



*"You will know them by their fruits." Mt. 7:16*

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY of Rev. J. A. WOOD

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"Perfect Love,"  
"Purity and Maturity,"  
"Sunset Echoes"  
"Wesley on Christian Perfection"  
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### PREFACE

With a grateful sense of obligation to God for his gracious providence over me during my long and laborious life, and at the request of my children and friends, I have written this brief outline of my experience and work as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal church during fifty-five years. In this I have given but a brief and imperfect sketch, a mere outline, of the blessings and mercies the Lord has been pleased to bestow upon his poor servant. I might have written much regarding my weakness, unworthiness and imperfections, and would have done so, had I supposed it would have pleased and honored my blessed Redeemer and Lord. If what I have written shall be of interest and encouragement to my friends and brethren, I shall feel satisfied.

John Allen Wood

### 1. PARENTAGE AND INFANCY

In a little stone house in Fishkell, Dutchess County, New York, I was born, June 24, A. D. 1828.

I was the scrawniest, the weakest, the most worrisome and unpromising of all my mother's children, so much so that mother said she was often ashamed of me, and some of her neighbors said I was not "worth bringing up." The most prominent trait of my infantile life was crying and developing my vocal organs to the trial and mortification of my parents. This I kept up as a poor, sickly little child for the first year and a half of my life.

If there were any contagious diseases in the community I was sure to catch them. I brought into the family the measles, the chicken-pox and the whooping-cough.

I present these items of my infancy that the merciful providence and sustaining hand of the blessed Lord may be seen the more clearly in the long, laborious life, briefly presented in this little biography.

My parents, Jesse E. Wood and Jane L. (Allen) Wood, had twelve children, two daughters and ten sons. I was the eldest of ten brothers. All of us grew up to man[hood] and womanhood, married and had families. There was but one death in the family, that of my eldest sister, Lucy (Wood) St. John, in forty-five years. She left six sons who all grew up to manhood.

My mother was a distant relative of Col. Ethan Allen of Revolutionary fame. My father's uncle, Col. Jesse Wood, served his country at the battle of Plattsburg and was present when the British surrendered.

Father and mother were moral people and did what they could, while without religious experience, to train their family religiously, sending us to Sunday school and inculcating the doctrines of Evangelical Christianity.

We moved from Fishkell to Berne, Albany County, in the spring of 1838. There, through the influence of my Sunday school teacher, Elmina Doty, sister of Elihu Doty, the first missionary sent by the American Board to the Island of Borneo, I was led to see myself a sinner and gave my heart to the Savior at ten years of age – the first in my father's family.

To get away from my brothers and sisters, who annoyed me in my devotions, I made the barn my closet of prayer. One morning father came out to the barn, and, hearing the voice of prayer within, stood and listened. He turned away, exclaiming, "Merciful God! Have I a son that is praying, and I a poor sinner unsaved?"

In less than a week a prayer meeting was appointed by the little Methodist society, at my father's house. This was the beginning of a glorious revival in the village.

For a few days father and mother looked as though they had lost all their friends, but one morning, when father came downstairs, I knew by the look on his face that he was converted. In the night he lay weeping, and mother said to him, "O! Jesse, don't weep so; it hurts me." In a moment God spoke to him and said, "Son, thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." He said to mother, "Now we must have family prayers. You read the Bible, and we will have John pray. He has done more praying than we have." I felt like old Simeon. "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

At that time, in 1841, father, mother and I united with the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the bosom of which I have found a home since.

Later, every member of my father's family (but one if not all) has professed conversion.

While attending the Second National Camp Meeting at Round Lake in 1871 my mother was stricken with paralysis. In response to a telegram I hastened home to Beach Lake, Pennsylvania, where in a day or two I saw her take her flight to her heavenly home. Mother was a good woman, every way a good woman, a good wife, a good mother, a good neighbor, a useful member of the church.

In 1874 father was happily married to Margaret E. Wakeley and moved to Coxsackie on the Hudson river, the old home of the Wood family. Here at Coxsackie lived my great-grandfather, Jesse Wood, who was a devout Christian, a deacon in the church and a merchant in the village at the time of his death by drowning while bathing in the Hudson river in 1802.

Here "Uncle Jesse," as father was called, was loved and honored, a peacemaker and a friend to all; and here in sweet contentment, with my good stepmother, he spent the closing fifteen years of his long life, and died in his eighty-seventh year.





## 2. MY BOYHOOD DAYS

From the time of my uniting with the M. E. Church I attended the class and prayer meetings and love feasts regularly. My reading was Methodistic. The lives of Carvoso, Bramwell, Smith and Hester Ann Rogers and other Methodist biographies, which were then in the Sunday school libraries, these were full of interest to me and molded my views of true Christian living.

My father being in moderate circumstances, we children had to turn in and help earn a living. I picked berries, picked hops, and sold them.

In my boyhood days I was much given to fishing and sometimes supplied not only our large family but some of our neighbors with fish. There was a small creek that ran through the town, which had a variety of small fish in it, such as suckers, chubs, redbins, trout, catfish and eels.

I got trusted for a dollar's worth of lumber and made what I called an eel-pot. Then I made a dam across the stream. It took me some time, and while I was at it I was the butt of ridicule by the boys and neighbors, as the stream was small, and there was nothing like an eel-pot in that part of the country.

The night after I finished my dam and got my wooden box set, there came a good rain which raised the water and roiled it. The next morning I hastened to my trap, and to my surprise I found it half full of the various kinds of fish I have mentioned, and some large pickerel which had come down from the lake during the night. From that eel-pot, for some time, I supplied our table and others with a variety of fish.

As there were mink and muskrats along the creek, I got after them. At that time mink skins were worth seventy-five cents and muskrats twenty-five and thirty cents. In various ways I caught quite a number of them.

As I was pious and did not associate with the rougher class of boys, of course I was made the butt of their ridicule and annoyance. They stole the fish from my traps, and sometimes put dead pigs and cats in them. I was at this time twelve and thirteen years of age. I was a regular boy and did my share of skating, sliding down hill, playing ball and other harmless sports.

I carried brick off a brick yard two summers, worked on a farm, worked in a restaurant in Albany, worked one year in a butt factory and five years in a knitting factory at Cohoes, N. Y.

When I was eighteen years of age I had an experience which taught me an important lesson. The young people of the community got up a Christmas sleigh-ride and invited me to go with them. I consulted my class-leader and he advised me not to go with them, and said if I did I would be sorry.

Contrary to my usual custom, I discarded his advice and invited my lady and went.

On our way we visited and talked religion, she being a member of the Presbyterian Church, so I got on in the first part of the ride pretty well. But when we reached the hotel where we stopped for refreshments, to my surprise the ball-room was opened and lighted and a dance was inaugurated. I felt mean and contemptible, and my lady and I staid out alone in the sitting room. On our return they got to racing and running horses and that aroused the old 'Nick in my horse, which had been a racer and was used to that kind of

performance. In spite of all I could do, he would run and was not satisfied to simply keep up, but would shy out and run by the others.

I felt ashamed and mortified – a young Methodist and a Presbyterian racing horses and coming into town on a full run. I learned a lesson, and I was never caught by Satan in that trap again.



When a boy I went to the country schools in winter, and when a lad of fifteen, desiring to improve my little stock of knowledge, I walked three miles every morning and evening for two terms at Knoxville Academy.

### 3. MY CALL TO THE MINISTRY

When I commenced work at Cohoes I received \$1.50 per week and paid one dollar of it for my board. I remained there until I was made overseer of the carding and spinning rooms, and received two dollars per day of ten hours, which, with overwork, often amounted to two fifty, equivalent to five or six dollars now.

At the beginning of my work in the factory, only two hands – one beside myself – professed to be Christians. During a revival the proprietor, Mr. Egbert, allowed me to hold prayer meetings in his office with his employees.

When I left to go to my studies, twenty-seven out of thirty-two employed in the rooms under my charge were hopefully converted.

I began to feel that God had some other work for me to do outside of work in the factory, and I asked the Quarterly Conference of my church to give me an exhorter's license. The good men said, "John is a good boy, but the idea of his holding meetings or preaching is absurd," and they refused to give me a license.

I then resolved never to ask the church to give me authority to hold meetings, but to prepare myself for the work and then enter any door that might be open.

I told my mother at that time of my purpose, and she replied, "John, if you want to be a poor man, carry an empty pocket and live from hand to mouth, be a Methodist preacher." She knew that I had a fine position, could come and go in style, and she doubted whether I would ever make a successful preacher. I did not wonder at her fears, for I had misgivings myself.

During my residence in Cohoes my oldest sister, my oldest brother and my brother-in-law were powerfully converted. My brother-in-law went out with a four-horse load to a camp meeting near Albany, as he said, to raise the devil. The celebrated John N. Maffitt preached, and St. John said while he was preaching, it appeared to him as though the whole universe was on fire, and Maffitt's words went through the audience and him like streaks of lightning. He forsook his associates, gave his heart to God and came home a happy Christian, and grasped me in his arms and cried and shouted, and I thought he was crazy.

My sister Lucy was much displeased because her husband was converted and refused to attend the revival services going on at the Methodist Church. She said she would go to hell before she would go to the Methodist Church.

The Congregationalists commenced meetings and she went there for about two weeks, was deeply convicted but found no relief. One evening, just before our meeting closed, Lucy came in and rushed to the altar as if she was shot out of a gun. In fifteen minutes she was happily converted. I had told her the Lord would not forgive her while she set up



her own will as to where and when she would be converted.

The Lord sent a man to me who wanted me to take charge of his woolen mill for two months, at Maltaville, in Saratoga County. As my health had suffered some by my long confinement in the factory at Cohoes, I thought the change would do me good, and I consented to go there.



#### 4. PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY

While at Maltaville my place for private prayer was in the woods back of the Congregational parsonage. In my earnestness I must have prayed louder than I supposed, for the Congregational minister overheard me and learned from it that I was in trouble about a call to the ministry. He sought an interview with me, and later invited me to come and live in his family and study with him and assist him in his work.

I was to pay a moderate price for my board, as I had been economical and had laid up some money to supply my needs while at my studies for a year or two. Before my two months' engagement at Maltaville had expired, Mr. Hill transferred his pastorate to Cambridgeport, Vt., and I consented to go with him there.

Rev. William Hill was an able Presbyterian minister, and for a number of years pastor of a Presbyterian church in Newburg, N. Y. He was convicted of his need of entire sanctification, and obtained it at a meeting for the promotion of holiness at Mrs. Phoebe Palmer's, in New York city.

He lived it, he professed it and preached it, and for so doing was expelled from the Hudson River Presbytery in April, 1844. Rev. Henry Belden was expelled at the same time for the same cause.

They united with the Congregational church. Brother Hill died in holy triumph at Bristol, Conn., July 31, 1851, in the thirty-seventh year of his age.

Soon after I reached Cambridgeport, in June, 1849, I found the remnants of a Methodist class meeting, and resuscitated it and acted as class leader. It soon filled up, revival flame broke out and souls were being converted, when Brother Hill put an embargo on it, saying it was not right for me to build up a Methodist church when living and studying with the pastor of the Congregational church.

I handed in my church letter at Athens, three miles distant, and the pastor, Rev. S. G. Kellogg, notified his Presiding Elder, J. C. Aspenwall, that there was a Methodist young man studying with the Congregational preacher down at Cambridgeport.

By the way, this Brother Aspenwall was the spiritual father of Rev. William McDonald, leading him to Christ and into the ministry.

Not long after, while walking up to Athens, I met a man in a buggy, who stopped his horse and said: "I will call you Bro. Wood. I am on my way to Cambridgeport to see a young man who is studying with the Congregational preacher, and I guess you are the man." I replied "I am," and asked what he wanted.

He said: "I am presiding elder of Springfield District, and want you to supply at Brookline, ten miles from here." I replied "I have no authority to preach, and can make no arrangements without consulting Bro. Hill." He said: "Get into the buggy and we will

go and see him.” He got Brother Hill's consent, and arranged for me to supply at Brookline every other Sunday for ten months, and sent an appointment for me to preach there a week hence.

Brookline was a little valley five miles long between the mountains, and had a population of a little less than four hundred, with two broken-down churches, a Methodist and a Baptist. There had been no preaching in either of the churches for nearly a year.



I had never conducted a religious service, except a class or prayer meeting. During the week I was terribly tried, became very bilious, could not fix my mind on any subject. To add to my nervous timidity, Bro. Hill attempted to drill me in extemporaneous preaching, placing me in one corner of his study and he taking a seat in the opposite corner. I broke down and ran out of the room. I endeavored to get a man to go and recall the appointment, but it was haying time, and no man nor team could be spared. So I determined to go down to Brookline and make an effort. If I failed, I would sell my books and go back to the factory.

## 5. MY FIRST SERMON

Saturday afternoon I walked down, and it was a long ten miles, for I dreaded going most distressingly. I stopped over night with an old Methodist class leader named Skinner, who resided in Hedgehog Hollow, he having made, as I said at the time, a raid on the woodchucks, hedgehogs and foxes. I was very nervous and could not sleep a wink all night. Before daylight I was out into the woods, on my face, crying to the Lord.

The church was situated on a large square. When I reached it, at ten o'clock, it looked like a town meeting. Scores of teams were hitched around the square and the people stood in squads. There had been no preaching so long. It was a beautiful July day, and they all turned out. The old class leader said to me: “You will have a big congregation. You won't be afraid of them, will you?” I replied: “I hope not.” He said: “Sartin, sartin!”

When I walked into the church I was introduced to an old Vermont Yankee by the name of Stebbins, clothed in pepper and salt homespuns. He was the most influential man in the church and in the community. He sized me up, and his first words to me as I took a seat by his side were: “Our young men are so proud nowadays, they can't preach any.” This started the cold perspiration all over me, as I was already trembling from head to foot. Coming from Cohoes, I was dressed, as they did in large towns, and my black satin vest and neat clothing caused the old man's remark.

I walked up into the pulpit, and I was so nervous that in spite of all I could do, one foot or the other would keep dancing. The church was filled. The choir was large and good, and led by a singing master who had conducted singing schools throughout that region.

My text was Gen. 30:27: “I have learned by experience.” I noticed that the Christian is a learner, and dwelt on some things he learned before his conversion, some things he learned at his conversion, and some things he learns after his conversion. During my discourse I resolved over and over again that if I ever got out of that pulpit I would never go in again.

As I came down the pulpit stairs an old Baptist deacon asked me how long since I left college. I thought he was poking fun at me, and it seemed the culmination of my distress.

The class leader requested me to lead the class meeting, which I did, and gradually obtained my usual freedom and ease. At the close Father Stebbins announced that I would preach again two weeks from that morning, though I had purposely omitted the



announcement.

During the fortnight my old salt and pepper friend drove twenty-five miles to see the Presiding Elder and request him to appoint me to Brookline for the year, not knowing he had already done it.

Father Stebbins and his family were staunch Methodists, and their home was headquarters for Methodism in that part of Vermont.

I never had an exhorter's license. Presiding Elder Aspenwall, without my request, but at the recommendation of the Brookline Quarterly Conference, gave me a local preacher's license.

I soon commenced a series of pastoral visitations and evening meetings, and in less than three months was in the midst of a glorious outpouring of the Spirit, in which nearly all the community who were not already Christians were converted. I preached nightly, first in the Methodist and the next night in the Baptist church, until a Baptist evangelist was sent for to baptize some of my converts.

A merciful providence. While riding on horseback through unbroken snow three feet in depth, my horse stumbled and threw me. With my right foot in the stirrup, he dragged me on my back, against his hind leg, some thirty yards, and then stopped, looked around at me and let me escape from my perilous position. There is scarcely one horse in ten thousand that would not have kicked me to death.

By the guiding providence of God, the following February I was married to Mary Louisa Mills, of Clifton Park, Saratoga County, New York. She was a lovely Christian, gentle, modest, unassuming, and for twenty-three years blessed my life as a devoted wife and a loving, faithful mother to the two sons and a daughter which she bore me.



## 6. JOINED THE VERMONT CONFERENCE

In the spring of 1850 I was received on probation into the Vermont Conference, and was returned to Brookline. Williamsville was added to it, and there we commenced housekeeping in one room, which was alternately parlor, study, sleeping-room and dining-room. We had the privilege of cooking on the kitchen stove. That was a hard year, with no very marked revival.

One striking instance I will relate. On a cold winter night a man drove up to the gate, and, coming to the door, asked if I was the Methodist preacher who believed in sanctification.

"I replied: 'I am a Methodist preacher and I ought to believe in sanctification.' He said: 'My wife wants to be sanctified, and God knows I ought to be converted.' I said: 'Come in.' He said: 'How long will it take?' I answered: 'That depends upon how earnest you are.'"

"Well," said he, we are in earnest, for we have come six miles through the storm." I told him to "throw the buffalo skin over the horse and bring in his wife." Within an hour he was happily converted and his wife greatly blessed, and they were on their way home. He lived in an Advent neighborhood. I knew the devil would be after him, and the next day I drove up there. I formed a class, held some special meetings, and had the best little revival of the year.

## A SUPPLEMENT TO MY SALARY

Our financial support (quarterage, as it was called), made up of onions, potatoes, cabbages, beets, turnips, maple sugar and money, amounted to less than one hundred dollars. But, toward spring, on a cold, snowy night, about eight o'clock a cavalcade came down the lane to the house, opened the door, rolled in a barrel of flour, threw in a pair of boots, a box of sugar, a couple of dresses for my wife and a few other store bundles. Then about seventy-five people came in. They set the table in the big kitchen with pies, cakes and other eatables, and then sat down and ate all of it. They then seated Mrs. Wood and me in a couple of chairs in the middle of the room and marched around us.

We were young people in the first year of our married life. Every man kissed my wife and threw a piece of money into her lap, and every woman kissed her pastor and dropped a coin into his hand.

They left about seventy dollars in money, besides other valuables. This, our first Donation visit, was a great help to us at this time, when I had run in debt for a horse and buggy, and we were just starting, without any furnished parsonage.

## BONDVILLE, VERMONT

The next Conference, 1851, I was sent to Bondville, a little village on the east side of the Green Mountains. On my way up I asked an old man by the roadside how far it was to Bondville. He said, "About a mile. Are you moving there? What are you going to do?" I replied: "I am going there to preach the gospel and try to get sinners converted." "You won't get one," said the old Adventist.

I said: "I shall try for it, anyhow."

"You won't get one," he reiterated.

That year his wife, his son-in-law, his daughter and nearly all of his neighbors were converted in my meetings.

Bondville was built by and named after Richard Bond. Though not a professor of religion, after passing through a great sorrow in the death by accident of his two little sons – one was killed at his father's sawmill and the other little fellow ran under his old, partially blind grandfather's ax and was instantly killed – Mr. Bond built a good church and asked Presiding Elder Aspenwall to send them a good preacher, and he would see that he was supported.

On my arrival I called on Mr. Bond, and after I left, he said to his wife: "Well, if we've got that fellow on our hands for a year we have got our hands full." When I had preached three Sunday mornings he said to a man who asked how he liked his young preacher: "He has hoed just three hills, and hoed them pretty well." About six weeks later, after I had preached in the evening from the text, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," and we had retired for the night, about eleven o'clock we heard some one come into the yard groaning.

Dressing and going to the door, we found a young lady, the leading singer in our choir and a leader in the community. Looking up piteously into my face, she asked: "Oh, Mr. Wood, is there mercy; is there mercy for me?"

She threw herself on the floor, and for over two hours was the most wretched mortal I ever saw.

She appeared as though sinking into perdition. We prayed with her, sang, and tried to get her attention, but she appeared lost to everything but her condition. It alarmed me, as I



had not yet witnessed, in my ministry, such agonizing conviction.

Her faith finally rested on Jesus. She sprang from the floor, clapping her hands, and cried: "He has, he has, I know he has!"

We sent her brother home, who came with her, and sent her upstairs; and late, after midnight, we could hear her clap her hands, and say: "He has, I know he has!" Matilda Burbank's conversion shook the whole community, and I at once commenced revival meetings. Richard Bond and his wife were among the first converts, and in six weeks over seventy precious souls were born into the kingdom of God.

At the Conference in 1852 I passed my second year's course of study and was ordained Deacon by Bishop Levi Scott.

I remained at Bondville two years, the full disciplinary time, and built a good parsonage, and received over one hundred and fifty additions to the society.

As Mrs. Wood had, in that high altitude, lost her voice, her doctor advised a milder climate. After passing in my conference studies for the third year, at the Conference held in St. Johnsbury in 1853, I was transferred to the Wyoming\* Conference. \*[Located in Wyoming valley near the east coast]

## OSBORN HOLLOW

My first station in the Wyoming Conference was at Osborn Hollow, Broom County, New York, which was a small circuit with four appointments. During the year I held a protracted meeting at each appointment, and had some two hundred old-fashioned conversions.

January 1, 1854, my son, John A. Wood, Jr., was born. He weighed three and a half pounds, and we carried him on a pillow the first six months. During his first year he blowed out his pipes most fearfully. It was estimated that he cried or screamed fully half of the time, night and day. We could do nothing but endure it and let him cry. It may have had something to do with his present powerful, fine, pulpit voice.

At the next Conference I passed in my studies of the fourth year and was ordained Elder by Bishop Edmund S. Janes, and was returned to Osborn Hollow. The second year I repeated revival services at each of the preaching places, and some ninety were converted and added to the society.

## WINDSOR, NEW YORK

My next appointment, in 1855, was at Windsor, Broom County, New York, with only one outside preaching place. The church at Windsor was quite formal and fashionable, and some fastidious. They did not wish me for their pastor, and protested against it; but Dr. George Peck, my Elder, insisted on it, and I was sent there. This, so far as I know, was the only objection that was ever made to any of my appointments. They had received the impression that I was rather rough, coarse, uncultivated, and not much of a preacher.

During the year I held two revival services, with a glorious outpouring of the Spirit, which crowded my congregations, restored backsliders, improved finances, and added nearly one hundred to the two societies.

During the year my son, Melvin E. Wood, was born, who, thanks to the blessed Lord, proved to be a good, dutiful boy, and has been for many years a worthy citizen of Minneapolis, a Christian man and an honest, careful bank employee.

As I was not wanted the first year at Windsor, Dr. Peck said they could not have me the second year, though this displeased them, as they had requested and expected my return.

## SUSQUEHANNA, PENNSYLVANIA

My appointment for 1856 was at Susquehanna, Pa., a town of about five thousand population.

Most of the men were employed in the repair shops of the Erie Railroad, located at the junction of the two divisions of the road.

The one Methodist church was the nearest dead and backslidden of any church to which I was ever appointed. My Elder, Dr. George Peck, said I need not fear, for if there were any change it would be for the better, "as the church was as flat as a pancake." I stayed in Susquehanna two years. The first year we held a long revival service. The whole town was shaken by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The work swept through the big shops. Over two hundred claimed to be converted. There were many striking, marvelous cases.

Thomas Nicholson, an English miner, was found in the vestibule of the church on his knees, begging for mercy. I asked him to come into the church. He replied: "Such a wretch has no business in the church." A few months before he had killed a man who was climbing into his window. Later, he fell almost a hundred feet from a bridge into the Susquehanna river, and it nearly killed him.

We got him into the church and at the altar. He was powerfully converted. When he gave his testimony, with the tears streaming down his face, he said he knew there was a devil, for he had seen him. He said it was in a coal pit in England where he and three or four others were holding a mock prayer meeting – praying to the devil. All at once the devil stood before them. They were so frightened they left the pit, and not one of them would ever enter it again.

Thomas Nicholson afterwards was a first-class sexton for years in our church at Susquehanna.

During the meeting a professional gambler, a returned Californian, who had spent most of his nights gambling at the taverns in town, after his wife was converted was persuaded to come out to church. To our surprise he came forward for prayers. The people said if he was converted, the whole town would be.

After coming forward three or four times, one night he suddenly left the altar and the church, and I thought it was all over with him. But he went down to the store of one of our members, a steward of the church, and called him out. He said: "Mr. Ingstrum, I want to confess that I have slandered and abused you around this town, and I cheated you out of a sack of flour in our last settlement." He paid for the flour. In twenty minutes he was at the altar again, and gloriously converted.

I remained at Susquehanna two years, and had another large addition the second year. During this year I went out of town some six miles to a place called Bear Swamp, and commenced a meeting in a schoolhouse. The third service the house would not hold the people.

The meetings were removed to a Congregational church about three miles distant – some thirty seeking penitents having promised me to attend and come forward for prayers. The first night the church was crowded, and one hundred and thirty-five persons came forward. It was a great time.

Some cried, some shouted, some screamed, and some ran out of the church, saying it was "a hell on earth."



I continued the meetings three weeks, and over two hundred persons professed conversion.

The community had the remnants of four broken-down churches – a regular Baptist, a Congregational, a Freewill Baptist and a few scattered Methodists. I did all the preaching, though the other preachers came out occasionally.

At the close of the revival services I appointed a day to dispose of the converts. The church was crammed with people. I asked the Freewill Baptist preacher to preach and draw the net, as he had attended the most of any of the preachers. He refused, and said, “You are the man to do it.” After a sermon in which I told the converts to go home, if they could find one, and, to help them to decide, I told them they should go where they could do the most good, feel most at home, and be most likely to live out their religion, and also that they should have some regard to the church relations of their parents and friends.

Then I told them, while the congregation stood and sang, “We are going home, to die no more,” those who wished to join the Regular Baptist church to take seats on the right of the pulpit; those who wished to join the Freewill Baptist to take the seats on the left, and those who preferred the Congregational church to take the end seats to the right, and if there were any who wished to be Methodists to take the seats in front of the pulpit.

The congregation arose and sang, and I sat down and hid my head behind the pulpit. In a few minutes the old Free Will Baptist preacher nudged me and said: “You have not got room enough for your Methodists.” I looked up. They had filled the front rows of pews clear through to the doors. I said: “If there are any more, take the seats to the left,” and sat down again behind my pulpit breastwork. Soon my Baptist brother said: “I guess they are all through.” I arose and directed the names taken. The Regular Baptist had five, the Congregationalist had nine, the Free Will Baptist had fifteen, and the Methodist had about one hundred and twenty. I asked the Free Baptist preacher to dismiss the congregation. He told them 'twas “a fair shake” and pronounced the benediction. In a few months the Methodists built a nice church, and have had worship there ever since.

During the same year I took several workers who knew how to pray through difficulties, and we went down the Susquehanna river three miles to Randolph, where Joseph Smith either wrote or copied his Mormon Bible, and we started a meeting there. The third night the fire fell on the people.

For a time it was a pandemonium. The house was crowded. Some wept, some screamed, some shouted, some ran out of the house, and the last I saw of an old Universalist his heels were going out of the window. In the midst of the excitement a prominent, wealthy man arose to ask prayers, but he was so excited he only said, “Let us pray,” and down he went among the praying crowd.

On his reaching home he told his family they might go to bed; he was going to have salvation if he had to pray all night. About three o'clock in the night he found Christ. He went out on his veranda, fronting the river, and shouted tremendously, and declared he could hear the angels sing. The uproar aroused his hired man upstairs. He came down, and Phelps said, “You are just the man I want; saddle the horse and go to Susquehanna and have Thomas Ingstrum (one of my stewards) go to Montrose right away and stop that suit I commenced yesterday against my brother-in-law.” The next morning he met his brother-in-law, living next to him, with whom he had been at law for years – met at a line fence between them. They wept, prayed, confessed to killing each other's turkeys and burying the little ones, and settled the whole feud. The revival fire spread, and a large number were converted.

## BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK

My next appointment, in April, 1857, was at Court street, Binghamton. I did not want to go there, and protested to the Elder against being sent there. There were more entirely sanctified people in that church than in any half dozen churches in the conference. It was one of the best appointments in the conference, and B. W. Gorham, Epenetus Owen and other sanctified ministers had been their pastors, and Dr. and Mrs. Palmer had held meetings with them repeatedly. On account of their stand on the subject of holiness, I was prejudiced against them, and many of the membership were prejudiced against me. At camp meetings and elsewhere I had antagonized them.

Up to this time, the first nine years of my ministry, I had practically ignored the doctrine of entire sanctification, and while blest with great revivals on all my charges, none of my members either sought or professed that blessing. I taught growth in grace, and Christian culture, and an indefinite gradualism. I disliked to hear the Wesleyan truth preached, and opposed those who preached it, and especially those who professed it.

In the cars on my way to Binghamton I felt deeply, shed some tears, and did a good deal of praying. I resolved to preach all the personal religion I could, to carefully avoid attacking those who professed full salvation, and not to antagonize the doctrine as they held it.

The church as a body received me kindly, though I am sorry to say a few declared they would not sit under my ministry, and left; but in a few weeks they all came back, as they were told I was preaching well, and had made no drive at their views. I had not been there but a short time before I became convinced that I was preaching to some people who had a better and deeper spiritual experience than I had. This I saw in the class and prayer meetings, and it made me feel dissatisfied and uncomfortable. This grew on me with the conviction that they were Wesleyan in their views and experience, while I had drifted from the Wesleyan and Bible doctrine.

I was so dissatisfied with myself, with my work, and had such hard times in the pulpit, that I went to my Elder, Dr. Rounds, and begged him to release me from the charge. God be praised that he did not do it! During that summer I lay many an hour on the floor of my study praying God to come to my help and give me more freedom in my work, and yet was too proud to tell my church the conflict and trial I was passing through. I learned afterward that the spiritually-minded in the church discerned my condition and were praying for me night and day.

That church was a great camp meeting people, and on the first day of September about seventy members with their families went to Kittleville camp meeting. They had some forty-five tents, beside their big prayer meeting tent, which would accommodate about four hundred people.

During six days of that meeting, with thirty or more of my members professing full salvation, I said nothing on the subject, and yet my soul was in great distress over it. We came to the last afternoon of the meeting, and Dr. Rounds was to preach. He asked me to exhort after his sermon.

Before I took my seat in the stand, I had a fearful struggle, and I could hold out no longer. One of my best members had just said to me "Oh, Brother Wood, if you will take a stand for full salvation, God will bless you, and lots of your people." I promised the Lord that at the close of the sermon I would go into our prayer tent, confess my need of entire sanctification and ask my church to pray for me, and I would go back to Binghamton and stand up for full salvation, where that truth had been trailing in the dust during my ministry. In an instant the Rubicon was passed. The moment of submission was the



moment of victory. There was such a conscious giving away in my heart that it appeared as if something had torn loose in me, and an indescribable quietness pervaded my whole being. I walked up into the pulpit and took my seat back of Dr. Rounds. There were about forty preachers on the stand, and some three thousand people in the congregation.

Just as the preacher announced his text, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," the blessed Holy Ghost fell on me, and an unusual sense of the divine presence pervaded the whole congregation. The power that fell on me swept me into the land of Beulah, and two preachers sitting by my side held me during the sermon, while all I knew for three hours was that God had me, and the heaven of heavens was streaming through and through my soul. For me to describe those three hours is utterly impossible, and I have never attempted to do so. It was like passing through the gates to the bosom of Jesus and taking a full draught at the fountain of life.

I had been prejudiced against persons losing their strength, and, as might be expected, the Holy Ghost did his work, taking control of both body and soul, before the preachers and the thousands of people. When I came to know where I was, I found myself laid on some quilts on the pulpit platform, and a spontaneous combustion coming from my inner being, saying at every breath, "precious Jesus," "precious Jesus," "precious Jesus." Crowded about me were the members of my church, weeping, shouting, and rejoicing. God had sanctified their preacher.

As soon as I was able to walk I went to our big prayer tent and told my people my purpose and that God had forestalled my design, taken me at my promise and had gloriously cleansed my soul.

I then invited all who wanted to be entirely sanctified to take the long row of middle benches through the tent, and they were immediately purified. That meeting never closed till the sun rose in the morning, and such a night of refining fire and power I never saw before, nor since, though I have been in many mighty meetings. There would be a prayer struggle, and then about every half hour the refining power would come, and two and three and sometimes more would be gloriously saved, and at times a dozen or more would be prostrated under the power. In the morning all were clothed and in their right mind in time for the cars, and I took into Binghamton the happiest company of Christians that ever entered that city; and in four weeks over seventy souls professed to be converted in my church.

I remained at Court street two years, and God gave the church a high tide of general prosperity. In the last year, the thirty-second of my age, I wrote the most of "Perfect Love."



## 6. THE RESULTS OF THIS CLEANSING BAPTISM

1. A sacred nearness to God, my Saviour. The distance between God and my soul has appeared annihilated, and the glory and presence of divinity have often appeared like a flood of sunlight, surrounding and pervading my whole being.
2. A sense of inexpressible sweetness in Christ. The fact that he is "the rose of Sharon," "the lily of the valley," "the brightness of his (the Father's) glory," has at times filled my soul with ecstatic rapture.
3. A deep, realizing sense of spiritual things. Bible truth has appeared transformed

into solid realities. The doctrines of the gospel become to me tangible facts.

4. A surprising richness and fullness of meaning in the Scriptures, which I had not before realized.

Many portions of the Bible, which I had hitherto but little understood, now appeared full of meaning, and exceedingly precious.

5. A triumph over temptation more complete and habitual. After that baptism I found no elements in my heart siding with the tempter. Before, I was conscious of inward affinities which sided with the tempter.

6. A great increase in spiritual power. This I realized in my closet devotions, in my pastoral duties, and especially in the pulpit, in presenting the blessed truth of God. I learned by experience that man may receive the Holy Spirit in measure limited only by his capacity to receive, and feeble ability to endure Him.

7. A clear and distinct witness of purity through the blood of Christ. The testimony of the Holy Spirit, and of my spirit, to the entire sanctification of my soul, became more clear and convincing than any I ever had of my regeneration; although I had no doubt of that years before.

8. A disposition to tell the blessed story of Christ and his "great salvation." I longed for a thousand tongues to publish the glad tidings to perishing men. During my pastorate at Susquehanna and Binghamton Rev. D. W. C. Huntington, a dearly loved brother, who joined the Vermont conference at the time I did, assisted me in revival meetings, and I assisted him. At that time he was clear in his experience and strong in his testimony and teachings of entire sanctification, more so than I was. His sermons then, and his articles for the press at that time were a great help to me.

Our friendship and intimacy has not ceased for over fifty years, though our views have differed in late years. Human environments have much to do in modifying and shaping our views of truth, and Dr. Huntington's environments in the Genesee Conference were very trying and doubtless had much to do in changing his views respecting the Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification. I believe with Dr. J. M. Buckley that if Dr. Huntington had held on to his early experience, he would never have written his book on "Sin and Holiness."

## BROOKLYN, PA.

From Binghamton I was sent to Brooklyn, a small country circuit in Susquehanna County, Pa.; sent there, as I had reason to believe, because of the open stand I had taken on the subject of entire sanctification. After God fully sanctified my soul the opponents of that work predicted the end of my usefulness and revival work, as I had run off on the hobby of sanctification. I was supplied with plenty of advice by the preachers and officials, to go slow, be prudent and not press the subject, or I would divide my churches, and do great harm. It was at the beginning of our civil war, and there were but few revivals in the conference, but the Lord gave me three blessed revivals at Brooklyn, and it was a year of victory. The first revival broke out in a prayer meeting when I was absent. I asked Judge Ashley to take the charge of the prayer meeting at night. I had preached on perfect love in the morning, and Ashley urged them in the prayer meeting to seek full salvation. About nine o'clock the sexton came to the parsonage and said I was wanted at the church. When I went into the church I found some twenty of my members on the floor under the power of God. As I walked in among them I went down very quick by the same power. For a time all seemed prostrated. Although the nights were dark and the roads were muddy, I commenced meetings at once, and the people came from all directions,



and about sixty professed conversion, and all my class leaders and stewards were entirely sanctified.

One other meeting I will notice. The township of Lathrop on this circuit had acquired an unfortunate notoriety for Sabbath breaking, profanity, petty lawsuits, and all manner of evil. For years rum, infidelity and the devil had the predominance. The Lord visited this town in great mercy, sanctified some of the members, reclaimed backsliders and converted over forty penitent sinners.

One poor, drunken sinner said he came to get “seven rods of religion,” and succeeded in getting just seven dollars' worth of law and justice. The reformation took hold at the foundation, and healed neighborhood difficulties, stopped lawsuits, crushed out infidelity and subdued slanderous, backbiting tongues, and constrained all to say, “Peace is declared in Lathrop.” When the revival closed, the town had a judge of election, a constable, two justices of the peace and a supervisor who feared God and loved the church.



## 7. THE PUBLICATION OF PERFECT LOVE

During this year I finished writing and published “Perfect Love.” Up to this time in the ministry I had saved, by a rigid economy, about four hundred dollars. I told my parents I was going to put that into my book. They replied, “You go and put it into a book, and you will never see it again.” I replied: “I shall do it, loss or no loss. God has directed and assisted me to write it, and money is out of the question.” While I was in Boston getting the plates out, Col. Ellsworth was shot in Alexandria, Fort Sumter fell, and the war began.

It has been reported by visitors to California that I have a large, beautiful, comfortable and delightful home at Lincoln Park, Cal. That is true, and, by the way, I will say that every dollar that built and furnished my home here came from the sales of “Perfect Love.” The title was a happy one, and its sale has been phenomenal. Between fifty and sixty thousand copies have been sold in this country, and three book houses have issued it in England. When I was in England, Gen. Booth told me he had just bought the plates of “Perfect Love” and one thousand copies to scatter among his soldiers of the Salvation Army.

### WAVERLY, NEW YORK

I stayed but one year in Brooklyn, and in the spring of 1861, I was appointed to Waverly, New York. That charge had been blest with precious revivals for several years previous, and in the midst of the great war excitement it was difficult to convince the church that it could have a revival this year, but soon many of the best members sought and obtained full salvation. For several months the blessed work of “perfecting the saints” went on until all my class leaders, two local preachers, and my stewards were cleansed in the atoning blood, and tasted the joys of perfect love. Soon the work broke out among sinners, and we had over fifty clear conversions. The work of sanctification gave an interest, sweetness and power to our class and prayer meetings such as that church had never possessed before.

At Athens, a town three miles from Waverly, Methodism, during years past had been waning, until it had become well nigh extinct. They had not had any preaching for nine

months past .At the request of a class of sixteen members, nearly all females, I commenced a series of meetings there, taking with me some of the sanctified members from Waverly. Over forty souls came forward for prayers the first week. The meetings were continued six weeks, and during that time over two hundred and fifty people came out as seekers of pardon, and one hundred and seventy-five of them gave good evidence of conversion. During these meetings quite a number of the converts and others sought perfect love, and this gave a marked interest to the meetings. Since then that charge has been self-supporting, and built a large, commodious church.

During the work in Athens there were many very impressive and mighty conversions. Elisha Satterlee, who kept the American Hotel, and was known all over Bradford County, was one instance.

His wife was a Methodist, and he made Methodist preachers welcome to his hospitality, and no matter how many sat at the table he would ask the preacher to ask a blessing. He had an only daughter that he almost idolized. She was happily converted and it greatly affected him. He then came out to the meetings and took his seat behind the stove, out of sight as much as possible. He did that three nights and then I went to him and asked him forward. The three nights before some of his prominent neighbors had been converted at one corner of the altar, and he replied he would go if I would take him to the place where those men were converted and stick by him till he got through.

When he started, it was like the breaking away of a mighty flood. He had a fearful struggle and his coming to the altar started many others, but I could not give them attention, as I had promised him to stick to him, I knew he would have to give up rum selling in his hotel, and I feared the results. I finally asked him and he replied that he had settled that behind the stove. In a few minutes, while we were singing, "I can, I will, I do believe that Jesus saves me now," he burst out singing it, and rose up and sung it standing. It shook that congregation mightily and over forty started before the service closed. I knew the Devil would be after him, and I went home with him. In a few minutes a man called and asked him if he would rent his bar and hotel. He replied, "No! No more liquor sold in this house while I own it." The next morning nearly all his hotel liquors went into the gutter in the street.

He joined the church, became class leader and steward and kept a temperance house for years.

Twenty years after when my son was pastor at Lock Haven, Pa., Elisha Satterlee was a steward and class leader in his church.

At the close of the year in Waverly I went to the conference in Wilkes-Barre expecting to be returned as much as I expected to live, as I left at Waverly and Athens over three hundred converts to be cared for.

While at Waverly, just before the conference, it pleased the blessed Lord to give us our only daughter, our precious and lovely little Mayme.

#### WILKES-BARRE, PA.

Wilkes-Barre is the great center of the anthracite coal region of the Wyoming valley, and at that time had about sixteen thousand population. The first Methodist church was the largest, the richest, and the most fashionable and worldly church in the Wyoming conference. It had more rich men, college graduates and prominent men in it than any three or four churches in the whole conference.

For several years past they had been waning in spiritual life with no revivals under light,



speculative preaching by a man who when he left there went to the Episcopal church. They asked the Bishop to send them a man who would preach the gospel and religion. Rev. John J. Pierce, my presiding elder, told them he had such a man, but they could not have him, as he had several hundred converts to look after. At the close of the Friday session the Bishop announced that J. A. Wood would preach in the evening. Nothing had been said to me, and it was a severe trial to me. It was what I had never done, to preach at the conference, I was not prepared to do it. I learned afterward that the Bishop had been requested to have me preach, which, had I known, I would not have consented a moment. My elder's remark directed the official board to me, and without my knowing it had the matter fixed as a trial sermon, and that before the whole conference.

I went to my room, and spent the afternoon on my knees and face in prayer to God, and decided to obey the Bishop, but to only present a little, simple, plain truth on "Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her." The blessed Lord helped me, and I had any easy time, and said all I wanted to. The next day the official board, which had been divided on three or four different preachers, united on me. On Saturday night, as I was about to start to go to Scranton to preach on Sunday, one of the church officials said to me, "We are going to have you for our preacher." Up to this time I knew nothing of this whole affair. I told him that was not so, and laughed at him, and went on to Scranton. Monday, on my return to conference, I found it was all out among the preachers, and at eleven o'clock my name was read off for the first church of Wilkes-Barre, in April, 1862. I was greatly grieved to leave my converts at Waverly and Athens, and some of our Bishops said they would not have taken me away from Waverly even though Wilkes-Barre wanted me. Some of the preachers as they left said: "Now we will see how Wood's sanctification will go in Wilkes-Barre."

The Provost Marshal's office was at Wilkes-Barre and there were from two to five or six thousand soldiers coming and going to the war, and we were almost within sound of the thunders of Gettysburg.

I preached the first four months to the church at ten a.m. And to sinners in the evening. After I had been there a few weeks, I heard that one of the most influential members of the church said: "Our preacher has got to come down, or the church has got to come up." I resolved by the help of Almighty God, not to come down, and if there was to be an equilibrium between us they had got to come up. During the summer one after another of the leading women in the church and city sought and obtained the blessed experience of full salvation. That started a decided interest in our class and prayer meetings which filled up and became seasons of melting power.

The women who sought perfect love were among the most wealthy families in the city and their experience and influence could not be ignored. The four Slocum sisters, wives of Judge Bennett, Lord Butler, Sharp D. Lewis and Lawyer Drake, were wealthy influential women that could not be pushed aside.

Early in September I announced that a revival service would begin in the audience room. Judge Bennett said: "Hold your meetings in the prayer room, as we have never had any revival in our audience room." I insisted on the big audience room, the largest in the conference, and the first night it was full and nine grown men came to the altar seeking pardon. That room was filled and often crowded for ninety-seven nights, and over four hundred and fifty sinners came forward for prayers.

Every few evenings some members of the society would be entirely sanctified, and that would add continued power and interest to the meetings. The Holy Spirit cut through every strata of society, reaching the highest and the lowest circles in social life. All classes, physicians, lawyers, editors and congressmen and army officials were brought

into the gospel kingdom. Especially it took a strong hold of the legal profession. We received into society six members of the Wilkes-Barre bar, these possessed a high order of talent, and four out of the six became either local or traveling preachers.

The results of this work were, great improvements in the large audience room, more than double increase in the benevolences, and I received at one time one hundred and ninety probationers into full membership, whose aggregated wealth ran up into millions. The Wyoming conference had a good chance to see "how sanctification would go in Wilkes-Barre." One evening a bright young lawyer came down the aisle while I was preaching, smiting on his breast, saying, "The rocks can rend, the earth can quake, of feeling all things show some sign, but this unfeeling heart of mine," and got down at the altar. I stopped preaching and invited sinners forward. He had a fearful struggle, and I was glad Dr. Nelson, my elder, who knew him, was there, as it required several persons to take care of him. He would have left the altar but for his wife, who with her arms around him would not let him go. I told him God had promised, though our sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as wool. With the tears streaming down his face he said: "Mine are black." I quoted, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Where is that? He asked. I opened the Bible and put my finger on it, and let him see it. He soon found relief and springing up walked up and down the aisle shaking hands and exclaiming: "It is good," "It is good," "It is good."

He has now been a prominent and useful member of the church for over forty years, and judge of the orphans court the most of that time.

#### SCRANTON, PA.

After staying the disciplinary time in Wilkes-Barre, in April, 1864, I was sent to Scranton, Pa.

Being quite worn and in feeble health I asked the Bishop to give me a supernumerary relation; but the cabinet requested me to take an appointment, and under the pressure I consented.

Scranton was the largest city in the conference, the center of rich coal fields, with railroads running out of it east and west, north and south, up and down the valleys, and over or through the mountains. It had a population of from sixteen to eighteen thousand.

Methodism had a hard soil to work in Scranton, and we had but one church, the Adams Avenue Church, except in the suburbs. During nine years past the floating society had struggled with a \$9,000 church debt. Dr. George Peck, and Brothers Gorham, Bancroft and others had each in turn grappled with it, and reduced it more or less. When I arrived I found the church needing repairs, and a \$4,300 debt hanging upon it. Nothing could be raised for repairs, so long as the debt was unpaid.

During the year my health was such as not to allow of more than one-half of my usual pastoral and revival work, and yet the Lord helped me to raise the \$4,300 debt and also to raise and put into the trustees' hands \$1,750 for interior and exterior repairs. I held six weeks of revival services and received on probation sixty-nine converts, while hundreds of soldiers asked prayers, and went from our meetings to the battlefields. Drafting was done at Scranton that year and I was put into the wheel, but the examining surgeon after stripping and examining me threw me out, saying: "You are about as fit for a soldier as a cabbage leaf would be to cover one of our ironclads." During the year General Lee surrendered, the Confederacy collapsed and President Lincoln was assassinated. At the close of the year I asked for either a supernumerary relation or a location, in view of my health and purpose to do unhindered evangelistic work, if my health improved. The



conference passed the following resolutions:

“Whereas, Rev. J. A. Wood has felt constrained to take a supernumerary relation to this conference, therefore,

“Resolved, That we cherish for Brother Wood the highest esteem and fraternal regard and that we commend him to the confidence of the church and community wherever his lot may be cast.”



## 8. NATIONAL HOLINESS CAMP MEETINGS

In August, 1866, while on my way to a camp meeting at Red Bank, New Jersey, feeling oppressed concerning the opposition the doctrine and distinctive experience of entire sanctification often met with at our camp meetings, I expressed my feelings to Mrs. Harriet E. Drake, of Wilkes-Barre, and my opinion that some camp meetings for the special work of holiness ought to be held.

Mrs. Drake had been fully sanctified when I was her pastor in Wilkes-Barre and had opened her house for meetings for the promotion of holiness. She coincided with my views and said if I would start such a camp meeting she would, if necessary, meet half of the expenses. I suggested the matter to Rev. Wm. B. Osborn and told him of Sister Drake's proposal.

The following April Brother Osborn visited Rev. John S. Inskip in New York. They approved of my suggestion and to inaugurate the movement called a meeting in Philadelphia for June thirteenth, to which they invited a number of brethren, whose views were known to be purely Wesleyan. The following ministers were present: George C. M. Roberts, R. V. Lawrence, Wm. B. Osborn, Alfred Cookman, George Hughes, A. Longacre, J. S. Inskip, Anthony Atwood and myself.

After much prayer and deliberation it was decided to hold the first camp meeting for the special promotion of holiness at Vineland, New Jersey, to commence July seventeenth and close July twenty-sixth.

The attendance was large and the meeting was one of unprecedented interest and power. There was excellent order, deep humility, heavenly fervor, godly zeal, brotherly love, and a divine unction that sweetened and sanctified every service.

The preaching was by J. W. Horn, George C. Wells, Seymour Coleman, R. V. Lawrence, Alfred Cookman, John S. Inskip, John A. Wood, and B. W. Gorham. All the sermons were on the special subject of holiness, and yet a large number of sinners were converted.

Bishop Simpson, though in feeble health, was present with his family and took part in the services. During the meeting his dissolute son Charles was converted and returned to his home a happy Christian. A few months later, as that son lay sick unto death, just before his departure, he turned to his weeping mother and said: “Mother, I shall bless God to all eternity for the Vineland camp meeting.”

At the closing service of the Vineland meeting, by a rising vote preachers and people voted to hold another meeting the next year. The “National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Holiness” was formed, and Rev. John S. Inskip was chosen President and Rev. George Hughes, Secretary.

Our great civil war had closed and left the churches sadly demoralized. Their spirituality was weakened in all parts of the country and there was need of a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The inauguration of the National Holiness Association and the holding of these holiness camp meetings were opportune and greatly assisted in arousing the churches to a better spiritual life.

Up to the writing of this book, the National Holiness Association has held one hundred and fifteen camp meetings in twenty-three States of the Union and in Canada, besides great tabernacle meetings in Washington, D. C., in Salt Lake City and at other important points.

When I assisted in starting at Vineland these National Holiness meetings, I was in poor health, was physically the weakest among all the members of the association, and yet, in the good providence of God, I have been able to attend over sixty of these great national meetings, and have done my share of the preaching to the vast crowds in attendance. Only one, Alexander McLean, besides myself, of the early ministers of the association is now living.

### **MY EVANGELISTIC WORK**

I was led to do evangelistic work by the conviction that I could do more good in helping a dozen churches or more a year, arousing the membership and leading them into the experience of full salvation, than to be confined to one church for a year or two and then leave it to suffer loss under pastors, too many of whom either oppose or ignore entire sanctification. This I saw repeatedly after my soul was entirely sanctified.

From the commencement of my evangelistic work in 1867, I had more calls for my services than I could respond to and often five or six times as many. They came from all sections of the Union and from both country and city churches – small and large. I could select such as appeared the most needy and where I could be the most useful.

During the whole of my twenty-four years of evangelistic work I never bargained or stipulated with any church as to any amount I should receive for my services, but accepted what was given me – with no begging or special pleading on my part. Sometimes I received a fair compensation and sometimes a small amount, and not infrequently barely enough to pay my traveling expenses and get me to my next appointment, and no year received over a thousand dollars above my traveling expenses.

The sale of my books, “Perfect Love” and “Purity and Maturity,” at my meetings often hindered the contributions of the people as they seemed to think if they bought my books, that would answer for my services.

My labors were about equally divided between country and city churches. The larger part of four winters was spent in six different churches in Philadelphia with very marked results in both the conversion of sinners and the entire sanctification of believers. I was with some of these churches three or four winters in succession. The most extensive and blessed of these meetings was at Hancock Street with Dr. William B. Wood and five weeks with Adam Wallace at old Salem.

At that time there was a modest, unassuming, loveable young man who was eminently useful in my meetings, a leader among the young people and a special favorite with his pastor. I have watched him with interest as he has studied, labored and matured into strong, beautiful manhood, and I saw him elected at the last General Conference in Los Angeles to the highest position in the gift of the church – Thomas B. Neeley, our honored



and loved Bishop.

For three winters I was with five churches in New York City and Brooklyn, and with some of them repeatedly. They were glorious seasons of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on saints and sinners – especially at John Stephenson's church, Twenty-seventh Street, where I held meetings three years in succession.

Six winters were devoted to work in many of the largest churches of Baltimore and Washington, with more demonstration and marked results than in Philadelphia and New York, as the people are more demonstrative as you go south from New England.

I enjoyed my work in Baltimore, Washington and Alexandria very much. God was pleased to give me easy and precious victories every year while with them.

While holding revival services at Washington, in Wesley Chapel where General Grant and family attended church before and while Metropolitan church was being built, Dr. Ames, the pastor, and I visited General Grant and spent an evening with him and his family in his study. Before we left I suggested prayers. He nodded assent and he and Mrs. Grant, Father Dent and all the children knelt while I prayed. That was just after his first nomination for the Presidency. He impressed me as a humble, great and good man.

On the Sabbath, Chief Justice Chase attended the services both morning and evening. He was an attentive listener, sat directly in front of me and wiped the tears from his face several times. I preached on Perfect Love in the morning and on Christian Perfection in the evening.

The next day he asked Chaplain French to bring me over to his office. He would like to talk with me a little.

On Saturday evening I called and spent an hour with him and his questions regarding the subject of my Sabbath sermons showed the great comprehensiveness of his mighty intellect. He went through and under and over the subject of Perfect Love in a most masterful way, and I was thankful he did not find me a novice on the subject. As I left he said: "Mr. Wood, if all the churches had taken the position of your sermons last Sabbath, we would never have had this cruel war." During my meetings at Wesley Chapel ex-Gov. Ford, of Indiana, was powerfully converted. The night he was converted he rose, trembling all over, and said: "I have often been an advocate, but tonight I am a humble client and my Advocate has won his case." It shook that great audience and there were few dry eyes in that house. He greatly assisted in the meetings thereafter. He was a large, powerfully built man and as he bade me good-bye at the close of the meetings said: "I am going to live till I am one hundred years old, and work for God." In a few weeks he died suddenly and the New York "Christian Advocate" contained a lengthy notice of his life, conversion and death.

## **A PROTECTING PROVIDENCE**

I was on my way home from a meeting at Richmond, Indiana, riding in a Pullman car. In passing from one car to another a gust of wind lifted my hat from my head and left it by the side of the track.

It was a new valued hat given me not long before by a former parishioner. I rode on for a hundred miles without a hat, feeling mortified. I had bought my berth for the night, but the conductor kindly made a change for me to stop over to the next train. I stopped and bought me a hat. Six hours later we came to the wreck of the train I had left. We found some remnants of the sleeper I occupied, but of the six persons I left in it, five were killed and burned up and one was seriously injured.

The lifting of my hat by that gust of wind saved my life. Within a week the hat came to me by express.

In my evangelistic work I held a series of meetings in Honesdale, Pa., where most of my brothers and relatives resided. One night after preaching on, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man," one hundred and twenty-eight sinners came forward for prayers. Among them several of my relatives.

A moral, self-righteous uncle with whom I had often had combat came down the aisle to the pulpit and looking up to me, said: "John, I can't stand it any longer, I will take off my coat and go at it." He took off his overcoat and laid it on the altar rail, and was soon happily converted. He joined the church and was an active Christian. A few years after he fell down his cellar stairs and was instantly killed.

At a meeting in Tulare, Cal., a rough, coarse, brazen-faced sinner attended night after night and greatly hindered the work. I finally went back to him and asked him if it was well with his soul? He replied, "I am all hunky dory." I thought it would do him good to dress him down and I did it thoroughly. The next night to our surprise he came forward, broke down, sought Christ, and got up and told the congregation that he had hatched up more deviltry in Tulare than any other man in the town. While his sister was praying for him he was converted. Booting people into the kingdom is not to be encouraged, but it may be done in some rare cases.

A little heroic treatment is sometimes useful and needful. At a camp meeting I had charge of in Ohio, one of the lady teachers at Mt. Union College was present. For three or four days she went about the grounds growling and complaining over the noise in the services. She kept up her complaining so long I thought she needed a little attention, and as I met her on the ground, I said: "Sister, you need killing," and I left her. She came around soon after and asked what I meant. I replied I meant just what I said, "You need killing," and left her. Not long after she came again and said "I would like to know what you mean." I said, sister, you know what I mean and you need something to stop your complaining. The next day she was forward for prayers and had a severe and lengthy struggle, but finally got the victory; she then did some of the biggest shouting I had heard for years. She kept it up so long, I said to her, "Hold on, sister, you are overdoing this thing." She looked up to me and replied, "You need not try to stop me, I have got to make up lost time," and I let her shout.

## **NERVOUS PROSTRATION**

While on my way to Albany, New York, to assist Dr. Jesse T. Peck, in a three-weeks' service at Hudson street church, in April, 1869, I injured myself in carrying a heavy valise in haste to make connection with the train, and found my nervous system prostrated. I tried to beg off and go home, but stayed and preached in that large church twice a day for three weeks. At its close Doctor Peck gave me a little portmonaie saying, "Brother Wood, here are three hundred thanks." It contained three hundred dollars, the largest amount -- more than double -- I ever received for holding a revival meeting. It was opportune.

I went home and never preached again for a year and nine months. I moved my family to Beach Lake, Pa., where my father and some of my brothers lived. I engaged a man to build me a house. My friends feared I would not live to see it finished. I moved into it and lived there one year and a half.

Brother Inskip reported in the "Home Journal" that Brother Wood's work was done and he had gone up into Pennsylvania, among his friends to die.



The first year I did not enter a pulpit and attended church only a few times. The second year I attempted to preach twice. I spent my time out of doors all I could in that climate. I fished in the lake, picked wild strawberries, blackberries and huckleberries and beechnuts in the woods. I worked in my garden, hoeing, weeding and cultivating vegetables and flowers. Gradually I came up to my former vitality. I moved to Philadelphia just before the terrible outbreak of small-pox, which visited that city in 1871. After remaining there for a few months we removed to Honesdale, Pa.

## **THE DEATH OF MY WIFE**

On the nineteenth of July, 1872, while residing in Honesdale, my lovely and devoted wife, filled with peace and hope, and in full possession of all her rational faculties, without a groan or a struggle, passed over the dark river into Paradise.

Before the shades of death gathered around her blood-washed spirit, the light of Heaven broke in on her soul. She knew she was going. Sitting in her chair, she raised her head, looked at one of her sons, then at the other, and as the little daughter was out of the room, turned her eye upon me and in an instant dropped her head and was gone.

She walked by my side through twenty-two and a half years of my ministerial life and was all I could desire as a gentle, loving, faithful wife, mother and companion, never grieving me by look, word or act. I shall soon meet her at the gates of the City.

## **MADISON, NEW YORK**

At the General Conference of 1872, Dr. Peck was elected Bishop. He wished me to take the charge at Madison, N. Y. I consented and the Wyoming Conference made me effective and I was transferred to the Northern New York Conference and stationed at Madison in the spring of 1873.

In April I moved to Madison and began again in the pastorate. Madison was a neat little country town, situated on the high grounds of Madison County. It had a new church and a cultured, wealthy membership.

I had been living for years in the Wyoming Valley, noted as malarious. The change to the high ground of Madison County developed in me in three weeks the regular old-fashioned fever and ague.

For over a month I had every other day the aches, shakes and sweats I had not known for thirty years, a hard beginning after my long invalidism.

I began to feel that I needed a wife and began to look about for one, praying the Lord to keep me from making a fool of myself during my widowerhood, as some ministers I had known had done.

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1873, I was married in Binghamton, New York, by Dr. Zachariah Paddock, to Miss Martha E. Sisson, of Norwich, Conn. That I was guided by the special providence of God in that union and marriage I have never had the shadow of a doubt for thirty-one years. In Martha E. Sisson I have had as wife, companion and mother to my three children, one of the best that ever blessed any man. This, my friends and none of the many thousands who have met and known her will question.

Now, in the closing days of my feebleness and age, she is a blessing to me every hour of my life.

I remained in Madison two years. While we had large congregations and more than usual prosperity, there were no marked revivals. The greatest hindrance to the work in Madison

was the hop raising, as most of the male members were raising hops for the breweries. Having one hand on the altar rail and the other on the hop pole did not work well in my meetings.

I was pressed back by my convictions into the evangelistic work and given a location by the Northern New York Conference.

#### BALTIMORE, MD.

During my second year in Madison, Mrs. Wood was elected by the trustees Principal of Colvin Institute, Baltimore. She had been a teacher in the schools of Norwich, Conn., and Jersey City, N. J., in years past. Colvin Institute was a Methodist, chartered and endowed free school, situated in the center of the city. It was the oldest Methodist school in the United States having been chartered and endowed in 1802. As the call appeared providential and would let me out in evangelistic service again, Mrs. Wood accepted the call and we moved to Baltimore in the spring of 1875.

The institute was fitted up and furnished and we moved into it and occupied it during the four years she was its principal.

I was associated with my dear Christian brother, Dr. William McDonald, for several years in evangelistic work and was more intimately acquainted with him than with any other man or minister in all my ministerial life. He was a powerful, eloquent, evangelical preacher and my work with him was a great blessing to me. I loved him as Jonathan loved David, and when the Lord called him home three years ago, I felt the loss and bereavement most deeply. The closing years of his useful Christian life were fragrant with the loving spirit of Christ and a blissful, peaceful assurance of eternal blessedness. I shall greet my dear McDonald at the gates of the heavenly city not long hence.

Brother McDonald and I held meetings at Fort Dodge, Iowa, and our host was Governor Carpenter. The weather was most fearfully cold and the governor came up and built a fire in our room and blacked our boots, as his servant was away. I told his wife that was the first time I ever had a governor build my fires or black my boots. At that time Jonathan P. Dolliver, our Congressman now, was a young lawyer, a member of that church, was very active and useful in our meetings and took a decided interest in full salvation.

I held several meetings at Denison, Iowa, and enjoyed the hospitality of Hon. H. C. Laub, one of our most prominent laymen in that section of Methodism. At that time our present Secretary of the Treasury, Leslie M. Shaw, was a young lawyer at Denison, was Sabbath school superintendent and a prominent worker in the church and in our meetings.

I had a glorious meeting at New Albany, Ind., and was entertained by W. C. Depaw, the millionaire Methodist of Indiana, and whose good wife is now doing so much here in California in her various benevolent gifts. Brother Depaw enjoyed full salvation, was a member of the National Holiness Association, and lead the meetings in his church in New Albany, for the promotion of holiness. He was a good, great and godly man.

During the year 1875 I wrote "Purity and Maturity" and it was issued in 1876. So far as I know it is the only book that has ever appeared, treating specifically the difference between Christian purity and Christian maturity. It shows that confounding the two, as the same, has caused most of the objections against the attainment of Christian purity in this life. The book has received many favorable notices and has reached a sale now of some over thirteen thousand copies.

While my family were living in Baltimore my eldest son, John A. Wood, Jr., was a student at Drew Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in May, 1878. In June he



was married to Miss Ida L. Perry and joined the Central Pennsylvania Conference, in which he has been a very successful minister and soul winner for twenty-six years.

#### **NORTH ATTLEBORO, MASS**

During the winter of 1878 Brother McDonald and I held a series of meetings in the Free Evangelical church at North Attleboro with most blessed results. The church was without a pastor and urged either of us to become their pastor. Brother McDonald declined, and I returned to Baltimore, but urgent requests followed me. I saw their need of a good pastor, as a large number of young people had been converted in meetings held by Rev. I. T. Johnson just before our going there, and in our meetings and a good number of them had sought and found purity of heart. After repeated requests to return to them I consented to supply them for four months, commencing with February, 1879.

Before the four months expired Mrs. Wood lost her voice from an attack of pneumonia, and was obliged to resign her position at Colvin Institute, and the church at North Attleboro by a unanimous vote called me to become their pastor.

Under these circumstances, my wife being obliged to relinquish her position at Colvin Institute, the church call being unanimous from a large body of active Christians who needed the care and instructions of an experienced pastor, and were willing to receive me without my being installed or changing my relations to the Methodist church, I consented to serve them for a year and moved my family to North Attleboro.

In the beginning I found the society with a small, poor church, heavily burdened with debt and without a parsonage. I remained there seven years and seven months, during which time the church building was enlarged and improved and its seating capacity in both the audience and prayer rooms doubled. A nice, commodious parsonage was built, the society had many additions, with large congregations and general prosperity.

An evangelistic tour for the promotion of holiness in foreign lands having been in the minds of some of the members of the National Association for several years culminated in 1880. Rev. J. S.

Inskip, editor of the Christian Standard; Rev. Wm. McDonald, editor of the Christian Witness, and myself, decided to take our wives and spend a year in work in England, India and Australia. The church voted me a year's absence to make this foreign evangelistic tour and supplied my pulpit during my absence.

#### **MY PASSPORT AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENT**

Before starting on our foreign tour I went to Washington to get a passport and some official documents. Governor Carpenter, of Iowa, who was in Washington at the time went with me to the White House and introduced me to President Hayes and Secretary Everts. The President sent me to Secretary Evert's office in the war building to get my passport and said, "Come back to me again and I will see what I can do for you."

The secretary's clerk weighed, measured and described me and gave me a passport which read as follows: "United States of America. Department of State. To all to whom these presents shall come; greeting. I, the undersigned Secretary of State of the United States of America, hereby request all whom it may concern to permit John A. Wood, a citizen of the United States, accompanied by his wife, safely and freely to pass, and in case of need to give him all lawful aid and protection: "Description – Age, 51 years. Stature, 5 feet 9 1/2 inches. Forehead, high receding. Eyes, blue-gray. Nose, prominent. Mouth, medium. Hair, brown. Complexion, fair. Face, oval.

“Wm. M. Everts, Secretary of State.”

I returned to the President's office and he handed me the following paper: “Executive Mansion, D. C., April 15, 1880.

“I recommend Rev. J. A. Wood, of Massachusetts, to the favorable acquaintance and good offices of all to whom this paper may be shown, and especially to the attention of all of the diplomatic, consular and naval officers of the United States in foreign countries.

“R. B. Hayes, President.”

I learned by experience, that in foreign countries great consideration is given to red tape, much more than in our country.

## 9. A FOREIGN EVANGELISTIC TOUR

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of June of that year we sailed from New York for Liverpool. We spent one hundred days in England, holding a series of meetings in London, in Malton, Leeds, Hull, Middlesboro, Southport and Liverpool. During these hundred days we held two hundred and eight public services.

Without going into particulars, I may say these meetings were attended with great crowds and most glorious results. Thousands of sinners and saints were blessed, either pardoned or entirely sanctified.

Calls came for our services from all parts of England, but our time was limited and we left, promising to return and extend our work in England.

We sailed from Liverpool on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of October and reached Bombay, India, on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of November, and remained there three months. We held a series of meetings in Bombay. Poona, Alahabad. Cawnpoor, Lucknow, Jubalpoor and Bereilly.

Our meetings in India were held with the missionaries and the English speaking people, and with the North India and South India conferences, at their request, and were seasons of great rejoicing and blessed spiritual power, greatly appreciated by the missionaries of all denominations. It was glorious to see hundreds of red coats (British soldiers) in our meetings and many of them bowed at our altars seeking God. Quite a number of Eurasians and natives who could speak our language were converted. While we were in India we were much pleased with what we saw of the missionaries and of their life and work. They were a noble body of men and women and were doing a great work.

We divided our forces in India and Brother Inskip and Brother W. B. Osborn, who was in India, went to Calcutta and then to Ceylon and Australia and held meetings. Brother McDonald and I returned to England to fill our engagements there. On our way to England we spent eight days in Palestine and visited Jerusalem and its environs, the Jordan, Jericho, the Dead Sea and Bethlehem, which was a rare privilege indeed. On our way from Palestine to Alexandria we got into quarantine.

The plague had broken out in Bagdad and though we had not been within a thousand miles of Bagdad our steamer was quarantined at Port Said, and we were carried on under the yellow flag to Alexandria. There an old scow was moored to our side and we were taken on board and landed between two squads of Negro soldiers and marched to an old box car, which had been used as a turkey and hen roost and taken out four miles to an old lazaretto or pest-house, better suited to give one the plague than to receive plague patients. It was an amusing sight to see a company of American ministers and their wives with some missionaries and Englishmen, marching between two files of Negro soldiers



with their bayonets pointed at us and jabbed at us, if we got too near them as we marched from the old box car to the pest-house. With a single candle lighting the long dismal room, with more than a dozen men, women and children, Americans, Englishmen, Italians and an Egyptian, we spent the night. We did not disrobe and Brother McDonald spent most of the night fighting cockroaches, which he declared were nearly as large as butternuts.

Morning came, after we were fumigated and after paying three dollars and sixty cents apiece for our lodging, we were let out and turned adrift four miles from the city without even a henroost to carry us back to Alexandria.

On our way from Alexandria to England, we spent a couple of days at Naples and visited the ruins of Pompeii, and a week in Rome, where we held services, and two days in Paris. Reaching England on the eighth of April we found an advertised program for more meetings than we could possibly hold, having been detained in the Suez Canal by running aground and by the quarantine at Alexandria, which threw us back two weeks.

We resumed our services in London, in Stepney Green Tabernacle, and held services at Leeds, Leicester, Sheffield, Grimsby, St. Helens and Liverpool. At all of these meetings the crowds and interest were unabated and hundreds of precious souls were blest of God. We left England with many pressing invitations to return and resume evangelistic work again. During this tour we spent eighty-two nights on the sea in nine different steamers and no death or accident. We traveled over six thousand miles by rail without accident, and held four hundred and thirty exhausting religious services, and all returned in usual health.

In 1880 at Attleboro, previous to my European tour I revised and enlarged Perfect Love, and verified all the quotations which had not been done at its first writing twenty years before, and in the preface said: "It is a pleasant item that after twenty years of reading, study and enlarged experience since the first writing, I find not an essential point to renounce, therefore my work has been to systematize, state more clearly, enlarge, make stronger and add other important items." After my return from our foreign tour while in Attleboro, I compiled and wrote "Wesley on Christian Perfection." In that book I systematize and present substantially all that Mr. Wesley left on the subject in his writing, and so classified and arranged the subject that one can readily turn to any aspect of Wesley's views at once.

After my return from Europe I remained at North Attleboro five years and as my health had been failing and hindered my usefulness, I sent in my resignation to take place the twenty-first of September, 1886.

During all my ministerial life I have been on the most fraternal and amicable terms with all Evangelical churches. Studying a year and a half with a Congregational minister took the horns off in that direction. Marrying a Baptist lady for my wife took off the horns towards the Baptists and marrying a Presbyterian lady for my second wife removed all the horns in that direction, if I had any.

During my pastorate in Attleboro I had a long and severe conflict with the Universalists, the worst theological battle of my life. I did not begin it, and though it was long and bitter in the treatment I received, when it ended I did not regret it.

On my leaving Attleboro, an editorial in the "Attleboro Chronicle," the paper which had treated me the worst, said what, in view of that controversy and the close of my longest and last pastorate, may not be out of place here.

"During seven years and seven months Rev. Mr. Wood has steadily grown in the good opinion and appreciation of this community. He has become recognized as a man of wide

experience, sincere and steadfast in his opinions, an able and successful preacher, a careful and devoted pastor and, in general, as a religious leader and teacher of rare ability.”

#### SOUTH PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

I moved to California the last of September, 1886. The winter before, in view of my health, the church at North Attleboro gave me three months leave of absence and I visited California. While here I held a series of revival services at the First Methodist Church in Los Angeles, at Tulare in the great San Joaquin Valley, and at Napa in the northern part of the State. We found the weather delightful here in January and February and we were much pleased with the climate and country, and even more with the reception given me by the churches on this coast.

The March day that we started for our home in Massachusetts we went out into a field and picked a large bouquet of about thirty varieties of wild flowers. When we reached the Berkshire Hills in Western Massachusetts, the snow was flying and the sleighs were going in the streets.

While in California, accidentally, as I thought then, but providentially as I believe now, I attended an auction sale at Lincoln Park. I rode out to the sale with my host, Brother Leslie F. Gay, merely for the ride, though I said playfully to my wife, as we drove away: “I am going out to Pasadena to buy some land.” After I left she went to her room and asked the Lord to direct and to keep me from doing any foolish thing. What a blessing to have a wife who can pray her husband through the emergencies of life!

On the way Brother Gay suggested, “Brother Wood, you better buy a building lot, you may want to come back here some time.”

At the auction a table was spread and covered with eatables for a free lunch. As the men gathered around the well spread table and were about to eat, I cried out: “Hold on gentlemen, let us ask a blessing here. God is good, this is a grand country, and we ought to be thankful.” The auctioneer said: “All right-hats off.” The hats went off and I invoked the blessing of Almighty God, a new thing at an auction or land sale in California.

The sale went slow and the auctioneer said he would put up any plot marked off. I saw a finely located building plot of two acres and asked him to put that up. Thinking as Brother Guy had suggested, that my health might compel me to give up my pastorate before long, I made a bid on it.

No one would bid against me, after the table scene and it was struck off to me. The next day I drove up and showed it to my wife and she decided the Lord had heard her prayer.

When we moved here, I built a good, convenient, comfortable house on my lot, and have lived in it, when at home, for nearly eighteen years; three times as long as in any other house during my lifetime.

My health greatly improved and since moving here I have preached in fifty-two different churches up and down this coast and in thirty-six of them have assisted in revival meetings. The churches of California have been open to me and I have been treated with uniform kindness, forbearance and respect.

My daughter, Mayme, after being the sunshine and music of our home for many years, was married September twenty-fourth, 1891, to Edward E. Barden, a Christian man, worthy of being the husband of any minister's only daughter. Their home is near mine, here at Lincoln Park.

As I draw this brief sketch of my life and work to a close, I may say I have had plenty of



trials, conflicts and embarrassments; preaching plainly and faithfully, doing thorough religious work has provoked opposition. Satan has hated me from boyhood, through all my life and has given me a full share of his attention. More than once men have come to my house and cursed me bitterly and forbade my visiting their families because their wives and children have become pious. "God has been my defense," and no weapon formed against me has prospered. I am constrained to say, God has been marvelously good to me and to my family. My three children and my precious, helpful wife have been a joy and comfort to me during all of my itinerant wanderings and labors. I have alluded to them in this sketch of my life because they deserve it and with no disposition to family glorification.

In contemplating the seventy-six years of my life, I am amazed and humbled in the very depths of my soul, by the directing, sustaining. Overruling and merciful providence of God through these long eventful, laborious years.

I have moved since I first commenced housekeeping twenty-six times; have been pastor of fourteen different churches; have preached on every continent in this world, and in twenty-four of the States of the Union. I have crossed the continent seventeen times in my evangelistic work, and never a wheel off the track, and have attended over sixty National camp meetings, and have written several hundred articles for the religious press, most of them on the subject of Christian holiness.

It has been my privilege to be associated with, and have sweet fellowship with many of the purest and ablest ministers in the Methodist church and enjoyed and been benefited by acquaintance with most of our Bishops and Editors during half a hundred years.

My work is now done, and though able to write some, I have not attempted to preach but twice in nearly three years. These years of weakness and suffering have been years of discipline and spiritual benefit to my soul. God is pleased to manifest his sacred presence and smiling favor to my apprehension and consciousness more clearly than when in the activities of pastoral and evangelistic work.

Perfect love is increasingly blessed to me as I near and face the end of this life. I love the blessed God, the blessed Savior, the blessed Holy Spirit.

I love the church and her ministers, and would express my profound thanks and gratitude to my ministerial brethren for their kindness and forbearance toward me. Holiness! Happiness! Usefulness! Heaven! !



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