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### FOREWORD

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# FOREWORD

This little volume does not profess to be a complete history of the Free Methodist church. Nor does it undertake a systematic discussion of the doctrines or polity of the church. It is simply what the title page indicates, "a brief outline" covering some of the principal events leading to the organization of the church and a hasty survey of its progress and development until the present time.

The work is prepared at the request of the Sunday School Teacher Training Board of the church. It has been written amid the busy cares of the pastorate. The collection of data, verification of dates and incidents have entailed much labor and care. Doubtless some mistakes will be found, but due care has been given to have all statements correct. Many days have been employed in the study of conference records and other available sources of information.

It is the hope of the writer that those who read the book may learn to love the church and her institutions and to revere more tenderly the memory of the men who suffered to give us our denominational existence.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the brethren who furnished data. The author also acknowledges his obligation for information gathered from "Why Another Sect," "Life of B. T. Roberts," "Life of T. S. LaDue," Damon's "Sketches and Incidents," and other sources.

J. S M'G.

# INTRODUCTION

The Free Methodist church was a child of necessity. Its founders were Methodists who were denied a church home because they upheld what they believed to be the true principles of Methodism. Fifty years have now passed since the stirring events took place which resulted in a church organization. Nearly all who participated in the conflicts of those times have gone to their reward and a new and younger class has taken charge of the affairs of the church. The question being asked on all sides is, Will this new element perpetuate the original simplicity and power of our fathers and maintain the distinctive issues which brought us into existence, or will there be a departure here and there at crucial points? Thus far no defection has taken place and the spiritual life of the church is apparently strong and vigorous.

The time has now come when the rank and file, especially of the younger members, need to be informed with respect to our origin and development, and at present there is a great demand for a short, concise history of the church.

When the Teacher Training Board decided to include such a history in the course of study for Sunday-school workers and cast about for the proper person to produce it, choice was immediately made of the man whose name appears as the author of this book. He has been a lifelong member of the church and for years has been a prominent minister of the gospel within her pale. He has been a member of several general conferences and for a number of years has been a member of the General Missionary Board, He is also a writer of acknowledged strength and clearness. He was therefore eminently fitted for the task laid before him.

I have read the manuscript with great care and wish to note the following points: 1. The book is well written. 2. Its statements can be relied upon. The author has taken great pains to verify his assertions and they are believed to be correct. 3. Though the work is brief and concise, yet it is comprehensive. The surprise is that so much ground is covered in so limited a space.

This book should immediately find a place in every Free Methodist home and should be read by every member of the Free Methodist church. I believe it will have an extensive circulation and that it will accomplish much good.

WILLIAM B. OLMSTEAD.

# CHAPTER I.

## INTRODUCTORY

Frequently the organization of a new denomination grows out of the fact that some have become dissatisfied with the doctrinal statements, governmental policy or some other feature of a particular ecclesiastical body and because of this have seceded and formed another church more in harmony with their own views. The Free Methodist church does not owe its existence either to a schism or a secession. All the men who were most prominently identified with the organization of the church were formerly either ministers or laymen in the Methodist Episcopal church, but they never attacked either the doctrines or the polity of that church. They did protest against what to them appeared to be grievous abuses of the powers conferred by the Discipline of the church upon them, by various officials and official bodies of that church. They were not schismatic. They did not seek to foist upon the church any peculiar doctrinal notions or practical precepts or introduce any practices of their own invention. They loyally and faithfully preached the doctrines of Methodism as they found them laid down in the standards of the church; they sought diligently and earnestly to lead men into the type of spiritual experience which for many years it had been the glory of Methodism to offer them; they endeavored to enforce Methodist discipline. All these things, at their ordination as Methodist preachers, they had solemnly covenanted to do. They believed certain doctrines fundamental to Methodism were being almost entirely neglected and set aside by the majority of Methodist preachers. These they sought to revive and restore to their proper position and prominence in their ministry. The church was departing from the primitive simplicity and power of Methodism and they did seek to recall those under their ministry to the "old paths" in which the church had walked while gaining her splendid victories. Their labor was not in vain. Revival fires were kindled wherever they went, sinners were saved and believers were entirely sanctified. But opposition developed, not from without as heretofore, but from within. A strong party opposed to the distinctive doctrines and practices of Methodism had grown up in the church. This party had control of the machinery of the church. The inevitable followed. It was simply a renewal of the old conflict between truth and error, between spiritual life and spiritual death. The two opposite elements could not flourish side by side. In the end one or the other must go down. The party controlling the machinery of the church made use of their power to crush out the spiritual movement. The leaders, both ministers and laymen, were remorselessly proscribed and thrust out by an arbitrary exercise of ecclesiastical power unparalleled in the annals of modern church history. Because they were true to their vows as Methodists and Methodist ministers they suffered the loss of all things. Hundreds of them unjustly and unceremoniously thrown out of the church of their choice where they had expected to spend their lives, were obliged to do something to save themselves and conserve the work God had given into their hands. After mature deliberation they organized the Free Methodist church.

Modeling, as was natural, their new home somewhat after the style of the old one which they had loved so well and from which they had been so unrighteously thrust out, they committed their cause to God and went about the work they felt He had given into their hands. The issue has proved that they were not mistaken in their convictions and that they did not build in vain. The work has spread over a large part of

the United States, across the border into Canada and to the distant lands of heathen darkness.  
Consecrated men and women have been raised up whose watchword is:

“Salvation! O salvation!  
The joyful sound proclaim,  
Till earth’s remotest nation  
Has learned Messiah’s name.

\* \* \* \* \*

Till o’er our ransomed nature  
The Lamb for sinner’s slain,  
Redeemer, King, Creator,  
In bliss returns to reign?’

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## CHAPTER II.

### EVENTS LEADING TO THE ORGANIZATION

Until about the year 1850 there seemed to be no general disposition manifest in the Methodist Episcopal church to depart from her original simplicity and power. Her ministers almost universally labored earnestly and fervently to promote a spiritual type of religion. The membership generally were noted for their spirituality and separation from the world in spirit and practice. About that time Methodism entered upon what Dr. Stevens, the editor of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, called its "transition state" A change began to be apparent. Two things, perhaps, more than all others, worked together to turn the tide toward worldliness and formality. The United States census revealed the fact that the church was the largest numerically in the country and owned the greatest amount of church property. This intelligence was no doubt pleasing to a people who had long been accustomed to hear themselves spoken of as the "filth and off-scouring of all things" religiously and whose denominational existence had been one long battle against opposition, misrepresentation and persecution. This fact was taken up by editors of denominational periodicals and by speakers at general gatherings and heralded through out the church, begetting in ministry and laity a spirit of self-satisfaction and self-congratulation The praises of Methodism were sung rather than the praises of God as aforetime. What Methodism had accomplished was often the theme rather than what God had done. About this time the country was being stirred by the anti-slavery agitation. On this great moral question the leaders of the church assumed an attitude of compromise. The Abolition movement characterized as "modern Abolitionism" was officially denounced. The rank and file generally, as is the rule, followed the leaders. The decline in spiritual power and drift toward the world were rapid. The effort was no longer in the direction of promoting deep spirituality and thorough revivals of religion, but rather to so tone Methodism down as to render it attractive to the worldly-minded. In order that this might be done those doctrines and usages which had been the peculiar heritage of Methodism and had characterized the movement and made it a mighty agency for good in the hands of God must be set aside and others more palatable to the carnal mind substituted. The result of this was that in a few years the distinctive doctrines of Methodism ceased largely to be preached from Methodist pulpits, and the distinguishing practical features of Methodism which had always rendered them outwardly a peculiar people were no longer insisted upon.

In the midst of this general defection there were here and there among both ministry and laity those who did not take kindly to the new order of things. They believed that Methodism had been raised up to spread scriptural holiness over the land; they believed that only as she held to her peculiar doctrines and usages and insisted upon them could she fulfil her mission; they believed that for her to fail to do this was to be false to God and humanity. Feeling thus and being animated by such convictions they could not sit quietly by and see the spread of the defection. Like some of olden time they felt constrained to "cry aloud and spare not," to "lift up their voice like a trumpet" and show Methodism her sins. Naturally these whether ministers or laymen, soon came to be looked upon as "troublers in Israel" by those who were advocates of the worldly policy which was beginning to control in the church.

Another disturbing element began about this time to make its appearance in the church. Methodist preachers began to ally themselves with secret societies. The excitement and opposition to secret societies occasioned by the abduction and murder of William Morgan by Free Masons in 1826, was still fresh in the minds of many of the older members of the church and they did not enjoy contemplating the thought that their spiritual guides were becoming members of the Masonic order and kindred associations. Many of the preachers were opposed to all secret societies on the ground that their influence was inimical to spirituality and tended to create cliques and parties in the church, thus interfering with its peace and harmony. Thus, on doctrinal, experimental and practical bases the lines were drawn between the two parties, one advocating a liberal, worldly policy, opening the door for the encroachment of the world upon the church, the other insisting upon standing by the "landmarks" of Methodism keeping the church separate from the world and contending for the life and power of godliness as exemplified among Methodists from the time of Wesley.

Out of the conditions just noted grew the circumstances resulting in the organization of the Free Methodist church. It was not without a determined effort to prevent it on the part of the lovers of primitive Methodism, that the new order of things prevailed in the church. Many noble men of God, like the prophets of old, called upon the people to "ask for the old paths" and return to them, but a younger generation who knew not the "former glory" was coming into control and the voice of the veterans was drowned by the cry of "progression" and "respectability." Here and there companies of ministers and laymen labored together heartily to bring about a return to the "old paths," in some places for a time with encouraging signs of success, only to find at last that the prevailing tendency worldward was too strong for them.

About the close of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth decade of the nineteenth century the lines were closely drawn between the two types of Methodism in the Genesee conference in western New York. Apparently the secret society question was the spark that started the flame But this was only an incident. The real issue was between worldliness and formality on the one hand and a vital, Spirit-baptized type of religion on the other The usual influences were at work in the conference in favor of the modernized type of Methodism, when in the providence of God such men as Asa Abell, Eleazar Thomas, Isaac C. Kingsley, C. P. Burlingham and others were brought into prominence in the work of the conference. They all enjoyed the experience of entire sanctification. The four mentioned above were presiding elders. In their work on the districts they preached the doctrine of holiness as taught by Wesley and urged preachers and people to seek the experience. Many among both ministers and laymen recognized the "joyful sound," and entered into the experience, and heartily seconded the efforts of these men in their work. Around the standard of holiness rallied B. T. Roberts, W. C. Kendall, J. McCreery, L. Stiles, Jr., W. Cooley, A. Hard and others, all men of ability and standing in the conference. Wherever one of these men went as pastor in charge of a district revivals followed and the church was built up. Spiritual and numerical declension followed under the ministry of the "progressives." The result was that the "Nazarite" preachers, as they were called in contempt by the other class, began to be in demand in the conference. The worldly-minded ones became alarmed. Their "loaves and fishes" were in danger. They began a systematic effort to bring the aggressive preachers and their work into disrepute. The cry of "extravagance," "wild fire," and "fanaticism" was raised. Such titles as "spurious reformers," "false prophets" and others less elegant and euphonious were applied to the leaders. Their preaching was

characterized as “clap-trap,” “arrogant boasting,” “cant,” “harangues” and “ranting.” These measures however all failed of the end they were intended to serve. The work went on with increasing power. Revival meetings and camp meetings attended by much of God’s presence and by the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of believers followed the work of the holiness preachers.

A strong party spirit developed in the conference. It could not be expected to be otherwise. In pulpit and in press strong language was used on both sides. The “Regency” as the opponents of the aggressive movement were now called, from time to time, in language neither classical nor respectful (the examples quoted above being some of the milder terms which they used) had expressed themselves concerning the leaders of the holiness movement, their teachings and their work. Some of the latter thought that the time had come to set themselves right before the people and to clearly set forth the differences between them and their opponents. The official organs of the church being closed against them, B. T. Roberts, one of the recognized leaders, wrote and published in the *Northern Independent*, a paper then published in Auburn, New York, an article entitled “New School Methodism,” in which he defined the views of the other party as expressed in their public utterances and showed wherein and why he and the party he represented disagreed with them. The article was fair, candid and courteous, but it dealt directly and fearlessly with the questions at issue in the conference, showing plainly wherein the “New School Methodists,” as he called them in his article, were out of harmony with the true teachings and spirit of Methodism. This article, harmless as it appears to us to-day, furnished the pretext for the beginning of the proscriptions, prosecutions and expulsions which led to the formation of the Free Methodist church.

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## CHAPTER III.

### EVENTS LEADING TO THE ORGANIZATION—CONTINUED

For some time, acting as an association and pledged to secrecy, the “Regency” had been seeking to secure a majority sufficient to control the action of the annual conference. Believing that they now had this they resolved to resort to extreme measures to stamp out the work these men were doing. Seizing upon the article on New School Methodism as a pretext they, at the next ensuing session of the conference, cited Mr. Roberts to answer to a charge of “Immoral and Unchristian Conduct” based upon garbled extracts and unfair deductions from his article.

The following brief synopsis of the specifications in the charge against Mr. Roberts and of his defense will show, the contrast between what they charged him with saying and what he did say.

Their accusations were:

1. That he said the Regency “was an associated body.”
2. That he said the opponents of the holiness movement were “opposed to what is fundamental in Christianity—to the very nature of Christianity itself.”
3. That he charged them with “laxness of religious sentiment.”
4. That he charged them with “sneering at Christianity in a manner not unworthy of Paine and that falls below the dignity of Voltaire.”
5. That he said they were “heterodox on the subject of holiness.”
6. That they were “attempting to substitute the lodge for the class-meeting and love-feast.”

Three other specifications were included but as these were, as Mr. Roberts showed in his defense, *verbatim* quotations from their own speakers and writers they are omitted.

In his defense Mr. Roberts showed:

1. That he had said that the Regency “acted as an associate body” in their opposition to the

holiness revival and leaders.

2. That he had said that the difference between the two parties related to what was “fundamental in Christianity,” but that men may differ as to the fundamentals of Christianity without opposing them.
3. That he had said of them that in their utterances against “Creeds” they “affect as great a degree of liberalism as do Theodore Parker and Mr. Newman.”
4. That he had said of language which they used with reference to the holiness leaders and what they conceived to be their views, “The following sneer is not unworthy of Paine himself,” etc.
5. That he had said, “When they speak of holiness they mean by it the same as do evangelical ministers of other denominations, and not what was taught by Wesley, Fletcher and others.”
6. That he had said that if “certain views of religion prevailed” the legitimate result would be that “the lodge must supersede the class and the love-feast.”

When the case was called in conference Mr. Roberts arose and said: “I have no intention to misrepresent any one. I do not think I have. I honestly think the men referred to hold just the opinions I say they do. But if they do not I shall be glad to be corrected. If they will say that they do not I will take their word for it, make my humble confession, and, as far as possible, repair the wrong I have done them. I will publish in the *Northern Independent*, and in all the church papers they desire me to from Maine to California, that I have misrepresented them.” No one answered that he had been misrepresented or offered to accept an apology or retraction. Had every specification in the bill been true, under a just administration a charge of “immoral conduct” would not have been entertained, and a charge of “un-christian conduct” only if an intention to injure or misrepresent had been shown, which was disclaimed by the accused and the prosecution did not seek to establish it. Though Mr. Roberts showed that only three of the specifications gave the words that he used in his article, and proved the truth of those by showing that he only quoted from articles written by members of the other party and from their repeated utterances in public, the conference voted all the specifications sustained, except one which was withdrawn. That is, they voted him guilty of “immoral and un-christian conduct” for saying what he did not say and for quoting correctly what they had said. He was sentenced to be reprovved by the chair. Immediately afterward he was appointed to the charge of a circuit. He accepted the reproof and appealed to the ensuing session of the General Conference.

Far and wide, in the official publications and by ministers and officials of the church, the report was circulated that B. T. Roberts had been found guilty of “immoral conduct.” Mr. Roberts writing of this says, “Before I reached my appointment a prominent preacher of the opposite party had taken pains to inform them that their preacher had ‘been convicted at the conference of ‘immoral and unchristian

conduct.’ This was also ‘ published, without explanation, in the *Buffalo Advocate*. Of course the people were hardly willing to receive us. We doubt if any itinerant ever had a colder reception.”

He however went his way about his work and “soon a revival of religion broke out which swept on with increasing power throughout the year. [1]

It is well known what inference is drawn when the report goes abroad that a minister has been convicted of “immoral conduct.” This report concerning Mr. Roberts, circulated as it was, could not fail to produce the usual impression upon the minds of those to whom it came. We here draw no inferences from the studied silence as to the nature of the charges while thus heralding the fact of the so-called conviction, but simply state the historical fact, leaving each to form his own opinion as to the motives of those who pursued this course. There were not wanting men who felt that great injustice was being done not only to Mr. Roberts, but to the cause of vital religion as well and that something ought to be done to counteract these injurious reports. Whether it would have been better for the cause to have endured all in silence attempting no explanation or vindication, we of this day cannot assuredly say. The following quotation tells what was done. Mr. Roberts says; “George W. Estes was at this time a prominent member of the Methodist Episcopal church, on the Clarkson circuit. He was a man of intelligence and influence in the community in which he resided. With many Others Mr. Estes felt that a great wrong had been done by the conference, and by the vague, insinuating reports published of the offense for which I had been convicted.

“Mr. Estes *without my knowledge even*, published over his own name and at his own expense, in pamphlet form, my article on ‘New School Methodism,’ and a short account of the trial.”

Mr. Estes’ comments in this pamphlet on the methods pursued by the opposite party to secure the conviction of Mr. Roberts were scathing. His denunciation of the administration in the conference and of the officials from the bishops down was extremely severe. Whether it were wise under the circumstances to say some of the things published in the pamphlet or not we of the present generation cannot correctly judge. We were not in the midst of the conflict and cannot see and feel as those who were. They felt that gross injustice had been done and, being men of strong character and convictions, expressed themselves concerning it in no uncertain language, which they no doubt felt the issue demanded.

When the Genesee conference convened at Perry, New York, in October, 1858, a charge of “Unchristian and Immoral Conduct” was again preferred against B. T. Roberts based upon the claim that he had published and circulated or assisted in publishing and circulating the above mentioned pamphlet. Regarding its publication Mr. Roberts says: “I never saw this article until some time after it was published, and was in no wise responsible for its publication. But Mr. Estes, a man of means, an exhorter in the Methodist Episcopal church, was responsible, and, like a man, he assumed the responsibility. At the last quarterly conference of the year, the question of the renewal of his license came up. The presiding elder asked George W. Estes if he was the author of that pamphlet. He replied that he was. *Without a word of objection the presiding elder renewed his license as an exhorter*, and soon after went to conference, and *voted to expel me from the conference and the church, on the charge. of publishing this very pamphlet.*”

At the trial Mr. Estes assumed the entire responsibility for writing and publishing the pamphlet, testifying that Mr. Roberts, so far as he knew, had no knowledge that its publication was intended, and that he had not assisted in its circulation. One witness for the prosecution testified that once on a train Mr. Roberts gave him some of the pamphlets with a request to circulate them. But he could not tell where Mr. Roberts got on the train, whether they were traveling east or west, or state definitely what was said about the pamphlets. He said, "My recollection is not very distinct." Persons intimate with Mr. Roberts testified that he did not circulate the pamphlets, some on the circuit of which he had been pastor during the year never having seen any of them until on the way to conference. In the face of this the charges were sustained and Mr. Roberts was voted guilty and expelled from the conference and the church.

Admitting that the pamphlet was as slanderous as the prosecution charged, or more so, the unaccountable thing in this whole matter is that, while the man who declared that he had no part whatever in its publication and circulation, and whose declaration was supported by unimpeachable and positive testimony, was found guilty of "unchristian and immoral conduct" and expelled from the conference and the church, the man who openly and on all occasions assumed the entire responsibility for its authorship and publication was never called to account in any way.

Speaking of his personal relations with the preachers of the conference and of his personal standing at this time Mr. Roberts says: "Personally, I had no reason to suppose that I was unpopular. I was on good terms socially with all the preachers. My appointments had always been all that I could have desired. Twice during my last trial they gave me such tokens of respect as I have never heard of being paid by a court to a man while they were trying him for a criminal offense. Once during the progress of my trial, they adjourned it over for a day to hold a funeral service in honor of Rev. William C. Kendall, who had died during the year. By a unanimous vote of the conference \* \* \* I was appointed to preach the funeral sermon to the conference, which I did with two bishops sitting by my side. At another time during the trial, the anniversary of the American Bible Society was held, and by another unanimous vote, appointed to - preside at this public meeting." From all this it is clear that the opposition in the conference was not against a few men but against the cause which they represented - By striking them they hoped to cripple the movement in the conference in favor of a return to the teachings and practices of primitive Methodism. They selected B. T. Roberts as the first one against whom to move because they regarded him as a leader—probably *the* leader—in the movement.

At the same conference Joseph McCreery was expelled from the conference and the church on substantially the same charges as Mr. Roberts. After his expulsion Mr. Roberts appealed to the General Conference and went out at the close of the conference, like one of old, "not knowing whither he went."

The action of the conference in thus expelling Mr. Roberts and Mr. McCreery produced a profound impression and aroused deep feeling. Many began to ask themselves whereunto this thing was destined to grow. Those who believed in and were seeking to adhere to the "landmarks of Methodism" felt that the time had come for them to take concerted action. At the suggestion of Isaac M. Chesbrough, of Pekin, Niagara county, New York, a call was issued for a layman's convention. This call, written by S. K. J. Chesbrough, when circulated for signatures was signed by over one hundred laymen, representing twenty-two of the charges in the conference. Pursuant to this call the convention met at Albion, Orleans county,

New York, Wednesday, December 1, 1858, at seven o'clock in the evening in the Methodist Episcopal church, and began with a love-feast. At 8:30 the convention adjourned to Kings-land Hall for the purpose of organizing.

Abner I. Wood was elected president; I. M. Chesbrough, G. W. Holmes, S. C. Springer, G. C. Sheldon, J. H. Brooks, George Bascom and C. Sanford, vice-presidents; S. K. J. Chesbrough, W. H. Doyle and J. A. Latta, secretaries.

One hundred and ninety-five laymen representing forty-seven different charges in the conference enrolled as members of the convention, each declaring himself fully in harmony with its objects as set forth in the call.

A committee on resolutions was elected consisting of S. K. J. Chesbrough, W. H. Doyle, G. W. Estes, S. S. Rice, John Billings, A. A. Ames and J. Handley.

After sitting nearly all night and a part of the next day this committee brought in a report which, after being fully and freely discussed, was unanimously adopted. The report is too long to transcribe here. It declared their "adherence to the doctrines and usages of the fathers of Methodism ;" their "earnest and hearty attachment to the Methodist Episcopal church ;" dealt at length with conditions and events in the conference; characterized the "expulsion of Brothers Roberts and McCreery as an act of wicked persecution calling for the strongest condemnation ;" declared their "utmost confidence in these brethren notwithstanding their expulsion ;" recommended that they "travel at large and labor for the promotion of the work of God ;" and pledged \$1,600 for their support.

The men who composed this convention were not novices - either in temporal matters or in the affairs of the church. There were among them physicians, merchants, contractors, farmers—men who had succeeded in the various callings which they had chosen. They were men of position and influence in the church, local preachers, exhorters, Sabbath-school superintendents, class leaders, stewards, enjoying the respect and confidence of the people in the communities where they lived. Many of them had grown gray in the communion of the church and in her service. They violated no law of God, or church, or state in meeting together and expressing themselves concerning what they believed to be a great wrong. But, between the time of the assembling of this convention and the next session of the annual conference, many of them were expelled from the church for no other crime than for attending it and participating in its deliberations.

Mr. Roberts speaking of his own course and that of Mr. McCreery after their expulsion says: "Each of us gave notice of an appeal to the General Conference. But what should we do in the meantime? We were both \* \* \* \* full of life and energy and anxious to save our own souls and as many others as we could. Neither of us had any thought of forming a new church—we had great love for Methodism and unfaltering confidence in the integrity of the body as a whole. We did not doubt but that the General Conference would make matters right. But we did not like to stand idly waiting two years. [\[2\]](#)

They both felt the call of God upon them. Each had given up all else to devote his life to this work. They were not conscious of having done anything to cause them to for. felt their commission. The “Layman’s Convention” had recommended that they travel and “labor for the promotion of the work of God.” After consultation with judicious brethren they decided to labor in accordance with this recommendation, taking care to let it be known that they did not claim to do this by the authority of the church. To quote again from Mr. Roberts:

“In accordance with this recommendation, Brother McCreery and myself went through out the conference, holding meetings and laboring for the salvation of souls. But we were careful to state that we claimed no authority from the Methodist Episcopal church to hold meetings—that we did as we were doing at the call of Christ, on our own responsibility as men and Christians. We not only announced this in public congregations, but \* \* \* \* I published the following in the *Northern Independent*. \* \* \* ‘This then is what I am doing. The Lord has opened a wide door into which I have entered. I disclaim all authority from man, but simply “instruct, reprove and exhort,” because I believe He has called me to it, and He blessed me in it.’ They did not administer baptism or the Lord’s Supper, or solemnize marriage. They did only what every man is free to do, labor as they had opportunity to bring men to Christ.. Yet it was because of this that it was afterward said of them that they “declined to recognize the authority of the church.”

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[1] Why Another Sect, pp. 154, 155.

[2] Why Another Sect, pp. 185, 186.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EVENTS LEADING TO THE ORGANIZATION—CONTINUED

One of the charges made every where against the leaders of the aggressive party by their opponents was that in their ministry and in their meetings they promoted a “spirit of wild fanaticism.” Those who voted to expel B. T. Roberts and Joseph McCreery frequently said in justification of their course, “If these men did not deserve to be expelled for circulating the pamphlet, they did for promoting enthusiasm and fanaticism.” The Bergen camp meeting was considered the “hot bed” of this “fanaticism and wild fire.” The sound of the things being done in the Genesee conference went abroad and as a result many came to the camp meetings and other meetings to see who these people were who were so much spoken against and what terrible things they were doing. Rev. William Reddy, for many years a presiding elder in the Oneida conference, attended the Bergen camp meeting in June, 1858. He wrote of it: “God was there. I believed, I felt He was there \* \* \* \* I heard old Methodists say, ‘This is as it used to be forty years ago.’ \* \* \* \* The doctrine of sanctification after the John Wesley standard, the definite way of seeking the blessing, the spontaneous confessions of having obtained it, on the part of intelligent, mature persons, the duty of exemplifying it by self-denial and universal obedience • \* \* \* were all earnestly taught and enforced, and many were the witnesses.” B. I. Ives, D. D., of the same conference wrote of this meeting:

“Two things connected with this camp meeting particularly impressed me. The first was the number of intelligent business and influential men, that were there with their families, tented upon the ground, and who stayed all through the meeting laboring for God and the salvation of souls. The second thing I noticed was the spirit of prayer and labor for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of believers that was manifested from the very commencement to the close of the meeting. \* \* \* \* I saw nothing like ‘wild fire’ or mere ‘animal excitement’ during the entire meeting. The motto was ‘order and power.’ And all the people of God seemed to be baptized with the real, old-fashioned ‘Jerusalem fire.’ And I pray God that we may have more of this in all our churches.”

At another camp meeting held on the same ground the next year several preachers from adjoining conferences were present. One of these, Rev. J. F. Crawford, of the Oneida conference, in his account of the meeting spoke as follows: “It is evident that these persons live near to God at home and bring the *real fire* with them. \* \* \* \* This was one of the strongest meetings we ever attended. We had heard so much about this people that when we went on the ground for a little while we were on the *come and see bench*, but we soon found that these persons had nothing but what a *few* of our people have in the Oneida conference. \* \* \* \* They are as intelligent a class of people as you will find in any congregation in the State of New York. They are clear in their views of holiness, according to our standard authors, and according to Scripture. We want to be identified with the principles and doctrines held by this much persecuted people. If there is any shame connected with them as long as they stand where they *now* do, we want to bear our part.”

Other testimonies of like character might be quoted but these are sufficient to show that unprejudiced observers recognized in the teaching of these men the fundamental doctrines of Methodism and the so-called "wild-fire" to be the fervor which had aforesaid characterized Methodist meetings.

While these things were thus transpiring in the East events of a similar nature were occurring in the State of Illinois. "During the winter of 1859-1860, considerable excitement existed in northern Illinois, mostly among members of the Methodist Episcopal church, in regard to the administration of the church toward some who had especially advocated the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification. A few years previous, Rev. J. W. Redfield, \* \* \* at the invitation of Rev. David Sherman, of the Rock River conference, came to St. Charles, Illinois, to assist him in a revival meeting. Though this meeting was held in the month of June, quite a number were converted. The greater good accomplished was in bringing some thirty or forty of the membership into the experience of perfect love. The character and success of the meeting \* \* \* led to Mr. Redfield being invited to labor in adjoining towns. Elgin, Marengo, Woodstock and several other places were visited by him. The revivals at Marengo and Woodstock were marvels of grace. At the latter place, lawyers, doctors, the sheriff, and many others were brought to Christ. Some of them be-came ministers of the gospel.

"About this time Rev. Seymour Coleman, of the Troy conference, was drawn to , Aurora, in the same county, to visit a son residing there. A vacancy occurring at that time in the pulpit of the First Church Mr. Coleman was requested to fill it until conference. Almost immediately the Spirit was poured out upon the people, and many in a short time entered into the experience of perfect love. He visited many camp meetings during the summer at which he preached with great power and success.

"In 1858 and 1859 the work began to be antagonized by the same spirit and sentiment that Phoebe Palmer and others had been obliged to meet in the East, and under the leadership of one who had been prominent in the opposition there. Some of the ministers who had been led into the experience now began to counsel with their fears, and ceased to preach and testify of the great salvation. Some of the laymen, finding they were not to be allowed to testify to the experience longer, that the doctrine was to be denounced from the pulpit, and in the class and prayer rooms, began to turn to the country schoolhouses where they might find freedom to worship God. \* \* \* Their labors were blessed in some instances in the conversion of scores of souls. Some of these workers were expelled for holding these meetings, and others were 'read out' of the church as 'withdrawn.' In one instance a whole family was expelled, when the entire winter had been spent by them in a continuous revival, resulting in the conversion of more than forty persons. In another instance thirteen were 'read out' as 'withdrawn' for going two Sundays in succession to hear Mr. Redfield preach in other than their own church. Some forty or fifty others then withdrew and took a position with the thirteen. They fitted up a place of worship, called a boy local preacher to serve them [that boy became Rev. J. G. Terrill of precious memory], and, though this was in December, by the following March they numbered one hundred and twelve, about one-half of whom had been converted from the world. [\[1\]](#)

Becoming convinced against their fondest hopes that there was no redress for their grievances they, on April 27, 1860, organized themselves as an independent church taking the name "Free" Methodist. The

Free Methodist church was not organized until the following August. The trustees elected were those declared "withdrawn" by the official board of the old church, viz., Elisha Foote, John M. Sangle, Ira D. Tyler, Warren Tyler and Ephraim Collar. At a sacramental meeting held at St. Charles in March attended by representatives from different points it had been decided to hold a - layman's camp meeting in June. The committee appointed selected grounds on the farm of J M. Laughlin near St. Charles. Thus began the "St. Charles camp meeting," which became to the western work what the "Bergen camp meeting" was to the eastern. Many drove fifty and sixty miles to attend this first meeting and a company of pilgrims from western New York made the long journey to meet these their companions in the tribulation and patience of Jesus. Names soon to become historic in Free Methodism are recorded. In charge of the meeting J. W. Redfield. Ministers, B. T. Roberts, C. E. Harroun, Sr., J. G. Terrill, Joseph Travis, E. P. Hart, George H. Fox, and others. Laymen, J. M. Laughlin, W D. Bishop, M. Bishop, I. H. Fairchild, Hon. Benjamin Hackney and others. A layman's convention was held during this meeting. In the resolutions adopted they - declared their adherence to Methodist doctrine, usage and spirit, their grief at the departures from these in the church, their determination to continue to hold to these and seek to - promote them, in the church if they could, but if not then by the organization of "Free" Methodist churches.

Having thus briefly sketched conditions prevailing in Illinois we return to consider the trend of events in western New York.

If the "Regency" party hoped by the expulsion of B. T. Roberts to check the progress of the work which he represented they were disappointed. The work swept on with increasing power. The Bergen camp meeting was. more largely attended than in previous years and its influence was farther reaching than ever before. As the spirit of persecution developed the "pilgrims" seemed to be drawn closer together. The year was a busy one for both parties, the one plan-fling and laboring to advance and extend the work and the other working just as diligently to cripple and hinder it.

When the annual conference assembled at Brockport, New York, in October, 1859, the Regency thoroughly aroused by the events of the year were prepared for desperate measures. Two ministers, J. W. Reddy and H. H. Farnsworth, who were in sympathy with the proscribed religion, were located. Charges of "Contumacy" were preferred against Loren Stiles, Jr., John A. Wells, William Cooley and Charles D. Burlingham, and they were expelled from the conference and the church. The charge in each case was fraternizing with or in some way recognizing one or both of the expelled preachers or allowing them to speak in their pulpits or take some part in public meetings. To give a slight semblance of actual complaint some of them were charged with holding services within the bounds of other charges than their own during the year. One man, Rufus Cooley, had his character arrested for praying with B. T. Roberts in a private house, but fortunately was not prosecuted for this crime. The expelled ministers, except Mr. Stiles, appealed to the General Conference.

The Layman's Convention met again in the Baptist church, at Albion, New York, November 1, 1859, and sat during that and the following day. The resolutions adopted reaffirmed the positions of the year before, denouncing as "cruel and oppressive" the expulsion during the year of lay members for attending the convention of the previous year. Referring to the expulsion of ministers and laymen they said: "These repeated acts of expulsion, wrong as they are in themselves, deserve the stronger condemnation from the

fact, scarcely attempted to be disguised, that the object is to prevent the work of holiness from spreading among us, to put down the life and power of godliness in our churches, and to inaugurate in its stead the peaceable reign of a cold and heartless formalism—in short, to do away with what has always been a distinctive feature of Methodism. If the work which the men who were expelled within the last two years, have labored, and- with such success, to promote has Methodism from the beginning been ‘fanaticism.’ Our attachment to Methodism was never stronger than it is at present, and our sympathy and our means shall be given to the men who toil and suffer to promote it. We cannot abandon, at the bidding of a majority, the doctrines of Methodism, and the men who defend them.” [2]

It is apparent that these men believed that they were contending for the perpetuation of original Methodism. They do not speak like men animated by simple enthusiasm or passion. The entire tone of their deliverances is calm, deliberate, statesmanlike. There is also to be noted in their utterances a note of sadness, as of those who realize that their task is an unpleasant one but a sense of duty holds them to its performance.

Of the six ministers expelled five had appealed to the General Conference. The discipline of the church declared, “They (the General Conference) shall not do away the privileges of our ministers or preachers of trial by committee and of an appeal.” The language is mandatory, “*they shall not.*” In the conference where these men were tried party spirit was at fever heat. Mr. Roberts was first denied the assistance of counsel unassociated with the difficulties He then asked for a change of venue because of the strong party spirit in the conference. This was also denied. He then asked for - trial by a committee. This was also denied him. Seeing how his requests to have his constitutional rights were refused, the others did not ask for them. A majority the men who sat in the conference and voted on the cases claimed to have been injured by these men, that is, they were plaintiffs in the case. They had already prejudged the case and declared that these men were worthy of the extreme penalty of ecclesiastical law. A case conducted in such a manner in civil court coming up for review would be immediately reversed. It now remained to be seen what the General Conference would do. Many believed that in this body each case would be calmly and impartially investigated and decided on its merits. The General Conference convened at Buffalo, New York, in May, 1860. At first it looked as though justice would be done. A memorial and petition signed by fifteen hundred members praying for an investigation of the Genesee conference difficulties was referred to a strong and - impartial committee. A few days later this committee was discharged and the memorial referred to a committee already overburdened with work. The matter ended there. When the appeal cases came up a court, or committee, of appeals was organized. With two exceptions,, the appeal of Mr. Roberts from the decision in his first trial (which decision they sustained), and the appeal of Mr. Burlingham, they refused to entertain the appeals. The reason given was that the appellants since their expulsion had refused to recognize the authority of the church Why then hear Mr. Roberts’ first appeal? If this had been true in the broadest sense the General Conference had no jurisdiction. Under Methodist polity a General Conference has no authority to try a preacher or to render any decision upon his acts except as the matter is involved in an appeal. But here a court - of appeals brought a charge against certain men, ad judged them guilty and pronounced the penalty and that too without giving them any opportunity to be - heard in their defense. The Discipline plainly stated, “*They shall not* do away the privileges of our ministers \* \* \* of an appeal.” There was only one legal course open to the General Conference which was to hear the appeals and decide them on their merits. This it refused to do. The case

of Mr. Burlingham was heard and sent back for a new trial. As Mr. Burlingham admitted all that was charged against him and appealed on the ground that his acts did not constitute a violation of the Discipline of the church, it is difficult to see the justice of the decision.

But one thing remained for the others to do, as Mr. Roberts said, they could only “appeal to God and the people.” This they did and the appeal has not been in vain.

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[1] History of St. Charles Camp Meeting, by J. G. Terrill

[2] Why Another Sect, pp. 259, 260.

# CHAPTER V.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

These things resulted in an anomalous ecclesiastical condition, for modern times at least. Here were several men of superior ability and influence suddenly deposed from their ministry and excommunicated from the church of their choice. No breath of scandal or immorality was attached to them. Even their enemies testified to the purity of their character and their ability. They were in the prime of vigorous manhood. The call of God was upon them. Not conscious of having committed any wrong against God or man, they did not feel that they could relinquish the work to which they had consecrated their lives. Denied a hearing by the final court of appeal in the church, they committed their case to God and turned their faces toward the work which seemed to come to their hands. Hundreds of laymen of unblemished reputation and sterling character had been, without even the form of a trial, thrust out of the church for no other crime than expressing their sympathy for these deposed ministers. Those who had been thus thrust out naturally turned to these ministers for spiritual leadership and -instruction. They were all, ministers and laymen, Methodists by conviction and by choice. Cut off from church fellowship and association what should they do? Other church doors might have been open to them. But they were Methodists. For some time the ministers labored in an informal manner organizing "Bands" wherever there was a company of these outcast "pilgrims." But they knew that some closer form of organization must soon obtain or the work would be scattered and destroyed. Those in the east and those in the west were now in communication with each other and there was a general feeling that the time had come when something must be done to conserve the work in both sections. In the summer of 1860 a call was issued for a convention to meet at Pekin, New York, to consider the advisability of organizing a church.

This call read as follows: "A convention will be held at Pekin for the purpose of adopting a Discipline for the Free Methodist church, to commence at the close of the camp meeting, August 23. All societies and bands that find it necessary, in order to promote the prosperity and permanency of the work of holiness, to organize a Free church on the following basis, are invited to send delegates:

"1. Doctrines and usages of primitive Methodism, such as the witness of the Spirit, entire sanctification as a state of grace distinct from justification, attainable instantaneously by faith; free seats and congregational singing, without instrumental music in all cases; plainness of dress.

"2. An equal representation of ministers and members in all the councils of the church.

"3. No slave-holding and no connection with secret oath-bound societies.

"Each society or band will be entitled to send one delegate at least, and an additional one for every forty

members. [\[1\]](#)

In response to this call a considerable number of delegates or representatives, both ministerial and lay came together August 23, 1860 at the close of the camp meeting which was held in a grove on the farm of Mr. I. M. Chesbrough, father of S. K. J. Chesbrough, at Pekin, Niagara County, New York. There was some division of sentiment as to the best course to pursue. Not all believed that the time had come to organize. Writing of this convention, S. K. J. Chesbrough says: "At the time of the convention I was not clear in my mind that the time had come for us to organize, and therefore I refused to be a delegate to the convention. I took no part in the proceedings. In fact, I was not present at the convention on the camp ground. All I remember of it is this: Before the convention was called, B. T. Roberts and several others came together under an apple tree right back of our kitchen. I sat in the kitchen door looking at them. They were nearly all seated on the ground under the tree, and it was voted that they proceed to organize the church. They then arose and went over into the grove, where the convention was held and the child born and named."

M. N. Downing writes as follows: "I was a delegate to the convention at which the Discipline was decided upon at Pekin, New York. At this convention Revs. Joseph McCreery, W. Cooley, and, I think, a Rev. Mr. Farnsworth and several laymen opposed the immediate organization of a new denomination, on the ground, as they believed, that it would be premature. \* \* \* \* The majority prevailed and the organization was effected, taking the name of the Free Methodist church. The minority withdrew, and were after that known as the Nazarite faction. \* \* \* This faction went to seed completely at a camp meeting at East Shelby, New York. Rev. W. Cooley and wife were at this meeting and seeing fanaticism in some of its wildest forms coming in, fled to the Free Methodist church for refuge, and were useful workers therein."

Of this convention and its work B. T. Roberts wrote as follows in the *Earnest Christian* for September, 1860: "About eighty laymen and fifteen preachers met in convention at Pekin, New York, on August 23, to take into consideration the adoption of a Discipline for the 'Free Methodist church.' Quite a discussion took place as to the propriety of effecting at present a formal organization. When the vote was taken all but seven—five preachers and two laymen—stood up in favor of organizing immediately. \* \* \* After a careful examination, item by item, the Discipline as agreed upon was adopted with singular unanimity. \* \* \* The doctrines agreed upon are those entertained by Methodists generally throughout the world. An article on sanctification, taken from Wesley's - writings, was adopted. \* \* \* The annual and quadrennial conventions (now called conferences) are to be composed of an equal number of laymen and ministers. The episcopacy and presiding eldership are abolished. Class leaders and stewards are chosen by the members, and the sacred right of every accused person to an impartial trial and appeal is carefully guarded. \* \* \* \* It is not the intention to try to get up a secession. On the contrary, as much as in us lies, we shall live peaceably with all men."

The founders of the Free Methodist church showed their strong attachment to Methodism by adopting all the Articles of Religion contained in the Methodist Episcopal Discipline and accepted by all, Methodists everywhere. They added two articles, one emphasizing the peculiarly Methodistic doctrine of entire

sanctification and one on future rewards and punishments. The essential elements of the episcopal polity of the old church were retained while those which rendered it so liable to abuse were eliminated. The life tenure of the bishopric was discarded and an elective episcopate for a term of four years was substituted. The term presiding elder was discarded, but the essential elements of the office were retained in the district chairmen (now district elders) elected yearly by the annual conferences. A limited episcopacy is perhaps as nearly a correct name as one could give to the form of government.

B. T. Roberts was elected the first General Superintendent (Bishop), and at each succeeding General Conference was reelected, filling the office with great acceptability until the time of his death.

The first class, or society, organized under the new Discipline was formed at Pekin, New York, August 26, 1860. Of this Rev. S. K. J. Chesbrough writes: "I well remember the Sunday after the organization, when my wife and eighteen others answered the questions of the Discipline which Brother B. P. Roberts had written on a piece of paper and formed the first Free Methodist class ever organized under the Discipline."

After diligent inquiry only thirteen of these names can be secured by the writer: Ann E. Chesbrough, Annette Groves, Adaline Rose, Jane E. Cushing, Jarvis Pike, George Rose, Ursula Mitchel, Cornelia Castle, O. W. Carl, Joshua Carl, Elizabeth Carl, Lewis E. Chase and Lucina Chase.

Following the wholesale expulsion of lay members, to which reference has been made, "Bands" had been organized by the expelled members modeled after the bands of early Methodism. These bands now began coming into the new church by voting to adopt the Discipline put forth, by the convention at Pekin. These societies thus organized began to call upon the leaders in the movement to furnish them with spiritual guidance and pastoral oversight. The logical sequence was the organization of conferences to provide for this demand.

The first session of the Eastern Convention (now known as the Genesee conference) was held at Rushford, Allegany county, New York. There were fourteen preachers and fourteen lay delegates enrolled. These preachers were given appointments and the district chairmen were authorized to employ ten more and yet all the places calling for preachers could not be supplied.

The following are the appointments made by this conference:

Genesee District.—Chairman, —; Holly, to be supplied; Albion, L. Stiles; Kendall, M. N. Downing; Rochester and Chili, Daniel M. Sinclair; Buffalo (Thirteenth St.), James Mathews; Buffalo (Second Free Methodist church), supplied by S. K. J. Chesbrough and others; Carey and Shelby, J. B. Freeland; Asbury, to be supplied; Canton and Yates, supplied by A. C. Leonard; Alden, to be supplied; Pekin, Tonawanda, Porter and Wilson, Russel Wilcox, Judah Mitchell, Arthur King and Isaac Williams.

Allegany District.—Chairman, A. F. Curry; Wales and Spring Brook, Ephraim Herrick; West Falls, supplied by Levi Metcalf; East Otto, supplied by Otis O. Bacon; Rushford, J. W. Reddy; Gowanda and

Collins, to be supplied; Chemung, T. W. Read, H. W. Spears; Perry, A. A. Phelps; Cadiz, supplied by A. B. Matthewson.

A. A. Phelps was ordained deacon. The project of starting a weekly paper was discussed, but it was decided that it was not best to undertake it, although the need of some medium through which to correct the many misrepresentations of their actions and motives was keenly felt. Speaking of this B. P. Roberts said: "A weekly paper at this time would almost unavoidably involve us in controversy. Those who are leaving no means untried to destroy us have put so many weapons into our hands that might be employed to our advantage and their discomfiture, that the temptation to use them would be a great calamity. What we most need is a general, deep, and thorough revival of religion. A rehearsal of the wrongs we have suffered, and of the misdeeds of others, will not be very likely to save souls." In this spirit of self-forgetfulness, committing themselves to Him that judgeth righteously, these men went forth from this first conference. Is it strange that the story of the next year is one of continuous revival and ingathering of souls?

During this year the work was spreading in Illinois. There, as in western New York, those who had been cast out had organized themselves first into "Bands," then some of them into "Free" Methodist churches. After the Pekin convention these bands and churches adopted the Discipline and became Free Methodist societies. In June, 1861, a camp meeting was again held at St. Charles in Mr. Laughlin's grove. It was largely attended and much good was accomplished. During this camp meeting the Western Convention (now the Illinois conference) was formally organized in the house of Mr. John Laughlin, a short distance from the camp ground. Twenty preachers and twenty lay men composed the convention. B. P. Roberts presided. Ten preachers were received. Two, J. W. Redfield and J. Travis, were elected and ordained deacons; and two, Judah Mead and J. Travis, were elected and ordained elders. As an illustration of the devotion of these men of God it is recorded of one of them that, during the year, he had traveled 1,600 miles on foot, visited and prayed with 1,000 families and received thirty dollars. Such men, like Marion's patriots living in the swamps and feeding upon sweet potatoes, could not be defeated—victory was assured.

The following appointments were made by this conference:

St. Louis District.—Joseph Travis, chairman; St. Louis, Joseph Travis, one to be supplied.

St. Charles District.—Judah Mead, chairman; St. Charles circuit, Thomas LaDue; Clinton circuit, J. H. Fairchild, W. D. Bishop; Aurora circuit, J. G. Terrill, Erastus Ribble; Marengo circuit, E. P. Hart, J. W. Dake, one to be supplied; Crystal Lake circuit, B. M. Hooker, E. Cook; Newfield circuit, G. L. Shepardson (supply); Ogle circuit, C. Underwood, G. P. Bassett; Sugar Creek circuit, Wisconsin, P. F. Shepardson, C. E. Harroun; Geneva circuit, P. C. Armstrong; Belvidere circuit, J. W. Matthews; Elroy circuit, J. Collier; Rennselaer mission, A. B. Burdick; Norwegian mission, J. Oleson; general missionary, J. W. Redfield.

The events which have so far been recorded which, in the east, led up to the organization of the church

all occurred in western New York, but the same conditions, though perhaps not in such an aggravated form existed in other places. In the eastern section of the state were many who having become tired of the prevalent conditions of worldliness and formality wished for a church home where they could freely unite in worshipping in simplicity and spirituality. Hearing of the organization of the new church they entered into communication with Mr. Roberts and others, who, answering to the call, came over and helped them. B. T. Roberts, William Cooley and Zenas Osborne were the pioneers who blazed the way for Free Methodism in this section. The first society was organized by B. P. Roberts in a stone school-house near Rose Valley, Wayne county, New York, December 2, 1860. The members of this society were: Josephus Collins, John Glen, William Glen and wife, Harrison Holcomb and wife, John Barrett and wife, Lewis Barrett, Leonard Mitchell, Sarah Mitchell, William Sherman and wife, Margaret Nusbickel, Elizabeth Finch, John Weeks. February 12, 1861, Mr. Roberts organized another society at the home of Aaron Winget, in the town of Huron, Wayne county, New York. The following were members of this society: Aaron Winget and wife, Benjamin Winget, Lovilla Winget, John B. Stacy and wife, — Perkins and Sophia Perkins. From these societies as a beginning grew the Susquehanna conference. Three persons named among the members of these societies afterward entered the ranks of the itinerary and did faithful service. John B. Stacy several years ago crossed triumphantly over. John Glen, in the evening of life is still active in the Oregon conference. [2] Benjamin Winget is now and has been for several years the faithful and laborious missionary secretary of the church.

From these beginnings the work continued to develop in different places in that section. Those engaged in its development believing it necessary to its progress and conservation and urging the step, Mr. Roberts, on April 10, 1862, at Union, New York, organized the third convention (or conference), known as the Susquehanna Convention. The meeting for the organization was held out of-doors, the members sitting upon a rail pile in an apple orchard. This first session made the following appointments: Union circuit, James Guion; Madison and Otsego, J. Olney; Rose, W. Cooley; Hudson River mission, A. B. Burdick; Susquehanna, T. F. Johnson; Whitehaven, to be supplied.

Although the New York conference was not organized until 1874, twelve years after the meeting of the first General Conference, and the Michigan conference preceded it in date of organization by eight years and the Minnesota and Northern Iowa, by two years, yet its history is so closely associated with that of the Susquehanna conference that an account of its beginnings and organization properly belongs here.

Some time during the year 1861, Rev. Loren Stiles, Jr., in answer to an earnest call from a company of pilgrims who had been forced out of the Methodist Episcopal church because of their decided stand for the "faith once delivered to the saints," went to White Haven, Luzerne county, Pennsylvania, held some meetings among them and organized a Free Methodist society. A church was soon erected and dedicated, and at the session of the Susquehanna conference held at Rose, New York, September, 1863, A. B. Burdick was appointed to this field. In 1864, there were two preachers appointed to charges in this territory. In 1865, six were appointed. October, 1867, about one hundred and seventy-five members and probationers from this territory were reported to the conference, five preachers were appointed and one charge was left to be supplied. Two years later about three hundred members were reported and nine preachers were appointed. The growth was steady until the time of the organization. The New York conference was organized at Brooklyn, New York, September 3, 1874, B. T. Roberts presiding. Thirteen

ministers in full connection who had been members of the Susquehanna conference; three who had been on trial; one in full connection from the Genesee conference and one received on trial composed the ministerial force. Over six hundred members and probationers were reported. One traveling chairman, W. Gould, and J. Mathews, a stationed chairman, were elected. Sixteen charges were supplied with pastors and two were left to be supplied. At the present time (1908) there are about twelve hundred members and probationers in the conference and about seventeen preachers regularly employed besides several supplies.

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[1] Life of B. T. Roberts, p 230

[2] Since this was written Mr. Glen has died.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FREE METHODISM IN MICHIGAN

The records indicate that T. S. LaDue was the first to carry the standard of Free Methodism into the State of Michigan. In the fall of 1861 he had been transferred from St. Charles, Illinois, to Rochester, New York, but in the summer of 1862, B. T. Roberts thought it best for him to go in response to a call from some people in the southwestern part of Michigan to organize a Free Methodist society there. Finding those who wished the organization unfit to be received into the church he decided not to form a society but labored until conference as the way opened in southern Michigan and northern Indiana. [\[1\]](#)

At the session of the Illinois conference in the fall of 1863, B. T. Roberts wished to send E. P. Hart to Michigan in response to calls he had received from parties in that state requesting the organization of Free Methodist societies. The Illinois conference however was short of preachers and Mr. Hart was appointed to Marengo with the understanding that at some time during the year he should spend three months in Michigan. After some correspondence with Mr. H. L. Jones, Mr. Hart made arrangements to go and hold a series of meetings. The journey was successfully made and he and his wife reached Ida, Monroe county, Michigan, on January 24, 1864. No one being at the station to meet them they made inquiry at a store and were directed to the residence of Mr. Jones. After a walk of a mile or more through the snow and over the hubs, carrying their luggage, they reached the home of Mr. Jones' father and were warmly welcomed. Mr. Jones, a preacher among the people known as the Methodist Episcopal Conformist church, had arranged for Mr. Hart to hold a quarterly meeting over the following Sabbath. This first meeting was attended by much of the Spirit's presence. At the close of the service on Sabbath morning, Mr. Hart read from the Discipline and explained the position of the Free Methodist church. They seemed highly pleased and invited him and his wife to remain and hold meetings and if he thought best to organize societies. This meeting was held at East Milan, about twelve miles from Ida. Mr. Jones suggested that while Mr. Hart went to preach at some other points he would go home and begin a meeting at the "Plues' school-house," near Ida, Mr. Hart coming later if the interest was good. Mr. Jones had been holding meetings about a week when Mr. Hart returned. He went to the schoolhouse that night feeling that the crisis had come, or, as he expressed it, that it was "make or break" for the work in Michigan. The Spirit of God in convicting power attended the word and when the invitation was given several responded, among whom were the wife and twin daughters of John Plues, of whom Mr. Jones had said a few days before, "If that man should get saved it would stir the whole community." His wife and daughters were converted. On returning from meeting one night, as she began to get out into the light, Mrs. Pines said, "John, I want to ask your forgiveness for any wrong I have ever done, and I would like to read the Bible and pray before we retire." Mr. Plues in an angry tone replied, "I'll never forgive you, and there shall be no reading the Bible and praying in my house." After retiring his treatment of his wife troubled him and he could not sleep. Before morning he was in such an agony of conviction that he could endure it no longer and humbly asked his wife to bring the "preachers" to pray for him. About daylight Mrs. Plues came to the place where Mr. and Mrs. Hart were lodging. They gladly went as soon as possible and after a struggle he was converted and at once went to work very earnestly to see his

neighbors converted. The meeting swept on in power for weeks and many were saved. This meeting may be considered as really the beginning of our work in Michigan.

Having now been absent from his home and his work in Illinois for several weeks Mr. Hart began to feel that he ought to return. He thought of advising the converts to join some church and to be sure to live religion. He and Mrs. Hart would go back to Illinois and meet them in heaven. When Mr. Hart suggested this in reply to John Plues' question, "Brother Harts what are you going to do with us people?" Mr. Plues replied, "No, s-i-r; you have got us into this boat and you must see us through." Mr. Hart responded, "By the grace of God we will, Brother Pines." He wrote to B. T. Roberts stating the conditions and the demand for him to stay and care for the work which had begun and received the reply, "Stay, by all means." He accordingly decided to resign his work at Marengo, Illinois, and move to Michigan to give himself wholly to the work there. Going back to Illinois he and his wife made known their determination and amid the tears and protests of friends made preparation to move to Michigan. Turning their backs on a strong society, a pleasant parsonage, relatives and friends, they brushed away their tears and went out to a place the Lord had shown them having no certain dwelling place.

A society of about fifty members was organized at the Plues' school-house. This was the first society organized in the state. The following were some of the members: Jonathan Atkinson, Carrie Atkinson, John Pines, Samantha Plues, Agnes Plues, Florence Pines, Thomas Plues, Joseph Plues, James Flues, Henry Jones and wife, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ Rivers, wife and daughter, Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_ Brown, Helen Galloway, Albert Galloway and wife, E. Leonardson, Robert Simpkins and wife. One important fruit of this first meeting was two preachers, A. V. Leonardson and E. Leonardson, who for many years now have been doing faithful work as ministers.

Upon their return to Michigan, as it was now summer time, Mr. and Mrs. Hart threw themselves into the work and the summer was spent in journeying to and fro, spying -out the land, answering calls for meetings and holding services in school-houses and groves wherever the way was open. At a grove meeting near Ida in June B. T. Roberts was present a part of the time, his presence proving a blessing and help to the work. Through a peculiar train of circumstances a little later Mr. Hart was brought in contact with John Ellison and at a grove meeting later in the season Mr. Ellison made the decision which resulted in his uniting with the church, giving to the Michigan work a preacher who for many years was one of the pillars of the Michigan conference.

At the session of the Illinois conference held at St. Charles, September 22, 1864, one in full connection and thirty-eight on probation, were reported from Michigan, but this represented only in a very small degree what had been accomplished. The "sound" of this "new religion," as many called it, had gone abroad and calls for meetings were coming from every direction. Among the appointments of the Illinois conference that year appear the following: "Michigan district, E. P. Hart, Chairman and Evangelist. Raisinville, W. D. Bishop, H. Jones." The year was a successful one. Mr. Hart and his wife labored extensively in evangelistic work and the next fall the report from Michigan was nearly two hundred members and probationers. At the conference in September, 1865, E. P. Hart was again appointed chairman of the Michigan work. Six circuits are found in the list of appointments: Raisinville, Morenci, Van Buren, Huron, Ransom and Coldwater. Four pastors were appointed and two charges left to be

supplied.

On June 22, 1866, in connection with a camp meeting held on the Raisin river in Monroe county, the Michigan conference was organized in a brick school-house near the camp-ground. B. T. Roberts presided. E. P. Hart, C. S. Gitchell, W. D. Bishop and H. L. Jones, in full connection, and John Ellison and L. T. Frink on trial were received from the Illinois conference. Several others were received on trial. E. P. Hart was elected' chairman and nine circuits were supplied with pastors. The number of members and probationers was not reported.

The conference met again in September following and was held in the first Free Methodist church erected in Michigan. It was built under the labors of John Ellison, at Sherwood, Branch county. Joseph Travis presided and in connection with the conference dedicated the new church, preaching the dedicatory sermon from Hag. 2: 9 with great power. Only those who have heard him preach on such occasions can imagine what a sermon it was. A total membership of four hundred and eighty-two was reported. E. P. Hart was again elected chairman having nine circuits on his district. E. P. Hart and John Plues were elected delegates to the General Conference which met at Buffalo, New York, October 10, 1866.

All this was accomplished in less than three years as the result of the faithful labors of one man and one woman who, without any missionary board or missionary appropriation back of them, went forth trusting God for all and proclaiming the old-fashioned gospel. Surely we of this generation of Free Methodists owe much to these - fathers and mothers of "Early Free Methodism" who "without scrip or purse" went forth and blazed the way for this work which has brought so much of spiritual enlightenment and liberty to us.

Up to the time of the organization of the conference in 1866 the work in Michigan had been confined to that part of the state lying south of what is known as "the base line" running from east to west across the state and forming the northern boundary o~ a tier of two counties lying across the southern part of the state, but as the laborers lengthened their cords and strengthened their stakes the work began to spread to the northward. Isabella county, lying almost in the center of the state, was at that time considered the northern extremity of civilization. In the list of appointments for 1867 we find "Isabella, R. Wilcox." From "Hart's Reminiscences" we learn that this meant Isabella county. Mr. Hart tells of holding his first quarterly meeting on this circuit in a log school-house. The Sabbath morning congregation of twenty-five or thirty comprised the population "from miles around." Other appointments soon appear in Ionia, Clinton, Genesee, Saginaw and other counties to the north, and in 1870 a district of nine charges appears to the north of the base line. The growth in all parts of the conference was healthful and steady.

In the fall of 1876 the North Michigan conference was formed out of the territory in the state of Michigan lying north of the "base line" before referred to. The organization of the conference took place at St. Johns, Michigan, September 27, 1876, B. T. Roberts presiding. The conference roll shows sixteen preachers in full connection and fifteen on trial. The statistical table shows a total membership of about thirteen hundred

Eight years later, 1884, this territory was again divided by a line running due north from the "base line" to Lake Huron from the southern point in the boundary line between Ingham and Eaton counties, the conference east of this line to be known as the East Michigan conference. The organization was effected at Gaines, Genesee county, Michigan, September 18, 1884, E. P. Hart presiding. The names of twenty-six preachers in full connection and four on trial appear upon the roster of the conference. About eleven hundred members and probationers are reported in the statistics.

On January 24, 1864, when E. P. Hart and his wife stepped from the train at Ida, Michigan, they were so far as the writer has any knowledge the only Free Methodists in the state; there was not a church building, parsonage or any other piece of property, real or personal, belonging to the church anywhere in the state. At the time of the organization of the East Michigan conference there were three thousand Free Methodists and property valued at nearly \$72,000. Since that time there has been steady growth and to-day in Michigan there are five thousand members of the Free Methodist church, over one hundred preachers actively engaged in the work and church and parsonage property valued at nearly \$300,000.

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[1] Life of T. S. LaDue, pp. 47-51.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORTHWEST

Some time during the year 1865 one E. N. Sumner, later familiarly known as "Father Sumner," living in the southeastern part of the state of Minnesota, not far from Cannon Falls, at a place locally known as Cherry Valley, heard of the Free Methodists in Illinois, corresponded with some of them and decided to cast his lot among them. He in a peculiar sense united with the church "by letter." It is a matter of record that the questions of the Discipline were sent to him and that he sent his written answers and church letter from the Methodist Episcopal church by mail to one of the pastors and was received into the church. It is said of him that he was a man of settled principles and convictions, naturally possessed of an iron will, commanding his household after him. He was a farmer of some means, a loyal Methodist who enjoyed the experience of holiness, was zealous for the promotion of God's cause and for this was ready to sacrifice property and home. He gave liberally of his means. Whatever he did he did thoroughly whether it were plowing a field, planing a board, building a house or organizing a Free Methodist society. Through his influence in the winter of 1866-7 George H. Fox of the Illinois conference went to Minnesota, held a revival meeting and, in the home of Father Sumner at Cherry Valley, in Goodhue county, organized the first Free Methodist society in the state consisting of the following persons: E. N. Sumner and wife, Thomas Harrison and wife, Alexander Harrison and wife, \_\_\_\_\_ Plaistead and wife, Joseph Swartz and wife, George Seamans and wife, and others. In the fall of 1867, T. S. LaDue was appointed to Hudson, Wisconsin, and Cannon Falls, Minnesota, but it appears that the demands of the work in Wisconsin were such that not much was done in Minnesota that year. In the fall of 1868, a new district was formed known as the Minnesota district. T. S. LaDue was made chairman, with Hudson and Cannon Falls as a base to work from. He moved to Hastings, Minnesota, and from this we mark the beginning of that work which spread all over the northwest. During the year Mr. LaDue traveled extensively in Minnesota holding meetings wherever the way opened. Two meetings especially, at Pine Island and at Havana, were characterized by much of the presence of God. Much good was done and the membership was increased threefold during the year notwithstanding bitter opposition from without and a serious division from within. In 1869 there were two circuits in the Minnesota district, T. S. LaDue local chairman, and C. M. Damon constituted the working force. appointed by the conference. By the advice and urging of others Mr. Damon accepted an appointment in the east and Mr. LaDue was left alone. The year was fruitful in results. Societies were organized and the membership increased. Mr. LaDue suffered from severe illness, bitter opposition assailed them from without, and some within, yielding to a heady spirit, brought in division and discord, but the faithful ones held on their way and God gave the victory. On October 11, 1872, at the "Stone school house," near Plymouth, Cerro Gordo county, Iowa, the Minnesota and Northern Iowa conference was organized. B. T. Roberts presided. The following preachers in full connection were enrolled: T. S. LaDue, C. M. Damon, S. H. Greenup, S. P. LaDue, J. P. Shattuck, T. B. Chase, N. Cook. Nine preachers were admitted on trial. There were two hundred and seven members and probationers reported. The work in the conference has passed through many vicissitudes, but under the leadership of such men as T. S. LaDue, C. M. Damon, G. C. Coffee, W. R. Cusick, George P. Wilson and others it has gone forward and a goodly company of pilgrims still remain while many have gone to join the church triumphant.

In March, 1877, one Norman D. Baldwin, of Olivet, Dakota, while on a visit to Michigan, came in contact with the Free Methodists in a meeting held by J. W. Sharpe near Galion, Michigan. He united with the church and about two weeks later returned to Dakota. In August of the same year J. W. Sharpe, on the advice of a physician that a change of climate was necessary to save his life, resigned his work in Michigan and removed to Olivet, Dakota. He made the journey by team. On the way he attended the session of the Minnesota and Northern Iowa conference and, uniting with that body, was appointed to Olivet, Dakota. Reaching Olivet, October 11, 1877, on the fifteenth of the same month he preached his first sermon in the school-house from Mark 16: 15. Notwithstanding bitter opposition from some "gospel-in-the-water" preachers -a revival followed and on February 4, 1878, the first society was organized consisting of the following members: Norman J. Baldwin, Mary Baldwin, E. J. Sharpe, Alexander Hainbright, Mary Taylor, Anna S. Smith and Sophia Taylor in full connection and eleven others on probation. A little later another society was organized at Scotland seven miles from Olivet. In June, 1878, the first camp meeting was held on Lone Tree Creek one mile south of Olivet. J. W. Sharpe was the only preacher in Dakota until this meeting was about one-half over when G. C. Coffee, district chairman from Iowa came accompanied by D. W. Cook who had just lately united from the Methodist Episcopal church. There were seven tents on the ground. God was pleased to grant his presence and show his power to save. Soon after this meeting another society was organized at the Michigan settlement six miles west of Olivet. At the conference of 1878 Mr. Sharpe reported forty-one members and probationers. In December, 1878, the first Free Methodist church in Dakota was built. It was a sod building seventeen by thirty-five feet, and was hurriedly completed in time to hold a watch meeting December 31. A revival followed resulting in many conversions. In the summer of 1879 the district court was held in this church and the pastor was appointed foreman of the grand jury. In the fall of 1879 five preachers were appointed to circuits on the Dakota district. G. C. Coffee, chairman. The country was new, settlements were sparse and accommodations primitive. Roads were only winding trails over the prairies. In times of flood it was often necessary for preachers and chairman to travel long distances on foot to reach appointments, following railroad tracks and sometimes crossing swollen streams on ties and rails holding together where bridges had been swept away, or paddling across in watering troughs when a row boat could not be had. Travel was largely by ox team, people frequently going one hundred miles thus to a camp meeting. But much of God's presence and blessing were given and souls were saved.

The Dakota conference was organized at Providence, Dakota, September 19, 1883, B. T. Roberts presiding. The following preachers in full connection were received from the Minnesota and Northern Iowa conference: G. C. Coffee, J. W. Sharpe, D. Fear, D. W. Cook, J. S. Phillips, George Windust, E. N. Sumner. F. W. Moon who had been on trial was received into full connection and elected and ordained to deacon's orders. One hundred and seven members and probationers were reported.

In the fall of 1878 in answer to repeated calls which had come from some members of our church who had settled in that section, E. L. Smith at that time a local preacher on the Owatonna and Havanna circuit, Minnesota and Northern Iowa conference, was appointed to Frazee City and Sank Centre as supply. Mr. Smith, then a young man, took his family and made the journey of three hundred miles by team to Leaf Valley in Douglas county about midway between the two points named in the minutes as composing his circuit. Here were six pilgrims, David Covel, Elizabeth Covel, Henry Covel, Marcia Covel, George

Knapp and Adelia Knapp, who had been organized into a class before moving to this section. Thy became the nucleus of the North Minnesota and North Dakota conferences. From this center Mr. Smith worked outward. In the following April another class was organized at Grove Lake forty-two miles from Leaf Valley. At the next conference he reported seventeen members and was returned to his field and three others, W. P. Cook, S. H. Greenup and A. Walcott were assigned to work in the same section. From this time the work went steadily forward. The North Minnesota conference was organized September 14, 1887. The following who had been in full connection in the Minnesota and Northern Iowa conference enrolled as members of the new conference: S. P. LaDue, J. S. Bradley, A. Tice, A. H. Reed, S. H. Greenup, J. G. Norris, E. L. Smith, M. F. Childs, C. E. Reynolds, W. Barham. There were about two hundred and fifty members and probationers reported.

Some time during the year 1881 T. W. Lane and wife and some others moved from Iowa to Larimore in what is now known as North Dakota. W. R. Cusick, at that time chairman of the North Minnesota district of the Minnesota and Northern Iowa conference, visited them and preached for them and probably organized them into a society thus forming the nucleus of what later became the North Dakota conference. In the minutes for 1883 occurs the first appointment of a pastor to this territory, "Larimore and Jerusalem, A. Tice" The next year Devil's Lake and Tracy is added to the list of appointments in this territory. From this time the work continued to develop in North Dakota until in 1897 it was thought best to organize a new conference to be known as the North Dakota conference. The first session was held at Larimore, North Dakota, September 29 to October 3, 1897. B. R. Jones presided. G. Greenup, Z. Newell, H. A. Spicer, O. E. McCracken, W. A. Greenup and A. G. Parks, formerly of the South Dakota conference, and A. McCracken and W. H. Lawson, formerly of the Central Illinois conference were the preachers enrolled. Two hundred and twenty-five members and probationers were reported.

The first record of Free Methodism in Oregon and Washington is found in the minutes of the New York conference for 1876 to 1879. Among the appointments for these years appears this one, "O. Edwards, missionary to Washington Territory." In the appointments for 1880 we find "Washington Territory Mission, J. Glen, chairman. Seattle, J. Glen; Walla Walla, G. Edwards." The same appointments appear for the next year and Seattle reports fifteen members and probationers. The next year Seattle reports thirty members and "Oregon district, T. S. LaDue, chairman," appears in the appointments. The next year Washington Territory Mission reported thirty-six members and Oregon district fifty—the nucleus of the present Oregon, Washington and Columbia River conferences.

In October, 1874, "Father Sumner," who has already been referred to as the first Free Methodist in Minnesota, removed from that state to Oregon and located near Clackamas. For some time he had been in correspondence with T. S. LaDue, who was then laboring in the New York conference, urging him to come to Oregon. He finally sent money to pay the expenses of Mr. LaDue and his family to Oregon. In the spring of 1882 he at last saw his way clear to answer to the call and he and his devoted wife with their family took the long journey to the land to which they felt God in his providence was calling them. The first Free Methodist society in Oregon was organized at the Damascus school house, near Clackamas, Oregon, in July of that year. It was composed of eight persons, members of Mr. La Due's and Father Sumner's families. When it became known that he had come as a Free Methodist preacher to establish Free Methodism in the northwest, bitter, relentless opposition assailed him, especially from some of the

“holiness people.” But God was with him. Others came to his aid and a good work was raised up. The work in Oregon and Washington was organized as the Oregon and Washington Territory conference, at Beaverton, Oregon, about eight miles west of Portland, June 10, 1885. The following preachers in full connection were enrolled as members of the conference at its organization; T. S. LaDue, J. Glen, G. Edwards, G. Windust, A. P. Goode, N. C. Mower. A. Beers, F. Cathey, H. Van der Veen and J. LaDue were received on trial. One hundred and nineteen members and probationers were reported. Father Sumner had passed away the preceding February and Mr. LaDue followed in March, 1888, but each had been faithful and the work had been planted. At the session of 1895, ten years from the time of organization, there were eight hundred and nineteen members and probationers and twenty-seven ministers regularly employed who were members of the conference, and several supplies. One year later the Oregon and Washington Territory conference was divided into three conferences known as the Oregon, the Washington and the Columbia River.

The first society organized in the bounds of what now constitutes the Columbia River conference was organized by N. C. Mower at Bethany, near Colfax, Washington, in September, 1885. The original members were, Nelson B. Gilliam, Nancy Gilliam, E. Baldwin, Anna Baldwin, Delia Arrasmith, P. Taylor, S. A. Taylor, Maggie Taylor, Maggie Finch. Rev. T. S. LaDue was the first chairman. F. H. and H. F. Ashcraft did work in the territory which prepared the way for the organization of Free Methodism. The Columbia River conference was organized at Spokane, Washington, April 2, 1896. Eleven preachers in full connection and seven on trial were enrolled. There were two hundred and sixty members and probationers.

The Washington conference was organized in the chapel of Seattle seminary, Seattle, Washington, April 9, 1896. Nine preachers in full connection and three on trial were enrolled. The number of members and probationers was two hundred and thirty-seven.

The Oregon conference was organized at Gresham, Oregon, April 16, 1896. Eleven ministers in full connection and four on trial are recorded in the minutes of this first session. Three hundred and fifty-one members are reported.

Among the appointments made by the first session of the Western Convention appears this one; “Sugar Creek Circuit, Wisconsin, D. F. Shepardson, C. E. Harroun.” Eighty members are reported in 1864. In 1865 G. H. Fox was appointed to “Winnebago and Wisconsin.” The next fall, 1866, T. S. La Due was appointed to Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, and B. F. Doughty to Sugar Creek. One hundred and eleven members and probationers were reported at the next session from the two charges. At the session of 1869 a Wisconsin district was organized, M. V. Clute was made chairman, four preachers were appointed to the work. The next year there were reported from this territory two hundred and fifty members and probationers. The Wisconsin conference was organized at Pierceville, Wisconsin, October 7, 1875, with seven preachers in full connection, three on trial and a total membership of two hundred and seventy-five. At present there are thirty-one preachers and eight hundred and seventy-seven members.

The work in the state of Iowa was also an outgrowth of the Illinois conference. At the session held at Elgin, Illinois, September 18-21, 1867, W. B. Tracy was appointed to “Northern Iowa.” He died early in

the year. A footnote to the statistical report of the conference the next year reads: "The figures for the Galva, Winnebago and Free-port circuits, include missionary appointments in Iowa." Three circuits in Iowa are found in the list of appointments this year and three preachers, W. F. Manley, B. F. Doughty and I. Bliss were appointed. The statistics for the next year show an aggregate membership of two hundred and seventy-four. The Iowa district was organized at the session of 1873. J. Travis was elected traveling chairman. There were nine circuits, two of which were left to be supplied with an aggregate membership of about three hundred and sixty-five. September 23, 1875, at Birmingham, Iowa, the Iowa conference was organized with seven preachers in full connection and five on trial. The total membership was about four hundred and twenty-five.

Just ten years later, October 7, 1885, the West Iowa conference, embracing the western part of the state of Iowa and a portion of the eastern part of Nebraska, was organized at Red Oak, Iowa. Five preachers in full connection and two on trial who had been members of the Iowa conference, one in full connection and one on trial from the Missouri conference and five received on trial composed the ministerial force. The new conference had a total membership of five hundred and thirty leaving the Iowa conference with a membership of about eight hundred and eighty. The aggregate membership of the two conferences now is about two thousand.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE WORK IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

The work in western Pennsylvania began in the Venango county oil region. In the year 1867 Mr. H. A. Crouch located at the Storey Farm, near Oil City and engaged in the oil business. He was a man of great simplicity of spirit and of strong faith in God. The writer but a youth when he first knew him, remembers and cherishes him as one of the most lovely and lovable characters he ever met. His wife was one of the excellent of the earth. Marvelously converted in early life in the midst of prevalent spiritual darkness, he was in 1859 under the labors of such men as B. T. Roberts, W. C. Kendall and others, led into the experience of holiness. In 1863 he and his wife united with the Free Methodist church in Rochester, New York. In the oil region he became acquainted with Rev. B. W. Hawkins, an elder in the Erie conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, at that time bookkeeper for the Columbia Farm Oil Company. Through the influence of Mr. Crouch and his wife Mr. Hawkins was led into the experience of holiness and later to unite with the Free Methodist church. Mr. Hawkins was a man of very pleasing manner and address, great personal magnetism and an able minister of the gospel. In the zenith of his power he combined in his pulpit ministrations clear statement of truth, more than ordinary ability as an orator, a vivid imagination and a flow of language and power of expression which enabled him to paint word pictures which at times were overwhelming. A very great measure of the Spirit at times attended his preaching. The writer recalls many marvelous scenes of blessing and victory among the people of God at such times. He united with the Susquehanna conference in September, 1870, and was appointed to Oil Creek Mission. Soon after the conference the first society was organized at Columbia Farm about six miles from Oil City. B. W. Hawkins was the pastor. The following were members, with others whose names cannot be secured: H. A. Crouch, Mrs. H. A. Crouch, Mrs. Wood, Miss Frankie Wood, Mrs. Miller, Miss Minnie White, Mrs. Ferry, Miss Mary Smith, Mr. Shaw, Mrs. Shaw.

In the summer of 1871 a camp meeting was held at Oil City. H. A. Crouch writing of this meeting says: "The sound thereof went abroad. Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; Dover, New Jersey, and other places felt its influence for it was 'born of God.' Heaven and earth felt its power." Soon after a society was organized in Oil City. The following were among the charter members of this society. Charles Lee, Jennie Davis, Mrs. Reynolds, Mary E. Holtzman, Mary Marshal, James Whitehull and wife, Margaret Lee. From these two nuclei at Columbia Farm and Oil City the fire spread all over the northwestern part of the state.

In July, 1874, a camp meeting was held at Franklin, Pennsylvania, in charge of B. W. Hawkins who was at that time chairman of the Allegany district, Genesee conference. E. P. Hart, then district chairman in the Michigan conference, attended this meeting preaching with great power and effect. In attendance at the meeting was J. B. Corey, a coal dealer from Braddock, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. At the close of the meeting he insisted on Mr. Hart's going with him to Braddock and preaching there before he returned to Michigan. He consented and on Sabbath, July 26, 1874, he preached the first sermon in the United Presbyterian church in the morning, also preaching in a hail at three o'clock in the afternoon and at half past seven in the evening. In September of the same year he and his wife returned to Braddock

and held a series of meetings in which over one hundred and fifty people professed conversion and a strong class was organized. The following are some of those who formed this first class: A. Boreland, Elizabeth Boreland, Ella Boreland, Rachel Corey, J. B. Corey, Cyrus Riley, Nancy Riley, Rachel Wallace, I. A. Pierce, Edward Koib, Reese McWilliams, Mary McWilliams, Richard McWilliams, Agnes McWilliams, James McWilliams, Elizabeth McWilliams Adda McWilliams, Matilda Phillips and others. This society was organized in September, 1874. Rev. E. Leonardson of the Michigan conference was placed in charge of the work for the first year. The General Conference which met in October, 1874, gave the territory in western Pennsylvania to the Genesee conference which had charge of the work there until the formation of the Pittsburg conference in 1883.

On account of its isolated condition and other circumstances the work in the southwestern part of the state for several years made but little progress. The work in the vicinity of Oil City, however, developed steadily. Societies were organized at Franklin, Tionesta, East Hickory, Tidioute, one near Bradford in the McKean county oil regions and at other more remote points. One society at a country point known then as Stewart's Run, P. O., in Forest county is worthy of special notice because from that society seven preachers went out into the work, six of whom, John S. McGeary, A. D. Zahniser, J. J. Zahniser, E. S. Zahniser, R. A. Zahniser, and A. H. M. Zahniser, the last five brothers the sons of a godly Presbyterian mother,—are still engaged in active service.

At the General Conference of 1882 a petition having been presented requesting it, the territory in Pennsylvania lying west of the eastern boundary of Potter county and the Allegheny mountains was separated from the Genesee conference and made into a new conference known as the Pittsburg conference. A little later the boundary line on the east was changed to run due south across the state from the northeast corner of Potter county. The first session of this conference was held at Oil City, Pennsylvania, October 18-20, 1883. E. P. Hart presided. The following preachers from the Genesee conference in full connection were received: J. T. Michael, R. W. Hawkins, John S. M'Geary, J. Barnhart. James Spear united from the Wesleyan Methodist connection but on account of his age and poor health never was engaged in active work. J. D. Rhodes who had been one year on trial in the Genesee conference also united. A. D. Gaines, M. L. Schooley, W. B. Roupe and D. B. Tobey were admitted on trial. J. Baruhart was ordained elder. Five hundred and eighteen members and probationers were reported. Fifteen circuits are noted in the first list of appointments, four of which were left to be supplied.

Very soon after its organization the conference struck stormy sailing and for a time it looked as though the work would be wrecked. But God undertook. The disturbing element withdrew and God set his seal of approval upon the work as never before. A flame of revival broke out all over the conference, societies were organized, churches built and the work enlarged and strengthened in a manner almost unprecedented in the history of Free Methodism. The work was deep and thorough. The fruit remains until this day. Among the effective agencies for the spread of the work were the camp meetings. These were in the beginning of the work usually held in communities where we had no societies and thus new fields were opened up into which the ministers entered and held revival meetings and societies were organized. As the work spread many young men were converted to whom came the call "Go ye," and a host of earnest, devoted, self-sacrificing, courageous preachers was raised up to care for and carry on the

work. Also of the "hand maidens" not a few. It required faith and courage to go forward. Frequently a preacher's appointment as it appeared in the minutes represented only an opportunity to make a circuit—no societies, churches, parsonage or official board—but without a murmur they went forth and God honored their faith and gave them success.

One of the results of the organization of the new conference was that the work in the southwestern portion of the state was given more attention and made rapid progress as well as that in the northwestern part. At the session of the Pittsburg conference held September 27 to October 1, 1898, at New Castle, Pennsylvania, a resolution was adopted asking the General Conference to divide the territory into two conferences. The petition was granted, the division was made and two conferences, the Oil City and the Pittsburg, were created out of the territory, the Oil City conference occupying a little more than one-half of the original territory in the northwestern part of the state, and the Pittsburg the remaining part in the southwestern section of the state, and the state of West Virginia. Some changes in the boundaries of the two conferences have been made since. At the time of this division there were about two thousand nine hundred members and probationers in the conference and about seventy-five preachers regularly employed. At the present writing (1908) there are three thousand and nine hundred members and probationers in the two conferences and about eighty-five preachers actively engaged in the work.

As the writer closes this brief sketch of the work in western Pennsylvania, with which he has been personally associated for a period of about thirty years, many names and faces seem to rise up before him and a host of recollections come trooping up from the past. It would be pleasant to dwell upon these recollections and write of those whose names are thus recalled. Of two names which will always be historic in connection with the origin and growth of our work there he feels that particular mention should be made—Clifford B. Barrett, the "Happy Alleghenian," and Mrs. Jennie Tobey, familiarly known as "Grandma Tobey."

Clifford B. Barrett was born in New Hampshire. He was left an orphan while a child and was raised without any religious training by an uncle who was a Universalist. He was naturally of a jolly, hilarious, fun-loving disposition. In his early manhood he drifted into the lumber woods of western Pennsylvania. This was in the days when the lumbermen after cutting their lumber "rafted" it down the Allegheny river to market. Among the boisterous, jolly men who frequented the lumber camps and the river in those days "Clifford" found congenial companions. For years in the lumber woods and on the river in "rafting time," according to his own testimony "with a whisky bottle in one pocket and a deck of cards in the other" he was known as the "Wild Alleghenian." Brought under conviction by the Spirit of God while preaching a mock sermon for the amusement of some of his wild companions, he was soon marvelously saved and some time afterward sanctified. He became as enthusiastic in the service of God as he had beforetime been in the service of the enemy and, still following the lumber business for some years, he was renamed the "Happy Ahleghenian." Soon after the organization of the Free Methodist church he united with it. For many years no camp meeting, conference or any general gathering of pilgrims in western Pennsylvania seemed complete without the presence of Brother Barrett. Those who once heard his "Hallelujah" or "Amen" will never forget them. The writer expects to hear and recognize them on the other shore. Devoting his entire time to the work of God without human guarantee of support or appointment by any conference (although he was a licensed evangelist) he traveled, as he often said, through "eighteen

different states and more or less in Canada,” and was the means of leading many sinners to Christ and many believers into the experience of holiness. He was somewhat eccentric and this became more marked as he grew older, but he lived and walked in the Spirit and was mighty in prayer, simple, direct and positive in his testimonies, and oftentimes powerful in exhortation. He especially loved the young preachers of the conference, calling them usually in private, and often publicly praying for them, by their first names. His “hobby” was holiness. He insisted everywhere, always, that the pilgrims be “very definite” in the experience of this grace and in their testimony concerning it. His wish had always been to fall in the battle but this was not gratified. He was laid aside for some time before his death and was a great sufferer, but maintained his victorious experience to the last. His last words, addressed to his sister, were, “O, Dillie, help me praise the Lord.” And thus he went to be with Jesus. In the beautiful cemetery at Tionesta, Pennsylvania, by the side of the Allegheny river which he loved so well, in a grave marked by a plain stone on which is engraved as he requested, “C. B. Barrett Gone to Glory,” his ashes await the resurrection morning.

“Grandma” Tobey was brought up a Universalist and was never awakened to the claims of God or the need of experimental religion until her children were grown to manhood and womanhood. In order as she thought to keep her own children and other young people from getting into bad company she used to have dances in her own home and dance with them. Her husband was a lumberman on Tionesta creek. At that time the virgin forest lined this stream on both sides for the most of its length. Here and there were clearings where the lumbermen had been at work. When her children had become young men and women, and two of them had gone away to school the Spirit of God showed her how she had failed to do her duty by them and she was brought under conviction for sin and the need of a personal experience of salvation. She earnestly sought God and was soon marvelously converted in her own home and began to let her light shine in her home and among those employed by her husband in the manufacture of lumber. Soon after her conversion she was led to see her need of a deeper experience but knew no name for it. Speaking to the pastor of the Methodist church, which she had joined, of this he told her she must be patient and grow into the experience she felt she needed. In the summer of 1871 she attended a camp meeting at Oil City in charge of B. T. Roberts, and obtained the experience of a clean heart. Soon after the way was opened for meetings at the point on Tionesta creek where her home was and it was not long until revival fires were kindled and the lumber camps where before, blasphemy, drinking and revelry abounded were resounding with the praises of God. She had remarkable faith in God. Her children, a son and two daughters, had married Catholics. She took their cases to God in prayer and prevailed. They were all saved. Her son has been for years an able minister and successful soul winner. His wife is one of the noblest of God’s saints. Another illustration of her faith: Her husband and son had cut some logs but the streams were low and they could not get them to the mill. “Grandma” went to God about it and got an answer. She told them to get everything ready for it was going to rain and they would get their logs down. They acted on her advice and to the surprise of all but herself, for it had been very dry, it rained, the streams came up and they got the logs all down to the mill. Others who laughed at her faith started to get ready after the rain came but before they could accomplish anything the water fell and their logs remained in the woods all summer. They still tell on Tionesta creek of “Grandma Tobey’s flood.” To the prayers, testimonies and faith of “Grandma” as much as to any one agency is due the work of God in north western Pennsylvania. In a green old age she still lives. Her face still shines as it did the first time the writer saw it in a little school-house over thirty years ago; her testimonies still retain their note of

victory; she is still a welcome visitor at quarterly meetings, camp meeting or conference; many regard her as a “mother in Israel”—their mother; in that great day when the jewels are made up in her crown will be many stars and many will rise up and call her blessed.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE MIDDLE WEST AND SOUTHWEST

Among the first appointments of the "Western Convention" (Illinois conference) we find "St. Louis, Joseph Travis." This seems to have been the only appointment outside of the state in that direction until in 1867 when we find "Lawrence and Kansas, C.H. Lovejoy." The next year there were reported from Kansas thirty full members and ninety-nine probationers. Four circuits in Kansas are found among the appointments for this year (1868) and five preachers were appointed to that field. A Kansas and Missouri district was formed including circuits in southwestern Illinois, Missouri and Kansas. C. H. Lovejoy was made chairman. The minutes of the Illinois conference for October, 1870, show a membership in Kansas, in full connection, of two hundred. The Kansas and Missouri conference was organized by vote of the General Conference held at Aurora, Illinois, October 12-21, 1870. The appointments were made by general superintendent B. T. Roberts and C. H. Lovejoy and J. Matthews who had been elected chairmen of the work by the Illinois conference. These appointments were ratified by the General Conference. C. H. Lovejoy, J. Matthews, I. Bliss, W. H. Neal, H. Matthews and O. Wisner, who had been members of the Illinois conference, identified themselves with the new conference. No records of this conference appear in the published minutes until the year 1877. They then report sixteen preachers in full connection and thirteen on trial, and a total of three hundred and sixty-seven members, but the reports are incomplete. The work steadily spread over the state of Kansas into Colorado, Nebraska and in Missouri. On account of the widely extended condition of the work it was adjudged best to divide it and in the fall of 1883, the territory was divided into three conferences known as the Kansas, West Kansas and Missouri. Their aggregate membership was about nine hundred and twenty-five, preachers about forty-five.

In the minutes of the Illinois conference for 1869 we find this appointment, "Colorado district, D. M. Rose, chairman; Colorado, D. M. Rose." Colorado district does not appear again until nine years later in the minutes of the Kansas and Missouri conference, when we read "Colorado district, W. M. Adams, chairman. Colorado, to be supplied." Two years later Colorado Springs reports seventeen members. The next year thirty-nine were reported. No report again appears from Colorado until 1884 when fifty-nine members and probationers are reported. The Colorado conference was organized at Fountain, Colorado, November 5, 1886, with the following preachers in full connection: J. F. Garrett, T. H. Vipond, C. W. Stamp, J. B. Roberts, G. A. Loomis, B. F. Todd, and J. I. Council and V. Roth on trial. No statistical report is given in the printed minutes, for that year. At this time (1908) there is a total membership of four hundred and thirty. Sixteen preachers are engaged in the work in the conference.

Very soon after the organization of the Kansas and Missouri conference the "joyful sound" drifted across the border into Nebraska and some who had been associated with our people in states further east, and who had settled in that state, and others who believed in a full salvation, called for Free Methodist preachers. In answer to these calls appointments were established and work opened up, especially in the southeastern and southern part of the state. In 1884 the Kansas conference formed a Nebraska district in

the southeastern part of the state. The same year the Iowa conference appointed T. H. Allen and F. A. Smith to Omaha, North Kennard and Fletcher in the state of Nebraska. The next year the West Iowa conference was formed and the work in northeast Nebraska was taken charge of by that conference. In 1889 one year before the Nebraska conference was organized, the Omaha district reported to the West Iowa conference one hundred members from four circuits. The same year the Nebraska portion of the Kansas conference work, then known as the Lincoln and Elkhorn districts, reported one hundred and forty-five members. On August 14, 1890, the Nebraska conference was organized at Yutan, Nebraska. The conference roll shows nine preachers in full connection, and none on trial. A total membership of two hundred and ten was reported, but time Omaha district was reported to the West Iowa conference this year, and to neither conference for 1891. In 1892 there were nine preachers in full connection and seven on trial. A full report from all the territory of the conference gave a total of three hundred and fifty-five members and probationers.

The Platte River conference occupying the southwestern and western part of the state of Nebraska was organized at Ravenna, Nebraska, August 20, 1896, from territory formerly embraced in the West Kansas conference. As early as 1878 when the states of Kansas and Missouri were included in the Kansas and Missouri conference, the preachers from that conference had begun to open up appointments in this - part of Nebraska. The first society organized appears to have been at a place called Methodist Creek in the south central part of the state. Soon other points began to open up. In 1885 the Alma district was formed composed of five circuits, all of which were supplied with pastors. In 1890 about two hundred members were reported from this territory and the work was moving out toward the north and west. In 1893 there were two districts reporting about three hundred members and probationers. At the time of the organization of the conference in 1896 thirteen preachers in full connection and five on trial were enrolled. The aggregate membership was four hundred and sixty. The minutes for 1907 give the number of preachers as twenty-four and the total membership a little over five hundred.

The first appointment in the bounds of the Oklahoma conference was made by the Kansas conference in 1887. In 1893 sixty-three members were reported from the territory. In 1898 there were one hundred and forty-eight. The Oklahoma conference was organized at Emporia, Kansas, October 21, 1899. C. E. Harroun, Sr., C. E. Harroun, Jr., J. L. Brown and A. J. Donaldson in full connection, and C. W. Van Treese, M. Wright and S. Freer on trial were the preachers. No statistics are available for that session. There are at present eight hundred and eighty members and about twenty preachers in active service.

The Arkansas and Southern Missouri conference, occupying the southern part of the state of Missouri and the state of Arkansas, was organized at Fairplay, Missouri, September 4, 1895. The reason for its organization was the widely extended character of the work in the Missouri conference. There are at present seven preachers and a total of two hundred members.

Some time in the latter part of the year 1877 or early in 1878, G. B. Harvey, an elder in the New York conference, removed to Texas. There being no Free Methodists in that state, and having formerly been a preacher in the Methodist Protestant church, he united with the East Texas conference of that church and was appointed to a charge. As he began to preach entire sanctification as a second work of grace and separation from the world as a necessary fruit of salvation, opposition developed and he was, at the

request of the people removed from his pastorate. He immediately wrote to B. T. Roberts requesting the restoration of his membership in the New York conference and at the same time asking for a transfer to the Kansas and Missouri conference and appointment as missionary to Texas. At the next session of that conference September, 1878, he was received and appointed to Texas. His first work was in Lawrence, Kauffman county, where a society was organized and a small chapel erected. This work however did not become permanent. Some time later a society was organized in Ennis, Ellis county, and a church building erected. This society was the foundation of our work in Texas. Some of the members of this society were: J. A. McKinney, J. C. McKinney and wife, F. Glasscock and wife, Cyrus T. Hogan and wife, Mary McCullough, \_\_\_\_\_ Snow and wife and \_\_\_\_\_ Ainsworth. This society was organized in 1879. Mr. Harvey now removed his family to this place and held meetings quite extensively through central Texas. Societies were organized and some preachers were raised up and the work was known as the Texas district of the Kansas and Missouri conference. The Texas and Louisiana conference was organized at Corsicana, Texas, July 10, 1881. G. R. Harvey, an elder, was received from the Kansas and Missouri conference and Philip Allen by certificate of location from the Louisiana conference of the Methodist Episcopal church South. W. Parker, J. A. McKinney, H. V. Haslam, H. A. Hanson and S. H. Hurlocke were received on trial. The number of members is not given. The Texas conference at its last session reported seven hundred members and probationers and twenty-five preachers in active service.

The work in Louisiana grew out of the work in Texas. Philip Allen, an ordained elder in the Louisiana conference of the Methodist Episcopal church south, having been led into the experience of entire sanctification began to preach the doctrine and testify to the experience on his fields of labor. Others were led into the experience, among them two preachers, J. A. Biggs and J. P. Byars. The latter two meeting with much opposition withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal church south and organized the Union Methodist church. At the session of his conference held in 1880 Mr. Allen was located. Having heard of the Free Methodists, he, in the summer of 1881, went to Texas to meet with them. Returning to Louisiana with him, Mr. Harvey organized the first Free Methodist society in Louisiana at Welcome Home, Caldwell Parish, in the early summer of that year. Those who had been members of the Union Methodist church largely, came into the society, including Rev. J. A. Biggs and Rev. J. D. Byars. The latter were received into the conference at its next session. The work in Louisiana being widely separated from that in Texas it was thought best to organize it into a separate conference. This was done by the organization of the Louisiana conference at Welcome Home, November 13, 1884. Since then some progress has been made in extending the work in Louisiana and Mississippi. There are now eleven preachers and a total of about one hundred and seventy-five members.

# CHAPTER X.

## THE MIDDLE WEST AND SOUTH

The Indiana and Central Illinois conference was organized at Waynesville, Illinois, October 9, 1879. A variety of circumstances led up to the organization of this conference out of portions of the territory occupied by the Illinois and Michigan conferences. Possibly one of the most important factors was the work of the "Western Holiness Association." Near the close of the seventh decade of the nineteenth century, or in the early part of the eighth, several ministers of different denominations in Central Illinois were, led into the experience of entire sanctification. Among these were M. L. Haney, H. Wallace, L. B. Kent, W. B. M. Colt, J. P. Brooks, Isaiah Reid, and others. These men began to preach the doctrine and urge believers to seek the experience which they themselves had received. Soon violent opposition to them and their work developed and they were forced out of the ranks of the regular ministry in their churches and became known as "Holiness Evangelists." They soon became convinced that some form of organization was necessary to conserve the work and organized the "Western Holiness Association." Under the auspices of this association the *Banner of Holiness*, was issued and became a strong factor for the promotion of the work. Soon "county associations" were formed and these were followed by "bands" composed of those in the different localities who were in accord with the work. In some cases there was a brief statement of doctrine and practice which one has denominated a "minature Free Methodist Discipline," to which all subscribed. But in many cases there was no formal basis of union, but a mere informal agreement to stand together to promote the work of holiness. The ministry in the different churches generally opposing the work, the direction and management fell largely into the hands of the laity in many places. This led to the organization of the "Layman's Holiness Association" and under the leadership of this organization many gracious revivals were held by laymen in which many souls were converted and sanctified. J. H. Moss of Greenville, Illinois, now in glory, held for many years one of the staunch laymen of the church, R. W. Sanderson, now for several years a successful pastor in the Central Illinois conference and "Uncle Shel" Young of Sorento, Illinois, were active workers in this movement.

Soon some of the leaders, among both the ministry and laity saw that if the work was to become permanent there must be a closer organization and unification of the "holiness people" than existed. About this time some having become acquainted with the Free Methodists began to look toward that church as a home for the holiness people and began to plan for the bringing of the work into that organization. Many of the preachers and people at first seemed to favor it, but later some of these strongly opposed it. In the fall of 1879 W. B. M. Colt, H. F. Ashcraft and F. H. Ashcraft decided to unite with the Free Methodist church and to use their influence to induce the "holiness people" to do the same. Accordingly at the organization of the Indiana and Central Illinois conference these brethren united, Mr. Colt by certificate of location from the Nebraska conference of the Methodist Episcopal church, and the Ashcraft brethren on trial. W. W. Kelly, an elder, and F. H. Haley, a deacon, in the Illinois conference also united and John Harden who had been two years on trial in the Michigan conference was received into full connection. Four others besides those mentioned above were received on trial. The new conference embraced what had been known as the Central Illinois and Bellville districts in the Illinois

conference and the Indiana district of the Michigan conference. The total membership reported was two hundred and fifty-seven. At the end of the first year this had been increased by over four hundred. A good degree of prosperity has always attended the work in the conference, and notwithstanding the fact that she has "swarmed" several times the Central Illinois conference still reports an aggregate of two thousand members.

The first appointments within the bounds of the Wabash conference were made by the Michigan conference. In the fall of 1871, Septer Roberts was appointed to Cincinnati and Evansville. Mr. Roberts, who was pastor at Dublin, Indiana, had visited Evansville during the year and in September, immediately preceding the session of the conference, had organized a society of twelve members. J. W. Vickery, a layman, heard of the Free Methodists, probably through the *Earnest Christian*, and through him the work was introduced into that part of the state. Of that original society of twelve not one is now living. All have gone to their reward. In 1872, and again in 1873, B. R. Jones was appointed to Evansville and Ft. Branch. At the close of his pastorate of two years he reported sixty-eight members and probationers and church property valued at \$4,000. Some time during the year 1873-74, through the influence of three brethren named Johnson, Harden and Biddle, C. S. Gitcheil, who was pastor at that time at a point called Tippecanoe, went to Attica, Indiana, and held a meeting which resulted in the organization of a society and the erection of a brick church and parsonage. The three men named above, all men of means and influence in the community, became charter members. Mr. Johnson, now over eighty years of age, is the only one of the three living. In 1875 this society reported forty-six members and property valued at 9,000. A little later the work spread along the western part of Indiana and the eastern section of Illinois until another division was decided upon and the Wabash conference was organized at Attica, Indiana, October 21, 1885, including the larger part of the state of Indiana and that part of the state of Illinois lying south of the Illinois conference and east of the Illinois Central railroad. The conference began with eleven preachers and a total of live hundred and thirty members. At present there are twenty-eight preachers and about eleven hundred members.

Many of the preachers in the early days of Free Methodism were effectually delivered from all temptation to feel that the fields of labor assigned them were narrow or circumscribed. A whole state for a circuit ought to satisfy a man however great his aspirations might be. And yet to be faithful to facts it must be recorded that even then there were those who would go beyond the bounds of their charges to hold meetings.

In the minutes of the first session of the Michigan conference one of the appointments reads, "Ohio, H. L. Ash." From "Hart's Reminiscences," we learn that Mr. Ash was "a young man, a son of Uncle Arby Ash" of Huron circuit in Michigan. The "young man" evidently found his circuit and went to work, for we learn that he soon secured the services of E. P. Hart of Michigan to assist him in meetings at Windsor, Richland county, Ohio. By thoroughly advertising Mr. H. as "one of our big guns" the "young man" succeeded in awakening quite an interest in the community to hear the new preacher and the meetings were largely attended. Much of the divine presence and blessing were given and many were saved and a society organized which proved to be the germ that developed into the Ohio conference. August, 1867, at the third session of the Michigan conference, Windsor, Ohio, reported twenty in full connection and seven on probation. In 1868 Toledo circuit was added to the list of appointments in Ohio. The next fall,

1869, a total membership of about one hundred and seventy-five was reported from Ohio, and four charges in that state were supplied with pastors by the conference. The next year the Toledo district composed of circuits in Ohio and in southeastern Michigan was formed and E. P. Hart was made chairman. The increase in the membership in Ohio was about fifty this year. Of the eight charges in the Toledo district in the appointments for 1873 all but one were in Ohio and all were supplied with pastors. During the fall and winter of 1874-75 E. P. Hart held a meeting in Summerfield, Noble county, Ohio, and organized the first society in that section of the state. In 1876 eight circuits reported five hundred and thirty-five in the aggregate as the membership in Ohio. The work was now fairly launched in the state of Ohio, and much of it being widely separated from the Michigan conference, requiring very long journeys to reach the seat of the conference it was thought best to organize the Ohio work into a separate conference. The organization was effected at West Windsor, Richland county, Ohio (where the first society in the state was organized), October 2, 1879. B. R. Jones, J. A. Wilson, C. F. Irish, J. Cripps, N. B. Woods, J. Hayden, elders, C. B. Schaeffer who had been two years on trial, and W. Jones, who had been one year on trial in the Michigan conference, united. C. B. Schaeffer and W. Jones were elected and ordained deacons. S. K. Wheat-lake was received on trial. The statistics show an aggregate membership of six hundred and eleven. The present status of the conference is about forty preachers and eleven hundred and fifty members.

The first Free Methodist preacher of whom we have been able to find a record who entered the state of Indiana and established an appointment was T. S. LaDue. In the summer of 1862, while living in Van Buren county, Michigan, he received a letter from one J. W. Barron, a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal church, living near Elkhart, Indiana, requesting him to come there and preach. In answer to this call he established an appointment at Elkhart which was continued for some time. He also held meetings at Mishawaka, Indiana. The conference removed him in the fall and no permanent work was established at either place.

At the first session of the Michigan conference C. S. Gitchell was appointed to Indiana. At the third session of this conference, "Dublin, Indiana," reported sixteen members. In the appointments for that year it was left to be supplied, but the next year reported twenty-seven members and forty-five probationers. C. S. Gitchehl was again appointed pastor this year. In 1872 Dublin disappears from the appointments and the statistical table. In 1873 Ft. Wayne appears in the statistical table and in the list of appointments and this seems to be the first permanent society organized within the bounds of the North Indiana conference. In 1880 there was reported a total of one hundred and sixty members from this territory. The North Indiana conference occupies about one third of the northern part of the state of Indiana. It was organized at Knox, Indiana, October 27, 1887. There were seven preachers in full connection, eleven on trial and a total of two hundred and twenty-five members. The Present enrolment of preachers is twenty in full connection, three on trial. The membership in the aggregate is four hundred and eighty.

The Kentucky and Tennessee conference was formed out of territory developed by the Central Illinois conference in the state of Kentucky, the state of Tennessee being included within its boundaries. It was organized at Scottsville, Kentucky, October 29, 1896. The minutes for 1907 show eighteen preachers and an aggregate membership of about three hundred.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE WORK IN CANADA AND CALIFORNIA.

Probably the first Free Methodist preacher to preach in Canada was B. T. Roberts. Robert Loveless, a member of the Primitive Methodist church, whose home was in Ellesmere about thirteen miles north of Toronto, Ontario, was a subscriber to the *Earnest Christian*. Through this magazine he learned of the Free Methodists. He corresponded with Mr. Roberts, who went to Ellesmere and preached there and also at Stouffville, fourteen miles north of Ellesmere. The first Free Methodist preacher to be regularly appointed to Canada was C. H. Sage of the North Michigan conference. In his autobiography Mr. Sage says: "I went to conference free as a bird and told the Lord I was ready for any field of labor. When the appointments were read the last one was, 'Canada, C. H. Sage.'" Mr. Sage started to his field of labor trusting God. He found a small class at Gait which had been raised up by a Sister Smith. This seems to have been the first class organized in Canada. The "candle" has not gone out as there is still a society of thirty members there and a church and parsonage. Mr. Sage labored at different points in Canada until spring when, not being satisfied with his success, he returned to Michigan and supplied a circuit until conference. Much to his surprise at the conference session in October, 1877, Canada was made into a district and he was returned as chairman. In 1878 and 1879, he was continued in the same relation, other preachers being appointed to charges in Canada from year to year. In the fall of 1879 Rev. A. Sims, who had been an ordained elder in the Primitive Methodist church in Canada, united with the conference and took work in Canada. He became at once a strong factor in the development of the work and remains such until this day. Although for some reason (possibly because it was so far separated from the conference with which it was connected) the reports appearing in the conference minutes are very incomplete, it is apparent that the work from year to year began to take on shape and become more encouraging.

The Canada conference was organized at Gait, Ontario, October 21, 1880. The preachers in full connection were C. H. Sage, J. Craig, T. Carveth, A. Sims. On trial, William McKearnin, C. M. Smith, J. H. Winter. Three hundred and seventy-four members and probationers were reported. One of the peculiar features of the Canada work for a number of years, and to some extent the same to-day, was the number of women who took charge of circuits and were instrumental in holding together, extending and building up the work. Apparently it was a case where Barak would not go and Deborah was obliged to take the lead. Another feature was the extent of territory over which the work spread, extending from the western almost to the eastern boundary of the province of Ontario. This led to its division into the East Ontario and West Ontario conferences in September, 1896. The West Ontario conference at the time of the division had eight preachers in full connection and two on trial and five hundred members and probationers. The East Ontario conference had twelve preachers in full connection, three on trial and a total membership of seven hundred and fifty. For 1907 the two conferences reported forty-five preachers and one thousand six hundred and thirty members in the aggregate.

During the last decade of the nineteenth century members of our church at different times moved from

the eastern part of Canada into the western provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. After settling in their new homes these people sent urgent requests to the east that preachers might be sent to them. These appeals awakened a response in the hearts of the brethren in the east and one brother especially felt this needy field laid on his heart. J. D. Shier, a man of some means and a member of the Free Methodist church in Bracebridge, Ontario, provided money to put the first missionary in the field also to purchase a tabernacle, tents and outfit for holding meetings. In the fall of 1898, W. H. Wilson was appointed by the West Ontario conference "missionary to Manitoba and the northwest territory." During the year 1899 a society was organized of members who lived at widely scattered points called the "Floating Society." This society was composed entirely of members who had emigrated from the east. In the early part of the year 1900 the first revival meeting was held at Westview, Saskatchewan. From the fruit of this revival the first permanent society was organized March 11, 1900. In June of this year J. W. Haley, now missionary in Africa, went to Western Canada and for two years aided effectively in developing the work. In 1902 Rev. F. M. Wees, a member of the West Ontario conference, with his wife, went to the help of the little band of workers and rendered valuable assistance in the work. In view of the fact that this work was so remote from the conferences in Ontario it was thought best to organize it into a separate conference. Accordingly at Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, on July 5, 1906, six preachers, W. H. Wilson, F. M. Wees, O. L. King, E. Steer, R. Hamilton and J. B. Newville, and six laymen, representing one hundred and twenty-four members and twenty-four probationers, met and were organized into the Western Canada conference by Bishop Burton R. Jones. They have held one annual session since at which the ministerial force was increased by two received on trial, and an increase in membership reported.

California, from the days when William Taylor, afterward Methodist Bishop of Africa, was sent to lay the foundation of Methodism in that state, until the present, has borne the reputation of being the hardest field in which to do religious work that our country presents. The territory was originally settled largely by adventurers—men who went there solely for the purpose of seeking fortunes. In the mad rush and scramble for gold everything else was forgotten. Men who in the east had been identified with the church and active in religious work caught the infection and joined the money-mad crowd. The result was that the whole community became possessed with a spirit of supreme indifference to sacred things which seems to prevail until the present. Free Methodism at its introduction there met this and faces it still. B. T. Roberts, when holding meetings there in 1880 said in the Methodist preacher's meeting in San Francisco, "I am surprised, brethren, that you have accomplished as much as you have. It is the hardest rock I ever drilled in."

It has been almost impossible to secure satisfactory data regarding the beginning of our work in that state. The earliest conference appointment the writer can find is "W. D. Bishop, missionary to California," in the minutes of the Michigan conference for 1873. But no report of his work appears in the minutes and after two years the appointment is no longer found. In 1875 "California Mission, G. W. Humphrey" is found in the minutes of the Genesee conference. But the appointment does not appear again. It is probable that some time during that year he organized the first Free Methodist society in California. A society was organized that year of which the following were members: Thomas Dawler, Maria E. Parks, Mary A. Young, a Brother and Sister Briggs, a Brother and Sister Thomas, probably Dr. and Mrs. Bishop and others. This society was formed in San Francisco. In October, 1876, Rev. F. H. Horton, a local preacher in the Methodist Episcopal church, united with the society. Meetings were held

in halls, tents and private houses in Alameda, Pacheco and other places. At Pacheco a society was organized which still remains. In the fall and winter of 1879-80, B. T. Roberts and wife spent several months in California holding meetings twice a day most of the time. In the early winter of 1882-83, E. P. Hart and wife went to that state and held a series of meetings in San Jose. After several weeks of hard work a small society was organized and Rev. M. L. Vorhies went from Iowa to California to take charge of the work. This society remains and is the strongest in the California conference. The Iowa conference minutes have a report from California in 1883 of two circuits, Oakland and San Jose, with sixty full members and nine probationers. The minutes of the first session of the California conference do not appear in the combined minutes. The second session was held at Oakland, California, November 14-16, 1884. There were seven preachers in full connection and two on trial. The total membership was one hundred and thirteen. There are at present sixteen preachers and three hundred and fifty-seven members and probationers.

Rev. David Shepard was the first Free Methodist preacher to preach within the bounds of the territory now embraced in the Southern California conference. Eugene C. Shipley, a kcal preacher, removed from Chicago to Los Angeles in 1886. Through his influence Mrs. C. B. Ebey, in 1887, was induced to go to Los Angeles for her health. C. E. McReynolds, a member of the Minnesota and Northern Iowa conference, about the same time located there. The first distinctively Free Methodist meeting in southern California was a prayer meeting led by Mr. McReynolds in the home of Mrs. Ebey. In April, 1888, Rev. C. B. Ebey went to California, expecting to return in a short time to his district work in the Illinois conference, but seeing the improved condition of Mrs. Ebey's health and listening to the urgent appeals of the few pilgrims he decided to remain and hold some meetings. A tent was erected in Pasadena and a five weeks' meeting held. A class of thirteen was organized at the close. A little later a meeting was held in a part of the city (of Los Angeles?) known as Monk -Hill. Soon a church and parsonage were erected on Pepper street, Pasadena, and dedicated to God in January, 1889. by E. P. Hart. Mr. Hart and wife remained for some time and assisted in a meeting at Compton, at which place the second Free Methodist society in southern California was organized. C. B. Ebey transferred to the California conference in the fall of 1889. A Los Angeles district was formed and he was made chairman. From that time until he was elected editor of the Free Methodist, in 1903, he was closely associated with the work in that part of the state. He was instrumental during this time in raising up or assisting in raising up and organizing eighteen societies. The General Conference of 1890 authorized the organization of a Southern California conference when the General Superintendents should think it advisable. The conference was organized by B. T. Roberts at Los Angeles, May 21, 1891, with the following ministers: C. B. Ebey, D. McLeod, James Seals and Thomas Fluck. The membership was one hundred in full connection and twenty six on probation. The names of thirty preachers are found on the conference roll at present, but only a portion of these are engaged in the active work in the conference. The total membership is now five hundred and fifty.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

Tracing the Free Methodist church back through the evolutionary steps which led to its organization we reach the "Layman's Convention" as the basis of its deliberative and official bodies. The sturdy spirit of devotion to right, the righteously indignant protest against ecclesiastical proscription and persecution, and the manly type of independence which refused to surrender God-given convictions, rights and privileges at the demand of a party which, having secured control of affairs, exacted unquestioning obedience as the price of peace which characterized these conventions in their deliberations and deliverances, reveal the type of men who were back of the movement which gave us our denominational existence. The "Convention" at Pekin, August 23, 1860, at which the Free Methodist church was formally organized was the logical sequence and outcome of these. As the church had originated in conventions it was somewhat natural that this term should be selected to designate its deliberative and official bodies. The general, annual and quarterly conferences were all known as conventions until in 1862, when the first and only "General Convention" held under the Discipline changed "convention" to "conference" in our denominational terminology.

The General Conference is the legislative body of the church. It is the only body having power to make rules and regulations which are binding upon the membership of the denomination. When properly convened and organized it has full power to legislate subject only to the restrictive rules of the Discipline. These rules forbid the altering or changing our Articles of Religion, our General Rules or establishing any new standards of doctrine; the doing away with lay representation, an itinerant ministry, the general superintendency or the free seat system; the depriving of our ministers or members of the right of trial by an impartial committee or an appeal. Two-thirds of the General Conference and three-fourths of the members of the several annual conferences concurring then either of these may be changed but the last, which may not be changed.

The General Conference meets once in four years, and is composed of the bishops, who are members *ex officio* and an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates elected by the several conferences according to the provisions of the Discipline. The basis of representation at the time of the organization was one ministerial and one lay delegate for every ten ministers in full connection in the conference. At the General Conference of 1878 "fifteen" was substituted for "ten" in the basis of representation. At the General Conference of 1882 the basis of representation was changed from the number of preachers to the number of lay members in the conference. Now each annual conference is entitled to one ministerial and one lay delegate in the General Conference and when there is an aggregate membership of eight hundred, two delegates of each kind and one additional delegate of each kind for every subsequent six hundred members in full connection in the conference.

The first General Conference met at St. Charles, Illinois, Wednesday, October 8, 1862. The Pekin convention had decided to have a general superintendency and had elected B. T. Roberts to the office of

general superintendent. He called the conference to order and presided. The members of this conference in addition to the general superintendent were: Ministerial delegates: Genesee conference, L. Stiles, Jr., A. Abell; Illinois conference, J. W. Redfield, J. Travis; -Susquehanna. conference, W. Cooley. Lay delegates: Genesee conference, G. W. Holmes, H. Hartshorn; Illinois conference, O. Joslyn, B. F. Hackney; Susquehanna conference, J. T. Collins. Not one of these is now living (1908). After sitting until October 16 in St. Charles, Illinois, the conference adjourned to meet at Buffalo, New York, November 4, 1862. It adjourned finally November 7, 1862. The Genesee delegates objected to the seating of the Susquehanna delegates on the ground that the general superintendent had transcended his authority in organizing that conference. To provide against a recurrence of such objections the executive committee was created and no new conference could be formed without its consent. This committee was at first composed of one minister and one layman from each conference, but as the records of the conferences in those days are somewhat imperfect the writer has so far found it impossible to give the *personnel* of the committee as first organized. B. T. Roberts was reelected general superintendent. A committee was appointed to draft a constitution for a missionary society.

The second General Conference convened at Buffalo, New York, Tuesday, October 10, 1866, where it sat until Saturday, October 13, when it adjourned to meet at Albion, New York, October 15, where it met and continued its sittings and adjourned finally Thursday, October 18. Four annual conferences were represented. The number of delegates was eighteen. The executive committee was made a court of appeals in the interim of the General Conference; it was also authorized to elect another general superintendent if in its judgment the interests of the work demanded it. All missions outside the bounds of an annual conference were placed under the charge of the general superintendent. Steps were taken to secure a legal incorporation of the church. B. T. Roberts was reelected general superintendent.

The third General Conference met at Aurora, Illinois, Wednesday, October 12, 1870, and adjourned finally Thursday, October 21. Four conferences were again represented, but there were fifteen ministerial and fourteen lay delegates. Two ministers expelled during the quadrennium appealed to the General Conference. In the hearing of these appeals the delegates from the conferences which expelled the appellants refrained from voting. The action of the conferences was unanimously sustained. The amendment to the general rules against the use of tobacco was submitted to the annual conferences; also an amendment placing the general superintendency under the restrictive rules. During the interim Rev. Levi Wood had founded the *Free Methodist*. He now offered it to the General Conference. The offer was accepted and E. Owen was elected editor. The next day he resigned and Joseph Mackey, of New York, offered to take the paper and edit and publish it at his own risk. His offer was accepted. Provision was made that an extra session of the General Conference might be called at the request of two-thirds of the annual conferences. The Kansas and Missouri conference was authorized and its appointments made by the general superintendent and the district chairmen presiding over the territory. B. T. Roberts was reelected general superintendent. One hundred and twenty-five preachers and six thousand and five hundred and fifty-six members were reported.

The fourth General Conference convened at Albion, New York, October 14, 1874, and closed its sittings October 27. Six annual conferences were represented by eighteen ministerial and eighteen lay delegates. The conference voted to elect two general superintendents. B. T. Roberts was reelected and E. P. Hart was

chosen for the second. A missionary board, composed of the general superintendents and three ministers and two laymen was formed. The following are the members besides the superintendents: William Gould, E. Owen, T. S. La Due, Joseph Mackey, E. H. Winchester. The *personnel* of the executive committee is given as follows: B. T. Roberts, E. P. Hart, J. W. Reddy, E. Owen, J. G. Terrill, P. B. Jones. W. Jones, N. A. Bennett, A. Wise, O. P. Rogers, D. W. Abrams, W. B. Bertels, J. M. Cusick.

The fifth General Conference met at Spring Arbor, Michigan, Wednesday, October 9, 1878, and adjourned sine die Saturday, October 19. Ten conferences were represented by thirty-one ministerial and twenty-five lay delegates. These, with two general superintendents, made a total membership of fifty-eight. Steps were taken looking toward the purchase of the *Free Methodist*. The executive committee was authorized to act as an advisory committee in the managing of the *Free Methodist*. A committee was elected to compile and publish a denominational hymnbook. B. T. Roberts was requested to write and publish the book, "Why Another Sect." B. T. Roberts and E. P. Hart were reelected general superintendents. Three hundred and thirteen preachers and ten thousand six hundred members were reported.

The sixth session was held at Burlington, Iowa, beginning Wednesday, October II, 1882, and adjourned Monday, October 25. The Ohio, the Indiana and Central Illinois, the Canada and the Texas and Louisiana conferences had been organized in the interim, making fourteen conferences in all. These were represented by thirty-five ministerial and thirty-one lay delegates. The "two year rule" was so modified that in "exceptional cases" a preacher might be returned to a charge the third year. T. B. Arnold, owner and publisher of the *Free Methodist*, made the following proposition to the conference: "I will publish the *Free Methodist* paper at my own expense; I will also pay an editor appointed by the General Conference, who shall have editorial control of the paper; and I agree t the appointing of a committee by the General Conference, \* \* \* \* who, in case they find this arrangement proves unsatisfactory, shall have power to negotiate for the purchase of the paper, or to change the management and fill vacancies in the editorial chair." The proposition was accepted and Joseph Travis was elected editor. The salaries of the general superintendents were fixed at \$800 and their traveling expenses. A system for collecting these salaries was adopted. The rule against secret societies was incorporated in the general rules. B. T. Roberts and E. P. Hart were reelected general superintendents.

The seventh General Conference was held at Coopersville, Michigan, October 13 to 26, 1886. The two superintendents, with thirty-two ministerial and thirty lay delegates, representing twenty-three conferences, constituted the membership. One conference, the Louisiana, was not represented. The *Free Methodist* was purchased from T. B. Arnold, and B. T. Roberts was elected editor. An amendment to the Discipline providing for the election of a general conference evangelist was adopted. W. B. M. Colt was elected. T. B. Arnold was elected publishing agent. A new chapter was added to the Discipline on "Church Extension" and the Missionary Board was made a "Church Extension and Aid Society." The conferences were grouped in seven districts, from which the members of the Missionary Board were chosen. The executive committee was made a publishing committee and ordered to incorporate under the name "Executive Committee and Publishing House of the Free Methodist Church of North America." C. B. Ebey was elected missionary secretary, and S. K. J. Chesbro, treasurer. The conference decided to elect three general superintendents. B. T. Roberts and E. P. Hart were reelected. G. W. Coleman was elected as

the third.

The eighth quadrennial session was held in the May Street church, Chicago, Illinois, October 8 to 23, 1890. The three general superintendents and seventy-seven delegates representing twenty-eight conferences, composed the membership of the conference. A chapter on "Bands," with rules and regulations for bands and band workers, was adopted. A new chapter on "Claimants and Claims" was adopted. The full claim of 'a superannuated preacher or preacher's widow was raised from one hundred dollars to one hundred and fifty dollars per year. The collection for this fund was made a general *pro rata* apportionment upon the entire membership of the church. The missionary board was made a board of claimants and claims and was charged with the administration of this fund. An amendment to the Discipline forbidding raising, manufacturing or selling of tobacco was adopted. B. T. Roberts, E. P. Hart and G. W. Coleman were reelected general superintendents. B. R. Jones was elected editor of the *Free Methodist*. S. K. J. Chesbro, who, upon the resignation of T. B. Arnold in 1888, had been elected publishing agent by the executive committee was reelected. W. W. Kelley was elected missionary secretary.

The ninth session was held in Greenville, Illinois, October 10 to 25, 1894. Three general superintendents, forty-six ministerial and forty-two lay delegates composed the *personnel* of the conference. Rev. B. T. Roberts had died during the quadrennium and W. T. Hogue had been elected by the executive committee to fill the unexpired term. On the election for general superintendents, E. P. Hart, G. W. Coleman and B. R. Jones were elected. W. T. Hogue was elected editor of the *Free Methodist*. The term "district elder" was substituted for "district chairman." W. W. Kelley, on account of failing health, had resigned his position as missionary secretary in the interim, and J. G. Terrill had been elected his successor by the executive committee. He was reelected. S. K. J. Chesbro was reelected publishing agent. W. G. Hanmer was elected general conference evangelist. At this conference it was decided to establish a publishing house and to locate it in Chicago.

The tenth General Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois, convening October 12, 1898. Thirty-five annual conferences were represented. J. G. Terrill, a charter member of the Free Methodist church and of the Illinois conference, who had served - as missionary secretary for two years had died during the quadrennium and B. Winget had been elected in his stead by the executive committee. The conference decided to elect four general superintendents. E. P. Hart, G. W. Coleman and B. R. Jones were reelected. W. A. Sellew was elected as the fourth. W. T. Hogue was reelected editor of the *Free Methodist*, S. K. J. Chesbro, publisher, and B. Winget, missionary secretary. The time for the meeting of the General Conference was changed from October to June. At the meeting of the executive committee in October, 1895, A. C. Marshall, of the Michigan conference, had been elected assistant publishing agent. His duties as defined by the committee were "to labor under the direction of the publishing agent, to travel at large in the interests of the publishing house and to solicit funds for the same." One year later the president of the committee announced that Mr. Marshall had withdrawn from the church. W. B. Rose was elected to fill the vacancy caused by the withdrawal of Mr. Marshall. At this session of the General Conference Mr. Rose was reelected. His duties were to look after the publication of Sabbath-school literature and books and in a general way to render assistance to the agent. This general conference authorized the executive committee to elect an editor for the Sabbath-school literature which had lately been acquired from T. B.

Arnold. Immediately after the adjournment of the conference the committee met and W. B. Olmstead was elected.

The eleventh quadrennial gathering of the representatives of the church met in Greenville, Illinois, June 13, 1903. Thirty-eight annual conferences were represented by fifty. nine ministerial and fifty-seven lay delegates. These, with the four general superintendents, composed the conference. O. W. Coleman, on account of advancing age and increasing infirmities, declined to be considered a candidate for reelection. B. P. Hart, B. R. Jones and W. A. Sellew were reelected. W. T. Hogue was elected as the fourth general superintendent. C. B. Ebey was elected editor of the *Free Methodist*. W. B. Olmstead was reelected editor of Sabbath-school literature. S. K. J. Chesbro was reelected publishing agent and W. B. Rose assistant publishing agent.

The twelfth General Conference convened at Greenville, Illinois, June 12, 1907, and adjourned -finally Friday, June 28. Forty conferences were represented by sixty-four ministerial and sixty-one lay delegates. One event distinguishing this general conference from all others in time history of the church was the presence of J. P. Brodhead as ministerial and F. Grace Allen as lay delegate from the newly organized South Africa Mission conference, representing a constituency of six preachers and fifteen missionaries, and forty native workers and six hundred native Christians who just a short time before were raw heathen. By a vote of seventy-eight to forty the conference decided to change "general superintendent" to "bishop." The four general superintendents, B. P. Hart, B. R. Jones, W. A. Sellew and W. T. Rogue, were reelected as "bishops." The number of general conference evangelists was increased to three. C. W. Stamp was reelected. S. K. Wheatlake and J. H. Flower were chosen as the other two. J. T. Logan was -elected editor of the *Free Methodist*. S. K. J. Chesbro, on account of advancing years, declined a reelection, and W. B. Rose was elected publishing agent. W. B. Olmstead was reelected editor of Sabbath-school literature, but resigned, and D. S. Warner was elected. B. Winget was reelected missionary secretary. W. B. Olmstead was elected Sunday-school secretary and evangelist. A. Beers was elected educational secretary. Action was taken making provision for an order of Deaconesses. Also admitting women evangelists who have served as supplies two years consecutively to a voice and vote in the conference while they continue to receive an appointment. It was decided that the assistant publishing agent, instead of being elected by the general conference, should be nominated by the publishing agent and elected by the executive committee. C. W. Stevens was elected assistant agent at a meeting of the executive committee held in connection with the session of the general conference.

The statistical summary was as follows: Members and probationers, 33,043; Sabbath schools, 1,175; scholars amid officers, 48,133; value of church and parsonage property; \$2,061,545; value of publishing interests, \$90,000; raised for foreign missions during quadrennium, \$140,000; one college and seven seminaries valued at \$500,000; students enrolled, 1,400.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## FOREIGN MISSIONS.

One of the marvels of modern history is the rise and development of the missionary spirit in the church within the last century. Almost from the apostolic age until the last decade of the eighteenth century the nominal Christian world seemed to be in the grasp of a profound slumber, an impassive lethargy, a supreme indifference as regarded the condition of the heathen world and the great commission given her to evangelize all nations. True there were here and there individuals who seemed to catch a glimpse of the work to be done and every age has produced its moral heroes who have dared and suffered for the lost ones of earth, but during all these centuries there was no general awakening of the church to this matter. This apparently impenetrable, immovable wall faced the young man upon whose heart the Spirit of God laid the burden of the lost millions of heathendom in the closing years of the eighteenth century. William Carey, an obscure cobbler in a little village in England; a member of a despised sect; later a poorly paid preacher for these despised people; who would have supposed that he was destined to originate a movement which would electrify the Christian world? His own people had no sympathy with what they conceived to be his visionary ideas. When he propounded in the association the question, "Whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations was not obligatory upon all ministers to the end of the world," one of the "Fathers" not only voiced his own unbelief and indifference but that of Christendom as well when he said, "Sit down, young man. You are a miserable enthusiast to ask such a question. When God wants to convert the world he can do it without your help." But Carey had faith in God and the courage of his convictions and in spite of rebuffs he kept hammering at the wall until God enabled him to make a breach in it through which the light has been shining clearer and stronger with each decade of the century past and which shall shine

"Till earth's remotest nation  
Has learned Messiah's name."

Instead of indifference there is now everywhere a great and growing enthusiasm among all bodies of professing Christians to evangelize the world; instead of one little society composed of twelve obscure men, there are powerful organizations denominational and interdenominational whose object is to carry the gospel to the nations who have it not. Instead of a paltry twelve pounds (sixty dollars), the amount Carey and his friends subscribed for the propagation of the gospel among the heathen, there is pouring into the treasuries of the various missionary societies and boards a golden stream of \$20,000,000 annually; instead of one man who was ready to answer, "Here am I, send me," thousands to-day stand waiting to be sent.

In the earlier part of our history as a church the subject of missions to the heathen did not receive much attention among us. There were several reasons for this. We had just begun our denominational existence. Our work in the home land was purely missionary work. All had to be built from the foundation. Scattered companies here and there must be gotten together to form the nucleus of an

organization. Ministers must go forth without scrip or purse to where there were no churches, no parsonages, frequently no members, to raise up a work and build churches. During this formative period it required all the energies of the infant church to meet the demands of the home work and maintain her existence. Quite early however, in our denominational existence, at the General Conference of 1874, just fourteen years after the organization of the church, action was taken looking toward efforts in missionary work by the election of a missionary board which was authorized to take charge of all moneys raised for missionary purposes and appropriate it to home or foreign missions as in the judgment of its members the cause of God could be best promoted. This was only a germ, but the issue has proven that it was a live germ.

At the General Conference of 1882 Rev. C. B. Ebeey was elected missionary secretary which position he filled until the General Conference held at Chicago, Illinois, October 1890, when he was succeeded by Rev. W. W. Kelly. On account of failing health Mr. Kelly resigned and Rev. J. O. Terrill was elected his successor by the executive committee in April, 1893, and filled the office with marked ability until the time of his death in the early spring of 1895. The executive committee elected as his successor Rev. B. Winget whose fitness for the position has been evidenced by the fact of his practically unanimous election at each General Conference since. The General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist church was legally incorporated June 19, 1885. The interests of which it has charge, the volume of business it transacts, and the amount of funds it administers are steadily increasing year by year. One of the hardest worked officials of the church is its secretary.

The first Free Methodists who went to the foreign field were Rev. Ernest F. and Phebe E. Ward. Mr. and Mrs. Ward feeling the call of God upon them to go as missionaries to India, Mr. Ward offered himself to the Illinois conference for appointment to that field. He was received on trial, ordained deacon and elder and appointed missionary to India at the session of that conference held at Freeport, Illinois, October 6-10, 1880. They immediately sailed for India, arriving there in January, 1881. Although recognized as Free Methodist missionaries and receiving for several years, the principal part of their support from the Free Methodist church, they did not come directly under the board as they felt that to do so would not be in harmony with the idea of "faith missions" which they had adopted. It should be said here, that, having some means of their own, they expended what they had in the work to which they felt they were called. They spent a part of the year 1892-93 in America, returning to India before the close of the year 1893. After their return for a time they withdrew from the church and labored as "independent faith missionaries." Latterly they reunited with the church and in October, 1905, they were received by action of the Missionary Board as board missionaries and are proving to be valuable helpers to the missionaries on the field.

The first missionaries to go out to India under appointment by the Missionary Board were Miss Mary Louisa Ranf and Miss Julia Zimmerman. They sailed from New York, December 17, 1885. Miss Zimmerman left the work under the board, June 12, 1886. Miss Ranf continued her labors until the time of her tragic death November 6, 1890. Going into a place of worship to attend an evening service she came in contact with an oil lamp which was insecurely fastened, knocking it from its position. In falling the lamp was broken and the burning oil was spilled on her clothes setting them on fire. All her clothing was burned from her body. About five hours after the accident her spirit went to be with Jesus.

Miss Celia J. Ferries was accepted by the board and left Chicago, Illinois, for India in February, 1891. After remaining in India for five and one-half years she returned home in August, 1896. Remaining in the home land a little more than a year she left New York for India, October 23, 1897. Anna Jones landed in India in September, 1892 and remained about four and one-half years when because of failing health she returned to America. The board not thinking it wise because of the condition of her health to send her back to India she was discontinued. Mattie J. Miller was accepted for India in October, 1894, and immediately set sail reaching Bombay in December. She was granted a furlough in the summer of 1900. At the meeting of the board in October of that year she tendered her resignation which was accepted.

Rev. H. L. Crockett and Abbie Crockett, his wife, and their daughter Vangie and V. G. McMurray, the first two having been accepted by the directors of the board and the last by the board at its annual meeting, sailed for India, October 23, 1897. V. O. McMurray and Miss Ferries were united in marriage in the early summer of 1898. In the fall of 1900, because of Mrs. Crockett's mental and physical condition they were obliged to leave the field. Not deeming it best on account of Mrs. Crockett's health to think of returning to India, they tendered their resignation to the board and it was accepted. Mr. Crockett is a successful minister in the Susquehanna conference.

Miss Emma Appling went to India under the Pentecost Bands, later seeking employment under our board she was, on recommendation of the missionaries on the field, accepted in October, 1896. In 1900 her health failing she was obliged to ask for a furlough. She was returned to India in the fall of 1903, but again in 1907 her health failing she was obliged to return to the home land, where she is at the present time. Rev. J. T. and Mrs. J. T. Taylor left New York for India January 19, 1901. Miss Rose Cox and Miss Effie Southworth sailed at the same time. In September of the same year Mr. M. C. and Mrs. Ethel M. Clarke sailed from New York for India. Miss Mary E. Chynoweth embarked for the India field, January 4, 1902. As a result of a nervous breakdown brought on by over-exertion Miss Cox in 1905 was obliged to return home for a furlough. Her health restored she is now on time field again in active service. On account of a serious failure in Mrs. Taylor's health they were obliged in 1906 to come home. Mrs. Taylor's health is much improved at this time (1908) and they expect soon to return to India. In the early part of 1908 Miss Chynoweth contracted virulent smallpox and entered into rest eternal. Since the last mentioned have gone out the following have been accepted and are on the field: Rev. and Mrs. George Edwards, Miss Jessie W. Lively, Mr. S. P. Casberg, Miss Mata D. Allee, Miss Edith M. Santee.

Our first mission station in India was located at Yeotmal, Province of Berar in Central India. The struggle to get a foothold in that land was long and severe, but at last land was secured and a good bungalow erected. During the late famine in India the way was opened for our missionaries to get a number of orphans both boys and girls. Two orphanages were established and there are now fifty-two boys and forty-four girls under the charge of our missionaries. They are being reared under Christian influence and training, many of them have been converted, and in a few years they will go forth to tell the story of the cross to their own people. Two other stations have since been opened, one at Darwha and one at Wun. There are thirty-four native communicants in India at the present time, fifteen missionaries on the field, three native helpers and property valued at about \$17,000.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### FOREIGN MISSIONS—CONTINUED.

Apparently the first manifest interest in missionary work in Africa was aroused in the Free Methodist church by an appeal which came from a certain chief known as "King Tappa" who had sent out a request for a missionary to come and teach him and his people the "God palaver." Mr. P. W. Abrams of Michigan in 1884 published in the *Free Methodist* an account of this appeal and invited correspondence from any who felt called to go to Africa. Among those who read this call and became interested in the matter were Mr. G. Harry Agnew, and Mr. Robert and Mrs. Katie Shemeld of Minnesota, and Rev. W. W. and Mrs. A. T. Kelly of Illinois. They were all accepted and appointed to Africa. In the early spring of 1885 they left America for the "Dark Continent." May 15th they sailed from England and reached Africa about one month later. Mr. and Mrs. Kelly and Mr. Agnew went to Inhambane where they established the mission which remains until the present. Mr. and Mrs. Shemeld stopped at Durban and going inland some distance started a mission at Estcourt. This mission was for some time known as "Bethany Mission." The work did not become permanent and later Mr. and Mrs. Shemeld withdrew from the church. Mr. Kelly's health failing under the strain of the climate in Inhambane, he and Mrs. Kelly in about one year returned home. For about two years Mr. Agnew toiled on alone, his only companion being "Tom" a native helper. Much of this time he suffered from the dread African fever and at one time met with a serious accident nearly costing him his eye. But save for a short trip for physical recuperation he stuck to his post.

March 3, 1888, another company of missionaries destined for Africa set sail. They were Rev. and Mrs. J. D. Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. A. Y. Lincoln, and Miss F. Grace Allen and Miss Ida Heffner. Their destination was Inhambane. One can imagine the joy of the lonely pioneer when on April 20, 1888, these reinforcements arrived at the station. But the joyous experience was of short duration. June 20, just two months later, while Mr. Agnew was absent on business, Mrs. Lincoln was taken suddenly ill and died. Because of a peculiar train of circumstances immediately following Mrs. Lincoln's death the other members of the company entered the employ of the American Board and went to other fields and Mr. Agnew was again left alone. Mr. Lincoln started soon after his wife's death for home, but, broken ill health by the fever and in spirit by his wife's sudden death, he passed quietly away at Bethany Mission, July 29, 1888.

For six months, though left alone the second time, Mr. Agnew toiled on and then, feeling that he needed rest from the strain and surgical help for his eye injured in the accident spoken of above, he began to plan for a trip home. His way being providentially opened, in January, 1889, he started on the homeward journey. He attended several camp meetings and conferences and did much to arouse an increased interest in missions while he was in the home land. In May, 1890, he started on his return journey to his loved field in Africa. Reinforcements again came to his aid in November, 1892, in time arrival of Frank L., and Mrs. Rose M. Desh, but as they were not in a fit condition to endure the climate, in two months' time they were on their way back-to Natal. They soon after severed their relation with the board. Again

the missionary was left alone to battle with heathen darkness and superstition. Several times he was very near death from the deadly African fever when no white person was near, but God preserved him. He again returned to the home land in the fall of 1894 remaining about three months, attending during that time the General Conference at Greenville, Illinois. On February 3, 1895, three weeks after his return to Africa, he was united in marriage with Miss Susie Sherman, at the Fair View Mission Station. In May following they settled in their home in Macheche. Soon after this Rev. J. J. and Mrs. Emma H. Haviland came to assist them in the work on the Inhambane field. The domestic happiness of Mr. Agnew was destined to be shortlived. On December 14, Mrs. Agnew was taken ill and three days later her spirit took its flight from the tabernacle of clay. Soon after this Mr. Agnew feeling that he must have release from the strain of the Inhambane climate and the way opening, as he believed providentially, to enter a field at Johannesburg in the Transvaal where the climate was healthful, he decided to go there. Although for several years while laboring at Johannesburg his support came from parties outside the Free Methodist church, he never severed his relation with the board and always considered himself a Free Methodist missionary. &lay 3, 1897, at Durban he was united in marriage to Miss Lillie A. Smith.

Mr. and Mrs. Haviland remained at Inhambane in charge of the work there after Mr. Agnew left. About two months after the beginning of his work at Johannesburg Mr. Agnew received a letter from Mrs. Haviland telling him of the death of her husband which occurred March 18, 1897. Mr. Haviland had been just about five years in Africa and was, as was Mr. Agnew himself a few years later, stricken down just on the eve of starting for the home land. Again the burden of the Inhambane work rolled upon the shoulders of Mr. Agnew. Although he never remained again permanently at Inhambane he always carried the work there upon his heart and at least twice made the journey thither on foot to give necessary oversight to the work. Once each year he returned to his beloved Inhambane and gave encouragement and counsel to the native workers and converts. Steady progress was made in the work at Johannesburg until the time of the Boer war when, on account of the unsettled state of the country he was obliged to leave for some time, but as soon as conditions would permit he returned to Johannesburg to prosecute the work there. In December, 1902, Mr. Agnew made his last trip to Inhambane, spending some time there visiting the different stations, baptizing and receiving converts into the church. Soon after his return to Johannesburg lie was seized with hematuria fever and on March 9, 1903, he departed to be with the Lord.

The history of our missionary work at Inhambane and Johannesburg, is inseparably connected with the story of his life. Briefly summed up, What are time results as seen today? At Inhambane there are reported forty-two "out stations" where time gospel is preached to the natives; there are five white missionaries now on the field and seventeen native evangelists employed; there are two hundred and seventy-six native communicants; about one hundred adherents; one thousand other natives who are receiving regular instruction; several thousand more directly under the influence of the gospel; property valued at over \$1,000. At Johannesburg (Umusa or Germiston) there are four "out stations"; sixty communicants; several thousand who are hearing the gospel message through our missionaries; property valued at nearly \$6,000. Four white missionaries are employed and four native evangelists.

In the fall of 1887, Rev, and Mrs. A. D. Noyes were accepted as missionaries and sent out arriving in Africa November 29 of that year. Because of a failure in funds for their support they accepted positions under the American Board for a time. December 1, 1890 they resumed work under the board again. They

settled in the province of Natal, South Africa, and established a station called Fair View, on the shore of the Indian Ocean, near the mouth of the Urnzumbi River, some distance south of Durban. Here Mr. Noyes purchased 2,300 acres of land with the privilege of paying for it in annual payments and erected a house built of iron on a wood frame valued at about 1,200. In 1891 Miss F. Grace Allen, who was mentioned in connection -with the work at Inhambane, went to Fair View and took work under the board. Her work was school work, at first a mixed school for boys and girls, but later a school for girls. Miss Allen has been steadily in the employ of the board from that time until the present. In September, 1894, she came home and attended the General Conference at Greenville, Illinois, in October, returning again to her field in the following June. By vote of the General Missionary Board in the fall of 1905 she was granted a furlough to begin in the summer of 1906. She came to America at that time and remained until after the General Conference of 1907, representing the South Africa conference as lay delegate in that body. She is now on the field engaged in active work.

Because of some misunderstandings between Mr. Noyes and the board concerning financial matters and his methods of conducting business matters on the field he came to America to attend the annual meeting of the board in October, 1895. Satisfactory arrangements having been made he, in November, returned to Africa where he remained until 1898 when he and his family came home and ceased to work under the missionary board.

Rev. and Mrs. J. P. Brodhead and Miss Lucy A. Hartman sailed from New York April 6, 1898 and arrived t Durban, Africa, May 15. They proceeded at once to Fair View and entered upon their work. The missionary secretary, Rev. B. Winget, accompanied this party. After the return of Mr. Noyes and family to this country Mr. Brodhead was made superintendent of the work in Natal, a position which he filled with marked ability until the time of the organization of the South Africa conference. The time of seed sowing and waiting had been long but the seed now began to bear fruit to the great encouragement of the workers. Soon after this company of missionaries entered upon their work the spirit of inquiry and seeking after time Lord began to rest upon the natives as never before. A revival, steady, deep and thorough began which continues until the present time.

In the early spring of 1902 another company of missionaries consisting of Mr. and Mrs. N. B. Smith, Carroll Smith, Margaret A. Nickel, Rosa D. Hunter and J. W. Haley, embarked for Africa, arriving at Durban May 20. Since then the following have been accepted by the board at the dates connected with their names and are now on the field: W. A. Backenstoe, M. D. (1902), Nellie Reed, Rev. and Mrs. Jules Ryff (1903), A. E. Haley, Mrs. W. A. Backenstoe (1904), Miss Matilda Deyo (1905), Miss Maggie La Barr, George D. Schlosser (1906), Rev. and Mrs. N. B. Ghornmley, Rev. and Mrs. G. G. Kessel, Rev. and Mrs. A. M. Anderson (June, 1907).

The work continuing to develop in the African field the missionaries felt the need of some different arrangements for the care of it and having for some time urged the organization of a conference or the election of a general superintendent for Africa, or both, the Missionary Board at its meeting in October, 1904, took the matter under advisement and decided to send one of the general superintendents (bishops) to visit the different foreign fields, and to spend at least six months in Africa organizing a South Africa Mission conference, if in his judgment he thought it best to do so. General Superintendent W. A. Sellew

was chosen to go. On April 1, 1905, he and Mrs. Sellew sailed from New York and on May 13, they arrived at Durban, South Africa. May 16, they reached Fair View Mission Station and were accorded a most hearty welcome. - Mr. Sehlew after visiting all the stations, looking over the work and consulting with all the missionaries decided to organize the conference. Accordingly at Fair View on October 11, 1905, the South Africa conference was organized. The following were the ministerial members: J. P. Brodhead, Jules Ryff, A. E. Haley, J. W. Haley, Carroll Smith. The following were present as "acting members": Dr. and Nrs. W. A. Back. enstoe, Miss Nellie Reed, Mrs. Carroll Smith, Mrs. J. W. Haley, Miss F. Grace Alien, Mrs. Jules Ryff, Miss Margaret A. Nickel, Mrs. J. P. Brodhead, Miss Lucy A. Hartman. In addition to these were the native delegates from the different stations. Jules Ryff was elected secretary. J. P. Brodhead wa elected district elder for the entire conference. Six months later, beginning April 10, 1906, the second session of the conference met at Fair View. There being no superintendent present J. P. Brodhead was chosen president. J. Ryff was elected secretary. Mr. Brodhead was again chosen district elder. The third session was held at Fair View, March 26 to April 2, 1907. J. P. Brodhead again presided. J. Ryff was secretary. J. P. Brodhead and F. Grace Allen were elected delegates to the General Conference to meet at Greenville, Illinois, June, 1907. Carroll Smith and J. W. Haley were elected district elders. Mr. Brodhead had now been on the field about nine years; all this time he had borne heavy burdens; several times he had been on the verge of a complete collapse and once had given way in his nervous system under the strain. The Missionary Board having voted him and his wife a furlough, immediately after this conference he and his family started on their homeward journey. They reached New York May 21. Mr. and Mrs. Brodhead attended the General Conference, referred to above, in June and were a very great inspiration to the missionary work among our people.

In closing this chapter a brief summing up of results in Africa may not be out of place. In what may be called the Fair View field (called the Inland and Coast districts in the conference minutes) there are now six principal stations, viz., Fair View, Itemba, Edwaleni, Greenville, Baleni, Ibisi, with twenty-six out stations. There are at present thirteen white missionaries employed and eight native evangelists, two hundred and thirty native communicants, and property valued at about \$45,000. In the entire field are twenty-six white missionaries and eighty native helpers. There are about six hundred native communicants, about the same number of adherents and many thousands besides who are being brought under the quickening influence of the gospel. The native Christians contributed last year for all religious purposes \$875. The total value of all mission property in Africa is about \$62,000. The work is moving steadily forward. Surely our labor in this field has not been in vain.

## CHAPTER XV.

### FOREIGN MISSIONS—CONTINUED

Our first missionary to Japan was Masazi Kakihara, a native Japanese. Having been converted and sanctified and made to know the joys of salvation himself his heart burned with a desire to have his people know the new life into which he had entered. At the time of his baptism as a Christian he had taken the name "Paul" and by this name he was known among our people. The writer met him while in attendance at the General Conference held at Greenville, Illinois in October, 1894. "Paul" was then a student in Greenville College. The writer's most vivid recollection of him is the persistency with which he talked of Japan to all who would listen to him. One year later he was accepted by the board. Early in the winter following he went to Japan and began work among his people. October 23, 1896, Rev. Teikich Kawabe and Mrs. Kawabe were accepted on trial as missionaries by the directors of the Missionary Board. In the fall of 1898 Masazi Kakihara came to America and attended the General Conference in October of that year, returning to Japan soon after. Not long after this he left the employ of the board, and, engaging in business in Osaka, with two other Japanese, they lost money and failed. Sometime during the winter of 1899-1900 he came again to America. The last heard of him he was at a "Japanese Christian Home" in New York. In the meantime Mr. Kawabe was pushing on in the work. For some time, until we could see our way clear to send other missionaries to assist him, our work was supervised by Christian Alliance missionaries on the field. At the Missionary Board meeting held in October, 1902, Rev. W. F. Matthewson and Mrs. Minnie Matthewson were accepted and appointed to Japan. Later the directors of the board accepted Mr. August Youngren and Mrs. Anna M. Youngren of Seattle, Washington, and appointed them to go out with Mr. and Mrs. Matthewson. They sailed for Japan from Vancouver, B. C., January 26, 1903. At the meeting of the Missionary Board in October, 1905, Professor S. E. Cooper and Mrs. Rose L. Cooper were accepted and appointed to Japan. They soon after sailed for their field of labor. At the annual meeting of the Missionary Board in October, 1907, Rev. W. L. and Mrs. Meikie were accepted and appointed to Japan. At the same time Mr. and Mrs. Matthias Klein who were already on the field were accepted as missionaries on trial. Miss Minnie K. Hessler was accepted by the directors and went out during this year. There are eleven American missionaries working in Japan. There are twenty-nine native workers. There are three principal stations, Osaka, Sumoto and Akashi. There are about four hundred and fifty native communicants and property valued at about \$10,000. For some time past the hearing of Mrs. Matthewson has been seriously impaired so that fears have been entertained that if she remained in Japan she would become totally deaf. During the last year Mr. Matthewson's health has failed and in view of this and the condition of Mrs. Matthewson's hearing they have been granted a furlough and expect soon to return home. Their coming will be a serious loss to the mission. Notwithstanding this however, the outlook for our work in Japan is encouraging.

Sometime during the year 1885 a young woman in western New York who had been an invalid from childhood was instantaneously healed in answer to prayer. About the same time she entered into the experience of entire sanctification and united with the Free Methodist church. Feeling that God had saved and healed her that she might work for him she began to enter every open door where she might do

service for him. For several years she taught school, and, either usually held meetings in the school houses where she taught, or secured others to conduct services. For some time she labored as a supply on circuits in the Pittsburg conference. Feeling the call of God upon her to go to China as a missionary and no way at that time being open in the Free Methodist church she offered herself to the China Inland Mission and was accepted. On January 6, 1896, she sailed from Tacoma, Washington, for China. Seven years were spent in that land in the far interior, laboring for the redemption of its benighted people. She passed through the troublous times of the Boxer uprising being marvelously preserved from injury and death. In March, 1903, having been granted a furlough, she left her station for the homeward journey, reaching Seattle, Washington, in May. She was in attendance at the General Conference at Greenville, Illinois, in June of that year and none who were present and met her or heard her speak will ever forget the impression made and the enthusiasm aroused on that occasion by Clara Leffingwell.

In connection with this General Conference was held the first general gathering of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society composed of regularly elected delegates. Miss Leffingwell attended many of the meetings of this body, creating a strong impression and arousing much enthusiasm for missions in general and for China in particular. Ever since she had said "Yes" to the voice calling her to China she, as a loyal Free Methodist, had desired to see a mission in China under the direction and control of her own church. She felt that the time had come for the church to act, and she succeeded in impressing this conviction upon many others. In settling up their affairs the women of the W. F. M. S. found they had a surplus in their contingent fund amounting to about \$4,000, and they voted to turn this sum over to the general board for the purpose of establishing a mission in China whenever it was thought best to do so. At the same time a Mr. Peterson of Seattle, Washington, offered to the board property valued at about \$5,000, to be used for the same purpose. The newly elected Missionary Board immediately after the adjournment of the General Conference met and decided to establish a mission in China, and appointed Miss Leffingwell as the first missionary. At the regular annual meeting held in October the board decided to send out at least seven missionaries in addition to Miss Leffingwell. C. Floyd Appleton was accepted for China at this meeting. At different times the following were accepted either by the board or by the directors: George H. Schofield, Rev. N. S. Honn and Mrs. Alice Honn, Miss Florence B. Myers, Miss Edith Graves, Miss Lillie Peterson. Mr. Appleton and Mr. Schofield, that they might begin the study of the language at once, sailed for China November 18, 1904, reaching Shanghai, December 31, when under the direction of the China Inland Mission they immediately began the study of Chinese. April 8, 1905, Miss Leffingwell, Miss Myers and Miss Graves sailed for China. Miss Leffingwell had been sick for several days but with the indomitable courage which characterized her, insisted upon going. The ladies reached Shanghai May 7, and, as soon as necessary preparations could be made, proceeded inland. Cheng Chow (pronounced Jung Jo) in time northern part of the province of Honan had been selected as the location of the mission. The ladies reached this place the last of May. Miss Leffingwell immediately secured a place for a mission and a residence and entered upon the work. Her letters to friends at home indicate that she was very happy at this time in seeing the realization of her desire in the establishing of a mission in China. Only about one month was allowed her in which to enjoy the fruition of her labor. July 4, she was taken violently ill and on July 16, she passed over to be with the Lord. Her death was a great shock to her companions on the field and to the church. But no voice counseled retreat. Those on the field were there to stay, and those at home gathered new courage to stand by the work. Mr. and Mrs. Honn soon after went to their field and since then Mr. and Mrs. Frank R. Millican, Miss Lucy A.

Tittmore, Miss Laura E. Millican (now Mrs. Appleton) and Miss Edith F. Jones have gone out and the work is being carried on. Mr. Schofield and Miss Myers were married soon after she arrived in China. They are located at Hsing Kieh Hsien, in the same province. The others are engaged in the work at Cheng Chow. Since this work was begun Miss Peterson was obliged to return home on account of failing health. She has just lately gone to be with the Lord. Twelve American missionaries and five native workers are still at work on the field. May we not confidently expect that there shall yet be a harvest gathered in China as the result of the life of that young woman in western New York who laid all at Jesus' feet?

In April, 1893, at a meeting of the Missionary Board S. E. and Mrs. S. E. Mills, who had been laboring as "faith missionaries" in Santo Domingo were, at their request, recognized as Free Methodist missionaries, but with no claim on the board for support. In 1894 Miss Esther D. Clark went to their assistance remaining about five years. In 1898, S. E. Mills and wife severed their connection with the board but Miss Clark wished still to be recognized as a Free Methodist missionary. In 1900 because of the civil war on the island Miss Clark returned to this country for a time. At the board meeting in October, 1904, Miss Clark was regularly accepted and appointed to Santo Domingo where she has been laboring since. The missionary secretary visited the island in the summer of 1907 and spent some time there. On his recommendation at the annual meeting in October of that year provision was made for sending Dr. W. C. Willing to that field. He has since gone and with J. W. Winans, who preceded him, is laboring in conjunction with Miss Clark.

In the fall of 1906 Mrs. Kittie Wood Kumarakulasinghe, who had spent some years in India as a Salvation Army missionary, and, after some time spent in this country, was about to return to the Island of Ceylon was recognized as a Free Methodist missionary in that field and an appropriation made for her support. She is now in the island.

At different times various independent missionary movements have sprung up in the church. Robert L. Harris was the leader of one of these. In November, 1885, he sailed for Africa, landing at Liberia. After some time spent in holding meetings among English speaking people and explorations he returned to America in May, 1886. With a party of several others he again started for Africa October, 1886. He came back to America again in April, 1887, leaving the missionaries he had taken over on the field. He never returned to Africa.

Another movement in connection with the Pentecost Bands before they separated from the church began in 1890. Several missionaries were sent out to Monrovia on the west coast of Africa. Some of these died soon after landing and others returned. Rev. V. A. Dake, founder and leader of the Pentecost Bands went out to Africa in the fall of 1891 to visit this mission. January 2, 1892, he died on the west coast of Africa and was buried there. Soon after those who remained returned and the mission was discontinued. A short time after this the Pentecost Bands withdrew from the church and became a separate organization.

No account of the missionary work of the Free Methodist church would be complete which did not devote some space to the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. The first local society was organized by

Mrs. Ella L. McGeary at Verona, Pennsylvania, in December, 1889. Two years later Mrs. McGeary organized another society at New Castle, Pennsylvania. In 1891 Miss Emma Freeland (now Mrs. Clark Shay), organized a society in Brooklyn, New York. This same year the New Castle district society of the Pittsburg conference was organized by Mrs. McGeary, and the Wisconsin conference effected a conference organization, the Pittsburg conference following one year later. The movement continued to "move," and at the General Conference held in Greenville, Illinois in October, 1894, representatives of the societies from different sections met and formulated a constitution and organized the General Society. The work is now organized throughout the church and is an invaluable factor in carrying on our missionary work. During the quadrennium closing June, 1907, \$140,000 was raised for foreign missions throughout the church, of this amount \$110,000 being raised by the W. F. M. S. For the year 1907, \$55,201.58 was raised for missions. Of this amount the W. F. M. S. raised \$39,242.60, nearly seventy-five per cent of the whole amount. Their general meeting held in connection with the last General Conference was composed of forty-six members including the general officers of the society. They are represented on the General Missionary Board by three members whom they choose at their quadrennial meeting. One of these is a member of the board of directors. No more careful, painstaking members participate in the deliberations of the board or of its directors.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

# EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

The founders of the Free Methodist church were not, as was frequently charged by their opponents, mere religious enthusiasts or zealots. It is true that they were men of pronounced religious convictions; that they believed in, enjoyed and urged upon others an intensely spiritual type of religion; that they believed that the salvation of their own souls and the souls of those among whom they labored was their first and highest concern as ministers of the gospel; and that they not only believed, but constantly insisted that, where men and women were in earnest about their own salvation and the salvation of others, their religious life and exercises would be accompanied by a deep and holy fervor. Because of this they were often, by the advocates of a cold, lifeless, rationalistic type of religion, denounced as mere religious bigots and fanatics.

B. T. Roberts was a graduate of Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut, and was accorded the highest honors of his class upon his graduation. Throughout his life he was a student and voluminous reader. It is said of him that he read the Bible in seven different languages. W. C. Kendall was his classmate and was graduated at the same time. Loren Stiles, Jr., was a graduate of the Methodist Theological Seminary, Concord, New Hampshire. At the time he first identified himself with the movement he was "celebrated in western New York as a pulpit orator." The opponents of the work thought to make use of his learning and polish to hinder and cripple it, but were disappointed. He recognized the work of God and threw his whole soul into it. These men represented the intellectual caliber and literary qualifications of those who were active in the movement which resulted in the organization of the Free Methodist church. The principle that "Ignorance is the mother of devotion" has never had any countenance from them or their successors. The founders of the church did not, nor do her leaders now, endorse the doctrine of intellectual supremacy which has engendered the modern spirit of rationalism and destructive criticism and which has filled the faculties of many of our schools, and many of the pulpits of Christendom, with unbelievers. They have always recognized the effectiveness of thorough intellectual culture in connection with definite Christian experience and entire consecration to God, as a factor in qualifying men for the work of saving the lost and in building up the church in righteousness.

As a result of this the work of organizing the church was not yet completed when the question of a school or schools where young people could have the benefit of thorough intellectual culture in the midst of the type of spirituality, and under spiritual influences such as they were seeking to propagate and create, was being agitated. The minutes of the second annual session of the Genesee conference contain the following:

"Resolved, that a committee of two preachers and two laymen be appointed to take measures to secure, if possible, during the coming convention year, a suitable edifice and grounds to be devoted to school purposes."

The church had its conception and birth in troublesome times and amid difficulties. Its educational work was to be started and carried forward under similar conditions. The first educational institution founded was the Chili Seminary at North Chili, Monroe county, New York. In the fall of 1866 a school was opened in the farm house on a farm near that village which B. T. Roberts had purchased with a view to establishing a school there. The next year a large ball room in the village hotel was rented - and fitted up for school purposes. Miss Delia Jeffries, later Mrs. T. B. Catton, who in these early years was a valuable helper in this work, says of this year, "We had about a many students as we could accommodate in our close quarters." By the fall of 1869 a new seminary building had been completed on the farm and on November 6 it was dedicated, Dr. M. B. Anderson, president of the Rochester University, delivering the address on the occasion.

The educational work of the church was now fairly launched. At this time there were less than six thousand members in the church and they were widely scattered over eight states of the union. Less than one-half of them were within reasonable patronizing distance of the school. God alone knows all the burdens borne by its founder before the seminary was placed on a secure financial basis. Eternity alone will reveal the worth to the church of this school established as the result of so much labor and sacrifice. Under the name of "A. M. Chesbrough Seminary" it is still doing a good work for God and the church.

The next school to be founded was Spring Arbor Seminary at Spring Arbor, Michigan. Some time during the conference year 1869-70, the attention of the Rev. E. P. Hart was called to some vacant school buildings at the above place. The Michigan conference was held at Spring Arbor in September, 1871. At this time steps were taken preparatory to the purchase of this property for school purposes. No material progress was made during that year. At the next session of the conference held at Delta, Ohio, in September, 1872, it was decided to continue the negotiations for the above property. Soon after conference the citizens of Spring Arbor heartily cooperating with the committee the buildings were secured and in May, 1873, they were dedicated and the school opened. The school has passed through testing times but has survived them all. Since its doors were first opened about fifteen hundred young men and women at different times have been enrolled as students. Two hundred and twenty-five of these have completed different courses and have been graduated. There are three buildings, a frame Ladies' Hall, one of the original buildings remodeled and enlarged, a three-story brick, and an artificial stone Administration Building. The school owns two farms containing one hundred and thirty acres of land and has a 6,000 nucleus for an endowment fund. The present accommodations and equipment enable the school to offer up-to-date advantages and meet the requirements of the present day educational system. The enrolment for the past year was two hundred.

The Evansville Seminary at Evansville, Wisconsin, was the third in order of the schools founded in connection with the development of our educational work. In 1879 some buildings which had originally belonged to the Methodist Episcopal church, and which had been used by them for school purposes, but which had passed into the hands of the Free Will Baptists', were acquired by our people and in 1880 the school was opened with Professor J. E. Coleman as principal. From that time until the present Evansville Seminary has been one of the potent influences in building up Free Methodism, especially in the Middle West. Many young men and women in its halls have been brought to Christ, many others built up and

strengthened in Christian character, while young men have here found both spiritual and intellectual training to fit them for the work of the ministry.

Wessington Springs Seminary, Wessington Springs, South Dakota, was opened for the reception of students in 1884. Like all of our schools it was born of self-denial and hard labor upon the part of those who felt the necessity of the work laid upon their hearts. The school building is beautifully situated at the foot of the range of hills known as Wessington hills which rise from the surrounding prairie and just a short distance from the famous "Wessington Springs" from which the town takes its name. Although widely remote from the center of our work the school has enjoyed a fair degree of prosperity and has done and is doing good work.

It is now about twenty-five years since the founding of what was then known as Orleans College, at Orleans, in Harlan county, Nebraska. Because of protracted drought in the patronizing territory of the school those who had subscribed toward the erection and furnishing of the buildings were unable to pay their subscriptions, patronage fell off and for several years the school passed out of our hands. About ten years ago, the Methodist people having failed to make a success of the school, it again came back into the hands of our people. Since then it has been making steady progress, reporting last year a total enrolment of about one hundred and seventy-five. The school is now known as Orleans Seminary. At this time Rev. A. J. Damon, son of Rev. C. M. Damon, founder of the original school is principal.

Seattle Seminary was opened for school work in 1893. Beginning her course in the midst of the financially troublous times of that year the existence of the school seemed imperiled for a time, but through the Herculean labors of her financial agent, A. Beers and the earnest, united and self-denying support of those interested in the school, indebtedness was cancelled, current expenses met and the school placed on a safe basis. For several years now Seattle Seminary has been enjoying an era of unexampled prosperity and is to-day one of the best equipped and best supported schools in the church. The objects sought to be accomplished in all our schools are being accomplished there and the entire northwest is feeling the influence of the devoted young men and women who are here being trained for lives of usefulness. Not only so but its range of influence has overflowed into India, China and Japan.

Los Angeles Seminary is situated in Hermon, a beautiful suburb of Los Angeles, California. The erection of the seminary buildings was made possible by a generous donation of one hundred town lots in this suburb by Mr. Ralph Rogers of Los Angeles on condition that the seminary be located there. His offer was accepted and about \$25,000 was realized from the sale of lots. A substantial building of three stories, one hundred by eighty feet, was erected and furnished. A fund of about \$12,000 toward an endowment was left after the building was completed. During the four years the seminary has been in existence it has enjoyed an excellent degree of prosperity. The trustees are planning for the erection of a new building and for enlarged facilities.

Greenville College located at Greenville, Bond county, Illinois, is the only educational institution in the church doing work of college grade. The institution was first founded in 1855 as a school for young ladies and was known as Almira College. The original building of brick, four stories high, forty-four by

one hundred forty-four feet, cost \$50,000. In 1892 the property was purchased by the Central Illinois conference of the Free Methodist church for \$12,000. The institution was reincorporated under the name of Greenville College and authorized to confer the usual degrees. Since the second year of its existence the school has done college work, the number of students in the collegiate department steadily increasing from year to year. In 1907 a new Auditorium Building was finished at a cost of \$20,000. This building is also of brick and contains besides a chapel capable of seating seven hundred, music rooms, recitation rooms, literary society rooms, chemical and physical laboratories, and gymnasium. The attendance has steadily grown from the beginning, the registration in all departments for 1907-8 reaching three hundred forty. Not only has the college prospered financially and in patronage, but God has been pleased in a special manner to honor the school with the frequent outpouring of his Spirit. Revival meetings are held every year and these have been attended by marked displays of the Divine presence and the conversion of many souls. Young men and women from all parts of the church will look back to the college as the place where they were brought under influences which turned their feet heavenward, while others will thank God forever for the training they received which made them better, stronger and more effective Christians. The literary work done is thorough, meeting the approval of the best universities.

No people have ever shown deeper interest in education than the Free Methodists, and were the story of the labor, self-denial and self-sacrifice of those who have toiled and suffered to make our schools what they are to-day written, no more heroic chapter would be found in any period of the history of the work of God in our land.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### CONCLUSION.

The richest heritage of nations, organizations or movements are the men they produce and give to the world. What are all the ecclesiastical organizations, power and prestige of Protestantism growing out of the Reformation compared with the names of Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, John Knox and a host of others; what are all the glories of Methodism measured by her vast number of adherents, her wealth, her colleges and universities compared with the treasure of such names as John and Charles Wesley, John Fletcher, Adam Clarke, Francis Asbury and others which are written in her annals? Our nation would be poor indeed could we point only to our broad do main, our great corporations, our extensive manufacturing establishments and our other signs of material wealth. We have a far more illustrious and lasting wealth in those immortal names which throughout our national history have been imperishably engraven among the lists of the world's greatest men. Free Methodism has not much as yet to offer to the world in the way of numbers, wealth, prestige or denominational achievement, but she is rich in that she has given to the world, both among her ministry and laity, men who are worthy to stand side by side with the uncrowned kings of any period in the history of the church. In this closing chapter the writer would pay brief tribute to a few of these.

Around one man, B. P. Roberts, as a storm center, the forces opposing the work of which Free Methodism is the outgrowth seemed to gather at the beginning. This has rendered it necessary to say much of him and his relation to the movement in the former part of this work. But in closing a brief personal appreciation of the man will not be out of place. In appearance he was of medium height with a well knit frame, weighing about one hundred and eighty pounds. In early life his hair was dark. His complexion was ruddy indicating strong vitality. His eyes were hazel in color, clear and penetrating. He had a large well-formed head, bald in later life. One said of him as he met him for the first time when he was about forty-five years of age, "I thought he was one of the finest looking men I had ever seen." He was characterized by great simplicity of spirit and manner. No one need feel diffident or embarrassed in his presence. He made one "feel at home." Although a finished scholar and life long student he never sought to make any show of his learning. After he had preached a dedicatory sermon at a certain place a man who was impressed by the sermon said, "It is too bad that man is not educated." He little knew that it required the highest type of culture to enable one to express exalted thought in simple language. He had the power of saying much in a few words His editorials, the subject matter of the books he wrote, his sermons, were all models of brevity and conciseness in stating truth. He possessed in a marked degree the faculty of going directly to the heart of the matter in hand. He could say more in half an hour than most men in twice that time. Capable of exalted conception, sublime thought and expression, he usually spoke in language so simple that a child could understand. As a presiding officer he was a thorough master of parliamentary law, self-possessed, expeditious, kind. His experience as a Christian was marked by the same directness and simplicity which characterized him as a man. He sought for himself continually a definite experience in saving grace, conscious personal communion with God in the Holy Spirit and urged the same upon others, especially upon the preachers. As a preacher he impressed all who

knew him with the feeling that he did not look upon the pulpit as a place in which to display the erudition of the scholar or the arts of the orator. He spoke as God's messenger directly, forcefully, simply to the intelligence and conscience of his hearers. Possessed of a strong personality, a commanding intellect and a pleasing address, he was a man who, had he sought to use his abilities for his own personal advantage, might have gone to the summit of worldly position and influence. But he voluntarily turned his back on all prospect of earthly advancement and, resigning himself to a life of toil and self-denial, devoted his time and his energies to the advancement of the work of full salvation. His arduous labors wore on his sturdy frame and all too soon he fell. Born in July, 1823, he died February, 1893, being not quite seventy years of age. But he fell in the fight. He lived long enough to see the Free Methodist church, which existed only in name when he was elected its first General Superintendent, grow into a well organized body of twenty thousand people; he lived to see many of the reforms which he advocated adopted not only by his own people but by others; he lived, not to see the doctrine of holiness become popular, but to see many everywhere outside the bounds of his own denomination become earnest advocates of the truths for which he had contended. His appeal "to God and the people" was entertained. God honored him and his work and in thousands of hearts to-day his memory is enshrined as one of God's noblemen.

No one has been more closely associated with the origin and progress of the church than S. K. J. Chesbro. He wrote the call for the first "Laymen's Convention." He was secretary of both sessions of that body in western New York. He was the intimate personal friend of B. T. Roberts, Loren Stiles, and of all the men who were engaged in the conflict which resulted in the organization of the church. Among the names appearing in the minutes of the first session of the "Eastern Convention" we find his, and from that time until the present his has been a familiar name in the annals of Free Methodism. For years he served as pastor in "old Genesee." In 1888, upon the resignation of T. B. Arnold, he was elected publishing agent by the executive committee and continued with marked ability to fill that position until the General Conference of 1907, when on account of advanced years he declined a reelection. During this time he was also general treasurer of the church funds. Of slender build and erect carriage he impresses one as being taller than he really is. Naturally quick, alert, active, his long experience in business life and with business men has given him a brusqueness of manner which many have mistaken for sharpness, but there is no more tender, kindlier hearted man than he. Loftiness of character, transparency of motive, unbending integrity, unimpeachable fidelity are elements of his personality which have made him a central figure in our history. Now in his eighty-third year, beloved and revered by all who know his personal worth, he calmly awaits the summons to join those who have gone on before.

One day in the winter of 1859, a young man in Marengo, Illinois, who had decided to make the law his profession went into the office of a lawyer who was a personal friend. The young man had been under conviction for some time and on this day he was on the verge of desperation. His friend noticing his agitation inquired the cause. The reply was: "Henry, it has come to this. I can go on as I am going, fill a drunkard's grave, and go to a drunkard's hell, or I can give my heart to God, live to some purpose, die happy and gain heaven, and," after a pause, "Henry, I shall do just as you say." The friend, a professed infidel said, "Why, get religion of course." The other replied, "That settles it." That evening he sought and found God. The decisions of that day gave to the Free Methodist church and the cause of Bible religion the life, labors and influence of Edward Payson Hart. About three weeks after this lie entered into the experience of holiness. The next week lie went to assist in a protracted meeting and, as he

expressed it in his own terse way has "been going ever since." In August, 1860, he was united in marriage with Miss Martha Bishop who has been indeed a "hell) meet for him" during all these years. In personal appearance Mr. Hart is of medium height, well built, inclining to be a little stout in later years. A well formed head covered in earlier life with dark hair, a pleasing countenance, with a clear, bright eye. In the prime of his manhood he bore a strong resemblance to General U. S. Grant. His manner is grave, quiet, unassuming, unostentatious. He weighs his words, but when he speaks it is with the positiveness of conviction and carries weight with it. As a preacher he is clear, strong, forceful, eloquent. His manner in the pulpit is dignified, easy, pleasing. Never descending to harsh invective, his polished shafts of keen sarcasm hurled at sin and the weaknesses and foibles of popular religion cut to the quick. When a young man the writer considered him the greatest preacher he ever heard, and has not materially changed his opinion yet. In 1874 he was elected general superintendent and has filled the position with marked ability ever since. With the exception of B. P. Roberts no other man perhaps has exerted a greater influence in the making of the Free Methodist church. Beloved, honored by all who know them, the weight of years settling upon them, he and his devoted wife can no more take the active part in the work they have taken in time past. In the possession of such characters the church has a heritage far above all wealth, or power, or prestige of a merely earthly nature.

And what shall I say more; for time and space would fail me to tell of the polished, eloquent Stiles, "the orator" of the Genesee conference of the "old church," and, later of the Genesee conference of the Free Methodist church, stricken down in the prime of his manhood and usefulness; of La Due, the stalwart, fiery, eloquent pioneer of the northwest; of quaint C. E. Harroun, Sr., some times reminding those who knew both of Dr. Redfield, again reminding others of B. P. Roberts, but always his own inimitable self; of the versatile and amiable Terrill; of Joseph Travis, whose lofty conceptions and sub. lime presentations of truth linger as a sweet perfume in the memories of those who heard him, and of many others whose names can not even be mentioned. There were giants in those days. To be associated with them in the work to which they gave their lives, to have some little share in helping to advance it is the highest honor which can come to a man.

It is now a little over fifty years since the agitation culminated in western New York which resulted in giving us a denominational existence. Men are both to believe that in a Christian land there could be found 'those professing the religion of Jesus Christ, ministers of the gospel in one of the leading Protestant churches, church dignitaries occupying the highest ecclesiastical positions, who would lend themselves to such schemes and methods as were resorted to in order to cast out the founders of Free Methodism. But the facts are indisputable. The record has been made. It affords another illustration of the truth that the most bitter, relentless spirit with which one can come in contact is the spirit of religious persecution and ecclesiastical proscription. With malice toward none, with charity toward all, the facts which made our existence necessary are written. It is almost forty-eight years since the Free Methodist church was organized at Pekin, New York. Has she justified her existence? The results of an individual's life are not always fully seen in what he himself has accomplished. The influence he exerts upon others may be productive of farther reaching results than anything which may be seen in his own life. The same may be true of an organization. Early Methodism exerted a tremendous influence upon the religious organizations around her, the results of which in many respects are apparent today. So the Free Methodist church is not to be judged as to the results of her work by what is seen in her own body alone. Her reflex

influence upon others must be taken into account. At the time when our fathers were thrust out for their faithfulness in advocating arid urging people into the experience of entire sanctification as taught by Wesley and his coadjutors, the testimony in behalf of that doctrine and experience was well nigh silenced. Zinzendorfism and gradualism were being substituted in Methodist pulpits everywhere. The modern holiness revival dates from the time when those men so heroically took their stand for original Methodism. On all questions of moral reform she has stood and still stands in the van. Her rallying cry has always been, "Holiness unto the Lord." This she has inscribed upon her banners and in every conflict the battle is fought out on this issue. But around this central issue she has grouped certain others which she insists are the necessary practical concomitants of the experience, and by these she has stood with unswerving fidelity. Thus her message has not only been a clarion call to earnest spirituality but to the most thorough type of practical Christianity as well. Who can estimate the results of her testimony and loyal adherence to convictions of right and duty during these forty-eight years of her existence? True, some, looking from the outside, seeing how resolutely she has maintained her attitude on these positions have misunderstood her and, looking upon her as a merely reform organization, have turned away. Some from within have, by giving undue prominence to these "issues" in their preaching and testimony, strengthened this wrong impression and have thus hindered the very cause they were seeking to advance. But notwithstanding all she has gone forward and has prospered.

It has required no small degree of self-denial and self-sacrifice to carry this work forward through these years. Were the story written in full it would compare in examples of moral heroism and devotion to duty with the greatest battles for right in other times. Men capable of filling the highest ecclesiastical or educational positions, capable of making name and fame for themselves in the world, have joyfully turned their backs on it all and have gone forth without purse or scrip to preach the gospel of full salvation to small congregations at a smaller salary. Men who might have had luxury and ease have cheerfully accepted poverty and toil because they loved truth and righteousness. In the opinion of the worldly wise they are written down as fools. In God's book they are recorded as wise and their names shall shine among the moral heroes by and by.

The limited space to which the writer has been confined has rendered it impossible to dwell upon the striking characters which Free Methodism has produced. The bare mention of a name must suffice where he would gladly devote pages. For thirty-five years he has been identified with Free Methodism, its work and its workers. No cleaner, purer, truer men live than are found in the ranks of her ministry. No nobler, more devoted, consecrated company of men and women can be found than compose her membership.

Forty-eight years have removed the fathers of Free Methodism, with but few exceptions, from the ranks of the church militant to those of the church triumphant. A younger generation is coming into control and taking the direction of the affairs into its hands. Such a change has proven disastrous to more than one organization in the past. The temptation to turn aside will come to us; inducements to tone down will be held out to us. God grant that we may never forget the ground of the battle which gave us existence. May the example of those men who gladly suffered the loss of all things be a constant inspiration to us to maintain the standard they set. And thus contending for the faith once delivered to the saints may we so acquit ourselves in the fight that we too may receive the crown which the Lord has promised to all who love and obey him.



# **THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH**

**A Brief Outline History of its  
Origin and Development**

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**BY JOHN S. M'GEARY**

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