

THE PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION

A Doorway to Heaven

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CALVARY COVERS IT ALL

More than passing interest centers in the stream of musical blessing that poured into the evangelistic world from the Pacific Garden Mission.

Quite symbolic were the visits to the shelter, in its first years, of Horatio G. Spafford, from whose burdened heart came that glorious gospel song,

“When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.”

He had written the words the year before Colonel and Mrs. Clarke began their mission on Clark Street, after receiving a cable from Cardiff, Wales, in which his wife sent the message: “Saved alone.” Their four children had perished in the Atlantic when the steamer Ville de Havre sank within a half hour after colliding with another vessel.

Spafford spoke at the mission a number of times.

Music played an important part in the services and while the type was not reflective of the great cathedrals, yet it was conducive to a spiritual work in the hearts of drunkards, gamblers and outcasts. The old organ, still standing at the mission, provided a pleasant if wheezy contrast to the tinny instruments of the drinking dens, and its tunes were dedicated to God, as evidenced by the sign, “**Ye must be born again,**” which was displayed near the manual in the days when Mel Trotter’s brother, Bill, played the keys.

Through the years the mission inspired the writing of many Gospel choruses. One of the most popular was James P. Sullivan’s “O Say But I’m Glad”:

“There is a song in my heart today,
Something I never had;
Jesus has taken my sins away,
O say, but I’m glad!

“O say, but I’m glad, I’m glad,
O say, but I’m glad!
Jesus has come and my cup’s overrun,
O say, but I’m glad!”

From a nearby tavern Sullivan had seen Harry Monroe come out of the mission. Attending the services a number of times, he never forgot Monroe’s sweet voice as, with arms outstretched, he sang old Gospel hymns. Sullivan wished he had a relationship to God like Harry’s, but for five years he went on in sin, until in 1912 he staggered from a Harvey, Illinois, saloon into a local mission and was converted. “Poor Harry’s face always haunted one with his sweet singing,” said Sullivan. “Now he has gone to heaven, but he never knew that his singing sank deep in a wild Irishman’s heart. Some time ago his dear face came back to me. I seemed to hear him sing again, and I wrote the chorus, ‘I Recommend Jesus to Thee,’ Which is having a reception something like my ‘O Say, But I’m Glad.’”

Outstanding, too, among mission converts as a producer of Gospel songs was Scotty Lawrence. Talented as a songwriter, he once took a bet that in twenty minutes he could grind out a song that would sweep the country, and what’s more, he made good on it. Then he fell into ribald theatrical company. Much in demand in social and theatrical circles because of his song hits, he soon fell victim to overpowering alcohol and drug habits.

He drifted to Chicago, like many another human failure and outcast. In desperation, he stole openly in a large, Chicago department store, so the police would send him to the Bridewell for a six months sentence, which he thought might cure him. Upon his release he drifted back into the same old gang, none the better for his incarceration. Dozens of times he wandered into Pacific Garden Mission, prayed, professed Christ as Saviour, and went out to backslide. He was perhaps the most prayed for man in America.

In every mission in Chicago he had raised his hand for prayer, only to revert to drunken disgrace. It was a sorry state of penitence and drunkenness that made Lawrence despise himself. One night after professing Christ at Pacific Garden Mission, a trustee there bought Scotty a new suit of clothes. The very next day he appeared in overalls: he had been jack-rolled and the suit taken from him. And he was drunk again. Finally one night in 1921, three godly women, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Wendell and Miss Hunter, a schoolteacher, knelt beside him at the mission. One of them whispered, “Scotty, God loves you.” He gave his heart anew to God that night and heard the very angels of heaven sing.

The next song he wrote was,

“One day in sin I was told of a love,
Coming from One who is reigning above,
Gladly I listened, ‘twas music to me,
To know, though a sinner, that I could be free.

Chorus:

“Somebody whispered that Jesus loved me,
Jesus who died upon Calvary’s tree,
Said He would save me, from sin set me free,
Somebody whispered that Jesus loves me.”

That song echoed from one mission hall to another as the story of Scotty Lawrence was told, but the song-writer started out on another search. It was for the girl who fourteen years ago had promised to marry him if he came back sober, and a Christian.

He found her in New York, told her of Christ and His power to save, and they had a joyful reunion. They spent many successful years in the East in children’s work. Meanwhile, too, Gospel song after Gospel song poured from Lawrence’s heart, and Christians were carried nearer to God by the noble words and music that flowed from his pen. “In the Palace of God’s Love” he dedicated to the Taylors.

“Living for Jesus, dwelling in Him,
Vict’ry is certain, no room for sin;
Strengthened for battle, His presence near,
Foes will be vanquished, no cause to fear.

“Trials and temptations I take to Him,
Because ‘twas Jesus died for my sin;
All day He’s with me, ‘tis Beulah land;
He doth uphold me with His right hand.

“Over in glory His face I’ll see,
Where there’s a mansion waiting for me;
How I adore my Saviour, my King;
That’s why I love His praises to sing.

Chorus:

“I’m dwelling in the palace,
In the palace of God’s love;
Each day brings a message From heaven above,
Whispering so sweetly, He! loves even me;
I’m dwelling in the palace,
In the palace of God’s love.”

When he died, his widow wrote to Pacific Garden Mission:

“He more than made good and all who knew him loved and respected him. He was a ray of sunshine and our love was a beautiful, sweet and perfect love. My memories are a sermon in themselves, and I know Scotty is near me always. He couldn’t help but be, he loved me so dearly.

“I held his hand as he crossed over and he knew me and kissed me, and I said, ‘Everyone loves you, dear. Jesus loves you and everything is all right.’ He smiled, said, ‘Yes,’ and in a few minutes was with his Master.

“His passing was as sweet and quiet as a baby falling asleep.”

The song, “Show Others What Jesus Can Do,” for which Scott Lawrence wrote both words and music, as is the case with all the other selections quoted in these pages, is a beautiful testimonial to God’s working in his life:

“Prove by the smile on your face ev’ry day,
Prove by the wisdom He gives when you pray,
Prove to the world there is no other way,
Show others what Jesus can do.

“Prove by the burden you’re willing to bear,
Prove by the comfort and cheer which you share,
Prove in His service you’ll go anywhere,
Show others what Jesus can do.

“Prove by each act you’re a child of the King,
Prove that you fear neither life nor death’s sting,
Prove by your faith till in Glory you sing,
Show others what Jesus can do.

Chorus:

“Show others what Jesus can do,
Show others what Jesus can do;
Through His grace from above,
Give the message of love, and
Show others what Jesus can do.”

Scott’s song, “Whisper a Prayer,” was sung at the funeral service:

“Whisper a prayer in the morning,
Just at the break of the day;
Why fear the fight, in your battle for right,
When you know He will lead all the way?

“Whisper a prayer at the noon-time,
Pause in the midst of the throng,
Look unto Him, Who can conquer all sin;
In thy weakness, in Him thou art strong.

“Whisper a prayer at the twilight,
After the day’s work is done,
No other friend will prove true to the end,
Like Christ Jesus, the Crucified One.

Chorus:

“Whisper a prayer,
Just whisper a prayer,
Even a whisper He’ll hear over there;
Vict’ry is thine,
In love so sublime,
When to Jesus you whisper a prayer.”

But it was the mission’s own Ma Taylor who, probably more than any other, sent a deluge of inspiring choruses to the evangelistic world. Almost sixty Gospel songs flowed from her pen from the day that Dr. Towner paid her five dollars for “Jesus Only” and introduced it in his Moody Bible Institute song book. For sixteen years at the mission Ma Taylor played the piano and organ with an increasing awareness of the place of Gospel music in the ministry.

Her most popular number, “Calvary Covers It All,” she wrote at the mission. The chorus came to her on the platform at 650 South State Street when Charles E. Crawford, then with the American Bible Society, was giving his testimony.

Crawford told how, when he entered full-time Christian service, his district manager handed him an application issued by a bonding company, since all employees of the organization served under bond.

“My heart sank,” said Crawford, “for I knew that in the light of my record before conversion no bonding company would accept the risk.”

When he told the manager his story, the superior officer said he was sorry, but he was powerless in view of a century-old rule that all employees must be bonded, and that Crawford would have to seek another position. Broken in heart, Crawford stole away to the shipping room to find relief in prayer.

The manager came upon him unexpectedly, expressed his regret, but said the company would give him adequate time to secure another job.

The following week the district manager summoned him and said that the governing board had unanimously agreed “that in spite of the fact that my record was black as midnight before conversion, since that now Calvary covers it all, I was to continue my work serving without bond and with an increase in salary.”

For two decades Crawford served the firm becoming district sales manager for eleven states. Out of his testimony that night came Ma Taylor's

“Calvary covers it all,
My past with its sin and stain;
My guilt and despair
Jesus took on Him there,
And Calvary covers it all.”

Ma Taylor showed the complete song to Homer Hammontr who introduced it at the Church of the Open Door, Los Angeles, where four thousand sang the words. From there spread through California and around the country. Robert Harkness, Harry O. Anderson and Harry Ironside began using it during campaigns. Then it was sung in England, Scotland, India and China, and J. Edwin Orr used it in his successful soul-winning campaigns in South Africa.

Among Ma Taylor's other well-known compositions is “Kept in Christ, I'm Satisfied,” which Walter MacDonald uses extensively today, as well as her “As Far As the East.” The former number was written under the drive of mission work, and dedicated to Pa Taylor during his superintendency:

“Satisfied my soul's deep longing,
When in Christ my soul doth hide,
When the snares my footsteps thronging,
I have Him, there's naught beside;
Satisfied, O precious knowledge,
Kept in Christ, I'm satisfied.

“Kept in Christ, I'm satisfied,
When in Him my soul doth hide;
Ev'ry need by Him supplied,
Kept in Christ I'm satisfied.”

MacDonald, probably the outstanding mission convert in Taylor's regime at 650 South State Street, fell asleep one night while visiting at the home of Christian friends. He had been in the midst of a pressing program of evangelistic meetings. Suddenly, in his sleep, he began to sing. The words were among his favorites, and none other than this song.

Among the most recent Gospel choruses inspired through Pacific Garden Mission's soul-saving ministry is that entitled, “Have You Heard the News?” composed by Herbert Claar, once mission pianist. It was at 650 South State Street that on August 14, 1940, Claar found Jesus Christ the Saviour from sin, and the All-Sufficient One. That is why he could write:

“Have you heard? Oh have you heard the news?
Salvation is a gift to you and me,
Don't delay, Receive the gift today,
Jesus paid it all on Calv'ry's tree, Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord, King of glory,
Him crucified, it's the new old story,
He'll fulfill, For whosoever will
Shall be saved! Saved! Saved!"

For a number of years Dad and Ma Taylor's secretary and helper at the mission was Flora Rice, who had a beautiful soprano voice. A promising college graduate, she looked to a vaudeville career while studying at Baylor University and Southern Methodist University, but when she was saved in her Texas church she wanted to enter Christian service.

For six and a half years she served the mission. The night Hattie Matthews was converted it was Flora who sang the solo convicting Hattie's heart. Later she married a Texas engineer, R. B. Alexander, who had been converted at the mission.

But the soul-saving station's musical contribution was only one of several functions secondary to its primary evangelistic purpose. Many a young man entering the Gospel ministry won his first converts to Christ at the old lighthouse. Among them was Dr. Joseph Croft Dent, retiring pastor of Chicago's Temple Baptist Church, who won his first soul for the Master when, as a student at Moody Bible Institute, he spoke at the mission. Harry Monroe used to ask him to bring his concertina to lead singing in the Jackson Park meetings held for the men preparing the grounds for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.

Many a servant of God, already trusting Christ for salvation, came into an experience of complete surrender at the mission.

Such is the story of John R. Rice, the "Will Rogers of the pulpit."

At the time he was a junior college teacher pursuing graduate work at the University of Chicago. Rice was in the mission in May, 1921. He saw sinners, almost hopeless in their despair, come to Christ and find inexplicable peace. That night he promised God that "if He could help me save sinners He could have me to preach to sinners. Thus I became a preacher of the Gospel of Christ."

Many a young convert learned his first lessons in pastoral theology at the mission. Such was C. C. Beatty, later dean of Seattle's Northwest Bible Institute. He came to Chicago with the World's Fair influx in 1893, and was saved at a mission service on Clark Street conducted by Ed Card, a Pacific Garden convert.

Card brought him to Mother Clarke and Harry Monroe. They put him to work taking the offering, dealing with seekers at the altar, and giving his testimony. One night Dr. R. A. Torrey, then president of Moody Bible Institute, was to speak, but failed to appear. Monroe asked Beatty at the last moment to give the evening's message, making no explanation since half the audience did not know Dr. Torrey was to come anyway. After that the mission boys called him "Doc Torrey" in good-natured derision.

After serving a small church and several years of evangelistic work, Beatty went into Bible Institute administration.

Many a sinner, outside of Christ, came into the mission only to spurn his Saviour's call. But by the scores they wrote in later to tell that they found no peace until, at some meeting elsewhere or alone in the closet of prayer, they made settled accounts with the Master.

Charles H. Miller was only one of a whole family of them.

He had spurned his mother's pleadings and sank into liquor and gambling. In a drunken stupor, he felt the curse of delirium tremens coming upon him, and wandered into what he thought was a long hallway. It proved to be the mission room. John Wendell gave him a Bible and the men knelt for prayer near the old organ. Miller did not make a personal commitment, however, and things became worse. Miller's mother held on in prayer.

One night, February 8, 1921, he staggered into another mission and was saved.

The next Saturday he testified at Pacific Garden Mission and went out to found the Beaumont Rescue Mission in Beaumont, Texas.

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