

CHAPTER VII

Victory

Ballarat

In April 1868 I began my work at Ballarat, my excellent colleagues being Rev. G. Daniel, D. Duncan, R. M. Hunter, and S. Williams. This place had long been famous as a goldfield. The yield there had perhaps been large, more uniform, and for a longer period, than in any other part of Victory. But there have been times when richer mines than usual have been opened, and the mining interest has wonderfully revived. Miners from all parts have rushed into the district, the excitement has been great, and everything has seemed prosperous. Such a time the preceding year had been, when what was known as the Webster-street rush had taken place. But now there was a lull; the excitement was dying out; mines from which great things were expected had failed or, being soon worked out, were abandoned; many were leaving the district; and things were settling down into their former condition. It was under these circumstances that I began my work in Ballarat. On my arrival in the Circuit by train, between ten and eleven o'clock at night, Messrs. James Oddie and George Smith, the Circuit stewards, with many of the members, were at the station to give us a warm welcome. The services in the old Lydiard Street Church the first Sunday I was in the Circuit I shall not soon forget. The crowded church, the splendid singing, the hearty responses in prayer, the attention of the congregation, the deep feeling, and the numbers that rallied round me in the after-meeting, when we pleaded with God for penitents seeking mercy, made me feel that I was among a people ready and willing to do God's work. With such helpers we must succeed. Four or five fully decided for Jesus that night, and week after week others were saved.

A few extracts from my diary will give some idea of the soul-saving work in Ballarat at this time.

1868, *April 19.* – Preached at Wendouree morning and afternoon. Good time. At Lydiard Street at night: five or six persons in distress. The showers are beginning to fall.

April 26. – Preached at Scotchman's at 11. Addressed Sabbath School at 3. Denham Lead at night; three penitents.

Monday, 27. – Prayer-meeting at Lydiard Street. Great crowd. Gave an address on Church work. A blessed meeting: four or five seeking God.

May 3. – Preached at Buninyong morning and afternoon. Much power. Evening at Pleasant Street: many could not get into the church: three decided for Christ.

May 17. – Gave tickets at Pleasant Street to one class at 8 o'clock; to another at 9. Preached at Baptist Church at 11; at Pleasant Street at 3. Evening at Lydiard Street: church crowded: five penitents.

May 24. – Golden Point – class for tickets at 1; preached at 11. West Park in afternoon. Neil Street in evening: six professed to come to Christ. Lord's Supper.

June 1. – Lydiard Street – prayer-meeting: crowded, great power; members greatly blessed: three seeking Christ.

July 12. – Neil Street, morning; Lydiard Street, evening: thirteen penitents.

I preached frequently to Christians on Entire Sanctification, and the duty of individual effort to save souls. I preached to sinners on instant surrender, and present salvation by faith alone in Jesus. Many of the members of the church gave themselves wholly to the Lord, and began to work earnestly for Him, and sinners were pricked to the heart, and converted to God.

When I went to Ballarat, I was greatly troubled by beggars calling at all hours and seeking relief. Now I have always had difficulty in dealing with such cases. In some you see at once that it would be wrong to give money. A wretched-looking fellow, the worse for drink, one day asked for money. I refused. He pressed me hard for sixpence, but I told him plainly that I would not give him a farthing. He then began to storm, and when I at last closed the door he struck it several hard blows, and cried out, "I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll go and turn Roman Catholic." Such as these one can readily refuse to help; but it is not so easy in the case of others. I may have sometimes refused to give when help was greatly needed; but I know I have been taken in scores of times. Some I have met with who would deceive the most discerning. I remember one who came to me late one evening, and said he had come from Sydney, and had been compelled to walk all the way, and to sleep out at night. He was an educated man, and was seeking employment as a teacher. I never heard a more straightforward tale in my life. I pitied the poor fellow, gave him his tea, and was so taken with him that I told him I would ask my wife to make him up a bed for the night. To this, however, he objected. He had, he said, been sleeping anywhere during the previous week, and would not sleep in my house. He was greatly obliged for my kindness; but all he wanted of me was to try and find some employment for him. With the promise to call in the morning, he was about to leave, when I offered him money for his bed and breakfast. He refused to take any for a long time, and I had almost to force him to accept five shillings. The next morning I waited, expecting every moment to see him, but he came not. At last I went out to try and hear something of him. As I was passing a public-house I saw him standing at the counter drinking. Soon after, he left and went to a confectioner's, and returned with a small package which he gave to a little girl in the public-house. He then came out and stood at the door. I went to a member of our church, who was in his shop close by, and said to him, 'Do you see that man standing at the public-house door there?' "Yes," said he, "I do; the rascal has imposed upon me in quite a clever style. For a long time he refused to let me help him; but at last he took what I offered, and I have found out that he is a regular swindler." I called in two policemen, and told them the story. They took their place behind some chests of tea, and I sent for the man. When he entered the store I said, "You are a bad man to be deceiving me and others, and obtaining money as you have done." He began to storm furiously; but the police came out, laid hold of him, and marched him off to the lock-up. The next morning the police magistrate wished me to press the case against him; but I begged that he might be let off with a warning and an order to clear out of the town. This the magistrate did, threatening that if he were not out of the town in one hour he would have him up as a vagrant and punish him severely. He was out of the town within the hour; but before he left he called on the Episcopalian minister, and in his clever way got five shillings out of him.

Many cases like this I have had, and I felt that there was a danger of my being so disgusted that I would be unwilling to relieve any case. I therefore tried in every way to find out whether help was needed or not, before refusing. I sent some to our poor-

stewards, who knew most people, to obtain a note from them assuring me that the applicants were all right; but this was a roundabout way. At last, providentially I believe, I found out how to test beggars at your door. One evening at dusk a man came to me and begged for help. I heard his story, and then said to him, "Now look here; I've often been taken in, and I don't like it. I know nothing of you; but I know the sergeant at the detective office near here. You just wait till I put on my hat, and I'll go with you, and if he says you are all right, I'll help you." I went for my hat, but when I returned the beggar was gone. "Oh! oh!" I said, "this is too good to be forgotten. I'll try this again." How many beggars have mysteriously vanished from my door while I have gone for my hat, I cannot tell.

Very much is said in our day about "Faith Healing." I believe as firmly as anyone that, according to the promise in James v. 15, "the prayer of faith shall save the sick;" but I do not believe that the prayer of faith can always be presented to God for the sick. Or why should Paul have left Trophimus sick at Miletus? And why was not Timothy healed? And why should any Christian die? I believe that in prayer every Christian should seek to be, and may be, guided by the Holy Spirit – Romans viii. 26 is clear on this point. Taught what is God's will concerning the sick, the prayer of faith may or may not be offered. I have been sent for to visit the sick, and have prayed for the Holy Spirit to guide me in prayer, and have not been able to pray for the person's recovery. It has seemed as if I could exercise no faith. In other cases I have gone when all appeared hopeless, and, taught by the Spirit, have prayed in faith, and the Lord has heard and answered. We had a very remarkable case of this kind at Ballarat. One day four ladies, all members of our congregation, were walking down the street, when a horse ran away with the cab. The ladies ran in different directions – one for a grocer's shop at the street corner, in front of which was a post. There a wheel of the cab caught her, crushed her against the post, and threw her bleeding and insensible into the gutter. She was carried into the parlour of a chemist's shop close by, and one of the ladies sprang into a cab and drove away to tell me. I left with her at once. On the way she told me all about the accident. At the chemist's door I found Mr. John Little, one of our leaders, and we went into the house together. Meanwhile they had brought in the first doctor that could be found: he was a Roman Catholic. When we entered the room the doctor was standing by the side of the couch, with his hand on the lady's pulse. I went to him and said, "How is it, doctor?" "In ten minutes," said he, "she will be dead." "Is there no hope at all?" I asked. "None," he replied. The internal haemorrhage is something fearful; nearly every rib in her body is broken; nothing can save her; she is dying now." I turned to my friend Mr. Little and said, "Let us pray;" and it came to me like a revelation from heaven, "Pray that her life may be spared." I prayed and prayed, and my friend prayed, until the doctor came to us and said, "It is of no use praying; that woman cannot live." "Doctor," I replied, "we must pray, our only hope is in God." We prayed on and on, for an hour or more, and still she lived. The doctor then left for a short time. When he returned he called me into the next room and said, "Mr. Watsford, it is really of no use praying that she may live, for she cannot: it is only the excitement of your prayers that is keeping her alive." I replied, "Doctor, you say there is no hope; but nothing is impossible to God: we must pray." And we did. Hour after hour passed, and still she lived. The morning came, and she was yet alive. In a few days they bound up the broken ribs, and carried her to her own home. She lived for years after, frail and feeble, but able to get about. Some years later I was preaching at Ballarat, and she was one of my hearers. After the service I hastened down to speak to her and said,

“Mrs. R-----, you are a living miracle.” “Yes, indeed I am,” she replied. “The Lord heard prayer that night.” The doctor never forgot that patient. I think he was a little annoyed at first that the woman lived, when he had declared that she would surely die; but after a while he forgave us all. He soon after left the district; but he remembered Mrs. R-----. Coming one day by train from Echuca, when we stopped at Rochester station I saw someone on the platform looking earnestly at me. Presently he came to the window of my carriage and said, “Good-day, Mr. Watsford.” “Good-day, doctor,” I replied. “Oh,” said he, “how is that Mrs. R----- getting on?” I told him that she was doing very well. “I tell you, Mr. Watsford,” he said, “by all the laws of medicine and surgery, that woman ought to have died.” A year or two after, I was waiting for a coach on the North-Eastern line, when the doctor came up, and, after friendly greetings, asked, “How is Mrs. R-----?” I said, “Oh, she’s pretty well.” “Mr. Watsford,” said he, “you did more that night by prayer than all the holy water in the world would have done.” Some years later still, at the time of the Sydney Exhibition, I was invited to Sydney to preach at the reopening of Surrey Hills Church. On the following Monday, as Dr. Kelynack and I were walking through the Exhibition, I saw a gentleman on the opposite side looking very steadfastly at me. He came over. “The Rev. John Watsford, I presume?” “You are right, sir; but I do not recognise you.” “I will make you remember me in one moment. How is Mrs. R-----?” “Oh, I know you now, doctor,” I said. He had never forgotten that night. He had then learned the power of prayer.

The Ballarat Circuit, when I went to it, was by far the largest in Victoria. We had forty places on the plan. Giving quarterly tickets was no light work. Many of the classes met at 7 o’clock and 8 o’clock on a Sunday morning, and we had to leave home very early to be in time when they were in the country places. I took us two months to visit all the classes. We were busy in one work or another every night in the week. About thirty places, each with Church and Sabbath School Anniversaries, gave us tea-meetings enough to satisfy anyone. I have in my diary the following entry: -

Tuesday, November 24, 1868. – Through a mistake made by the friends at Cardigan, who fixed on the wrong evening, I had nothing to do tonight – certainly something new in this Circuit.

It had long been thought desirable that the Circuit should be divided; but there was such strong opposition on the part of some that everyone seemed afraid to move in the matter. Some strongly advised me not to attempt the division; but I saw it was the right thing to do. Those opposed did their best to prevent it. When the question came before our Quarterly Meeting there were about one hundred and fifty persons present; a fact which I turned to account, saying that no other argument was needed to prove the necessity of dividing the Circuit. There was strong feeling in the meeting. Hard things were said; but the motion to divide was carried. There was soreness for a time; but our friends had too much good sense to keep up the irritation, and were too wise not to see that the division was for the good of both Circuits.

The Ballarat Lydiard Street Sabbath School has been well reported of by all who have known it. The Senior Superintendent of my day, Mr. J. A. Doane, was a most successful officer, and was greatly respected by teachers and children. His successors, the Hon. James Campbell, Messrs. Proctor, Coltman, Robinson, Muley, and others, have also been efficient superintendents, and have done good for the

school. In the upper school were about three hundred young men and women – a grand sight, I often thought. The spirit of the school was excellent. If anyone behaved badly, the whole school felt it. Someone once wrote a bad anonymous letter to one of the officials. The school determined to find out the offender. When he was discovered, they insisted on his expulsion unless he withdrew everything and made an ample apology. In travelling from one end of Victoria to the other when connected with our Home Missions, often, after a service, a young man has come to me and said, “I am a Ballarat Sunday School lad.” It was an honour to have been connected with that school.

While in this Circuit I stood by the bed of many a dying Christian and heard their last testimony. Some gave it quietly, calmly, confidently, and then “fell asleep”; and some triumphantly, shouting almost to the last the praises of their blessed Lord. One dear old leader, Mr. Waterhouse, who had served his God for many years, had a glorious end. Looking up at the last, as if he saw the heavens opened and the glorious company waiting for him, he turned to his wife and, reaching out his left hand, said, “Take my hand.” Then, waving the other on high, he cried, “I’m coming, I’m coming,” and passed to the glory-land. A dear little girl who loved the Saviour, when very ill and suffering greatly, said to me, “Do you think it will be long before Jesus comes for me?” The day she died she suddenly cried out, “Oh, now He has come. Quick, father, mother, kiss me! Goodbye, now come Jesus.” And in a moment she was gone.

We sometimes help a camp meeting at Ballarat, and the results were, generally, very good. We had one on Good Friday, March 26, 1869. About 1500 persons were present, and a gracious influence was on us all day. At the service that followed in Lydiard Street in the evening the power of God came upon the people, and many were seeking mercy, eleven of whom professed to obtain peace with God. Some weeks after, we had a blessed work, as a few extracts from my diary will show: -

June 20. – Tickets to class at 8 o’clock. Preached at Denham Lead at 11; Lydiard Street at night. Very wet. Blessed time. About fifteen penitents seeking Jesus, many of whom could rejoice in Him as their Saviour before the meeting closed. Glory be go God! Jesus, ride one!

June 25. – Met praying men; warned them against mere excitement. A good company in the church. Spoke on full salvation necessary to usefulness. Invited those who were determined to consecrate themselves fully to God to come forward. About fifty came, and, I believe, made the full surrender. Glory be to God! One poor backslider was restored. One person who had come twelve or fifteen miles to the meeting was in great distress.

June 27. – Lydiard Street in the morning: blessed time. Sabbath School in afternoon. Wendouree at night. Went to Lydiard Street afterward: there were eight or ten penitents.

June 28 – Had great conflict last night. This morning felt weary and low. In my study, instead of reading the chapter in order, I opened my Bible, and before me were the words, “Fear not, O Jacob, My servant; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen. For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground” (Isa. xlv. 2, 3). Glory be to God! I will trust in Him and fear not. I do not believe in doing what some do, going to the Bible and casually opening it, and, without looking, putting the finger on some passage, and taking it as God’s special

word or promise. I have known some do this, and, not satisfied with the passage they put their finger on, try again and again till they found something that they approved of. But I do believe that God sometimes cheers, encourages, or guides His servants by directing their attention to some portion of His word, and I am sure it was so in this case. I had no sooner read the verses than there was a ring at my door, and a letter was handed to me from one of our local preachers informing me that they were had a great stir at Miner's Rest last night. Soon after, I went into the town, and one of our friends from Alfredton told me they had a break-down there last night. Praise the Lord!

June 29. – Preached at Lydiard Street. Six professed to find peace.

June 30. – Our Quarterly Meeting. Preached at Pleasant Street in the evening. Eight or ten decided for Jesus.

July 3. – Fellowship Meeting. Glorious time. Three or four professed to believe for a clean heart. Glory be to God: that is what we want. Three penitents.

July 4. – Lydiard Street, morning. Power of the Lord present to heal. Addressed Sabbath School in the afternoon. Pleasant Street at night. Twelve anxious ones: several obtained mercy. A good but eccentric man interrupted us. He was disturbing us so much that I at last told him that if he did not tone down I must put him out. "Bless you," he said, "I'll let you do anything you like with me." Well, what could we do with such a man? And yet it is very trying that God's work is injured when one like this brother carries on so extravagantly.

July 5. – Wet evening: three seeking the Lord.

July 6. – Midday prayer-meeting: time of power. One saved. Preached at Buninyong in the evening. Six came to Jesus.

July 7. – Midday prayer-meeting: blessed time. Preached at Lydiard Street in the evening. Eight or ten seeking the Lord, most of whom could rejoice before the meeting closed.

July 8. – Great power at midday prayer-meeting. Preached at Benevolent Asylum at 3; Sebastopol at 7. Eight or ten members of church seeking entire satisfaction: a backslider restored: three or four penitents.

July 9. – Preached at Lydiard Street. Five or six in distress: some saved.

July 11. – Preached at Sebastopol at 11. On the way my horse fell, but, thank God, I was only shaken a little. Love-feast at Lydiard Street at 3. Glorious time. Preached in the evening. Much power; great resistance; powers of darkness struggling. Five persons were seeking mercy.

Then follow entries telling of three at one meeting seeking God, six at another, nine at another, and so for many days. Some of those brought in at this time are now earnest workers in the Church.

While stationed at Ballarat we had two or three very destructive floods. One especially, in October 1869, was very severe. The water was so high that boats were plying in Bridge Street. Much property was destroyed, and more greatly damaged. At the great Northern Junction mine the waters poured down till the mine was completely flooded. Many of the miners had come to the surface, but seven or eight poor fellows were still below. Very little hope could be entertained of these being saved; but some thought they might possibly fight their way into some "jump-up," where the water would not reach them, and where they would have sufficient air to last some hours. If so, they might be saved, provided they could be speedily reached. The miners set to work to pump out the water. They toiled on for many weary hours,

till at last the cry rang out at "The Corner" in Ballarat, thrilling every heart, and filling the town with rejoicing, "Seven men saved!" Another poor fellow was rescued some hours after. The men suffered greatly for want of fresh air, but when brought up they soon recovered. On the following Sunday we had a thanksgiving service in Lydiard Street Church. There was an immense crowd. Numbers who could not get into the church stayed about the doors all the service time. At the close we sang "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," to the old tune. It was singing to be remembered.

The miners have heavy work, and are exposed to many dangers. Many are suddenly hurried into eternity, while many, through breathing impure air, lose their health and suffer for life. Most of the miners are Cornish men. However bad the times may be, they have a decent suit of clothes for Sunday, and anything but a scanty or ill-supplied table. Many of them are Christian men, and you may generally reckon on their presence at the class, the prayer-meeting, and wherever souls are to be won for Christ. Some of them are among our most successful workers. Among these was Jimmy Jeffrey, of whom so interesting a record is found in the Jubilee volume of Victorian Methodism by Rev. W. L. Blamires and J. B. Smith. I had Jimmy with me at many meetings, and the people were always delighted to hear him. He was a thoroughly good man, everyone had full confidence in him, and his quaint remarks in their own dialect told immensely upon the people. Once he quoted, "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," and said, "Ah! That was well, David, well for you, the great king; but for a poor sinner like me, I'd rather stand at the door up to my knees in snow, and listen through the key-hole, than dwell in the tents of wickedness." In a meeting at Mount Pleasant another Cornish brother preceded Jimmy, and addressed the chairman as "Mr. Cheerman." When Jimmy came on he said, "Mr. Chairman, before I begin to make a speech I want to set old Father S-----, who preceded me, right. I am really surprised that an old man like him should make such a mistake in grammar as he did. Why, Father S-----, it's not 'cheerman' at all; its chairman. Now don't forget that. But some of you will be beginning to say, Who is this that is setting everybody to rights? What great scholar is he? Why, bless you, I'm Jimmy Jeffrey." Then he rattled away in true Cornish dialect till the people were almost convulsed with laughter. He closed thus: "Now you know who I am, and where I came from – Cornwall, blessed Cornwall! Who wouldn't go back to again get one-and-sixpence a week for himself and family to live on?" I was with Jimmy once at a Church Anniversary tea-meeting at Sebastopol. Before the public meeting began I said I hoped we should have a good time, with as little nonsense as possible. While one or two speakers were addressing the meeting, some rude boys were throwing lozenges at persons in the church. I more than once called attention to it, but it still went on. Jimmy, in speaking, said something that made the people laugh heartily. Annoyed at the conduct of the boys, which was becoming worse, I rose and said, "Really, Mr. Chairman, this is too bad." Jimmy staggered back as if he had been struck, and looked unutterable things, till I added, "If those boys who are throwing lozenges do not desist, I shall ask you to request the trustees to put them out." Then Jimmy heaved a deep sigh, and said, "Oh, what a relief! I thought he was coming down on me."

At the Conference held in Adelaide in 1870 I was nominated as the President for the next year. The British Conference sustained this nomination, and so I had to take the chair at the Conference of 1871, which was held in Hobart, Tasmania. It was a trying time to me; but the Lord helped me. I have always rejoiced to see how the fathers and

brethren show all respect to whoever is placed in the chair, and I deeply felt their great kindness to me; but I was very glad when the Conference was over. People have thought that I know nothing of being nervous; but if they had only known what I have felt and suffered sometimes, they would have changed their opinion.

Melbourne: Brunswick Street

My next Circuit was Melbourne (Brunswick Street). In April 1871 I began my work in this large and important Circuit. I bless God that in answer to prayer the soul-converting power was with the word, and many were saved. A few extracts from my journal will best show this.

My colleagues were Rev. J. Eggleston, Joseph Nicholson, and Thomas Adamson.

April 13, 1871. – As some repairs were going on in the church, I preached in the schoolroom, which would not hold the people who came to the service. Many went away, and many had to stand in the porch and the aisle all the time. My subject was “Entire Sanctification.” A powerful, hallowed influence was on the congregation, and many seemed to be hungering and thirsting for the great blessing. Glory be to God! This is what the Church needs: there can be no true, permanent revival without it: with it God’s work must prosper, and sinners be saved.

Sunday, 16. – Preached at Northcote at 11. Addressed the Sabbath School at 3. Preached at Sackville Street at 7. Eight or ten persons were seeking Jesus, some of whom were enabled to rejoice in Him.

April 18. – Commence my visiting work. Called on twenty-one families in the afternoon. Preached at Sackville Street at 7.30. Three persons in distress.

My plan for visiting has been something like this: On going into a Circuit, assisted by stewards, leaders, and local preachers, I have called on all the members and hearers I could find. I then carefully prepared my visiting-book. My days for visiting were generally from Tuesday to Friday, and sometimes Monday. I did not spend a long time in any house, five or ten minutes at most, and I carefully guarded against mere idle talk on general subjects. I sometimes read a portion of God’s word, and always prayed. I could now and then, as the last entry in my diary shows, make as many as twenty and more visits in an afternoon; but the average number was fourteen or fifteen. I always looked upon this as one of the most important parts of my work. Little can be done in our Church without it. After fifty years’ experience I have come to the conclusion that, as a rule, our ministers, whatever their abilities as preachers, will never greatly succeed in Circuit work if they do not systematically visit the people. To me it seems impossible for any minister to know the spiritual state of his hearers, and what they need, if he neglects this work; and I am sure that, however greatly many may admire and praise the preacher, they will receive little benefit from his ministry if he is not a faithful pastor. Some good men shrink from this work, and they suffer thereby. I would urge two things upon all young men entering the ranks of the ministry.

1. Be determined, by God’s help, to attend to this work. It may be a little difficult at first, but pray about it, and fight earnestly against any disinclination to engage in it, and very soon it will become easy and delightful, and will tell powerfully on

your own piety, and upon every part of your work. It has been a great blessing to me, and a real means of grace. It have greatly enjoyed my intercourse with our people in their homes, and in it I have found matter for my sermons that I could never find in books.

2. Do it thoroughly and systematically. Let "all sorts and conditions of men" be included in your pastoral visitation. The sick and the sorrowful must have your first and careful attention. The rich who are prospering in the world need your faithful care as a pastor, and the poor must never be forgotten. It will be a burning shame if you attend the garden or evening parties of the rich, and leave them out of your real visitation work, and it will be a greater shame if you leave the poor altogether, or almost, uncared for. I know you can never satisfy some people in this part of your work, but let it never be truthfully said by anyone, "Our minister can attend football and cricket matches, and garden and evening parties, but he can find no time to visit his people."

April 23. – Preached at Coburg at 11. Addressed Sabbath School in the afternoon. Preached to a great crowd in Brunswick Street at 7. Fifteen persons seeking mercy, and many found it.

April 24. – Prayer-meeting. Brunswick Street. Eight or nine penitents.

April 27. – Preached again at Brunswick Street on Entire Sanctification. The schoolroom was filled, and many were in the church, and some outside at the door. There was a blessed feeling. Many were praying, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." It was difficult to close the meeting: some professed to enter into the glorious liberty.

Similar entries are found in my diary week after week for some time. The members of the Church were consecrating themselves fully to God and working for Him, and He greatly blessed us and saved souls. And so must it ever be. If entire sanctification is not preached, and the members of the Church are living without it, but little will be done in leading sinner to Christ. But if this great blessing is urged upon the attention of God's people, and they press into the enjoyment of it, the world outside must feel the influence, and sinners will be arrested and converted. A revival of holiness in the Church means an awakening among the unsaved.

I found in Brunswick Street a large number of old members, some of them leaders and local preachers, who had been consistent Christians and earnest workers for many years. Dear old fathers Wills and Hutcheon, the former a most successful class leader of many years' standing; the latter a hard-working and acceptable local preacher. Both finished their course and entered into the joy of their Lord while I was in the Circuit. Here also we had a large number of young people, members of our Church, who were willing to work; but many of them made, I think, a great mistake in working on what are called non-sectarian lines outside the Church. There is danger in holding the reins too tightly in the case of young men. They ought to be encouraged to work for God, and a good deal of liberty should be given them in their method of working; but it is most desirable that they should work on Church lines, otherwise much of the fruit of their labours will certainly not be fathered in, and they themselves may suffer loss. There is something very attractive in the idea of non-sectarian work; but experience teaches me that the best and most permanent work is in connection with the Churches. We can live at peace with members of other denominations, sincerely respect and love them, and occasionally help them in their services, and at

the same time do the work of God in our own Church. One of the things that has sometimes tried and annoyed me has been to hear persons who have left us say that they did so because there was no work in our Church for them to do. If they meant that they were not put up to address large congregations, or that they were not made leaders in important Church work, that may be true; and it seems very clear that whatever opinion they had of themselves, no one else thought that they were equal to anything of the kind. But if they meant that their hands were tied, or that there was no sphere of labour open to them, then I am at a loss to understand them. It has always been the glory of our Church that we have a place and a work for every man. We do not make all preachers of leaders; but I have never known an earnest, humble, devoted young man in the Methodist Church, with anything in him, who has not been soon noticed by ministers and leaders, and something given him to do. The fact is, such persons will soon find something to do, whether anyone notices them or not; and being faithful in the least, they will soon have more to do.

In 1871 I had, as President, to visit the Beechworth District, and hold a kind of District Meeting there. Those were the days of coaches. We started from Melbourne at 12 o'clock on a Tuesday. The roads were dreadfully bad in some places, and in others there was no road, for we were off the track, threading our way through the bush. During the night we were sadly shaken and knocked about. We reached Beechworth on Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock. I need scarcely say that I was very tired. In the evening I heard one of the probationers preach. The next morning I heard another probationer, who began the service with the hymn, "Bid me of men beware, and to my ways take heed," etc. Then I met the stewards, and heard the reports from the various Circuits. In the evening I preached on "Full Salvation." On Friday morning, at 7 o'clock, I heard another probationer. During the day I met the ministers, and examined the young men on trial. On the Sunday I preached at Beechworth, addressed the Sabbath School, and preached again. One young woman in great distress found the Saviour. That week I travelled many miles to El Dorado, Yackandandah, and Albury, preaching and lecturing at each place. On the following Sunday I preached twice at Albury and once at Wodonga. In the evening, at Albury, we had many penitents. On the Tuesday I left Wahgunyah by steamer for Echuca, which we reached on Friday. The trip down the river was a very trying one, stopping every night, as we did, to take in wool. At one place, where we stopped for an hour or two at noon, the passengers went ashore. Coming back, we had to step a short distance from the river's bank to the steamer. I led the way; but, just as I reached out my foot, the bank gave way under me, and I went down into the river up to my waist in water. I had hold of the rail of the steamer, and was soon up again, nothing the worse for my wetting. The next week a sensational paragraph appeared in one of the country papers that the President of the Australasian Wesleyan Conference had a narrow escape of being drowned, that he fell from the steamer into the river, and had to battle for his life, but being an expert swimmer he reached the shore in safety. This was copied into other papers in New South Wales, and alarmed some of my friends.

In 1872 we had souls saved in many places in the Circuit; sometimes we had showers of blessing, as extracts from my diary, similar to those quoted elsewhere, would show.

Among others saved at this time was a fine young man who was ill when I first visited him. He became very anxious about his soul. About a week before he died he was enabled to trust in Jesus as his Saviour. He calmly rested on Him till the end came.

He was very happy at the last. Another was a publican who at first was dark and unconcerned. After many visits he began to feel and pray. Some time before he died, when I had prayed with him one morning, as I rose from my knees he said, "What a load has been lifted from my mind! Jesus only: no other. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.'" "

In looking over my diary for the year 1873 I find the usual entries referring to visiting, preaching, lecturing, attending tea-meetings, and so forth. There are also frequent records of conversions; but we had no great awakening in the Circuit. In the month of May a week of special services, according to Conference appointment, was held; but while there were a few conversions, there was no great breaking down among the people. I have all along had my doubts whether it is desirable to hold these special services, unless we are forced to do so. There has been too much of going on in a cold dead way all through the year, till the time comes for holding revival missions; then some stir is made, a little house-to-house visitation is done, hand-bills are circulated, a revivalist, if possible, is secured for a week or fortnight, special services are held, believers are quickened, and a few sinners converted; but very soon things revert to their former state, and at the end of the year the Circuit is as it was. Better, far better, to raise the Church. When this is accomplished, the other will follow.

The Sunday School at Brunswick Street was large and successful. The Superintendents, Messrs. Stranger and Swan, had great influence over the young people. The conversion of the young was ever kept in view. Many in this school have been saved, and are in various places doing God's work. Some are missionaries in the islands, others are ministers at home, while many are doing good service as local preachers, leaders, and Sabbath-school teachers.

The Brunswick Street Circuit at that time was rich in pious and useful men who had done good work for the Methodist Church. Besides those already mentioned were Messrs. Lowe, Barrett, Bennetts, Galagher, Wimble, Newman, Nicol, Marsden, Overend, John, and many others. No layman did more for his Church, as trustee, leader, and local preacher, or served the Connexion better on its various Committees, than Mr. Edward John. A thorough Methodist, a consistent Christian, a man of sound judgment, and always at his post, he worked well for his Circuit and for the whole Church.

We had then in the Circuit a Methodist of the old school, one of the oldest colonists, who was known everywhere as Tommy Trotman. He was converted under the ministry of the Rev. N. Turner. It was a treat to hear Tommy in his class or in his home, for he told his experience in no stiff stereotyped form, was quite an original character, and his quaint remarks amused as well as profited those who heard him. He was never afraid to give a hearty "Amen," "Bless the Lord," in the house of prayer. His responses, however, sometimes confused a nervous preacher. He was well acquainted with our hymn-book, although he did not always quote quite correctly. If the preacher began a verse known to Tommy, he would take up the two last lines and repeat them aloud to the congregation before the preacher had time to do so. After one of our Conferences, when there had been much discussion on the Class Meeting question, I was giving some account of the Conference to our people, and, referring to the Class Meeting, said, "If we ever give up the Class Meeting" – before I could get any farther, Tommy cried out, "We're done for, man." I liked to hear him

tell his tales of the first days in Victoria. He did not fully believe in the conversion of his wife, who was as singular a person as her husband. When I have asked her about the state of her soul, the old man would break in with, "Mind now thee don't make any mistake about it. It's no use to say you be converted if you are not." He very often had something to tell of his conflict with the powers of darkness, and how through Christ he conquered. One day he said, "The old man came to me last night and said, 'Tommy, it's no use thee praying any more: God will not hear thy prayer;'" and I said to 'im, 'Thee 'rt a liar, devil, thee 'rt a liar;'" and I fell down on my knees and prayed, and God gave me the victory." One morning he said to me, "Oh, man, I've been to the gate of heaven last night; the door-keeper let me just peep in, and my! but it was beautiful. I asked him to let me in, but he said, 'Not yet; you must wait a while.'" Then, looking at me most earnestly, he added, "Eh, man, we must be clean to get in there." One day he told me that he had seen a vision of the Judgment Day. He said, "I saw the Father, and the Son, and the Son had a long spy-glass with which He looked everyone through as he came to the bar. All the world was there, and they went in one after another; and when He had looked them through, some were admitted into the city, and some were cast out. My turn came at last, and I went in, trembling all over. As soon as I entered, some said, 'Oh, turn him out: he's no good;'" but when they were turning me out the Son said, 'Wait a bit, till I see through him.' He looked and looked at me through the spy-glass ever so long, and then He shook His head, and looked again, and at last He said, 'I have found a little bit of love down at the very bottom of his heart. Let him in!' – and I tell you I was glad."

A strange circumstance occurred this year. A gentleman living in the country, who had known religion, lost his reason, and was confined in the Yarra Bend Asylum. His wife, who was greatly distressed, went often to see him, and requested my colleague, who knew him, to visit him. This he did until he left the Circuit, and I then engaged to call and see him occasionally. He was taken ill, and I asked the doctor if he got worse and was likely to die, to send for me. One night, about 12 o'clock, there was a loud knock at my door. When I inquired who was there, I was told that Mr. A. B. was very ill and appeared to be dying. I put my horse in the buggy and, taking the messenger with me, hastened to the Asylum. Arriving there, we went to the hospital, and the messenger left me, going through the back door and saying he would open the front door for me. Soon he returned, and said that Mr. A. B. was dead and had been removed to the dead-house. I returned home, and the next day made some arrangements for the funeral. On Saturday night the messenger came again to say that a mistake had been made: that it was the person next to Mr. A. B. who had died, and that he, though very low, was still alive. On Sunday morning I called to see him. When I went into the hospital, and sat down by the side of his bed, he was very calm and collected. I said, "Mr. A. B., you are now near the end: are you looking to Jesus?" "Oh yes," he replied, "only to Jesus;" and the tears rolled down his pale face. Very soon after this he began to talk wildly, and in a few hours he was dead. Was not this lucid interval given in great mercy to comfort the sorrowing friends? Certainly it did comfort them greatly.

At our Conference of 1874 at Ballarat we had, as usual, much difficulty with "the stations." The Circuits objection to some of our ministers, and it is difficult to know where to send them. Many brethren are pained year after year, and it seems to me wonderful how they can stand it. We allow Circuits to give invitations, and very often the invitation given and accepted is set aside, and a minister is sent to the Circuit

that the people not only did not want, but were very anxious should not be sent. I think that while invitations are allowed they should be respect, not in the case of some ministers or Circuits, but of all, and nothing but dire necessity should set them aside. I also think that after the second reading of "the stations" only a most urgent matter should lead to any alteration. To me it has always been painful to hear ministers pleading for better Circuits than those given them, and more painful still to hear protests from a Circuit against a good man of whom it knew little, because it wanted one of whom it knew less, simply because some official heard him preach when he had a remarkably good time, or some special friends of his had said that he was just the man for the Circuit. We certainly need something to save us, if possible, from the heart-burnings and irritation from which we now so often suffer. Some contend that we the presence of lay-representatives on the Stationing Committee would do this; but I think that this would not only help us, but greatly increase the difficulty.

South Melbourne

Having been appointed to the Emerald Hill, now South Melbourne, Circuit, I commenced my work there in April 1874. Knowing how much depended on my being fully given up to God and endued with power, I consecrated myself wholly to the Lord, praying that the last remains of self might be destroyed and that I might in every way glorify him. I met the local preachers, leaders, and other earnest workers in my study to talk about God's work and pray for His blessing. At once I began to preach on Entire Sanctification as the present privilege of every Christian. Assisted by the leaders, I visited all our people, and urged them to give themselves fully to God, to begin to work for Him, and to plead for the outpouring of the Spirit. I had found these means succeed elsewhere, and I believed they would succeed here. Very soon we had a move among the people, and the "showers of blessing" began to fall. In my diary I find the following entries: -

May 4. – Large gathering at the prayer-meeting. Much power. God will bless us.

May 5. – Schoolroom crowded at meeting this evening. Many under conviction: one found the Saviour. Our people are pleading and looking for great things.

May 6. – Very wet. About one hundred at the prayer-meeting. Many anxious: some fine young men among them. After the meeting, one young man came to my house in great distress.

May 7. – Blessed meeting. Other young men seeking. The young man who came to my house last night has found peace. Tonight he brought another wish him, who has decided for God. Glory be to God, the work is spreading.

May 8. – Large meeting. Many seeking the Lord: four or five professed to find the Saviour.

May 10. – Preached at Sandridge at 11. Met teachers at 4. Emerald Hill at night. Large congregation. Five or six penitents.

May 11. – At evening meeting, great resistance: powers of darkness opposing. Our praying men pleaded in faith, and God gave us the victory. Three obtained mercy: many others seeking.

May 12. – Took breakfast with ministers of the different Churches at Dr. MacDonald's. We had some most interesting and stimulating conversation in the

work of God. At our evening meeting there was again great resistance. It seemed as if all hell were there fighting against us. We had a great struggle. We must have more power.

May 13. – Evening meeting: blessed time. Many present. Eight seeking mercy: some obtained the blessing.

May 14. – Held meeting for young people. Large attendance. Many anxious: some enabled to rejoice in God.

May 15. – Crowded meeting. Many seeking.

May 17. – Preached at Sandridge at 11. Great power: people weeping all over the church. I closed the service and held a prayer-meeting. More than half of the congregation remained, many in great distress. I addressed the Sabbath School in the afternoon. Between twelve and twenty young people professed to decide for Jesus. In the evening at Emerald Hill we had a great crowd, and many seekers among them.

These entries may seem to some very monotonous, but to me this was a blessed monotony. The Lord had clearly showed me that my work was to save souls, and He led me by His Spirit to labour and look for this, and I rejoiced and praised His holy name that I could record, what to me was about everything else, this salvation of perishing men. During the year we had conversions at many places; but had we been more in earnest, had we pleaded more, and more fully trusted God, we should have seen greater things.

At Emerald Hill I had frequent intercourse with the ministers of other Churches, who were greatly concerned for the prosperity of God's work. We frequently had united meetings, and God greatly blessed us.

The Sabbath School here, under the superintendence of Mr. Bee, was a large and prosperous one.

My colleague, the Rev. H. Catford, who had been very ill for some time, died at the beginning of the year 1874. He was a good man, and a useful minister of Jesus Christ. Although he suffered so much for many months, when the end at last came he quietly fell asleep and passed away without a struggle.