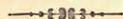


The Christian Mission Magazine.

JULY, 1877.

The Conference.



OUR Conference just past marks an era in the history of the Mission over which we shall have to praise God to all eternity. We have had years of organisation and consolidation which have done much for our foundations, and which have checked and cast aside tendencies which might have hindered our permanent and complete development. There remains for us now only to give ourselves as one man to the great spiritual work to which God has called us. We do not look for human consultations or authority or might, but, satisfied of our high and holy calling, we rejoice unitedly to look up to the hills whence cometh our help. The days of debate are over, and we meet to confer with God.

Right gloriously have we just experienced the benefits of this advance, and we praise God and take courage. In former Conferences we used to look forward to the moments once an hour when talk to man ceased and we all got down on our knees to talk with God. But this time not only have these seasons been frequently swelled from five or ten minutes to a quarter or even a half hour, but all through the conversations which have taken place our hearts have ever and anon been moved by the Spirit's power, and there has only been one feeling expressed on every hand with regard to every meeting, that it has been a "blessed time," and that "it has done my soul good." Thank God we have got on to a higher path, which will lead us, we have no doubt, to even much more heavenly communings in time to come.

The reports of the addresses delivered will convey to our readers, we think, a pretty fair idea, not merely of the thoughts expressed, but of the freedom from anything like constraint which all of us felt from first to last. We need hardly say, however, that even if we had been able to produce a verbatim report of the speeches, words would have utterly failed to represent either the lively upspringing of the living water from every heart, or the mighty influence felt on so many occasions by us all. Such as they are, however, we earnestly

commend the pages which follow to the prayerful and careful attention of all who love God and souls. The devotional session with which we commenced on the Monday afternoon was a precious foretaste of spiritual banquets which were to follow.

The Annual Meeting was felt by us all to be one of the best we have ever had, and was attended by numbers of country as well as town members of the Mission. The holiness meeting of the following evening was naturally a far richer feasting time, but the Love Feast of Wednesday surpassed all that had gone before it for mighty spiritual power. And we parted confident that marching on in this our strength through the year we shall see greater things than these.

THE OPENING ADDRESS.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BOOTH.

WE are met here before God to discharge a solemn and important trust, which has been as truly and really reposed in us by Him as though we had received a commission in writing direct from His throne and with His signature attached thereto. We have been called by the arrangement of Divine Providence to be officers and leaders in His army, and we are met to consider how we can best advance the interests of that army, and how better to accomplish the work to which He has called us.

It is said that fools learn in the school of experience, but that is not true, for fools learn nowhere. Only wise people improve and profit by the things which they suffer. We all remember what is said about braying a fool in a mortar and of the fruitlessness of such labour, for even then it is said his folly will not depart from him. Now all of us have been more or less brayed during the past year. God has been bruising us, dashing us about, to knock the folly out of us and to knock the wisdom in, and we ought to be wiser men and women for the labour and the experience. I trust we ARE. And now we meet to look the results of our work fully and honestly in the face, to compare notes, and to consider how, in the light of our failures and successes, we can improve our future. The Lord help us to profit by the review!

There seems to me no folly greater than that of clinging to measures and agencies that do not succeed. I hold, and have long held, that *success is the law of all rightly directed labour*—that is, that effort inspired by God, and in accordance with the word of God, must and will succeed. True, there are exceptions to all rules, and there will be exceptions to this. There will doubtless be a November, and a dreary November too, it may be, in the history of every worker; periods of cross-purposes and contradiction altogether beyond his control—times when, disastrously defeated, and defeated again, he must retreat before the foe. But as a rule, men and women who are of God, and who understand their work, will succeed; and consequently we think we ought not to be regarded as wrong or unwarrantable in concluding that those who do not succeed are either not men and women of God, or, though good and sincere people,

have nevertheless mistaken their vocation, and should, at the earliest opportunity, seek employment in some other calling.

This principle is accepted in business, in politics, and in war. We accept it in spiritual things; we indorse and wish to act upon it in the Christian Mission. We need not suggest to you how different it would have been with the Church had she accepted this principle and acted upon it in the past. We have failed, and suffered because we have not sufficiently acted upon it; we want to receive it in its integrity, and act upon it in the future.

Now we want to make a review, to give at a glance

A HISTORY OF THE YEAR.

In doing so we will look at our losses and our gains in the various branches of the work.

First we will begin with OUR STATIONS, and with respect to these we have had losses, and we will take the losses first, for we have lost stations—lost them voluntarily—and this abandonment has been taken exception to by some of our friends; in fact, there are some who energetically protest against the giving up of any ground once occupied. Here, therefore, I feel it necessary to remark that it seems to me possible to over-estimate the importance of maintaining a post when once established. As a rule, I admit that, having once unfurled our banner in a town, we ought to suffer a good deal before we beat a retreat. It is no doubt a right thing to “hold the fort”; but if we find that we have made a mistake, and taken a stand which is not likely to prove spiritually remunerative—in which the results do not promise to answer to the toil and sacrifice called for—let us have courage to confess our mistake, and withdraw for more congenial and productive fields of labour. We do not say that in any case we give up for ever—we may return again by-and-by; but we do say, let us take the larger opportunities and the easier tasks first. In some towns and neighbourhoods we find more difficulty than in others. Here and there is soil peculiarly in our favour, and gales blowing in the direction of our purpose. We are but young; this is only our childhood. Wait awhile, and we shall be better able to cultivate the barren rock and pierce the polar regions. Wait until our teeth are fully grown, and then we will at least attempt the cracking of the hardest nuts. Meanwhile, we must have some little consideration for our strength.

At the same time we ought to exercise the greatest care and cry mightily to God for wisdom to guide us ere we commence operations in any town. We ought thoughtfully to measure all the likelihoods and possibilities and difficulties existing in each case. We ought to go round about and through and through a town or neighbourhood and inquire of God and men, and calculate in the light of what we hear there and then, and what our past experience teaches us, whether we are strong enough to deal with them—whether we are able not only to take, but to keep, possession of the place, and then, in the name of our God, lift up our banner; and if we act thus we shall not have again, at least not frequently, ignominiously to furl our flag and beat a retreat.

I am free to confess that sufficient care has not been taken in past years in relation to entering upon new ground. People talk about my despotic government; but the fact is I am far too easily swayed, and have too often been induced by friendly pressure to act against my judgment.

And then, moreover, it is only during the last two or three years that I have really apprehended what are the possibilities of our future, and I am not ashamed to confess that I have been at least a party to mistaken courses of action in the past. I am never ashamed to say I have made a mistake. I am always pleased for my brethren to have the opportunity of saying to me, "I told you so." I can reply, "I am glad you have proved right." I have laid all the pride of my opinion on the altar, and am pleased to welcome new light as it pleases Him to give it me.

The abandonment of stations has resulted largely from the reception of this idea, that a man good enough to make and sustain a mission in a small hall out of sight, up a back street, will be able to gather and hold a congregation in a theatre and to build up a powerful society in a populous neighbourhood.

During the year we have relinquished nine stations. Some might consider this a sign of weakness; to me it appears the contrary. It is a proof of our confidence in our standing and our future. I wonder how many similarly circumstanced societies or organisations would dare to abandon as many stations, including the loss of 610 members, 72 of whom were public speakers, without fear of consequences. If we had been influenced by the desire to make a swell and a figure with our statistics, we should have kept more places lingering along to have been more or less an incumbrance and financial burden at least for some time to come. But let us look at them.

BROMLEY. A small country town with some 8,000 well-to-do inhabitants. To have held our own we must have built a hall which would have cost five or six hundred pounds, which we must have begged at headquarters. This would have been a great burden; the station could never have been a large one; so for the present at least we gave it up.

RYE. This place is in the midst of a dead, dreary marsh, out of the world—a long way from everywhere, and when you get there you get to nothing. Hastings could find neither men nor money to work it, and we gave it up. We did this reluctantly, for we loved the old-fashioned place. Many souls had been saved in it, and from it the gospel of power had sounded out to Romney and other places on that coast.

BUCKLAND, a suburb of Portsmouth. But the place was only ten minutes from our other Lake Road Hall, and we concluded one preacher would suffice.

NEW BROMPTON, an outlying suburb of Chatham, and an undoubtedly important one too, of some 6,000 working men; but until we can station a preacher there, which we certainly hope to do, it does not seem to us expedient to leave all the population of Chatham, Strood, and Rochester for fragmentary labour in New Brompton.

CUBITT TOWN. Our hall here had a gap in the roof and a gash in the wall, which gave promise of an early come down, and we got out of it, but it was into one so small as not to be worth maintaining.

TOTTENHAM. Here we had no place of our own, and could get none.

NORTH WOOLWICH. Here the population is small, and for want of an evangelist the work could not be maintained. But we have still a few warm-hearted friends there, and a piece of freehold ground, and a board upon it to say we are coming back some time.

KETTERING became absorbed into Stockton.

SHOREDITCH. The health of the evangelist gave way, and she had to

relinquish the work. There was £60 a year rent to pay for the place, and then it was a regular black hole when filled with people. The society had sunk, and seeing that there seemed no way of making anything worthy of the Mission, we very reluctantly resolved to withdraw.

Let us now turn round and look at our gains in the way of

NEW STATIONS.

And here we may remark that we had not, at the commencement of the year, the expectation of any considerable extension. With the exception of Bradford and Leicester, we did not stand pledged to any. We rather expected to have to continue the policy of the previous year, which was one of getting clear of incumbrances and consolidating what we did possess; getting on to lines along which we can steadily and surely progress for time to come. We have, however, I think, achieved some gains which far outweigh in present and future importance what we have lost. Let me enumerate.

ST. LEONARDS.

When this place was first brought before the committee, we were opposed to it; but circumstances seemed to make it almost inevitable. There had been a remarkable awakening among the blackguards of the neighbourhood. All the roughs in the neighbourhood from far and near had been attracted. A lady made a generous offer towards the expense of hiring and fitting up a hall. But we feared for Hastings, and it has turned out as we feared. There has been depression at both ends, and unless we can send a separate agent to St. Leonards, as we hope to do, there is little hope of doing better. For Hastings proper, whoever goes there, something must be done. There is plenty of room, and a grand possibility of success at both places. May it be accomplished!

LEEDS.

Some one may ask how we got there, remembering that at the last Conference Brother Dowdle was not sent there, but to Bradford. The facts are these: ground and money for a tent were offered at Leeds if we would consent for Brother and Sister Dowdle to work there for three or four months. Then it was agreed we could begin the winter at Bradford, and we might be in a position to drop a man down at Leeds to take up the work he would have begun. I consented. We lent them Brother and Sister Dowdle and money towards their tent, which they have unfortunately not yet paid back. The summer passed, and a dear friend and true lover of the Mission erected a wooden building for us, and then it was pleaded that Leeds was so big and so bad that we should not remove the evangelists. We replied that it was certainly both big enough and bad enough, and that if there was the opportunity to go to work on a large scale we would stand between them and the wrath of the next conference, even if they did not do anything for Bradford. Just then a large circus, capable of holding 4,000 people, was built, and taken for our work. I preached in that huge building full. It was one of the grandest sights I ever beheld. In the capacious ring of that building six elephants had been standing on their heads the night before, but that scene was as nothing for interest to that presented by the 20 souls or more who came out and knelt on the drugget we spread upon the saw-

dust, sobbing and crying for mercy, while the clowns and horse-riders looked on in amazement. But they were shocked at our goings-on, and voted us a nuisance to the neighbourhood, opposed alike to civilisation and religion, and refused to let us have the place beyond the term fixed in our agreement. God soon turned them out, however. Their great humanising and educational institution was a failure. It did not pay, and they had to shut up. They would be only too glad to let it us now, and if we only had a man to spare equal to such an undertaking we would say, Go in and conquer!

And now they have got what they call a tabernacle at Leeds. I don't like the name, and protested against it at the time, but they stuck to it. A very comfortable place it is, however, and a great deal of good has already been done in it. They have 70 members, and Brother Dowdle boasts there is not another such a congregation of vagabonds in the Mission. It is a splendid pool for any one to fish in, and as we are there we intend to stick to Leeds, and if we don't reopen the circus it will be because we hope, by some back-door influence, to get into one of the theatres.

BRADFORD.

While working in Leeds we never forgot our vow with respect to Bradford, and never ceased casting longing glances towards it. When the circus collapsed, on account of our not being sufficiently religious! we looked again, and found a large theatre, which seats over 2,000 people. They say it seats 4,000, but although these theatre people are so very religious, I must say they do sometimes make tremendous *mistakes* about numbers. It is a grand place, however, in a grand situation, and we have a good week-night hall, and a great work is in progress. Souls are being saved—big blackguards, some of the sort Brother Dowdle specially likes, whom we will now leave there to finish the year once more in the clover.

HARTLEPOOL.

This place was in a manner forced upon us. If some of my friends who are always censuring me about extension were in my place they would find themselves drawn into it in much the same way. This came about somewhat as follows: When in the North last winter I learnt that a series of very useful services had been held in Hartlepool, accompanied by a powerful and widespread awakening; but that all at once, with little or no notice, and with but little if any provision for the people who had crowded the theatre the previous Sabbath, the meetings had been given up, and the theatre closed, and then I said "they shall be opened again," and I telegraphed Brothers Allen and Ward to go over and make arrangements for a recommencement at the earliest possible moment. I could not do any other. You all think so; if you do not you ought to do, or you are not worthy to sit with us here. We were in for Hartlepool.

Brother Thomas seemed to be just sent us on purpose, and a very gratifying work has already been accomplished under his leading. We have got together a band of real dare-devils, who love God and souls supremely, and have a society of 100 people.

Then there is West Hartlepool, with a theatre ready for us, and twice as large a population. We shall overflow into it, I trust, this year.

NORTH ORMESBY.

This is a working-class suburb of Middlesbro', with a great and growing population of the right sort who are worth picking up, and who, when picked up, look like doing something. Brother Panter has been enabled to raise up a real Mission there, and Brother Roberts has followed up very successfully. They have now got a good society, and I understand a lot of money in hand, which they had better at once hand over to us. In the market-place, in the centre of the town, there is a good piece of ground to be had, on which a hall ought to be built, and I recommend our friends to go and do it immediately, and I will come down and open it.

At the beginning of the year the Theatre Royal was abandoned, and the Oddfellows' Hall taken in its stead. Since then

THE PRINCE'S MUSIC-HALL,

seating 1,500 people, has been taken, and is being crowded. A hallelujah society of Christian Mission artillerymen has been organised in connection with it and now numbers 158 members.

LEICESTER.

I have left the mention of this town to the last, because of the peculiar circumstances connected with it. Sixteen months ago a merchant and his wife implored us to mission Leicester. But we hesitated; our hands were full, and, moreover, we said, "You may not like our government or our measures," and fell to again and again to explain them, whereupon he replied to all, "We will be satisfied for you to govern and manage the work any way you may think best, if you will come and help us to reach the masses." My wife went, and struggled as she had seldom or ever struggled in a town before, bringing back upon herself the disease which had laid her aside before. Then my daughter went and continued the work. Many were interested. It is quite true some did not approve our straight hitting, still the merchant who first invited us implored us to go on, and, as you who were here last year will remember, we decided to do so, and two evangelists were stationed in the town. The superintendent evangelist had worked on with us for years, not only in harmony but in what seemed tender affection, and with many assurances that this harmony was never to be broken, suddenly came to a dead stop, and forwarded us a letter to the effect that not only had he for ever separated himself from the Mission, but that there was and would be henceforth no Christian Mission in the town of Leicester. When this statement was made known to the meeting of evangelists and delegates held in January, many of you will remember how the members of that meeting arose up as one man and said, "But there is, and for ever and ever there shall be, a Christian Mission in Leicester." That meeting recommended that Brother Corbridge be sent to Leicester to help, Brother Russell to continue and carry forward the work in that town.

I say to help Brother Russell, for we had, thank God! an evangelist in that town who had been faithful to his vows and to the purpose for which he had been sent and stationed there. And not Brother Russell alone, for there gathered with him in the open air a band of brave faithful people, who, under the blue heaven—under the black heaven I fancy it was, for it was in the evening—but who vowed, with or without a place to

cover their heads, they would have a Christian Mission in Leicester. God has smiled upon them. He has given them a house, of which we shall have something to say presently; He is making their enemies to minister unto them, and they boast that they have, then and now, as much earnest and successful labour as in any station in the Mission.

I now come, pursuing the same line of review, to our losses and gains in respect of MEN. Men are, and must be, of far more importance than places. The clothing is of trifling value compared with the man himself. Given a good, holy, well-trained evangelist, and send them where you will, and he or she, backed by the influence and assisted by the organisation of the Mission, will soon clothe themselves with buildings, audiences, and all that is necessary for the work of God. We will again begin with our

EVANGELISTIC LOSS,

for we have lost some evangelists. We are very sorry for this, but we need not be alarmed at it. It seems to me to be unavoidable; indeed, a necessity, nay, desirable that it should be so, that is, that we should be continually having losses in this direction. There will always be brethren who will develop unsuitability for the work, and who, acting on the principle that there is no place amongst us for unsuccessful men, must therefore separate from us.

Now I often say to brethren who apply to me for the position of evangelist, "A square hole must have a square peg to fit it, and it is necessary that you should discover whether you will fit the hole or for me to do so, because if you are a round peg it will be as much a matter of discomfort to you as to the hole, and there will be no comfort on either side until there is a separation." Assuming, then, that ours is a square hole, you will see that men will always be mistaking the hole. What, then, must a man be compelled to remain when he is conscious of unfitness? and, again, the hole will mistake the peg, and must we be compelled to keep the peg? I think not. Then there will be separation.

Again, there is another sort of difficulty: men change. The peg fits the hole at the outset; but the angles wear off. Men come to us and talk about being willing to take their coats off, carry boards, or do anything to save souls; but they change! They rub up against some Baptist or Primitive preachers, and get ministerial notions, or against some shopkeepers, and get proud and respectable, or against some doctrinal troubler of Israel, and make discoursers of new truths; at any rate, the devil is always rubbing at earnest men, and removing the sharp edges. And so, when the angles are gone, there is a feeling of a mutual misfit, and the brother moves off to a more congenial sphere. At this we don't fret, because we don't wish to retain men who have lost the spirit of the work. Another gone, somebody groans, "See what you are coming to!" but we say it is only a blessing in disguise. When the peg has ceased to fit the hole, the sooner it is out of it the better. Better an empty hole than a peg that does not fit.

We must constantly be losing men if the mission does not change. This would have been the case with Wesleyan Methodism if it had kept to its original principles. Of how many of its present ministers would it have to be said that they were unfit for it, if Mr. Wesley's standard of rule and labour were restored? But the whole thing is changed, and the whole character of the people, so that the concern still suits the men and the men the concern.

But we stand up to keep this Mission to its simplicity, to keep up the same feelings and desires as at the first.

If we do not change, and we do not, we must be losing people.

I can't tell you how it has torn my heart, how I have grieved and regretted losing people. But I have not regretted losing them under the circumstances. When they felt like saying, "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God," they were invaluable to us; but when they have become changed, we say to them, "We don't want you without your heart."

Let us just review the list of evangelists lost during the year.

JOHN WATTS was stationed at Stoke Newington by the last Conference. Before going there, however, he was seized with a violent cold, and was very ill, but after a time spent in his native air he recovered, got into the position of a hired local preacher amongst the Methodists, and is now, I am told, on the highway to the ministry.

J. TETLEY, who resigned soon after the last Conference, giving as the reason for so doing that he was not adapted for the work of the Mission, and was not strong enough to carry it out. He has returned to Burton and regained the position he relinquished when he came to us.

ABRAHAM LAMB retired from the work to become the "private evangelist" of a rich gentleman.

FRED. LEWINGTON'S resignation I very deeply regretted. It was his own act and deed, arising from family differences which it is impossible to relate here. I hope at some future time the way may open for him to come back. He was a raw bluntnavy when we took him; but by force of character, plod, and Mission spirit, he reduced the chaos he found at Limehouse to order, and instead of going into debt as they had been steadily doing for some time, he not only raised the necessary income to meet the current expenditure but paid off the accumulations of the past. If he could have gone on he would have made a very useful man.

GEORGE MACE retires from the work, but not from the Mission. For reasons which were satisfactory to us both he resolved to resign; but he will remain connected with one of our stations and give us all the help he can.

MARTHA ANDERSON died soon after she was taken into the work. While living she was one of our truest friends, loving God with all her heart and with a quiet fire burning in her soul. When she went to Croydon she was made a blessing to many; but an internal tumour or cancer immediately carried her off. She is the first evangelist who has actually died in harness, for Brother White, it will be remembered, had gone back to his employment previous to his death.

ELIZABETH AGNES POLLETT and ELLEN HALL have changed their names and their places of abode. I recommended them not to get married, but they did not take my advice. They are still with us and willing to do all they can to help us. They are not lost, and I suppose somebody says in each case they are found. They were good before their marriage, and they ought to be a great deal better after.

JANE WOODCOCK laboured with great devotion, and has only given up through ill-health; and even now she seems to be in some uncertainty whether she has done the right thing. She offers to preach on Sundays for us, and to help in every other possible way.

EVANGELISTIC GAINS.

And now, on the other hand, I am thankful to say we have a list of candidates to present to you which will, I think, be considered hopeful and encouraging in this direction. And with this list I want to connect a statement which is still further encouraging, and that is that while at former Conferences we have had almost invariably to complain of—our want of men to fill up vacancies, we have on this occasion not only sufficient to meet our present wants, but there is under our eye and growing up around us at our stations a still further list of able and promising candidates for future service. It has been often said we must grow our own stuff. (No disparagement to stuff grown elsewhere if it be of the right kind.) *We are doing this*; and I trust now the time is not far distant when we shall be able to act almost exclusively on this rule—to take no one, male or female, who has not either been converted in the Mission or trained in it. I don't say there should be no exception to this, but this most certainly should be the rule.

What we want is evangelists who prefer us and our system to all else. Whether they can be paid and prominent amongst us or not, they must, at least, if they have opportunity, choose our system for its own sake, whatever their position in it may be. A brother applied to me the other day at one of our country stations to be employed as an evangelist, and I said to him, after some conversation, "Now if your way had been open into the Primitive Methodist Ministry you would have gone, would you not?" He assented. "And although you knew the Christian Mission you would not have applied to us?" He said, "No!" Then I said, "You come to us, not because you prefer our peculiar organisation and measures, but because you can be a paid preacher, and therefore I can't recommend you. Your first work is to settle in your mind what people are most likely in your estimation to glorify God and save souls, and then join them, whether you can be big or little, paid or unpaid." From this class we must recruit in the future, and I rejoice to know they are multiplying amongst us.

I shall have to propose for your fraternal recognition during the present Conference the following brothers and sisters, who have either commenced work since our last meeting or who are ready to commence.

ELIJAH CADMAN, the converted sweep. He was a very bad sweep. You can imagine the rest, and what he is now I need not tell any of you. (Shouts of Glory!)

W. G. THOMAS, a converted comic singer, was recommended to us by a dear brother two or three years ago, but for some reason was passed over. His success during the past six months at Hartlepool gives blessed promise for the future.

JOHN ROBERTS was trained amongst us at Portsmouth, and has shown at North Ormesby his fitness for the work.

MARY MELINDA GODDARD was converted, in the Mission, in the old Gaff at Limehouse, as was also

WILLIAM BENNETT, and they are converted now. If Brother Bennett was here he would shout Amen. (Brother Bennett jumped up at the back and shouted.)

JAMES PARGETER, the converted publican and dog trainer, a spiritual child of Brother Thomas's, seems to have the make of a good man in him.

JOSEPH HURRELL, commonly called Happy Joe, was converted in the Mission at Middlesbro' two years ago.

GEORGE REED has laboured for some time amongst our people at Soho. His heart is on fire for the work, and he is making a considerable sacrifice to enter on it at once. He has been tried and proved.

JOHN TRENHAIL was a worker with us some time ago at Stoke Newington. He offers himself to us again—I believe with all his heart and with every prospect of being useful.

ALBING TOFT made himself at home amongst our people at Middlesbro' as soon as he met with them, and although somewhat eccentric, is willing to learn and likely to make something out worth reckoning upon.

JAMES ROBINSON comes to us from the North of England. We have heard him and passed him. May he be made a great blessing!

RODNEY SMITH, the son of our gipsy friend Cornelius. You well know his father and his uncles. He is young but willing, and if he is industrious and humble, and strives to learn, I have no doubt he will make a godly, useful evangelist.

(Since the address Brother WATTS, a child of the Mission, who has long laboured with all his heart at Chatham, was added to this list, and for completeness we insert his name here.)

My eldest daughter, who is here with us, graciously restored to a good measure of health and strength, purposes to give herself up to labour in the Mission, and I trust that by next Conference we shall have another son ready for the work. I think you must all see that the entering of our children into this enterprise is no small token of our confidence in the future and of our willingness to lay aside earthly ambitions and positions in order to promote its extension and success. I believe I can say for my dear wife as for myself that we have no greater joy than to see our children devote themselves to the redemption and salvation of the masses. May God accept all the nine for this service! I believe He will.

I now turn to inquire what

NEW HALL ACCOMMODATION

has been acquired during the year. Now, supposing that I came to tell you that during the year we had built halls that would seat 8,000 people, and that in doing this we had spent some £20,000, what a great deal some people would think we had accomplished! But we are able to say that we have provided just that sitting accommodation, and done it, too, as I am prepared to show, in a manner far more favourable to the maintenance of spiritual power than if we had, by dint of hard labour, put up so many separate and consecrated buildings.

But it will be said, "You have to pay rent." Just so, but that amounts to less—anyway, not more—than the interest we should in all probability have had to pay on borrowed money; whereas, had we attempted so great a building scheme, it would have broken your spiritual backs by taking you off from spiritual work to serve tables. We should have had to harrow and haunt the few friends we have for money, and some of you would have fallen before the temptation to condescend to bazaars, concerts, entertainments, and a heap of other worldliness and foolery to get even the £10,000 that would have been required, supposing you had borrowed £10,000 more; whereas the amount

we should have had to pay in interest paid in *rent* procures for us the same accommodation, and that in buildings better adapted for our purpose than any we could build.

There are just three conditions of a building well adapted for our use.

1. It must hold a lot of people.
2. It must stand in a public situation, not in a back street, "up here and down there, and then turn to the right."
3. It must not be repulsive but attractive, especially to the common people, because we are not all such great popular preachers as some of you, whom Brother Railton calls "the giants."

Theatres and music-halls have these conditions:—

- 1st. They are big enough.
- 2nd. As to publicity. Everybody knows where the "Foresters," and the "Pavilion," and the "Theatre Royal" are. No building you can put up can ever hope to be so well known to the outlying crowds.
- 3rd. These buildings are attractive. The man who has been seeing a blue murder in a theatre on Saturday night is very likely to say, "There's a prize-fighter on preaching there to-morrow. I'll go and hear him;" whereas you would have to pull and push to get him into a chapel.

Now you are all converted to my view, I see, or at any rate you will be, for we shall all come to it. We can get these places cheaply without having heavy debts and lots of money to get. But some of my brethren say, "Oh, but the raising of so much money weekly is such a burden." Well, when the money is wanted it will be forthcoming.

At Stoke Newington, where they have had no evangelist all this year, the people said to me, "If you will send us a preacher we will pay him." Miss Woodcock, after her retirement from the work, volunteered to preach for them; and she can talk, as what woman indeed can't if you will only give her the chance. But how much class-money do you think they got last week? Threepence! And why? Because the money was not wanted. If there had been £1 to pay to an evangelist they would soon have made up 16s. or 17s. out of it. And if you can say to the people "This theatre has to be paid for," down goes the money at once.

How often have I heard people say, "If we could only get a new chapel we should get on." But they have got the new chapel, and have become deader than ever, besides having a debt to grapple with.

And then I have heard them say, "Oh, if we could only get the debt off!" But they have got the debt off, and then they have not had even a collection to liven them up, and they have sunk to a lower depth still.

No, my friends, we are on the right track in this matter, and we will stick to it. There is an old adage that "fools build and wise men buy." Now it seems to me that all over this kingdom, in the most central and public positions, there are large buildings which, though they may have been built by foolish people and for foolish purposes, yet themselves are well adapted for our holy and benevolent purposes; these all cry out to us, "Enter and occupy for the Master and for the souls of the people."

This year we have got a theatre at Bradford, a theatre at Hartlepool, an old theatre at Stockton for our week-night services—an admirable place, fitted up rather too chapelified; but we must not complain, as much of it is the outcome of our friend Mr. Ward's loving heart. Some £70 or £80 have been spent on this.

We have built a hall at Hammersmith which has cost us some £550. It is a very comfortable place.

Then there is the room taken and fitted up at St. Leonards.

At LEICESTER Bros. Corbridge and Russell have spent £100 in fitting up the Salvation Warehouse, with a good deal of scheming and patching, and there were over a thousand people in it last Sunday I am told.

But I trust we shall have a more considerable extension to report if spared to meet you another year.

LIMEHOUSE. It will be remembered that we were requested by the Conference last year to assist our friends in their endeavours to secure a new hall here. The place we now occupy has been in our occupation some eight or nine years—in fact ever since it was a Penny Gaff. Beautiful for situation was Jerusalem of old, and for *our work* beautiful for situation is our Limehouse Hall, in one of the chief thoroughfares of this great city, and right opposite the gates of a parish church. The property has just passed into fresh hands, who in the first instance asked £50 rent with twenty-one years' lease, and to put the place in substantial repair. But since then I have had a communication from a gentleman who is a trustee for the property, and who in consideration of the good work we are doing has succeeded in gaining from our immediate landlord a reduction to £25 rent, while he himself offers £50 to make the repairs. Some time ago a lady offered £50, which, together with £80 the friends have in hand, makes £180 towards the alterations. I do not think I have anything further to say about buildings.

NEW PLAN OF CONFERENCE.

I have looked forward to the present Conference with unusual interest, because we have to a great extent abandoned the plans of previous gatherings. Much dissatisfaction had been felt and in many instances expressed at the controversial aspect it assumed, so large a portion of time being consumed in discussion on comparatively trifling matters, while the mightier and practical questions, which intimately concern the work of God and the souls of our people, were left partially neglected. It became evident to me that we were drifting in a wrong direction. I confess I have been much to blame in this matter. Under the idea that teaching my brethren management and law-making would increase their sense of responsibility and unite us more fully together, I launched the Conference on a sea of legislation which all came to nothing. It was no help to me, and it came to nothing with others. If anything was done that did not satisfy any one, whether evangelists or societies, they invariably blamed *me* and insisted on the exercise of my power to alter it. And yet here we were, with new men coming in thick and fast, leaving the most essential principles and practices to be mangled about and decided by mere majorities.

Seeing all this we asked, What shall we do? There seemed only one course—to return to our practice at our earliest gatherings. Most of you were present at the Conference held in January, when I frankly and fully expressed the feeling of my heart and my intentions as to the future, and my explanations appeared to be as frankly and cordially received. I recalled the fact that at the first I had associated brethren with myself upon the distinct understanding that they should labour under my superintendence. This was the full understanding. No one asked then,

as no one asks now, or expects anything else than this—each man to manage his station according to our wishes, and falling back upon us for council and direction as may be needed. All who come into the work now understand this. They come to me and say "Let me work" with the fullest understanding that I should direct them. And in this understanding, which is thus both "Ancient and Modern," we shall work in the future.

THE WORK OF CONFERENCE.

But it will be asked, perhaps, What, then, is the advantage of a Conference? Much, I answer, every way. What is the good of a council of war? The commander-in-chief calls the principal officers around him to receive information and counsel from all. Each brings his facts and expresses his judgment as to what is necessary and important to do, and then in view of all this he resolves upon a programme of operation. This is our council of war. We are here to consider practical questions and how we can best deal with them. To receive reinforcements and re-station our army, and above all we are here to help each other's souls, to cry together to the living God for the rebaptism of the Holy Ghost.

Now how does this altered plan affect the present Conference?

We thereby give up the Conference Committee. It seems almost useless to go into the reasons fully, but I may point out one or two. It seemed impossible to get a truly *representative* committee. Some of our oldest and most experienced brethren go into the country perhaps three hundred miles away. London is and must continue to be largely a training school, many of the stations being occupied by raw and new preachers, so that the men who could usefully advise us and to whom we could safely confide our secrets are not there as a rule.

If you are in any trouble you don't want to go to a committee. You come to me and say, "I want to see you alone." If any great question involving the happiness of us all were to arise, the only plan would be, it seems to me, to call together the most experienced of our brethren, and if need be all the others; but for all ordinary purposes it seems by far the simplest way, the only mutually satisfactory plan, for me to deal with the brethren personally and when possible face to face. Then a committee is far too slow for us! A brother writes, "I can have such and such a place for so much a week, and the man wants an answer immediately. What shall I say? Please send us a telegram." There is no time to call any committee together. We have to act at once. Fancy the Russians having a committee to carry on their war!

No superintendent is hampered with a committee at his station, and why should I be hampered with one? If I am to be, I shall see that you each have one to deal with as well!

This is a question of confidence as between you and me, and if you can't trust me it is no use for us to attempt to work together. *Confidence in God and in me are absolutely indispensable both now and ever afterwards.*

I shall present to you, as I have already intimated, for your acceptance a list of brethren to be received as evangelists on trial. Any name may be challenged and any question asked about any brother or sister, either in public or private. But the ordinary and old-fashioned discussions seem to have been not only useless but injurious. Hearts have been cut to the quick by remarks made and questions asked in past years, and even

resignations which none of you have known about have been handed up to me, which resignations I have had to persuade brethren to withdraw while Conference has been proceeding. If brethren have been heard and approved by those who have had such opportunity of testing, what possible gain can there be here if canvassed by those who are strangers except by hearsay? Still, I repeat we shall be glad for any inquiry to be made, or any question put. Then as to the appointments, I propose to make the list of stations myself. You all must and do feel that you have more reason to have more confidence in me than in any committee that you can select—that no committee can have the knowledge of the capacity of the brethren and the wants of the stations that I possess. Consequently I undertake this task. Then I shall be glad to hear from any evangelist or delegate any feeling or wish they may have on the subject. They are the happiest who have no wish but to see the work of God prosper, and to have such arrangements made concerning themselves as seem most likely to forward such prosperity; but I shall be pleased to make any arrangement I can to meet any such wish or feeling. That is to say, if two men are equally eligible to fill the same station I should naturally prefer to send the man who was preferred by the place. I am pleased to find that so far as I have inquired as yet as to the preference of my brethren, I have simply got the answer that they prefer to leave the choice to me. I trust we shall be guided by the wisdom which cometh from above.

As to any business which any brother wishes to bring before the Conference, I shall be glad if they will furnish me in the first instance with the particulars of the same.

There are several topics named on the circular of business as subjects for the consideration of the Conference, which I fear we shall not find time to consider. I will, therefore, make a remark or two upon them before I sit down; and, first, there is the question of

BIBLE-CLASSES AND SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

Now I want to say that we heartily appreciate Sunday-schools in the abstract—that it is useful, it is good, to get children *converted* and *train them for God*, but I utterly deny that it is any part of our work to teach children *to read*. Our business is simply to get them converted, and train them for God and usefulness in the same direction as we take with adults.

But we have not as yet any real plan to propose for dealing with the children. So far as our experience of Sunday-schools has gone, they have been an injury to the Mission wherever they have existed. There are only three left, I believe, and, with regard to these, we have no present intention of doing anything.

But it must be distinctly understood that no new school must be commenced—in fact, no new plan of any kind must be adopted anywhere without my consent.

Then as to Bible-classes. We all agree that they are admissible when rightly conducted. But so far as our experience of them has gone they have meant dissension and division. They need to be conducted by right men, and it seems we can't find the right men for them.

As to

THE TEMPERANCE QUESTION.

we shall have no time for deliberation, and our opinions upon the question, as it affects our societies, differ. Let us wait till we can arrive at

something with unanimity: until we have made up our minds to some definite plan it will be useless to talk. But in the meantime let us *make all our people abstainers*, and then jump on all temperance-meetings without God in them. We will have no song-singing or recitations. I cannot express my disgust at any entertainment of that sort. We will have no more mere teetotalism. We will have godly meetings, and we will teach all our people never to drink or touch the stuff for Christ's sake.

We must also more determinately than ever deal with

THE QUESTION OF DRESS.

Some time ago, when supping, with a few evangelistic friends, with the Earl of Shaftesbury, his lordship said to us that, in going over a London prison, the chaplain had remarked the rapid increase of female prisoners, especially young people. And in reply to a question from the earl as to the reason, the chaplain said he attributed it to three causes—drink, trashy literature, and flashy dress. He said any one would be surprised to see the tawdry feathers, and flounces, and flowers decked out in which prisoners came in, and to gain which they had doubtless been tempted to commit crime. Nothing can be more influential on this important question than the *example of evangelists' wives*. Our young men, I suppose, will have wives, but I say to you if you meet with young women wearing showy dress don't look at them, and if you are now engaged to somebody you met by moonlight alone long ago, before you saw the Christian Mission, make a bargain before you marry them that they shall dress neatly and scripturally, as becometh godliness, and so appear as fit helpmates for men who preach the gospel of Christ.

There is another question I don't think we shall be able to consider as intended—that of adopting some plan by which we could more readily recognise our most devoted and reliable people. When I go to a society I always feel I want to see who are its backbone. I would like to meet them alone, and have a cup of tea with them. I would like them round me when I preach; the thorough people—but it is very difficult without offence to divide them from the others. Otherwise I should very much like to see a distinction made between efficient and non-efficient, between regulars and irregulars, if it could be done without anything like the old preachers' plans or lists of exhorters, but at present I have no definite plan to propose likely to accomplish this. I do, however, commend it to your consideration.

I may remark here that we find our arrangement for brethren to come to London on the Monday instead of the Saturday as formerly—the Conference commencing its sittings on the Monday morning has not answered our expectation nor met with the unanimous approval of our brethren. They prefer the old plan, and so do we, and we will act upon it in the future.

We shall find out other things as we go on, which will perhaps be worthy of earnest thought and prayer, though we can say nothing definite about them yet.

I rejoice to see signs of "an abundance of rain" in our meetings already. THIS IS OUR GREAT WANT—A MIGHTY BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST. Another Pentecost! In my early ministerial life it was my lot to take part in several conferences, and I observed that invariably at

least three-fourths of the talking was done by a mere handful of men, and that on a small circle of dry financial secular business, leaving comparatively untouched the great questions which touched the vitals of church power and prosperity. And who composed this band? who claimed and gained this monopoly of talk—the soul-savers, the sanctified Holy Ghost men? No, the dried-up theoretical legislators, whose chief work was to look after everybody's rights, but especially their own. The Holy Ghost men could scarcely get a hearing, and some seldom attempted it. They were out of sympathy with the whole affair.

Now I want the holiest and most devoted men and women to come to the front. They have a right to speak. They have something to say. I want them round me, and then we will cry together to the living God, and He will give us a gloriously successful Conference.

LETTER FROM MRS. BOOTH.

THE following letter from Mrs. Booth to the Conference came, unfortunately, too late to be read during its sitting. We print it, however, assured that the brethren for whom it was intended will read it with pleasure:—

TREDEGARVILLE, CARDIFF.

MY DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS IN THE LORD,—I cannot express how deeply I feel my forced absence from your assemblies on this most interesting and joyous occasion: but seeing that the hand of the Lord is still upon me, I bow to His will, and I trust that whatever His purpose may be concerning me I may be better fit to fulfil it in consequence of this affliction. Pray for me that the "end of the Lord" may be fully realised. In the meantime, I congratulate you on the favourable auspices under which you are assembled together; and I most fervently pray that the blessed Holy Spirit may preside over all your deliberations for the furtherance of His kingdom and the glory of His name.

If I might send a word of counsel as well as of greeting, I would say, In all your projects, measures, and purposes be thorough in your rejection of mere worldly wisdom, fleshly policy, and Pharisaic routine. Cast off all the bonds of prejudice and custom, and let the love of Christ which is in you have free course, to run out in all conceivable schemes and methods of labour for the souls of men. Let your sympathies go *out—out—out*—unrestrained, free as the air, fresh as the dew, and all encircling as the light of the sun. Acknowledge no bounds, no limits to your obligations and responsibilities, but those of capacity and opportunity. The longer I live, and the more I reflect on the operations of the Divine Spirit, the more I am convinced that we are in no sense "straitened in Him," but that whatever measures are needful for the salvation of men, it is His will that we should adopt them, and His pleasure to succeed us in them. May the love of Christ constrain and the wisdom of Christ direct you to "become ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN" to a greater degree than ever in the past. I am yours in the gospel, though in bonds,

CATHERINE BOOTH.

HALLELUJAH BANDS.

AN ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT.

WE all know how difficult it is to free ourselves from the influences of early training and of kindred associations. What we learnt and heard and felt in the childhood of our religious history, and what we hear and see every day in the activities and utterances of the religious organisations around us, cleave to us, often fettering and crippling us. We especially want to cut loose from all mere traditional usages and maxims. We must get rid of the idea that we should do a thing because other people—churches, chapels, missions, or anybody else—do it, or because we have done it in the past. These remarks will, perhaps, be necessary to clear our way on this subject.

I do not know where the name "Hallelujah Band" came from. All I know is, it is there, and it has come to signify a certain sort of service different to the usual proper orthodox order of "divine worship." We all know what that is like. First a hymn, then a prayer, then another hymn, then a chapter, and sing again, then preach, another hymn, the benediction, home to dinner, then a nap, and, if you have eaten too much, you will not feel well enough for the open air or afternoon meeting of any kind. Now the hallelujah band stands out in contradistinction to all this; it is the very opposite to what I call the dry, desolate, stilted, one-man system. It begins with a big platform crowded with the holiest and liveliest people you have, with a sort of chairman who mostly stands and selects the most effective speakers around him, who deliver addresses from five to fifteen minutes' duration, interspersing all with earnest prayers and enthusiastic songs, bringing all to a close with a prayer-meeting and a penitent form.

With the origin of this movement I think I had something to do. Many years ago I and my dear wife were holding a series of special services at Walsall. We had a measure of success, but, anxious more effectually to move the crowd, we got together what I fancy was the first hallelujah band—at least, it was the first I ever heard of. There was Jim and John Dupe, Thomas Whitehouse, George and William Mee, Jim Cleaver, the Birmingham rough, and other worthies of the same character, all of whom became celebrities in the great movement that followed. We held a camp-meeting, and had processions and meetings throughout the day, and a wonderful day it was. Directly after this much the same set of brethren held meetings in Bilston, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Bromwich, and all through the Black Country, spreading in the north to Sheffield and in the south to Leicester and Northampton.

This was the most wonderful converting movement that has taken place within my knowledge and memory. I never had an opportunity of taking part in it, but from the accounts given me by those who did, and on whose statements I could rely, no work so spontaneous, so overwhelmingly successful, has transpired among the common people of the country during this century. The worst of characters were affected and saved in it. Drunkards, adulterers, blasphemers, thieves, fighting men—nay, the lowest and vilest, were laid hold of, and that in great numbers. It was the common people's movement in every respect. They were not

troubled with any scruples about vulgarity. Preachers and people were all on the same level so far as education and refinement went. The only difference in them was that which grace had made, and in most instances that distinction had been made very recently.

Imagine a theatre packed with people, the stage crowded with earnest, enthusiastic people. In the front rank and second rank too are the principals of the movement. All have taken off their coats, and if the place be at all warm, collars and neckties too. All have red shirts; and if there is a woman or two amongst them, as was no unusual thing, she wears a red Garibaldi. A hymn is given out, and a well-known tune with a swing in it is pitched, and away they go. Soon the platform is all on fire, and the audience catches the flame. Over and over and over the verse goes, till everybody sees the fountain, and feels the power. Then follow prayers and addresses all in keeping with this start. It was no uncommon thing to see thousands of the worst wretches of a country side listening and looking on with open eyes and mouths, and falling like bullocks under the power of God. And this went on night after night for months.

But, alas! the movement came to an untimely end. Why? I can only give one answer. There was no organisation, no discipline, no management. The leaders quarrelled about money, as to who should be greatest, and about things in general. First one and then another band went to pieces. Others struggled on for a long time after they had lost the power and glory of earlier days. I believe there are several societies initiated by the movement still in existence—some lively and useful ones, too, as in Derby, when George Mee fills the Temperance Hall every Sunday evening; but in the main the movement is dead. Can we not gather some lessons both from its success and its failure? This is a question worth consideration. Brother Corbridge has had some considerable experience, and may help us in the inquiry. To me there appears—

I. SOME THINGS NECESSARY TO AN EFFECTIVE HALLELUJAH BAND. And, first, you must have a GOOD LEADER. This necessity is absolute. I will name some qualifications. If you cannot find men with them all, take such as come the nearest. If you want to lead bands effectually, yourselves cultivate them. They are all within your reach.

He MUST BE ABLE TO SING anything and everything, have it ready, go off any moment; if he can't he must have a man always at his right hand who can.

He must have QUICK, able to judge where a meeting is, and what will lift it when down, or prevent it running away when up and ready, ever with just the measure that is wanted. He should be full of SPIRITUAL SYMPATHY—flowing out in every direction to both speakers and hearers.

He should be ON FIRE WITH ZEAL, inspiring all about him, and making them battle for victory in spite of themselves.

He must have COURAGE to adopt the measures, sing the songs, and call on the speakers whom he believes will be likely to break or mend something, whether people are pleased or offended; and with a rarer species of courage still, that can stop a speaker, gentle or simple, when time is up, or when off on a ramble of no use either to God or man.

He should have a DETERMINED AIM, to make every exercise bear and bend in the one direction of *salvation for somebody then and there*. And he must be dauntless in this direction. Devils and men and weak-kneed

saints are always in every meeting trying to take us off from what should be the issue of a service, and from the steady persistent use of the measures to attain it. They are always wanting us to go off after their hobbies. Sing some favourite song, or let some dear friend of theirs, "a local preacher" or "cousin from the country," hear a friend whom the devil knows will spoil the influence. Now you want a leader who goes straight forward, and will not turn to the right or the left. Such a man will drive the team and get somewhere worth coming to, even if he crack the axle and half kills the passengers with fright. Now there's your leader. Such a man will soon make a band worth having out of the rawest material you can put in his hands.

II. You must have HALLELUJAH PEOPLE, men and women full of the fire of the Holy Ghost, willing to be led and moulded, to sit still or rise up, who can pray and sing and believe, and pull heaven down on a congregation, and who can talk and say something when they do talk.

We have recently had some very remarkable services after this kind at Whitechapel, and we felt keenly the want of people trained to this sort of speaking. When a man has only five minutes it is folly to begin with apologies. He should dash right into his subject. Have a fact or an illustration, or point of some kind ready to begin with, and *go on*, and *go through with it*. Now we must be at a little trouble to train our people. It is much if not altogether a question of training. I remember reading that somewhere in the islands of the South Sea there are the descendants of some mutineers who landed and established a colony there. And this people, it was said, were most wonderful swimmers. They could do in the water what no other known people could—dive and float and roll about, apparently as much at home in the water as a porpoise or a dolphin. This proficiency, it appears, was attained by being trained to it. When quite children, their parents made a custom of throwing them into the water, not very deep, of course, to commence with, and they would flounder about at first, and come out laughing and crying and puffing, with mouths and nostrils full of water; but they only coaxed and cheered them up a bit and then threw them in again, and by this process persevered in they made them the most perfect swimmers in the world.

And so, my brethren, there are new converts all around us who may be trained to talk, and to talk effectively, if we begin with them young enough. Throw them into the water. Never mind how they stammer and palpitate. Never mind what mistakes they make at the beginning; if they can only stand and cry, they will do good, and, what is of more importance, get the habit and faculty of talking effectively to any number of people.

III. Then you must have UNITY OF AIM on the part of all the speakers. All must be in for the same thing. And

IV. You must be careful to DRAW THE NET at the close—aye, or in the middle, if you feel you have got fish in it. This is a question mainly for the leader. But it is an operation in which all should be interested, and in which all should unite. Now there are many advantages, evidently, about the hallelujah band plan. It affords abundant opportunity for training preachers. It is very favourable to the converting work—you can drop down on a prayer-meeting so easily and naturally any moment. It affords scope for all kinds of gifts. You need not be afraid of

spoiling a meeting by letting a brother have a try, because even if he do not go right those that follow are almost sure to bring the meeting back, and, after all, there are very few who cannot talk for, say, five minutes. I heard a new convert speak in a band at Whitechapel the other day, and produce an effect quite different to what others had done at the time. He told us how he had been persecuted by his fellow-workmen, who really seem to have been an exceptionally drunken, blasphemous lot, how one of them had tried his utmost to get him out of temper, that he had hammered him with his fists, but, finding this did not succeed, he struck him with a hammer, and that so violently that he had been compelled to go to the London Hospital for medical treatment. "Now," said the man, "before I was converted I had '*the use of my hands*,' and I would as soon knock a man down as look at him, and that man knows that six weeks ago I should have half-killed him, but now I feel nothing but love and pity for him." That bit of talk had, I say, a wonderful effect. We want less of self and more of the spirit of God.

Again, on this plan you can make sure of what, to the common people, will be INTERESTING MEETINGS. There is nothing that the people so stumble at and are so indisposed to listen to as a stiff formal discourse. What a change comes over people, preachers especially, the moment they enter a religious place! They will be perfectly natural and free outside, but directly they get inside the doors of "the house of God," as they call it, their blood seems to congeal, their hair goes straight down, and they become stiff and cold and formal. They dare not say "Shut that window," or "Open that door;" and as to inviting the people to come and sit closely round them, that would be a familiarity altogether beyond them. I am not speaking of dead carnal people, but of that strange freezing constraint which comes over all of us more or less.

Sometimes when we get into the prayer-meeting, after having had a stiff hard time of it all through the service, we suddenly get into liberty and then we say, "Oh that we had only felt like this an hour ago, why did I not say I can't get on with this text, I will try another," or tear up my notes, as Brother Clare says he did, and begin to sing. But is there any wonder people don't feel free, tied up as they are to a set form of service? I have heard a brother begin with a long hymn, and then go into a long prayer, and then another long hymn, and then a chapter, without note or comment, and then another long hymn to a *proper* tune, all cold as Greenland. He feels it and hates himself for it, but does not seem able to get out of the rut. But upon the hallelujah band system, surrounded by a host of holy praying men and women, you can sing a bit, and pray a bit, and let other people sing and go off like rockets, and you can carefully and regularly put some intelligence in here and there along with it all. And so you have every possibility and probability of being able to make, apart from its usefulness, a really interesting service.

At the same time, about this method I see SOME REALLY SERIOUS DANGERS. There is a danger of making people lazy. An evangelist may reflect, "I have no sermon to make. I will have so many for five minutes each. I can easily talk for five or ten minutes myself on the hymn, or on any matter that comes up. I need not read or pray or study. I will go and see my friends, or find somebody to amuse myself with." Now of course

it need not be so. To the man to whom the preparation of his two or three sermons is an intolerable burden, who goes about crying to God to give him something to say, and cannot visit or cheer up on account of it, this method may come as a welcome and useful boon. He may say I will visit every member in the concern this week. I will do extra open air, and I will hunt up facts and points for my short addresses into the bargain. There is a danger of making only SHALLOW PEOPLE. But this need not be the case if we go in for doing the thing well. Why should we give up *all* preaching for instance. Why not preach on a Sabbath morning when we have a band at night. Even if we are shut up to twenty minutes, much matter can be crammed into that time. No! you must not give up your preaching. You must not cease to think and study and collect matter adapted to move and save the people. But you may do with your sermons as I do sometimes with my children when I give them oranges, that is, divide them into quarters which saves my pocket and does not make them sick.

I have, however, for many years been convinced that with this system we might go through the land. Mr. Whitehouse, who had more to do with the bands when in their glory than any other man, sent me a letter the other day. He said that when he carried on the hallelujah band work he had little or no grip upon the people, and therefore did not carry the movement through. "You," he said, "have money and friends, and men, and if you will go in the land may be shaken." I feel constrained, my brethren, to do my utmost in this direction, and I rely on you to help me.

WILLIAM CORBRIDGE: When I went to Leicester, I announced myself as the "real old hallelujah man." I am in for hallelujah bands while I live, and shall join the hallelujah band when I get to heaven. I am glad Mr. Booth has explained a little about their origin. As to the name, I feel as though I should prefer "Salvation Bands" myself; but if the other name belongs to us, let us keep it by all means. There are many advantages in it. When they were first commenced in Leicester, they met on Coal Hill at six o'clock, and the people expected to see a brass band. All the rowdies and roughs in the town came together. It was the same with the split-offs in Kettering, Loughborough, Market Harborough, and Hinckley—all waited to see what sort of people would come, and they were thus laid hold of at the beginning.

Some of my happiest days were spent with the original hallelujah bands. Our delegate, Brother Walters, was saved in that movement, and I could point to some of the best men in Leicester to-day, enrolled on the books of various churches, who were converted in connection with it. In fact there is not a society, church, or chapel in the town, I

believe, which has not got some of the converts on its rolls.

The movement was a loose one, and this caused its failure. I don't believe in being chained up; but I don't believe in being too loose either. I should have been with the hallelujah band people now but for their looseness. They offered me more money to go to them than the Mission gives, but I would have nothing to do with them, because I believed they were like a rope of sand for want of organisation. I refused the Methodist rope because it was too short and too tight. I refused the hallelujah band rope because it was too loose. Now, in the Mission we have both *law and liberty*.

Some of the best of the hallelujah band men met with temptation. Men laid hold of them in connection with the churches, and drew them aside from their own proper path. In their own line they succeeded, but in a Baptist pulpit they failed. If you take a man out of warm weather into a frost, he must soon stiffen, freeze, and shrivel. When hallelujah band men were enticed away to stiff pulpits, which Mr. Booth once called "coffins cut in halves," they lost all their power.

Others saw a nice opportunity for

establishing something on their own responsibility. Now, at the beginning, in Leicester, our offerings would be as high as £20 per Sunday sometimes. They would give a man as much as £2 2s. to come from London and speak for ten minutes. Mr. Whitehouse lived a long way off, so formed committees to arrange, and they would lay hold of a shoe-hand, a prize-fighter, a clown, a cheap-jack, and carry on the services; but some men started the same sort of thing in their own hands, and did what they liked with the money. Consequently they made the movement stink.

When I went to Leicester, some people said to me, "The hallelujah band stinks throughout the town!" "Then," I replied, "I'll stir the stink up!" Anything honest and straightforward won't stink. It will not only smell nice to humanity, but it will go up to heaven, like Noah's sacrifice, a sweet-smelling savour in the nostrils of God himself.

I believe in *short speaking* instead of preaching. We go in for variety in the open-air—variety every way. And you have it every way in a hallelujah band. You have solos, fiddles, banjos, even ministers, if you like, only with the opportunity to pull their coats at five minutes' end.

We want trained people. I don't know of any other way of training people. I don't know of any other way of drawing out young converts. It brings them out in an humble way. They can tell their neighbours and friends what God has done for them, and it finds a way to the hearts of all the people.

If you don't like variety, stick to potatoes for twelve months! "I think it strange that your people don't want to go somewhere else sometimes to get some food," a gentleman said to me at our warehouse door, in Leicester, one day. "Sir," I replied, "if you ask our people as they leave the warehouse, nine out of ten will tell you they came here for food because they didn't get it elsewhere. They had one thing so long that they got sick of it. The people like to hear men who can pull off their coats and their collars, and waistcoats, too, if you like. It's all strange."

Of late we have tried experience meetings in the open-air, and it has worked so well that we have tried it inside too, and it has laid hold of the people's hearts, though we have only

allowed half-minute speeches. Change is a good thing. I believe in preaching a sermon sometimes, but not one of the ordinary style. Deal out the medicine in nice doses, and let there be mixture all the way through—not one thing continually. A man gets into a pulpit and takes a text, and has firstly, secondly, and thirdly, with divisions and sub-divisions, and splits it up in such a way. I once heard it said that some preachers had as many as nineteen heads to one sermon, and if it had as many legs they would have run away, and unless it had as many tails for people to catch at nobody would ever have stopped it, and it would never have been heard of any more.

Only fancy having to live on sheeps' heads for a month! jawbones, cheek, and tongue! You would soon say, "Let's have a steak." It is not enough to watch and listen to relish spiritual food. It must be mixed. An open-air sermon needs to be, like the articles in our magazine, paragraphed. It must not be like a string, or else a knife would be required to cut it off in the middle. A man comes up who has only two minutes and a half to stop; but he stays and hears an anecdote through, before his two minutes and a half are gone. Then another man comes up just as you have commenced another. But if it were all a discourse, a man would be likely to ask, "Where are we now?" and then pass on, thinking we are all off the line, in a fog, or all wool-gathering together.

Either go in for *short speaking*, or if you preach for *short stuff* full of steam. There are plenty of flowers growing around us, let us pluck and use them.

Something was said just now as to whether the "hallelujah band" system succeeded. I never saw so much success with any other system. I have seen 150 and 200 penitents all down at the same time. Policemen in their bright buttons and soldiers in their uniform, gentlemen in broad cloth and men in fustian, butchers and blackguards, cheap-jacks, clowns, ladies in silks, and Marys in stuffs altogether crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And God saved them all over, filled and flooded them, as people don't often get filled and flooded.

I know there are many risks and temptations connected with Hallelujah Bands. Men who don't care for anything or anybody will get up to speak. But you can pull their coats. If the

fire is not making a blaze, you always put a poker into it.

It is a great advantage to a man to have a staff around him, praying God down upon the people while he is speaking. It is much easier to preach surrounded by a lot of men full of God than before a lot of critics waiting to find fault, and when a hallelujah band is made up of praying people, who have prayed before they came, and go back to their closets afterwards, God hears their cry and uses them.

There is a temptation to people to be lazy, I admit—to save themselves instead of preaching. But then, for my part, I give the same measure to the people as if I preached; only I give it to them in quarters and bits. There's quite as much, only split up. Instead of having to deliver two long sermons, I give eight hallelujah sermons, that is, just the two sermons quartered. We find four periods of five minutes better than twenty minutes all in a dose. To make all our people praying and preaching folk instead of making us lazy throws more work on our hands, and we need more strength to do it.

Again and again we have had as many as 200 people on Cole Hill at six in the morning, and a procession on the way to the Warehouse often passes through a mile or a mile and a half of streets. We find by this means we wake people up. Some of them are, no doubt, ready to give us a pail of water; but by the time they can get up to get the pail of water ready we have delivered our message, and gone on, leaving some, no doubt, cursing us and wishing us all dead and gone; but others get up and follow us. We know that people are sleeping on their way to the bottomless pit, and if we can sing them up at an early hour, and bring them to our Warehouse, we think it quite right, and we have had three or four saved before breakfast.

Let us consider our object. If it be soul-saving, let us adopt the plan that will save more. But if we want to exhibit ourselves as ministers, let us take an hour to show off in. Our object is soul-saving, therefore let us have all and everybody at it. Let all our people be praying and preaching men and women. Let us be a working church, and we shall be a winning church. If every bee goes out to collect honey the hive must soon be filled, and then all the drones can be stung out.

ELIJAH CADMAN: I have had an experience in connection with hallelujah bands which a number of you have not.

The committee of one of the original ones sent for me and I frequently took part in such bands until they were finally broken up. I kept longing and looking for something of the kind until I came into the Christian Mission and fell into the glory again.

I shall never forget the first time I went to Leicester for the hallelujah band. I was a rough stone then. The corners are not all gone yet, but I've been polished a deal since I came here. I was like a watch, with the cog-wheels and hands and dial plate all there and the glass in, but I needed finishing.

The first time I went to Leicester I had to go to stop at the house of a man they called Hedges, a hatter, and I got there about midnight in a drenching rain, soaked all over. It was a new house, and another brother and I were sent up into a splendid new room. There was a new feather bed, a deal higher than I had ever slept before, and a gas chandelier in the middle of the room. It was a place for gentlemen; I never felt I was one before then. The worst of it was there were nightgowns on the bed for us to put on. I had never been used to that, and I said to my mate, "What is this for?" "Oh," he said, "you've got to put it on." "That I shan't," I said. "I always did sleep in my own shirt, and I always shall." We daren't turn the gas out, and we never had any sleep all night. I had always been used to sleep on feathers as long as myself, and had often punched a hole with my fist to lay my ear in, and I couldn't sleep there—I wasn't at home. When we got up in the morning there was water and wash-handstand and towel, but we daren't wash there for fear of dirtying the water and the towels. "Come, let's get out of this," I said, but we daren't move till somebody came to us. Wern't we glad to get away to the seven o'clock prayer-meeting. Once there we were all right. On the platform at the hallelujah meetings we all used to wear red shirts, hang our coats up, and fire away for five or ten minutes, unless we went particularly well. They would never stop a man while he was carrying the people under fifteen minutes. We had a glorious time, multitudes crying for mercy, row after row. I couldn't understand all about the torpedoes and the

Turks, but no mistake the hallelujah bands put many a torpedo under the devil's kingdom and tumbled it about wonderfully. They got many a thousand out of the horrible pit.

They got the sort of men in their congregations I like to talk to—men in their shirt sleeves and smock frocks, men with hair upright like bristles. Those are the sort. By God's help I could die for them. God save more of them!

This is the system to evangelise the world:—variety, clowns, wrestlers, prize-fighters. One or another was sure to get something to suit the people. A sweep would be sure to be sweeping some sin away, and a fiddler to be fiddling some away; and what an influence there used to be!

When I went away from that hallelujah band I started one myself. There were ten of us, and we worked Rugby and all the villages round about. The Wesleyans said we were all going mad, and would get ourselves into trouble. At first they had lent us their chapels for services, but after a bit they would lend us nothing, and give usless. We went round or were hunted round where we could get in the open air.

I used to make the best of Saturday nights in the market-place, all of us standing on a stall. We always had plenty of business; but everybody else had none, and so they determined to shift us, and they knocked our stall over.

We used to get so many husbands out that the women began to be afraid of us. I have gone and called at a house and thrown my hat in for the sake of following it, and have had it thrown out again.

I remember the Northampton band. Had there been proper anchorage for it, that is, organisation, it would never have failed, and infidelity would not have been so rampant there. The Church of England would have been awakened to a sense of the danger, and the Church of God would have been all alive to carry out His will.

The ants seem to me to be a sort of hallelujah band, for they all go at it and make a hill that would break the neck of a giant if he were to stumble over it.

The announcement was, "War in Northampton!" They said the Life Guards were called out, and that the headquarters were coming there, and so

they were. The leader was the converted sweep, and amongst the band was a comic singer. I have been plodding on ever since. I had a hallelujah pony that I used to drive through town and country with. It understood stopping while I rang my bell and preached to the people, and then going on with policemen and people after us.

I came up to London, dropped into the porch at Whitechapel, and dropped into my element, for I was converted in the fire: I have had it ever since, and I want more of it.

They say I make a noise, but I tell them there will be a deal more in hell. Some say we get up a great commotion, but they keep kicking up a deal more row in the public-houses.

We heard the other day about square men not filling round holes, but a round man can always make himself fill up a square. When I used to be a fuddler I was a regular swill tub. I had a lot of luggage to carry, but I have been sweated down for God since then, and I can fit in anywhere.

Chimneys are mostly square, and I could always fill up the corners so that water would not run by me. I would have a shoulder in one corner, a heel in another, and a knee in another, till all the lot were filled. And for the glory of God a man can have his fit anywhere tightened. I was never afraid of tumbling down when I fitted tightly. And God can make a man fit tight either outdoors or in. Your words may sometimes seem to come upside down, but never mind; stick to the cross and you will be all right.

I remember, soon after my conversion, being in a Wesleyan chapel. I felt, "Oh, I shall burst if I don't pray!" So I cried, "Oh, Lord, you have struck many a straight stroke with a crooked stick. Oh, do it here, and do it now!" And so He did that night, for when I had done I found that while some of the respectable people had fled poor sinners were crying for mercy.

If we are faithful hallelujah men on earth we shall go and shout hallelujah in heaven for ever and ever!

ANNIE DAVIS: I have had some experience in the hallelujah band system. When I went to Bethnal Green I was determined to make my station a success. But it was a dreadful tug, and last Christmas I came to the office and begged to be sent somewhere else, for the people seemed to wish me away.

However, Mr. Booth sent me back and told me to go ahead.

After I heard of Brother Corbridge's success at Leicester I determined, by God's help, to make a little Leicester at Bethnal Green by working on the hallelujah band plan. In one respect it is like Leicester, but friends will remember that I have been working on old ground and in a neighbourhood where people are not quite so liberal. I began to have bands every night of the week, and succeeded by that means in getting the hall filled with people; whereas on preaching nights we used only to get a few. I believe in preaching: I was accepted as a preacher, and I aim at being one, and mean to be one. I don't believe in doing less preaching on account of this plan. I believe in giving and getting all I can, and in knowing as much as other people. I have tried preaching inside two or three evenings, and having bands other evenings. But I found I still did not get so many people as came to hear the bands. So I have gone in again for bands every night now, and for talking more outside myself, as I have to do less inside. So that I really give the public more than I did before.

I mean to have more of these bands. I shall work them both outside and in. We have had working men and women, railway-guards and militiamen, and all the roughs and rabble of the neighbourhood have come to hear them. So, whether I go back to Bethnal Green or wherever I go, I shall go on working the system.

I preach on Sunday, for I believe in feeding my people; but I find that hallelujah meetings feed them as well as unite them together.

I have tried set bands, but I didn't find them answer, because I found that the people came the night they were planned; but when they were not planned they stopped away, whereas when I simply announced hallelujah bands all the week they came every night, hoping for a turn.

I believe in putting up the young converts to speak the next night after their conversion, if they can only say "I'm converted!" We have had some of the most blessed testimonies I ever heard from our young people, not only as to God's power to save them but as to His power to keep them pure and unspotted in the midst of ungodly friends and work-mates. They have

been able to say, "I am thoroughly saved. The blood of Jesus cleanses me from all sin!"

I have ever so many who can tell either inside or outside what God has done for them. Our open-air demonstrations have succeeded in arousing the attention of the whole neighbourhood. I believe they have been made a blessing to thousands of perishing souls, and we have won some of them for Christ.

Some weeks since, while we were singing through the streets "Who'll be the next to follow Jesus?" a poor woman said, "Whoever is that young woman leading the people, the singing has melted and broken my heart? I'll be the next!" and she came with us to the hall and found Jesus. I think if we were to train our people inside instead of out it would be better. The masses are outside, and it is a mistake that anything will do; if you want to hold the people you must interest them. The congregations are more likely to give the young converts a hearing than the public are—I mean those who have an interest in the young convert, not those that would keep all their mouths shut. May God guide and help us all!

W. BRAMWELL BOOTH: I did not hear in the President's address, nor have I heard in the speeches which have since been delivered here this afternoon, any mention made of the one reason which above all others commends this hallelujah band system to me—and that is that it will give our young converts suitable opportunity to testify for Christ.

It is all very well to say, "Oh, we let the young convert speak in the open air sometimes," while at the same time it is considered out of the question to give him a turn in the building. The continuous effort of preaching is of course beyond his power, and therefore, unless some other arrangement be made, the thing is beyond his reach. And even if he were put up to speak inside alone, with the responsibility of a set service upon him, that in itself, would, as a rule, be enough to make speaking impossible. But let him be surrounded by a band of godly men and women, who he knows are praying and believing that every word he says shall move the hearts of sinners, and for a few minutes he will speak to the point and speak with the power of the Holy Ghost.

As a rule our people, and especially

those just gathered in, do not get a chance of speaking indoors at all especially where no experience-meeting is held—unless it be in the class and then if it be a large one they hardly do more than get up and sit down again. Now I feel we ought to give them an opportunity of getting at those who knew them, who knew their sin, their wretchedness, their misery before they were converted: let them have a chance of saying to these, "There's somebody here that used to know me—that used to work with me, before God changed my heart" and then to tell how great indeed the change has been—such words, spoken with the power of God, and spoken when the hearers are compelled, at any rate for an hour, under the influence of a service to hear and to think, will do far more at any rate for the speaker's mates and friends and old companions than anything that any others would be likely to say.

And his mates and friends will come to hear *him*, while they would turn away with a sneer from the invitation to come and hear Mr. So and So. Here's a man, say, gets converted—may be with his elbows all out and his face all awry, and a nasty smell of stale beer and a dirty pipe about him, but he gets saved—and next morning the first question asked in the workshop is, "What's up with So and So?" Who can estimate the power of attraction if the man can answer "I'm converted, and if you'll come round to the Hall to-night I'll tell you how it was." It seems to me that to everybody in that workshop the mere information that this vagabond had not only "got religion" but was going to "turn preacher" would be an almost irresistible call to go and hear him.

My brethren, we *must* let the young converts speak. I am not only unable to agree with all that has been advanced upon this point, but some things that have been said have grieved me very much. I don't know who is going to decide when people are converted, and who can say that when people are saved they may not be moved to speak by the Spirit of God. If you have got a man saved, it seems to me that he is just as likely to be urged by the Holy Ghost to speak as you are yourself. If you will not take the risk of saying that he is not born again, you have no right to say he shall not testify of the things which he has both seen and heard. He may be a messenger of God with a message direct

to hearts all around him, and you take, it seems to me, a tremendously awful responsibility upon you if you say he shall not deliver it until he has been so long "on trial." We must not do this. If he has anything to say, let him say it, and with all your heart add Amen.

I have heard a great many sermons—preached by all sorts of preachers—that have done me little or no good, but, my brethren, I have had many a mighty blessing through the simple testimony of some wayfaring one who has said, "I feel, I know, I'm saved all over"—with the Holy Ghost in it. That's the sort of *preaching* we want—those are the *parsons!*—we are all parsons! Let us make all our people parsons! Nay, let us seek to turn the great world into parsons such as these.

Who made you or me a preacher any more than Tom Jones, the poor publican yonder, just beginning to serve God?

I have been looking round to-day, and I do not know any one here who was not set on to speak publicly for Christ within fourteen days of their conversion. Are you any the worse? Are you not inestimably the better?

Brethren and sisters, let us put our converts "on trial" by *trying them*. God has made us leaders, let us encourage them to *use* their talents—let us try their love and faith, and zeal, and patience, and skill in this warfare with sin and Satan.

There is just one word as to making a band—we must not be discouraged if we fail to get just the thing we want in three weeks, but be content to take time and trouble in drilling our people to work in this way. I am sure that we have abundance of material on every hand, such as will make bands quite as good, if not better, than ever have been made. Let us set to work in this matter at once and God will help us.

WE much regret that want of space prevents the insertion this month of reports of the other conversations promised for next month, as also of an account of the Annual Meeting by R. C. Morgan, Esq., Editor of *The Christian*, in which he speaks of the Mission as a "NATIONAL SAFE-GUARD."

Appointments of the Evangelists & Workers for 1877-78.

Head Quarters: THE REV. W. BOOTH AND MRS. BOOTH.

Treasurer: NATHANIEL J. POWELL, ESQ. | *Travelling Sec.:* WM. BRAMWELL BOOTH.
Hon. Secretary: ROBERT PATON, ESQ. | *General Sec.:* GEORGE SCOTT RAILTON.

For General Evangelistic Work: MISS BOOTH.

District Superintendents and Helpers:

WHITECHAPEL —	{ Wm. Geo. Thomas, William Bennett, Rodney Smith, Caroline Reynolds.	CHATHAM—William Whitfield. HASTINGS—John Price Gray. PORTSMOUTH—John Trenhail. CARDIFF—Charles Hedley Panter. WELLINGBRO'—William James Pearson.
BETHNAL GREEN—Supply.		LEICESTER — { William Corbridge. Elijah Cadman.
HACKNEY—Emma M. E. Stride.		LEEDS—James Robinson.
STOKE NEWINGTON—Arthur W. Watts.		BRADFORD — { James Dowdle. Joseph Hurrell.
STRATFORD—To be supplied.		STOCKTON—Job Clare, Arthur Russell.
CANNING TOWN—James Pargeter.		MIDDLESBRO' (Oddfellows')—T. Blandy.
PLAISTOW—Mary Melinda Goddard.		(Prince's)—Wm. Ridsdel.
BARKING—George Reed.		{ (North Ormsby)—John Roberts.
SOHO—Albing Toft.		EAST AND WEST { William Garner.
LIMEHOUSE & MILL- } Charles Hobday.		HARTLEPOOL— { Ernest Blandy.
WALL—		
POPLAR—Annie Davis.		
HAMMERSMITH—John Allen.		
CROYDON—John Borrill.		

THE
AUGUST MAGAZINE
Will contain
REPORTS OF THE CONFERENCE ADDRESSES
ON
HOLINESS,
HOW TO IMPROVE OUR OPEN-AIR WORK,
AND
GOOD SINGING.

By the Rev. W. Booth, James Dowdle, William Corbridge, Job Clare, W. Bramwell Booth, William Garner, Charles H. Panter, Elijah Cadman, James Robinson, W. George Thomas, and others.

Together with the Statement of the
STATE AND FINANCES OF THE MISSION FOR THE YEAR.