

Miracles in Australia and New Zealand

by Stanley H. Frodsham

The sermon recounts the miraculous healings and conversions during Smith Wigglesworth's evangelistic campaigns in Australia and New Zealand, emphasizing the power of faith in God.

Scripture: Psalm 103:3, Mark 5:36, Mark 9:24, Acts 2:4, Hebrews 13:8

Topics: "Divine Healing", "Revival Meetings"

Description

Stanley H. Frodsham preaches about the powerful healing and miraculous works of Smith Wigglesworth during his visits to Australia and New Zealand in the early 1920s. The testimonies include instant healings of a girl who had never walked, a man who had not walked in years, and individuals with chronic illnesses and diseases being completely restored by the power of God. The revival meetings led to numerous conversions, with many accepting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and experiencing the tangible presence of God through signs and wonders.

Transcript

It was in the early part of 1922 that our Greatheart made his first visit to Australia. We quote from a letter (which appeared in the English paper, Confidence) written by Miss Winnie Andrews of Victoria:

Our dear Brother Wigglesworth arrived in Melbourne last Thursday, and he had a meeting that night--and although he made it quite plain and clear to his hearers that he would rather see one sinner saved than 10,000 people healed of bodily ailments, he invited any who were in pain to come forward for prayer. Among those who came forward were several who later declared they had received remarkable and instantaneous healings. One little girl, 6 years of age, after prayer by the evangelist, was seen walking out of the front door of the building with her mother, who was delightedly exclaiming to all and sundry: "Look at her! She has never walked in her life before!" A man who had not walked for over four years, owing to rheumatoid arthritis, was instantly healed, and after triumphantly passing his stick and crutch up to the platform, gave an impromptu exhibition of the power that had come into his legs, by jumping and leaping and praising God.

Since the first night there have been many other wonderful healings. Last night a dear woman who had been unable to walk for 6½ years was brought to be prayed for, and--glory to God!--she got out of her chair and walked. Her husband pushed her chair along while she walked behind.

There have been many conversions--at one meeting alone, forty accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. The revival showers are falling and God is working.

Some may ask the very reasonable question, "Do the healings last?" We have before us a sheaf of testimonies of healings that were prepared 15 months after our Greatheart's visit to Australia. In it there are 18 testimonies of remarkable healings in this first Australian campaign. We have also a copy of the Australian Evangel of 1 February 1927, in which there are 13 testimonies of people who were healed in this campaign that was held five years before. We have also a copy of the Australian Evangel of 1 March 1927, which contains the story of one who was raised from a living death five years before. The testimony is so remarkable that we will let it speak for itself. It is written by Mrs. W.B. Brickhill (née Kathleen Gay) of Victoria:

At the age of 17 years, from a life of worldliness and sin, I received the Lord Jesus Christ as my own personal Savior, being truly born again. It was a wonderful morn when I awakened with the consciousness that I had passed from death unto life, from the power of sin and Satan, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

However, after 16 months of unmarred service for the Lord, an unfortunate accident occurred which caused serious injury to my abdomen, and brought on internal complications, necessitating consultation between four surgeons, who advised that an operation was imperative. The operation did not have the desired effect, and, to my sorrow, proved unsuccessful, laying the foundation for nearly fourteen years of continual suffering, the major portion of which time I was confined to bed.

Later it was discovered that consumption, with all its cruel and devastating ravages had gripped my entire being. This terrible disease wrought havoc with my constitution, causing sleeplessness for days and nights at a stretch. I got rest only when drugs were administered, and eventually my condition became such that drugs had no effect other than to cause a comatose state.

All the symptoms of tuberculosis were evident, eating into my internal organs and having the effect of destroying my appetite entirely. The condition of my digestive organs was such that I refused almost all food, and invariably the little food partaken of was vomited immediately. Sometimes it was not possible to retain even a drink.

Many leading specialists, surgeons and physicians prescribed without effect; in fact, many times they vouchsafed the opinion that my end was very near, and that there was nothing more to be done.

The deadly work of this disease was manifested to a very great extent upon my kidneys, which were perforated, and hemorrhage was very frequent. Outward evidence of the disease appeared in my left arm, thigh and hip, all of which presented the usual discharging sores connected with this malady. These parts of the limbs were so severely attacked that they presented an emaciated appearance, being repulsive to the sight, the bone being eaten into, a condition undoubtedly beyond all human aid. Having been reduced nearly to a skeleton, weighing only 42 pounds, and being told by physicians that six weeks was the extent of my life, I was not fearful of my fate, as it seemed to me that death would relieve me of all my sufferings.

While lying in this dying condition early in February 1922, a ray of light entered my soul through word coming to me that an evangelist from England was holding meetings in our city of Melbourne, and was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and his power to heal the sick. This evangelist was Smith Wigglesworth, and it was stated that he would pray for the sick. As the news was conveyed to me, I began

to receive faith in God, and expressed a desire that he should come and pray for me at my home; but learned that there were so many demands upon the evangelist's time, prayer for me at my home was impossible. The news caused the enemy to discourage me, but, praise the Lord, further faith being received. and being desperately anxious for victory, my parents were consulted. After much pleading to be allowed to be taken into one of the meetings, they reluctantly consented.

Therefore, on 16 February, as a very last resort, in my awful condition, I was assisted into one of the Sunday meetings. As the meeting progressed, my faith began to rise, and truly I realized the nearness of God. It was a hallowed time indeed. At length the evangelist was directed towards me, and on ascertaining that it was a consumptive case, he spoke sincerely to me and said: "Sister, I believe the Lord will heal you; fear not, only believe." [Mk 5.36] My eyes saw no man save Jesus; I waited for his divine touch. After being anointed and prayed for, the power of God permeated my whole being and I was instantly healed. All the pain, weakness, and disease ceased. Hallelujah! My chains fell off. My soul was free, I arose, and went forth praising God, realizing a mighty work was done.

Immediately after the Lord met me, my first desire was to hasten home and tell how great things had been accomplished in me. Even on my return journey I bore testimony of the fact by being able to walk unaided. On arrival at home I acquired a ravenous appetite for food, an unheard-of occurrence with me for years. Our household was filled with anxiety for my well-being as they watched me appease my hunger, fearing all the natural consequences from taking food would return; but to their amazement, I thoroughly enjoyed a hearty meal with satisfaction.

After dinner, with assistance, the bandages were removed from the affected parts of my body. It was found that the Lord had replaced decayed bone and ulcerated flesh with new, beautifully healthy flesh and bone covered with white skin similar to that of a little child. All my senses became quickened, and that night I was able to enjoy a beautiful night's rest, the first natural sleep since the time I became sick.

It is now five years since the Lord's hand so definitely rested upon me, and he has continuously overshadowed me with His presence, and filled me with His Spirit. The Lord provided work for me to do in his vineyard soon after he healed me, as a sister in the slum life of our city where, through his wonderful grace, many souls have been won for him. Along with me in this work is my husband, whom the Lord gave me in a wonderful way three years ago.

It is my sincere desire that my evidence of the power of God to heal will be used to help some soul in doubt to believe God, and find that he is faithful to his word that "all things are possible to him that believeth," [Mk 9.23] and "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." [He 13.8]]

We received a letter at that time from W. Buchanan, a Christian worker at Melbourne, concerning the Wigglesworth campaign in that city:

We had three glorious weeks of triumphant victory in the Melbourne meetings. Fully 1,000 souls were converted to the Lord Jesus Christ, and many scores were healed. In fact, the testimonies of those healed are still continuing to come in.

After being a great blessing in many parts of Australia. our Greatheart moved on to New Zealand. The following is a letter that was received from E.E. Pennington, Chairman of the New Zealand Evangelical Mission of Wellington:

In June 1922, Smith Wigglesworth came to Wellington little known to any of us. There was no flourishing of trumpets to herald his advent--a few small advertisements in the local press announced his meetings. About 1,000 attended his tent meeting on Sunday evening, and the night following this number was increased by about 500 to 600. From then on it was impossible to secure buildings large enough to accommodate the crowds; and the large town hall, seating 3,000, was packed every evening. On some occasions the crowd waited for hours about the doors before the commencement of the meetings rather than be denied the opportunity of hearing the man and his message. Never had the writer witnessed such scenes as followed the presentation of the word of God by this Spirit-filled man, although he has been associated with such mighty evangelists as Torrey, Chapman, and others in part of their New Zealand campaigns. On every occasion when an appeal was made for the unconverted to decide for Christ, the response was immediate and great, sometimes as many as 400 to 500 responding in a meeting. Over 2,000 made the great decision during the mission in Wellington--in some cases whole families entered the kingdom of God.

Some newspaper reports were not very friendly. We have before us, however, a special write-up which appeared in one newspaper under the heading, "Do you believe in faith healing?" The article begins:

Of course you don't. That is to say, you don't believe in what you have never seen. But perhaps you have seen and been puzzled as I have been. Then again, perhaps you have seen and not been puzzled, but, instead, have been converted. A good many have been converted in Wellington recently. Some went with open minds; some did not, but went to scoff--and remained to pray.

Whether you believe or you don't believe, the subject of faith healing is one of intense interest. Witness the thousands who assembled to hear and see Mr. Smith Wigglesworth at the Town Hall. The interest thus evidenced encouraged me to follow the matter up a little...

I have before me a number of affidavits. They are those of Wellington citizens who presented themselves for healing before Mr. Smith Wigglesworth on his recent visit here. The affidavits are genuine; they were sworn before Mr. C.A. Baker, J.P., and they speak for themselves--I have omitted the names, but the originals were left for inspection at The Dominion office as a guarantee of their genuineness.

Then there follow five affidavits. The first is that of a dairyman who had suffered from chronic gastritis and paralysis of both legs from the hips downwards, and could only drag along with crutches. When the evangelist, after anointing him with oil, asked for his crutches, he gave them to him and walked home. He states that for 14 years he had a cyst on the back of his neck, and had often spoken to doctors about removing it. It was the size of an ordinary hen's egg. The morning after his healing, when he awoke he found that the cyst had completely disappeared.

One of these testimonies is from a girl 20 years of age, who since infancy had suffered from double curvature of the spine. She could not walk till she was four years of age and could never rise off the floor without pulling herself up with both hands. One leg was three inches shorter than the other and was almost useless, being three inches less in circumference than the other. She persuaded her parents to take her to the Town Hall. There the evangelist placed his hands on her head and on her spine, and she was instantly healed.

My spine was straightened, and in a few days my leg lengthened. My hip which was diseased is well also. The Sunday following my healing I was so eager to attend the mission that, as there was no train, I walked all the way from Ngalo to the hall and back and felt no ill effect whatever.

After giving the five testimonies the reporter says:

There are several other affidavits of a similar nature, but space will not permit of their publication. Now what do you think of it? Do you believe in faith healing? Or are you still in the ranks of the skeptics?

In 1927 our Greatheart was back in Australia and New Zealand. This time his daughter Alice--Mrs. James Salter--accompanied him. He held fruitful campaigns in a great many cities. The word was confirmed with signs following. The two following remarkable stories speak for themselves. They both appeared in the Australian Evangel of 1 April 1927.

Miss H. Todd of Naremburn, N.S.W., testified:

While engaged in my occupation as nurse in Sydney I met with a serious accident, fracturing the knee-cap and displacing the internal cartilage, which resulted in synovitis and arthritis (chronic). I had the best medical skill both in Sydney and Orange without any permanent belief. I was just up for a while and then back to bed again, and so on for 18 months; and long, weary months they were, especially when after about 14 months, I had the misfortune to rupture the fibers of the muscles of the other leg, which resulted in having a lay-up for six weeks. The pain at times was most severe. I was a real invalid with no prospect of ever being able to follow my profession again. Being otherwise perfectly healthy, it was hard to look into the future with both legs crippled, to be dependent upon others to look after and keep me.

How blind I was, for since being invalided to Orange I had lived among folk who believed and tried to get me to listen to the scriptural teaching of divine healing, but I thought differently. Truly the bible did tell of wonderful things in bygone days, but to me those days were gone and things were different now. There was great talk of evangelist Smith Wigglesworth, but I was not interested. After the evangelist had begun his mission, which would only last five days, my brother, together with others, spoke most convincingly to me about the reality of the teaching of the scriptures on divine healing, and though I had been adverse to it right up till then, I went to my bible again and, being like the prodigal son, at the end of myself, I too was led to say, "I will arise and go to my Father." [Lk 15.18] And, praise the dear Lord, what blessings he had waiting to bestow upon me. I had been a Christian many years, but I had to be awakened before I could hear his voice and have him anoint my eyes. While reading the scripture I was arrested by the words, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." [Jn 9.25] This kept running through my mind all day Friday and Saturday; also the words of God, "I am the Lord, I change not." [MI 3.6] So persistently did these scriptures keep coming to me that I made up my mind to go that night to the mission for prayer.

On one leg I had a steel and leather apparatus to keep the knee joint from locking and pinching, which caused intense pain, and the other was in tight bandages. With the aid of a pair of crutches I got out to the car to be taken to the meeting, and though suffering intensely, I believed I would be healed. After the address I joined with those who were to be ministered to, and as the evangelist laid his hands on me and prayed I had a strange yet beautiful experience as though cold water with great force was being sprayed in jets upon both of my afflicted members where they were injured. So strong seemed to be the force that it even hurt me, and I knew it was the Lord; but on turning to go away I didn't feel any better, and expressed disappointment to two or three.

All the way home I wept copiously, and poured out my heart to God, and continued to say, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." [Mk 9.24] Arriving home, I was helped out of the car, and after walking a few steps, said that I thought I could walk alone. Just as I reached the threshold of the door, a wall of bright shining light confronted me, so exceedingly bright that it almost staggered me, and instantly I cried out, "Glory to

God, I'm healed," and truly I was. I went through the house praising the Lord, and up and down the back veranda, glorifying God and walking as I did before meeting with the accident. Seeing the crutches, I said, "Take those back to the kind friend that loaned them to me. I shall not want them any more." So the crutches were returned just before midnight. Hallelujah! On rising next morning I discarded the steel and leather support and the bandages, and have never touched them since, for I was made every whit whole.

Two days later I was sweetly baptized in the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2.4. My bible means more to me now than ever before. I now see my Lord as my Savior from sin, the great physician, the one who baptizes with the Holy Ghost, and the one who is coming for his bride very soon.

The other testimony is from Mrs. M. Legate Pople, Orange, N.S.W.:

Genesis 24.27--"I being in the way, the Lord led me" [Ge 24.27] --seems to be the best explanation of God's wondrous blessings to me five weeks ago. How I did want to go home! My poor heart was in such a state, past all human aid; even the casing was ruptured so that the least move would cause a lump to protrude like an egg. For 16 weeks I just lay prostrate, and how lovely it was to feel so near home, so often almost through the pearly gates; how real the dawning of that eternal day was to me, and how I just longed to enter right in. I was so bent on going "home to glory" that when asked if I would like to have evangelist Wigglesworth pray for me, if I should be here when he came, I said an emphatic "No," and I certainly meant it. Such a band of dear friends were praying for me everywhere that I just felt I wanted no more; my mind and my hopes were all centered on things above and not on things here below. How little did I know what wondrous blessings there were here below that I had not even tasted of, that my dear loving Savior wanted me to experience before I should pass through the pearly gates, and how graciously did He work to bring it to pass.

Brother Wigglesworth was not expected here for nearly two months, when suddenly dates were altered and he arrived almost without warning. Of course, this did not concern me, for my fellow invalid, Sister Todd [whose testimony is also given in this chapter] and I had made up our minds that we weren't going to have anything to do with the mission of the evangelist. How true are the Lord's words, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." [Is 55.8] As the mission went on, my friend, who was adverse to the teaching of divine healing, began to search the scriptures afresh to see if these things that were being taught, and which were confidently affirmed by numbers around who believed, were so. She became so convinced of the truth of God, who said, "I am the Lord; I change not," [Mt 3.6] that she came into my room saying she intended going to the mission for the laying on of hands and prayer.

That night I saw her making her way out on her crutches to the car in great agony, and somehow I felt in myself that she would be healed. After her return she came skipping down the steps to my room, like the man of old leaping and praising God, and saying, "Sister, I'm healed, I'm healed," and so she was, perfectly and completely. Hallelujah! It was wonderful.

All that night I prayed and sought the Lord, and then came the thought--how could I face my dear Lord whom I loved with all my heart if I just slipped home, having refused to prove whether he wanted me do to any more "little corner filling" for him, when before my eyes he had wrought such a miracle?

In the morning, the closing day of the mission, I was waiting for someone to come down to my room, to ask them if they would take a message to Brother Wigglesworth and see if he would come and pray for me after the morning service. After breakfast I could hear the dear ones of the house holding a prayer

meeting, but as they had closed the door I could not hear what was taking place. How I was longing for someone to come in to take my message, but no; time was getting on, and how I pleaded with the Lord: Could it be that they were all too much occupied with their own blessings and were unmindful of me? I questioned. Ah no, but because I had said "No" so decisively they would not ask me again, and they were all asking the Lord to constrain me to ask for prayer.

Presently different ones came into my room, but did not look at me or give me the usual smile and kind word. I asked each if they would take my message, and not until I had made the request five times did I get a promise that they would. I had said "No" once but had to say "Yes" five times. How long it seemed before that morning service was over; but at last, in came the matron, face beaming, and said, "He's come." I vaguely remember seeing a man step into the room, and after that saw no man but Jesus only. How sweetly does the dear Lord manifest himself. The evangelist told his daughter (Mrs. Salter) to put her hands on my knees, and he put his on my head and prayed a wonderful prayer (wonderful to me because I was right in glory). Then he laid his hands on my heart and prayed for my healing, at the same time rebuking death and commanding it to be dashed away in Jesus' name.

When he first came in he said, "Are you ready to get up?" I said, "Yes, I am," and now he said, "Get up," and up I got. My inability to even move just a few minutes before was entirely forgotten. One thought only seemed to possess me, and that was to get dressed as quickly as possible. I rushed across the floor and lifted down two heavy suitcases filled with books in order to get to where I could find some clothing. I was in such a hurry, I wanted to be dressed ready to greet "my girls" of my bible class who used to flock in after church just to have a peep at me. In the afternoon before I had lain semi-conscious for hours, and those who saw me then thought perhaps it was the last look; and here I was trying to find clothes to let them see me every whit whole! I was just ready when the door opened and a number of them were admitted, and what a shock they got. Some wept; some laughed, then wept; they hugged me, then would think of my heart and let go; but it was all right. I was healed perfectly and completely, and felt no weakness after my sixteen weeks in bed, when I had eaten scarcely anything. All the while I had lain there I was neither hungry nor thirsty, and would take little sips just to oblige those who brought it to me. Now I wanted my dinner, and a good dinner I had. I was changed, a new creation, just filled with God, divinely healed, raised up in a moment, from the shadow of death to abounding life--saved to serve.

The day following my healing I was gloriously baptized in the Holy Spirit according to Acts 2.4, and daily and hourly he fills me with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

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