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TWENTY-ONE YEARS SALVATION ARMY

TO THE READER

While writing this memorial of The Salvation Army's first twenty-one years' victories I have been only too sadly conscious of my inability to write as I would on such a theme.

To put together in one small volume the story of twenty-one years, no one of which can be properly described in a book of this size, was, of course, at a glance, out of the question.

In the following pages I have, therefore, tried simply to point out as clearly as possible the main features of the new champion force that God has raised to maintain His cause in the world.

Happily The General himself has given us, in addition, his own account of the way in which God led him to begin the war; and I trust that many who, induced by this fact to do so, may read the book, will fill up what remains wanting by giving up their lives likewise to continue the strife till Christ shall be indeed King over all the earth.

R.

P.S. – 1887. – All we have written as to The Army has had wonderful confirmation in the fact that it has grown during its 22nd year half as large again as it was when this book was written.

I. HOW WE BEGAN.

BY THE GENERAL.

I was born in Nottingham on the 10th of April 1829, and converted when fifteen years of age. I was brought up in attendance on the services of the Church of England, which at thirteen I exchanged of my own choice for what were to me the more interesting ways of the Wesleyan Methodists. There was nothing very remarkable in the measures that led up to my conversion; I had the advantage of hearing some faithful preaching, and came, in my new associations, under the influence of some godly friends, while as far back as I can remember the Holy Spirit had



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continually shown me that real welfare for time and eternity depended on the surrender myself to the service of God. After a long controversy I made this submission, cast myself on His mercy, received an assurance of His pardon, and gave myself up to His service with all my heart. The hour, the place, and many other particulars of this glorious transaction, are recorded indelibly on my memory.

Two events, which transpired soon after my conversion, had, I have no doubt, a very powerful influence in molding my religious character and shaping my after life. The first of these was a remarkable religious awakening that came to the society and congregation of which I was a member, and which extended for miles around the town. At that time the Reverend James Caughey, an American minister, was making an evangelistic tour through the country. He was an extraordinary preacher, filling up his sermons with thrilling anecdotes and vivid illustrations, and for the straightforward declaration of scriptural truth and striking appeals to the conscience, I had up to that time never heard his equal; I do not know that I have since.

For three months we were expecting him, during which time remarkable stories of the wonderful results that had attended his ministry elsewhere were continually reaching us, and for months before he came meetings were held to pray for a blessing on his labors. His visit was consequently the constant topic of conversation, and everybody was on the tip-toe of expectation when he arrived.

The result answered the anticipation. There were such crowds and rushes to hear the gospel as we had never dreamed of seeing. There were wonderful meetings, wonderful influences, and wonderful conversions. Multitudes were saved, many of whom became the most useful members of society. All this had a powerful effect upon my young heart. The straightforward conversational way of putting the truth, and the common-sense method of pushing the people up to decision, and the corresponding results that followed, in the conversion and sanctification of hundreds of people, made an ineffable impression on my mind, filling me not only with confidence in the power and willingness of God to save all those that come unto Him, but with an assurance of the absolute certainty with which soul-saving results may be calculated upon when proper means are used for their accomplishment. I saw as clearly as if a revelation had been made to me from Heaven that success in the spiritual work, as in natural operations, was to be accounted for, not



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on any mere abstract theory of Divine Sovereignty, or favoritism, or accident, but on the employment of such methods as were dictated by common sense, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God.

A second event that had a powerful influence upon my early character and me after life was the remarkable way with which I saw the application of the principle which I had seen so successfully acted upon among the religious portion of the community, to some of the poorest and most desolate people of the town.

Directly after this awakening I was laid aside with a violent attack of fever. My life was in danger, but God mercifully restored me to health, and I went out to devote my spared life to the work of saving souls, which became ever after the supreme business of my existence. During my illness some of my comrades had gone down to one of the poorest parts of the town and commenced meetings in the same spirit as the great revival which had just closed in the big chapel. From time to time they sent notes to my sick chamber telling how they wanted me to help them; and so as soon as able I went out and joined them in their struggle, and became a leader in the fight.

Our plan of operation was simplicity itself. We obtained the loan of cottages, and in these held meetings every night, always commencing with an open-air address, fine weather or foul, all the year round, inviting the people indoors for another meeting. Here again we had lively songs, short and sharp exhortations insisting upon decision for Christ upon the spot, which was to be signified by coming out and kneeling at the round table that stood in the middle of the room. These efforts were accompanied by visitation of the sick and of the converts, whose names and addresses were always recorded, together with the processions to the big chapel on the Sunday, which the respectable authorities of the society soon compelled us to take in at the back door where the free seats were. When our converts died, we had Salvation funerals; placing the coffin in the street, singing around it, and holding another meeting at the grave when the parson had done. In short we had a miniature Salvation Army.

I have said that these two series of events influenced my character and after, conduct. From the first I doubtless learned those simple principles upon which I have acted with a blessed measure of success ever since, and by the latter I was convinced that God was not only no respecter of



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persons, but that human nature was as religiously impressionable if not more so in its poorest, most ignorant and wretched forms as in any other.

But as time went on the influence and methods of church usage and the “traditions of the elders” carried me away from these simple plans on to the ordinary and orthodox church lines of actions. I must be a regular preacher and go through set forms and deliver regular sermons. All the influences and regulations of the society in which I lived and moved, and which it is not much exaggeration to say, I all but worshipped, willed it to be so.

At seventeen my superintendent minister wished to see me. He desired that I should go, as it is termed, “on to the plan,” that is, become a local preacher. I declined; my youth was an excuse . The secret feeling of my heart being that I could get more souls saved on the rough and ready lines I was then following out than on any other that I could hope at that time to be able to reach.

A year after, however, I was hooked into the ordinary rut and put on to sermon-making and preaching, and at nineteen I was pressed to prepare for the regular ministry. I again pleaded for delay; this time on the ground of my health, which was not very good, and the subject was postponed for another year.

The changes came; I removed from Nottingham to London. A violent controversy arose in the Wesleyan Society, though which I was separated from it, although I took no part in the strife, and it was near upon three years before I left business to devote my every moments and energy to the work of proclaiming salvation.

After six months in London I spent a little over a year in Spalding, Lincolnshire, and the villages around, where I dearly loved the people and saw many saved. I then returned to London again, where I came to study preparatory to become a minister in the Methodist New Connexion. But my studies were very much broken in upon and sadly interrupted by the more practical business of saving souls.

It was about this time I made my first acquaintance with the East of London, being appointed to preach at a little chapel. God spoke through me, and before the meeting closed very unusual



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results to that congregation followed, souls cried for mercy. Other meetings were held, and more conversions. This happened wherever I went, and it was soon noised abroad throughout the Connexion of which I had so recently become a minister. It was remarked upon in the magazine, and greatly wondered at.

A visit to Guernsey of a fortnight's duration followed, where several hundred persons were awakened, and then came a pressing call to Staffordshire Potteries. This was altogether contrary to my wishes, and I positively declined it. I wanted to settle down to my circuit and pastoral duties, and all the student business which is thought essential to ministerial work; but it was decided by the authorities that I should go to Staffordshire. Perhaps an Authority higher than theirs was determined there should be no settling down for me. It seemed so then, as it has done ever since.

While in Staffordshire, Longton, Hanley, Burslem, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Fenton, and Stoke were visited in turn. Seven weeks in all were spent in these places, during which time the names and addresses of 1,700 persons were registered as finding Salvation. This news flew through the community with rapidity, and the managing committee of the Connexion arranged for my being relieved from any circuit duties in London, very much to the disappointment of the people there, and set apart to the work of an Evangelist for the entire Connexion.

During the rest of the year, Bradford, Oldham, Mossley, Gateshead, and Manchester were visited. Then came the Conference, which formally approved my appointment, and renewed it for the following year.

Another event happened about this time – I was married. Three years before, on the same day that I left business for the ministry, I met the one whom I have had the privilege since to call my wife, and we were one in heart, soul, and purpose from that very night. There may be unions as thorough and perfect as ours has been, but not very many, so far as my observation has gone. I had formed an idea of what I wanted in a wife, and resolved to wait until I found a woman, in some measure at least, would answer to it. It began with devotion to God and to righteousness, and soul-saving, and went on to other qualities, moral, social, and intellectual. Although in my fancy I had formed this ideal, I never could have expected to find a being who so nearly answered



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to it as I did in the woman who then linked her fate with mine, and who has ever since been my comrade in the fight. How she has helped me as a companion, friend, counselor, and not least the mother of our children, I pause not here to attempt to describe. It may be said that the world knows all about us, seeing that her life has been almost as public as my own. I may say, however, that if personally I have, in the hands of God, had to do with the origination of this remarkable movement, if I have stood to it in the relation of a father, surely my precious wife may be truly considered to have been its mother.

Within a few days of our marriage, I fulfilled a second fortnight's engagement at Guernsey, and then a week at Jersey. In both places I preached in the very halls that The Salvation Army now occupy as Barracks. Then right away to York, leaving my wife, who was sick in London, on the way. Then followed Hull, Sheffield, Dewsbury, Hunslet, Leeds, and Halifax. At these places between three and four thousand persons professed to find Salvation. Some of these became ministers, many emigrated to distant lands; others became backbone members of the different societies, whilst others died and went triumphantly to heaven.

At Halifax the Chief-of-Staff was born. We were booked for Chester, but had to remain in Halifax for his convenience, advantage being taken of this interruption of our arrangements to give three week' services at another chapel in another part of the town.

Macclesfield, Yarmouth, Sheffield (second visit), and Birmingham were then visited, and then Nottingham, my native town, where we had between six and seven hundred converts in six weeks. Then came Chester, Bristol, Truro, and Stafford. At the latter place we had just got to work, with the blessed promise of a wonderful awakening, when the Conference which conducted the affairs of the Connexion, for various reasons, or rather on sundry excuses, relating to Church order, by a narrow majority decided that I should return to regular pastoral work. This was a heavy blow to me and very much against my judgement. But I bowed to authority, and spent one year in the Halifax and three years in the Gateshead Circuits. When the time had arrived that I must leave the Gateshead people, three years being the limit of ministerial stay in the Methodist Connexion, the officers sent in a memorial urging my re-appointment to the Evangelistic work.



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This was refused, whereupon I resigned my position in that body and went out, from home and salary, with a delicate wife and four little children under five years of age, leaving almost every friend I had behind me in order that I might have the opportunity of filling the sphere in which I thought I could best serve God and save the largest number of souls. This was my first step back again towards the simple plan of labor commenced at Nottingham fifteen years before.

I need not say that in this new departure my wife was one with me. Twelve months before God had opened her lips to speak in public, thus qualifying her to become my helpmate more fully than ever before.

The first door opened for us after this resignation was at Hayle, in Cornwall. The invitation came from a young minister who was one of my sons in the Gospel. My wife accompanied me. It was an anxious time. All who knew us had predicted that we were going straight to ruin. For four and a-half years I had bowed to the judgment of men, or rather to a traditional system which had stood between me and the people. Now the barriers were passed. I had paid the price. All the associations and friends of my life up to that hour had forsaken me, but I was free to carry out my convictions. True, the scale on which the experiment was to be tried was, at the onset, not a very extensive one. We had only a small chapel with a mere handful of members, of little influence and power in the neighborhood. But we were both full of confidence in God, and had no fear for the result.

It was done unto us according to our faith. From the very first morning in that little old chapel God was with us, and before three days had passed one of the most remarkable, perhaps the most remarkable, awakening, measured by permanent results, commenced that the west of Cornwall had ever known. From Hayle we passed on to St. Ives, then Lelant, and afterwards to St. Just. At these four places I believe between three and four thousand persons professed Salvation.

The Wesleyan Conference was held that year in Cornwall. We had already had some remarkable successes in their chapels. With no people had we more remarkable meetings, and there really seemed a probability of our being once more absorbed into the parent Methodist body, in connection with which we were both first saved and associated.



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But no; our course out of the churches and downwards to the masses must be continued, and had this idea been carried out, the probabilities are that such a progress would have been arrested. That conference passed a resolution closing their chapels against us. Evangelistic movements being unfavorable to church order, was against the plea; therefore they must not be allowed. Consequently that door was effectually closed. It has been opened again to others since, and evangelistic work is now a regular institution of that body. But our track lay plainly away from the churches, and we went on in it, with much dissatisfaction and many quiet complainings, it may be, as to what appeared to us the strange ways of Providence.

There were other churches glad to receive us, and at Penzance, Mousehole, Redruth, and Camborne, many were saved. At Redruth alone during some seven weeks' work it was calculated that several thousand people were converted.

And now another step downwards and outwards was prepared for us. We were very pressingly invited to Cardiff. This time it was not to a chapel, nor even to a respectable hall, but to a large wooden circus. Undenominational work was just then coming into fashion. The theory was, save the people outside the churches and then send them to the churches to be trained and cared for. We were waited to help carry this program out in Cardiff. It was certainly another advance towards the Nottingham starting-point.

From Cardiff we went on to Walsall, where another glimpse was gained of what was to be in the future. Some Methodists had built a big chapel, and were unable to obtain a congregation. They invited us to help them. But, alas! None of our inside attractions charmed the people. The respectable persons of the community were too proud to enter, and the lower orders were as positively opposed to anything of the kind as they could be. I went to work to try and make them come. The fight was a desperate one. Night after night I spoke to large crowds in the Market-square, processioning through the darkest and blackest slums to the chapel, into which very few would enter; so far as the door they came, and no further.

It was then I devised a special kind of meeting, out of which grew a most remarkable movement which went afterwards by the name of "The Hallelujah Band." To attract the people we invited all the celebrities we knew from Nottingham, Derby, Birmingham, and round about. These men



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had been remarkable in wickedness, but who we had reason to believe were now serving God. There was a preacher, a couple of prize-fighters, a Birmingham jail-bird, and others of the same class. These celebrities were advertised not as the respectable and religious people they were then, but by the characters they had borne before the conversion. We had a morning march; wagons in the hollows of a broken field, and meetings all day. We had great crowds of people, and souls saved.

The men, brought together that day for the first time, worked together for months afterwards with others through the Black Country and the surrounding districts. They attracted thousands of people in every direction. Many of the most notorious characters in the district were converted, and while it lasted it was, beyond question, a most wonderful religious movement. In course of time, however, the leaders disagreed. Divisions crept in. There being no acknowledged authority, all did pretty much what was right in their own eyes. There was no distinctive teaching beyond that of conversion, and the work gradually died out, or, at best, left only the monument of a few half-and-half Methodist societies behind.

But the remarkable influence and effect it produced while it lasted upon the worse and poorest classes of the community made a great impression on my mind, and I never ceased to wonder whether such a work could not be so originated and guided as to make it a powerful force for effectually dealing with the vast continent of rampant wickedness that I saw around me everywhere.

However we went on. Birmingham was the next town where I held a short series of meetings, visiting some of the small towns around. Then came a sort of settling down, and Leeds was chosen as a permanent residence. Here we had what may be called our first home since leaving Gateshead, having only lived in apartments and furnished houses, a few weeks at a time, until then. At Leeds our sixth child was born, and it seemed a necessity that the migratory form of existence followed during the last three years should be curtailed if not abandoned.

Our stay in Leeds lasted about six months, during which time we had a hard fight with the enemy in various forms. In chapel, in halls, in the denominations and out of the denominations. In the market-place, amidst oaths and blasphemies and pelting and mobbing with skeletons, who did



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not bear the name, but who, nevertheless, acted after their fashion, we struggled hard for souls, and won a goodly number.

From Leeds we went to London. For a long time the great city had attracted us. My dear wife had always objected to leaving the children for public work; and in London, we argued, she would find a sphere which would allow of her getting home the same evening, or, at most, would not keep her away very long together. To London, therefore, in 1864, we came, securing a home at Hammersmith.

About this time there was a considerable awakening of the public mind with respect to religion, and with a great deal of open-air and theatre preaching. Among other efforts a large tent had been erected in a disused burial mound belonging to the Society of Friends, in Baker's Row, Whitechapel. In this tent meetings were being held every night, and to conduct them I was invited for a fortnight.

Here was the open door for which I had longed for years, and yet I knew it not, and moreover was unwilling to enter it. The main reason for this was that I feared my ability to deal with people of this class; I had made several efforts, but apparently failed, and the thought saddened and oppressed me beyond measure. I would have given words, had they been mine, to have been qualified to attract and interest, and lead to salvation the masses I saw around me, as completely outside the Christian circle as the untaught heathen of foreign lands, but I despaired accomplishing it. This I thought was not my vocation. I had forgotten Nottingham, Meadow Platts and the work in it when a boy of sixteen, twenty years before.

However, as was my usage, no squeamish difficulties were allowed to interfere with duty. I accepted the invitation, and the hour and day found me at my post.

On the Mile End Waste the first open-air meeting was held, from whence we processioned to the tent. From the first the meetings were fairly good; we had souls at almost every service, and before the fortnight had passed I felt at home; and more than this I found my heart being strongly and strangely drawn out on behalf of the million people living within a mile of the tent - ninety out of every hundred of whom, they told me, never heard the sound of the preacher's voice from



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year to year. "Here is a sphere!" Was being whispered continually in my inward ear by an inward voice. "Why go further afield for audiences?" And so the church and chapel congregation somehow or other lost their charm in comparison with the vulgar Eastenders, and I was continually haunted with a desire to offer myself to Jesus Christ as an apostle for the heathen of East London. The idea or heavenly vision or whatever you may call it overcame me, I yielded to it, and what has happened since is I think not only a justification but an evidence that my offer was accepted.

The difficulties that beset us at the onset were many. To begin with: On the third or fourth Sunday morning we found the tent lying on the ground rent in pieces. It had been a stormy night, and among other things that the rough wind had finished was our tabernacle; and, what made things worse, it was too rotten to be mended or ever put back together again. That Sunday we had to fall back upon our Cathedral – the open air.

After a long search an old dancing room was secured for Sabbath meetings. They danced in it until the small hours of the Sunday morning, and our converts had to carry in, and fix up at four a.m., our seats, which fortunately had not been blown away when the tent was destroyed – It was a long narrow place, holding about six hundred people. The proprietor combined the two professions of dancing master and photographer – the latter being pushed especially on Sunday. In the front room, by which all the congregation had to pass from the open street, sat the mistress coloring photographs, whilst someone at the doors touted for business. The photographing was done at the top of the house, and customers had to pass on their way up by a sort of parlour that was open to our hall; and it was a regular thing for them to pause and listen to the message of salvation as they walked up on their Sabbath-breaking business. When we saw them on such occasions we generally contrived to give them something a little warm.

We had wonderful meetings in that room, and in connection with it I put in many a hard Sunday's work, regularly giving three and sometimes four open-air addresses, leading three processions and doing three indoor meetings, the bulk of the labor of all of which fell on me. But the power and the happiness of the work carried me along, and in that room the foundation was really laid for all that has come since.



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Meanwhile, however, we had no place for our week-night meetings except the open air on the Mile End Waste, and here we carried on till nine and after, then inviting those who were anxious to remain and seek salvation on the spot on which they stood.

Our first week-night place after the tent was an old low wool warehouse, the windows of which unfortunately opened on the street. When crowded, which was ordinarily the case, it was frightfully hot, especially in the summer. If we opened the windows the boys threw stones and mud and fireworks through, and fired trains of gunpowder laid from the door inwards. But our people got used to this, shouting Hallelujah when the crackers exploded and the powder flashed; but it doubtless frightened and kept away a good many folks. Still many a poor dark soul found Jesus there, and became a good warrior afterwards.

Then there was an old chapel called "Holy Well Mount" – a fine place it seemed, after the wretched holes and corners to which we had been accustomed – still it never seemed to answer our purpose; some of our folks thought it was just because it was a "chapel."

Then we had a stable up a court leading off the Whitechapel Road. We had it cleaned, and whitewashed, and fitted up, and from its situation were full of hope of seeing a lot done in it. But, alas! "we counted our chickens before they were hatched," as others have often done before us. After the first meeting or two we were summarily ejected, the room next to us being occupied by a gymnastic and sparring club; and our exercises disturbed theirs. They were old tenants, and their work being more in sympathy with the publican, to whom the place belonged, there was nothing for us but to go.

From the beginning we were always picking up people in the roads from all parts of London – nay, from almost every corner of the globe, as they travelled about for business or pleasure – and taking them with us to our Halls, and getting them saved. Many of the Londoners came begging for us to begin services in their neighborhoods, and so we went to Old Ford, to a carpenter's shop – to Poplar, to a wooden shed, between which and some stables and pig-styes there was only a wooden partition, through the open cracks of which a stench oozed, enough to poison us all, and it was a wonder it did not.



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Then we went to a penny gaffe at Limehouse, buying out the trumpery scenery, footlights and all. We went to a covered skittle alley in Whitechapel, where they bowled and gambled and drank and swore on a week-day. A temporary platform was constructed over the square upon which the pins stood, and on that platform, or in front of it, I have seen as many as twenty people at once kneeling and weeping as they sought salvation.

Then came a larger venture – the “Eastern Star” – a low beer house, notorious for immorality and other vices – was burned down and afterwards rebuilt. We bought the lease and fitted it up. In the front was our first bookstore; at the back a good Hall, and rooms for classes and smaller meetings upstairs.

Then came the old Effingham Theatre, on the stage of which there regularly mounted forty, fifty, and sixty sinners on a Sunday night seeking mercy. In this dirty theatre – at that time, perhaps, one of the lowest in London – we were fairly introduced to the public, and from that day the work went forward with increased rapidity.

During this time my wife was engaged in holding meetings, of three months at a stretch, in some of the largest halls around London and in various places within easy distance, some of which resulted, in addition to making friends for the East-End work, in the formation of permanent missions, of the same character as those established in the East of London.

All this time we had no regular definite plans for the future. From the very first I was strongly opposed to forming any separate organisation. It is true, that again and again the thought did come to me as to what could be accomplished for God and man by a people who were all actuated by one simple purpose, and that the immediate salvation of the masses, and the entire devotion of those thus saved to the work of saving their fellows. The chief sorrow to me in connection with the sects in the past, had ever been their divisions on the subject of practical Godliness and immediate results, but I constantly put from me the thought of attempting the formation of such a people.

My first idea was simply to get the people saved, and send them to the churches. This proved at the outset impracticable.



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- 1st. They would not go when sent.
- 2nd. They were not wanted.
- And 3rd. We wanted some of them at least ourselves, to help us in the business of saving others.

We were thus driven to providing for the converts ourselves.

As the movement grew we thought it might be our work to constitute a mammoth working men's society just there, in the East End, and with the smaller branches all around.

But as we spread from one part of London to another, and then to the provinces, we came to accept our mission to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to arrange accordingly.

Further particulars respecting this going forth will be found in this volume, but all our methods, and agencies, and successes, and organisation have, we think, grown out of four simple principles with which I believe my heart was inspired in the earliest days of my spiritual life.

(1.) *Going to the people with the message of Salvation.* – Out of this has grown all our varied open-air operations, processions, bands, colours, reviews, and the like.

(2.) *Attracting the people.* – This has originated the varied placards and all other attractive announcements.

(3.) *Saving the people.* – Hence the services for conversion, for holiness, for consecration, for fiery baptisms of the Holy Ghost, and for heavenly enjoyment.

(4.) *Our employment of the people.* – Out of which has grown our varied classes of Officers, opportunities for testimony, and the open door and continued encouragement to every man, and every woman, and every child, to use and exercise whatever gifts they may have received from God for assisting Him in subduing and winning this rebellious world to Himself.