

Jerry McAuley's Legacy

I've had a lengthy interest in Jerry McAuley. He's the man credited with beginning the first rescue mission in the United States (The Water Street Mission in New York City in 1872). Reading and learning of those early days in Rescue Mission ministry helps me stay compassionate in our current days of ministry to "God's human sparrows," as City Union Mission founder, David Bulkley, referred to those we are privileged to serve each day.

I hope you will be blessed to read the testimonies/stories below. Please note that the spellings, punctuation, etc. in these stories are left as originally written.



I have a few dozen books about Jerry's life and legacy and continue to find new-to-me "stories" about him and those who came to the Lord through his ministry. S.H. Hadley (Samuel Hopkins Hadley) was one such man. I recently discovered a book entitled The Holy Spirit in Life and Service, compiled by Amzi Clarence Dixon. The addresses (presentations) compiled in this book were delivered at a conference on the ministry of the Holy Spirit held in Brooklyn, NY in October 1894.

One address in this book was written by Samuel Hadley. It's entitled "The Holy Spirit in His Relation to Rescue Work." The contents of this chapter are below the following lengthy "introduction" to Samuel Hadley from two other sources I found.

- Rev. Daniel Doty, City Union Mission, 2018
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The Conversion of Samuel Hadley

from, *Jerry McAuley and His Mission* by Arthur Bonner (1967)

"On the night of Sunday, April 23, 1882, a man came to the mission weak from the aftereffects of a severe attack of delirium tremens. He could not push through the crowd. A tramp saw how anxious he was and asked, "Do you want to go in?" "Yes," said the man. "Then hang on to my coat." The tramp forced his way through the crowd and dragged the man up toward the front. He listened to the testimonies, prayed, and was born anew. The man was Samuel Hopkins Hadley. Almost every moment of his adult life before that night had been compounded of self-gratification, pleasure, fraud, and deceit. Almost every moment after, until his death in 1906, was compounded of self-sacrifice, sympathy, and love."

Lecture IX. Conversion

from *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) by William James
(American philosopher and psychologist born in 1842 – a fairly positive treatment
of those who told of “religious” experiences)

[Mr. James abridged his comments from an out of print pamphlet that Samuel Hadley authored called “Rescue Mission Work” and published at the Old Jerry McAuley Water Street Mission, New York City.]

“One Tuesday evening I sat in a saloon in Harlem, a homeless, friendless, dying drunkard. I had pawned or sold everything that would bring a drink. I could not sleep unless I was dead drunk. I had not eaten for days, and for four nights preceding I had suffered with delirium tremens, or the horrors, from midnight till morning. I had often said, ‘I will never be a tramp. I will never be cornered, for when that time comes, if ever it comes, I will find a home in the bottom of the river.’ But the Lord so ordered it that when that time did come I was not able to walk one quarter of the way to the river. As I sat there thinking, I seemed to feel some great and mighty presence. I did not know then what I was. I did learn afterwards that it was Jesus, the sinner’s friend. I walked up to the bar and pounded it with my fist till I made the glasses rattle. Those who stood by drinking looked on with scornful curiosity. I said I would never take another drink, if I died on the street, and really I felt as though that would happen before morning. Something said, ‘If you want to keep this promise, go and have yourself locked up.’ I went to the nearest station-house and had myself locked up.

“I was placed in a narrow cell, and it seemed as though all the demons that could find room came in that place with me. This was not all the company I had either. No, praise the Lord; that dear Spirit that came to me in the saloon was present, and said, ‘Pray.’ I did pray, and though I did not feel any great help, I kept on praying. As soon as I was able to leave my cell I was taken to the police court and remanded back to the cell. I was finally released, and found my way to my brother’s house, where every care was given me. While lying in bed the admonishing Spirit never left me, and when I arose the following Sabbath morning I felt that day would decide my fate, and toward evening it came into my head to go to Jerry McAuley’s Mission. I went.

The house was packed, and with great difficulty I made my way to the space near the platform. There I saw the apostle to the drunkard and the outcast – that man of God, Jerry McAuley. He rose, and amid deep silence told his experience. There was a sincerity about this man that carried conviction with it, and I found myself saying, ‘I wonder if God can save *me*?’ I listened to the testimony of twenty-five or thirty persons, every one of whom had been saved from rum, and I made up my mind that I would be saved or die right there. When the invitation was given, I knelt down with a crowd of drunkards. Jerry made the first prayer. Then Mrs. McAuley prayed fervently for us. Oh, what a conflict was going on for my poor soul! A blessed whisper said, ‘Come;’ the devil said, ‘Be careful.’ I halted but a moment, and then, with a breaking heart, I said, ‘Dear Jesus, can you help me?’ Never with mortal tongue can I describe that moment. Although up to that moment my soul had been filled with indescribable gloom, I felt I was a free man. Oh, the precious feeling of safety, of freedom, of resting on Jesus! I felt that Christ with all his brightness and power had come into my life; that, indeed, old things had passed away and all things had become new.

“From that moment till now I have never wanted a drink of whiskey, and I have never seen money enough to make me take one. I promised God that night that if he would take away the appetite for strong drink, I would work for him all my life. He has done his part, and I have been trying to do mine.”

Fairly soon after Samuel Hadley’s conversion he encouraged his unsaved brother Colonel Henry H. Hadley to go to the mission to find out first-hand how that mission and the Lord had changed his life. A few years later Col. Hadley came drunk one night to the mission but listened and was saved – led to the Lord by Samuel! During the course of his life after salvation he began 60 other rescue missions. This information about Col. Hadley came from the book by Abbie C. Morrow “Transformed - The Life of Jerry McAuley.” In the last chapter of her book she quotes S. H. Hadley giving a report on his brother, Col. Hadley saying that on his 59th birthday he started his 60th Rescue Mission.

"The Holy Spirit in His Relation to Rescue Work"

*by S. H. Hadley, Superintendent of Water Street Mission of New York
at a Northfield Massachusetts Conference, Thursday evening, August 10, 1894.*

This question is one above all others that I like to speak on. Rescue work is a work peculiar in itself. The cities have become filled with men who have been thrown down to death through the existing conditions of society. There are thousands of men and women, who once adorned homes and occupied positions of importance, who have become debauched and helpless drunkards. These people associate together, but this is not the time to go into the causes of it. It is hell that does it.

Jesus put his stamp of approval on our kind of work. The only place in the Scriptures where, that I can remember, he called himself the Son of God was to the woman at the well, who was a good deal like the women in lower New York. The wonderful talk he gave to that woman has cheered the hearts of millions. And in the ninth chapter of John we have the record of the Son of God healing the blind beggar. These two cases were outside the pale of ordinary society at that time.

Our work in Water Street is intensely a Holy Ghost work. It is so hopeless that there is no hope in anything else. We have to fall back on God alone to do the work. The class of men that you meet there have all passed through the modern means of church life and Young Men's Christian Associations, and have become drunkards and murderers and outcasts and everything that is abominable. Their constitutions have been shattered beyond any human power to reconstruct; their moral sense is utterly obliterated; and the dog has got into their nature to such an extent that it would seem to be impossible for human beings to fall so low.

Not one man in five hundred comes there for his salvation, but to beat me out of a night's lodging or a ten-cent piece. Our society is a society for the relief of the unworthy poor. If you have any unworthy poor send them over there. If you have any worthy poor, keep them yourselves. A man will come in there for some purpose or other, and by and by we will kneel down and pray with him. He will get up and declare that he is saved. We say to him, "Are you sure of it?" "I guess so." "Do you only guess so?"

Well, the women come up and shake hands with him, and we assume that he is telling the truth, though we know he is lying. It is a new experience for him to be believed, and the fact that he is believed tears him all to pieces; but perhaps in about ten days he will really come back for salvation and get saved. We have had men come to the mission, and we would pray with them and strive with them perhaps for two or three years, and finally they would get saved, and then make some of the grandest men.

It is now twenty-two years since Jerry McAuley started the mission at 316 Water Street. At that time it was declared to be utter nonsense to talk of a drunkard having the drink habit taken out of him, but it is not considered nonsense now. There are thousands standing on the earth today who have felt the thrill of the cleansing power of the blood of Christ; and there are thousands around the throne of God today praising Jesus who were once bleary eyed drunkards. There are thousands today who are lovely women, because the blood has touched them and cleansed them, who once were prostitutes. After twenty two years of drinking I was once supposed to be dying in a saloon in New York with the jimmies. The prayers of my mother saved me.

My mother was around the throne of God for twenty years before I was converted, but I was converted because my mother believed for me. Mothers, take your wayward boys before the throne of God and leave them there. That night, when I was supposed to be dying, the Lord Jesus came to me like a flash. I realized his divine presence; I saw I had received a visit from God. I went to the station-house and had myself locked up, and my suffering was intense. One drink of whiskey would have fixed it just for the time, but I had seen Jesus, and could not take it. They kept me in the station-house until it was safe to let me out, and when it was safe I came out and went to the Cremorne Mission (Jerry McAuley's second mission).

There I heard that Jesus could take the whole thing out of a man, and he took the whole thing out of me. I was the first man to go forward that night when the invitation was given. Fast women and drunkards were there, and some madams from the neighborhood had come in, and some pickpockets sneeringly looked on. The godly women there prayed. Next to me a poor girl of twenty-five knelt.

Oh, such a specimen of humanity! Her name was Maggie Parker. Jerry McAuley put his hand on her head and said, "Sister, pray." And she said, "O Lord, I have lost my place and shall never get another." It was not a classic prayer, but it went; and she was converted that night, and has been ever since. Next my turn came, and Jerry said, "Brother, pray." Oh, the temptations that Satan brought against me! I prayed, and Jesus filled my soul with glory; and from that day to this I have never lost the witness of the Holy Spirit for a moment. I have never once had a taste or desire for drink since then. Glory to His name!

At one of our meetings a medical student was present and came up to me for conversation. He tried to persuade me that I was teaching the people error in telling them that Jesus could take away the taste for intoxicating drinks. He began to talk to me about the condition of the drunkard's stomach, and all sorts of things, and told me I would lead the people into untold trouble in teaching them Jesus could take away the taste for drink; but, blessed be his name! He took it away from me.

A NEW YORK RESCUE MISSION

By Mr. S. H. Hadley of The Water Street Mission, New York City.

"And when I hated all my sin,
What a wonder, wonder, wonder!
My dear Redeemer took me in,
What a wonder, wonder, wonder!
And with his blood he washed me clean,
What a wonder, wonder, wonder!
And, oh, what seasons I have seen,
What a wonder, wonder, wonder!" Hallelujah!

The old Jerry McAuley Water Street Mission is the first rescue mission ever started in the world, and the work is carried on entirely by the converts, while the superintendent sits around and has a good time (*kind of a tongue in cheek comment*). It is away down town on the east side, nearly under the bridge. It is a very, very low down work. If you know of any man that is meaner than any other man on the face of the earth, send him to us, because there are lots of places in the city of New York where they advertise relief for the worthy poor, but our mission is the headquarters for the unworthy poor, the hardest class there is, and we get them to come and are very glad to see them. We have glorious meetings every night. When I first went there, there were about twenty thousand, now over fifty thousand attend in a year. Our average meeting every night is from seventy-five to one hundred men, and in that number we have at least thirty saved drunkards, and the rest of them drunkards still. No nice people, but "bums," saved "bums," all of them, praise the Lord!

Our mission has been blessed remarkably in the number of men that have gone out of it and that have taken hold of Christian work. God can take the devilment, the meanness and the skill that a man had in serving the devil, and that he learned in serving the devil, and make it useful in his own work. Oh, I think that is great, that the dear Lord Jesus Christ can turn the guns on the devil. The first man that was converted after I took charge of that mission, eight years ago, was the biggest "bum" I ever saw in my life, a Scotchman.

I asked the Lord that night to give me one soul, and the Lord did the best he could under the circumstances, and gave me the biggest "bum" in the house, and that man today belongs to the board and is one of the walking delegates in New York City. September, 1893, he was chosen grand marshal of the Labor Day parade, and he marched down Broadway at the head of 15,000 men. He rode and the rest of them walked, the best muscle and brawn and skill in our city. He isn't a politician, only he is a prohibitionist, praise the Lord! - and he hasn't any political pull, but they elected him because he was a Christian.

My own dear brother, Colonel Hadley, was converted soon after I went there, and he has started twenty-two rescue missions since the 28th of July, nine years ago. Few men have had the luxury I have had of leading my own brother to Jesus. I gave him his first drink and told him to take it, and afterward led him to the Lord Jesus Christ. I was converted three years before he was. He didn't believe in man, God, or the devil, but he watched me like a cat. We loved each other with a tender love, and at last he saw that something had got hold of me, something supernatural, and Jesus helped me to live it before him, praise His name! And I saw my brother fall at our mercy seat, and when the Lord came into his soul there was an electric shock that almost laid me prostrate. The St. Bartholomew Church people erected a mission costing thirty thousand dollars, and put him at the head of it.

There was an old woman came in our mission last January, a Scotchwoman who had married a Jew. She was drunk. I want to tell you something. Nine tenths of the people who are converted in our mission are drunk when they are converted. We wouldn't get half of them up if they weren't drunk. This woman came down there and fell at our mercy seat and Jesus saved her. We told her to come down in the morning and get her breakfast. We think it is a great thing down there to hit a person in the stomach with a loaf of bread, and we told her to come down and get her breakfast, and we gave her some work to do, and then the second day after she was getting the "jim-jams." She had drunk for years and years, and she stopped all at once. After Jesus touches them they don't drink any more. She said, "Well, I will have to go to the hospital," and she went.

You don't, many of you, know what it means to go to the maniac ward of Bellevue Hospital and be strapped down, having people hit you if you scream. But she said, "I can trust Jesus," and in five days she came back shouting happy. "Oh, brother," said she, "the Saviour went with me into the ward, and he saved me all the time." And this Jew of a husband came down and said, "I would like to know what sort of things my wife got here; she doesn't hit me over the head anymore." That man fell down and said, "I want this." He knelt down there and Jesus saved him, and it is a great sight to see that man grow in grace.

Oh, brethren, it takes a wonderful Saviour to save a drunkard; it takes a mighty religion to save a drunkard and keep him saved; it takes a great salvation, and we preach it down there in all its fullness. We tell the boys that Jesus can do anything for them if they will forsake their sins; that he will save to the uttermost. We had an old fellow, old Rube Johnson, and the very sight of old Rube Johnson would almost make a mission close its doors. He would come forward every time for prayers, and would nudge this fellow and that fellow. That man had worked for eighteen years on the "New York Herald" and for fourteen years on the "Times." Then he gave up work and went to drinking whiskey for a living. He came there for years and we were kind to him.

We never refuse a man anything he asks for in Water Street. One night Jesus met him, over three years ago. He had been drunk for twenty years; he always wore a linen duster in the winter and an ulster in the summer. Jesus saved that man, and from that second to this he has never turned to the right nor to the left. To see that man walk along the street with a clean shirt and decent suit, and a watch in his pocket, is a pretty big sermon.

The Story of Mr. Hadley's Conversion.

The Lord Jesus came to me one night in a saloon. I hadn't been in a church for many years. I was a dying drunkard at that time, and had walked the streets for four nights with delirium tremens. I hadn't a cent, and I went into a big gin-mill on the corner of 125th Street and Third Avenue, and all of a sudden, like a current of lightning, Jesus came into that room.

I have told this hundreds of times in gin-mills and dives. Sometimes the boys ask me, "How do you know it was Jesus?" I say to them, as I will say to you, that if you have ever seen him you won't need an introduction to him, you will know him, and so did I. I supposed I was dying. I jumped down from the whiskey barrel where I had been sitting for an hour and I walked up to the bar and hammered on the bar, and made everybody listen to me. I said, "Boys, listen to me. I think I am dying, but I want to tell you I will die on the street before I will ever take another drink." I have never taken that back from that day to this. I went out of there and I went to the nearest station house. Before that time the saloon to me was the most precious thing on this earth; from that minute I loathed it. It has been the great horror in my life ever since.

I went to the station house and asked the captain to lock me up. He did. I told him I wanted to be put in a place where I would die before it would be possible to get a drink. They kept me there until they felt it was safe for me to go. There is one place in the Scriptures where Jesus said, "I was found of them that sought me not." Jesus sought me when a stranger. When I was able to go from there, God told me to go to Jerry McAuley's Mission. I fought against it, and told him I couldn't go to a place kept by an ex-convict. He said, "What are you?" I didn't say anything further. I went.

The place was packed to the doors. There were people standing looking over each other's shoulders. I said, "That is just my luck, when I want to do right I can't." I turned and went right into the arms of a man. He said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I was going in there, but I can't get in." He said, "I will get you in, come with me." I took him by the coat-tail, and he took me up the aisle and landed me right in front of Jerry McAuley. I heard him tell his wonderful story of how Jesus Christ had saved him, and I believed it, every word of it. Then one after another spoke, and as the meeting came to a close he raised his hand and gave the invitation which I have given so many times since, "Who will come tonight, who will raise his hand for prayers?" My hand was the first that went up. I sat down with a lot of poor "bums" like myself. There was a wretched girl who sat close beside me, drawing her rags about her and weeping as if her heart would break. When we knelt Jerry looked at us, and a big tear trickled down his face, and he said, "Now, boys, we are going to pray."

How I trembled that moment and wondered what would happen. Jerry commenced to pray first, and he said this, "Dear Jesus, pity these poor fellows." O how much that prayer comforted me! What impressed me was that Jerry McAuley knew Jesus Christ. I have heard prayers when it took them half an hour to get up to Jesus before they could talk to him, but Jerry jumped into the fight. How I needed pity! Then he went on, "They have got themselves in such an awful hole and they can't get out; speak to them; Lord, won't you help them out? Do, for Jesus' sake. Amen." Every word of that prayer was engraved on my heart. After that they sang a hymn, and then Jerry came around from one to another and made them pray too.

He came to the poor girl who sat next to me. He put his hand on her head and said, "Sister, pray." This was her prayer, "Oh, Lord, I have lost my place and I know I will never get another." It wasn't much of a prayer, but Jesus saved her that night, and she is saved tonight. He came to me next and said, "Brother, pray." Oh, friends, I had knelt there to be saved. Some two months before that I had committed one hundred and twenty-five forgeries in the city of Brooklyn on one man, and I knew the man was mad and was going to put me where the dogs wouldn't bite me, and I had been hiding, and I never thought of it until that instant, and the devil said to me, "If you start to be a Christian now you will have to go to Sing Sing (*prison*); be careful, this is your last chance." Oh, how my heart beat! How I trembled! I thought, "After all, must I go away from this place unsaved?"

Jerry put his hand on my head and said, "Brother, pray." I said, "I can't pray, let somebody pray for me." He said, "All the prayers in the world won't save you if you don't pray for yourself." Then I said, "Dear Jesus, can't you help me?" and like a current of lightning Jesus Christ came into my poor soul, the darkness fell away forever, and the glorious dawn of heaven burst upon my dying soul. Oh, the bliss of that moment! I have never lost the witness of the Spirit from that moment to this.

A short time after this I went to see this man that I had wronged, and I told him how I had been saved, and as I talked to him the tears came into his eyes. When I had finished he took me by the hand and said, "Mr. Hadley, I am an Episcopalian; I don't know much about the kind of religion you have, but I would give my printing house if I had what you have."

And that thing that almost made me lose my soul, he just wiped it all away in one moment of time.

I commenced the very next day to work for Jesus, and I have never stopped. To me it is my meat and drink to tell poor dying sinners that Jesus Christ can save and that Jesus can keep. You never can tell what denomination we are in Water street, but we live Jesus and praise him and believe him, bless his name!