose while I was preaching and cried out: "I'd give the world, if I had it, to have what you have got and what you are preaching about." Quick as a flash I shot back at him: "Come on, Brother, it's for you; that's just what it will cost you. It cost me the world." But look what I gained.

Some people who hear a thing do not hear it right, and going off and repeating it, get it tangled up and put a wrong construction on what is said, as is illustrated by an occurrence in one of our great revivals. A man was seeking to be sanctified, so we prayed as was customary in those days, "Lord, kill him out to everything." Some folk went away from that service and told that I was the biggest fool preacher they ever heard, for a man came to the altar to get religion and that I asked God to kill him.

In one service I was shouting and having a good time. Two old women got into a fuss right there in the meeting while I was enjoying myself in the Lord. One of them charged that I was the biggest fool she ever had seen. The other one said: "If he is, he is the happiest one you ever saw." And her ire was so aroused and her heart was so hungry that she said to her partner in the fuss: "If that is foolishness, please don't disturb me."

Beloved, the way has been long and hard. The battles have been many. But the victories have been sweet, and now after thirty-five years of blessed and happy service for Christ, I press on, knowing that "the toils of the road will seem nothing when I get to the end of the way." Let us fight on, hold up the banner, and trust God for victory!

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## 18 -- DEFINITE ANSWERS TO PRAYER AND STRIKING DELIVERANCES

God has so wonderfully answered prayer through the years that it would be impossible for me to become a skeptic. It has never been my habit to make my needs known to people, but to God. My motto has been: "Take Your Burden to the Lord and Leave It There."

For three months we ran a Mission in Hendersonville, N. C. It was of necessity that we had five workers, so we were compelled to rent a house. Yet for the whole three months we didn't take a collection. Our habit was to arise at five o'clock each morning and pray; and money would come to us in the mail and from sources we knew nothing about. One morning at eleven o'clock we preached on "Faith", and we knew there wasn't a bite of food in our house, neither had we a penny of money. God blessed me, but my colleague got somewhat disgusted and went home. As wife and

I walked homeward a woman dashed out of her house toward us. She was weeping for some reason. Although she wasn't at the service that morning (and nothing was said of our need) she said that when she sat down at the table for her dinner something told her that we didn't have anything to eat. She gave us a dollar to use. When wife and I got home our co-worker was blue, and no prospects of any dinner. When I gave him the dollar with which to buy some food, it made him look like a new man.

I was conducting a meeting at a place where the pastor did as many do: waited until the last day of the meeting to take an offering for the evangelist. That day was stormy and we were rained out. I had enough money to take me only halfway home, and so told the Lord my situation and assured Him that I had done my best and that I was going as far as my money lasted and then trust Him to provide for my needs. Boarding the train, with the bell ringing and all ready to go, I looked out of the window and saw a horse and buggy coming up the street, with the horse running as fast as he could. A man jumped out of that buggy, letting the horse and buggy go their way. He dashed onto the train, threw a ten-dollar bill into my lap and jumped off the train to go and hunt his horse and buggy. Praise the Lord! I had more than enough money to get me home.

My little boy was sick and so near death that my wife wired me to come home. I closed the meeting I was holding and went home with just enough money to pay for nay ticket. For two months he lingered at death's door, and everything was going out and nothing coming in. I was in debt with these bills piling up on me. The devil took advantage of this and shook an empty pantry and a hungry family in my face, and declared that I was heading for the poorhouse and tried to make me think that God didn't love me any more. The test of my life came before me. Four doctors and a nurse came to operate on the child. But I went alone into the barn to pray. I prayed until I punctured Heaven just above that old barn. I shouted out of one stall into another and finally got out to the wagon-shed, and then I had to get outside, for the barn was getting too small for me. As I started toward the house shouting, wife came out of the door shouting. The doctor came out of the house with a big smile on his face and said: "It is all over. He is out from under the ether, and is doing nicely."

In a few days the doctor said that the condition of the child was so greatly improved that it was safe for me to go on my round of meetings again. But I didn't have any money with which to pay my fare to the place where they wanted me. (I had had a telegram that day from a church that wanted my services.) But wife and I agreed that if God wanted me to go to this place He could and would furnish the money for the ticket. Brother L. L. Folger came by that day and had prayer with us and, as he started to leave the home, said: "I have a little of the Lord's money here and am going to give it to you." After he left I counted it and found it to be \$2.10, the exact amount of my fare to this place to which I had been called by telegram. I went. As a result of this meeting there were one hundred professions and a new church was built, and I got enough money out of it to pay all my bills. I shook my fist in the devil's face and told him that he was a liar and the father of lies, for God loved me and had proved it to me.

Once, a letter came to me stating that an examination and diagnosis of wife's condition had pronounced it the dread "pellagra". It was at a time when the disease was stirring up such excitement ill the South. My meeting was in progress near Hamlet, N. C., but I went out in an old

country church and prayed for an hour and three-quarters, and prayed "clear through" and shouted the high praises of God all over the place. He healed her of that malady, bless His holy name!

My railroad fare for one meeting I held was \$10.00 and I got just about half of it back in the collections they took for me. As I left, the preacher and his wife were crying and worried about me. I told them not to worry as God would take care of me; He always had. Before I left the place I decided to go to the post office and see about my mail. There was a letter handed me from a man in Ohio who sent me fifty dollars. How good God is and how well He cares for His own!

I had a breakdown at one time and went home fully expecting to die. It seemed to me that my days of usefulness had about been worn out. I had a large family, expenses were great, and having had no opportunity to save anything we were in a sad condition. It looked dark to the human, but we had access to God's throne. Money came to us from all over the world. I got a letter from a missionary in Africa whom I had never seen. In it was twenty dollars and this message: "I tried to sleep and couldn't, so got up to pray. While ill prayer you came before me, and something told me you were in need. I wrote you a check for twenty dollars and put it in a letter for you, returned to bed and slept like a baby on its mother's breast."

I closed a meeting out in Oklahoma, and came into Kansas, almost up to the Nebraska line, to hold a meeting. The church was eight miles out on the prairie, and we had to drive out there and back for each service. No one invited us to go home with them and I noticed that the pastor's wife cried all the way out and back. It got on me so that I said to her: "It seems that you are under a burden." She said, "I am crying because you won't get enough money to get you to the Mississippi River." It was not so serious to me as to her, so I tried to comfort her by telling her not to worry, that maybe the Lord wanted me to walk home and do some street preaching on the way back home. The church was split all to pieces. Sensing that there was nothing to lose, I put the plow in to the beam and prayed for an angel to ride the beam. My sermons on "Repentance" got them riled up, and for a while it looked as if some of them would fight. I just laughed at them and told them, after they had said some awful hard things to each other, that I supposed they felt better now. Finally, they got to confessing things to each other and the fire of God fell. One of the women (the one who had caused so much unpleasantness) jumped up and confessed her part of the things and said that she was going to pay forty dollars on my expenses. The Lord blessed us so that they gave me enough to get home on, live off of it a month, and build a house for my family to live in while I was out preaching the Gospel. How good God is! Bless His name!

As we crossed the mountain on a train the engine jumped the tracks and ran within a few feet of a precipice one hundred and ninety feet high. Had it gone a few feet farther, no doubt I would have been playing on my heavenly harp now. Others were praising the engineer for his skill and bravery in saving us, and giving man the glory for this. I said to them: "Let's give God the glory; for there was a Holiness preacher on the train and God wasn't through with him. That was the reason the train didn't go over." Many have been the dangers from which He has safely delivered us while we have served Him wherever He might lead.

God says, "I will supply all your need," and when a thing is really needed we can stand on the promises of God's assurance and He will answer us. Having a wife and five little children, I really needed a cow (for milk is a child's heritage) but didn't have the money to spare for one. But

I prayed over the matter and left it in God's hands. One day I preached on Tithing and a man came to me after the sermon and said: "I am behind with my tithes but I have four cows and if you want one of them come over home tomorrow and pick out one for yourself." I did just that and she was mine.

I never fuss over the salary question, for I know that God will give me what I deserve from some source or other. I have held meeting after meeting that didn't pay expenses, but kept on and trusted God, and would run into one that would pay me enough to tide me over all the hard places and care for things that had accumulated.

During those awful hard years we trusted God for everything and He cared for us. There were years that we didn't have to call in a doctor. Some of the little experiences have been some of the largest to me. Once when I was in a furnace and no one knew it, a man came to me and said: "Here's a five dollar gold piece that I have been keeping to see just how long it might be kept in my possession. But something tells me that you need it, so I am giving it to you." To me that five dollar gold piece looked like the whole United States Treasury. When God's good saints have given me money that had blood and sweat on it, I would have been a traitor to have used it foolishly.

Wife was sick and a general practitioner urged me to take her to a specialist and have her examined as it appeared that she had a cancer of the breast. We had just enough money to get to Asheville, N. C. But I took her to Dr. Norbous' Hospital. His thorough examination confirmed this and his advice was that the cancer be immediately removed. I asked him, "When?" His answer was, "In thirty minutes." My, what a shock! No money, and I didn't know where to get any then! But since it had to be done, there was nothing else to do but go ahead with it. He stated that it was serious and that he didn't know what the outcome might be, but that he would do his best and we could trust God for the rest. Cleo told me what were her funeral arrangements if she died in the operating room. I told her that God had given her to me and that I didn't believe He would take her away so soon. While she was on the operating table, I prayed in the little park near the hospital. Then Rev. E. L. Henderson gave me a meeting there in West Asheville while she was in the hospital, and for it they raised seventy-five dollars. How that did help me out! One day I asked the doctor what he charged for an operation like that. His reply was, "Five hundred dollars." I had such a fluttering of the heart when he told me the sum that it scared me for the time. "But," he continued, "I have never given much to missions, and since she has spent so many years in Africa I am going to donate my services free of charge to her." My heart trouble got better all at once.

She pulled through that one all right and the doctor feared that another cancer might appear in the other breast. In a little while it did. I was in Durham, N. C., when she broke the sad news to me. I was praying and God gave me some precious promises on which to kneel and I stood on them, trusting God. In just a few days the thing went away. PRAISE THE LORD!

God does hear and answer prayer. Time would fail me and space forbids my going on with any more of the definite answers to prayer. But through all these years God has been real to me. There have been hundreds of things just as real and blessed to me as these I have related to you. How true that we would know more of God if we left a margin in our lives to trust Him for what we have and need. We have things so well organized now that we miss these blessings that come

to us in answer to prevailing prayer and faith. Food tastes good when it is prayed down, no matter what it is.

When I hear a preacher talking about sacrificing and then grumble at a twenty-five or thirty dollar a week salary when his members are living on less, my admiration for him as a man of God goes down a bit. God declares that He will supply all our need. Then why worry about it? He marks the sparrow's fall. Are we not better than many sparrows? Man cannot stand prosperity as well as he can adversity. That is the reason God has to let things come that way. If we are not careful some will be found serving for the money that can be got out of it rather than for the blessing that God gives us for what He wants done.

A God-called man will preach if he gets money, and he will preach if he doesn't get any money. He preaches because God has called him to preach. He will surmount obstacles and overstep circumstances. My friends, one of the greatest joys that can come to one in the afternoon and evening of life will be the thought: "I never let money influence me to turn aside from the path of duty." Now my prayer for the young ministers of the Gospel is that God will help every one of them to be "A faithful minister of Jesus Christ."

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\*The printed book has a number of sermons and sermon outlines in a second section which have been omitted from this digital edition.

THE END