

FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS

The Autobiography of an Early Australian Baptist

John Chandler



Forty Years in the Wilderness

by
John Chandler

A narrative of the experiences and the Lord's dealings with an early colonist, together with some account of the first Particular Baptist church in Victoria, Australia

2014

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Publisher's Note: The Gospel Standard Trust issues this book with the hope that it might be spiritually profitable. Although we only issue books we feel set forth a Scriptural standard, there will be differences in opinion and interpretation, and the most gracious of men still have to say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." We trust our readers will prayerfully "prove all things" and "hold fast that which is good", whilst bearing in meekness with any imperfections.

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Preface

Inheriting an original copy of this book by John Chandler in a dilapidated condition, we desired to see it preserved and reprinted in its entirety, with the exception of it being made easier to read by dividing it into chapters, as it was originally written in a continuous narrative. A more recent edition was also in existence but it was lacking a substantial amount of the author's religious exercises, whilst retaining the historical content. So neither book was ideal.

Since giving a privately published copy to an English friend, it has come to the attention of the Gospel Standard Trust Publications as worthy to be reproduced.

We are delighted and thankful for the publishers to recognise the value of both the historical events and spiritual exercises in John Chandler's life, as an impressive example of how providence is interwoven with grace in a believers' experience, with the addition of the footnotes, maps, photographs, paintings, etc., making it a comprehensive and instructive snapshot into the life of an early colonist emigrating from Great Britain.

Our sincere desire is that the reader will be edified and encouraged in their life's journey to trust in the Lord God of heaven and earth when difficulties arise. May the Lord's blessing attend His Word and work.

A. J. Seymour
Hawthorn, Melbourne, Victoria
August 2014

Publisher's Note

This most interesting, indeed gripping account by John Chandler of his life, emigrating to Australia as a child with his parents, and the hardships and dangers he endured living and struggling to establish himself and his family in the harsh and often lawless environment of a developing colony, was originally written in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Also included are quite detailed accounts of his spiritual experiences and call by grace, and some fascinating and perhaps salutary insights into the early history of the Australian Strict Baptist churches.

Chandler was not an educated man, and this shows through in the sometimes disconnected and ungrammatical character of the narrative. Very little alteration has been made to the original text, with only a very small number of the grossest grammatical irregularities changed to make reading easier, and a few expressions relating to the native population of Australia, that are now unacceptable, also modified. The book has, however, been divided into chapters (which it was not in the original) and the punctuation extensively modified for the sake of clarity.

Very few original copies of this book survive, either in England or Australia. In the latter it is regarded as a very rare account of life in the early years of the colony and state of Victoria, written from the standpoint of one of the ordinary people—such accounts more commonly come from the better educated who cannot write first-hand of the struggles of the poor. As such, it was republished by the Australian secular historian, Michael Cannon, in 1990, with some background material in a fairly lengthy introduction and a very few footnotes, though many obscure references to people, places and events were left without comment. Sadly, Cannon deleted what he described as “a fair amount” of John Chandler’s “pious musing,” as “so repetitive as to be ultimately boring,” even suggesting that his spiritual experiences could be considered by some “to be delusions of a sensitive mind driven by stress to seek spiritual consolation.” The book has also, in recent years, been privately published by Mr. Joe Flitton of Zion Chapel, Hawthorn.

On reading the book, it was felt that interest and understanding would be increased by adding background information relating to many matters casually mentioned in the text without any explanation, whether relating to the wider context of the State of Victoria, or to narrower matters of church history, the Chandler family, or even Australian dialect. This has been done by extensive footnotes and inserted pages and appendices, and it is hoped that the reader will find these of value. The inserted pages are distinguished by a different typeface and surrounded by a border. The historical accuracy of the added material has been verified as far as possible, but errors cannot be ruled out, and it is hoped that any Australian readers in particular will excuse any such that come to light.

One question that continually arises when reading this book is, When was it written? The date usually given, and the one accepted by Michael Cannon, is 1893, but many references in the text make this impossible, e.g. to the death of Frederick Newnham, who lived until 1899. Also, adding up the periods of time Chandler mentions as having been involved in his various business enterprises, or since he sold his business, makes more years than are available to fit them in. It would seem likely, therefore, that the book was commenced in 1893, but written or revised over quite a number of years, only seeing the light of day toward 1900.

Imperial units of measurement in the text have been left unchanged, though in the footnotes some metric units have been used. Miles have been retained for distance to try and conform to what most U.K. readers will be familiar with. A conversion table to help with less familiar measurements is included at the front of the book.

Measurements

At this time measurements used in Australia were of the Imperial System, as in the United Kingdom. The currency in use was also the same 3 tier system, which in the U.K. continued until 1971, but Australia switched to a decimal system of dollars and cents in 1966.

Money

Money was based on a 3 tier system of **pounds, shillings and pence**.

£1 = 20 shillings = 240 pennies. 1 shilling = 12 pennies. Pennies could be sub-divided into 2 halfpennies or 4 farthings. Some coins were also given names, so 5 shillings = 1 crown, 2 shillings and sixpence = a half-crown, 2 shillings = 1 florin. A guinea was 21 shillings.

At decimalisation in Australia, £1 became A\$2.

At decimalisation in the U.K. the value of the pound was unchanged, but was now made up of 100 pence. So 1 new penny = 2.4 old pennies. The shilling disappeared.

Weight

The imperial system of weights is based on **pounds and ounces**.

16 ounces = 1 pound, 14 pounds = 1 stone, 8 stone = 1 hundredweight (=112 pounds), 20 hundredweight = 1 ton (=2240 pounds).

Metric equivalents: 1 ounce = 28.35 grams, 1 pound = 454 grams, 1 ton = 1016 kilograms. (1 tonne or metric ton = 1000 kilograms).

Length and Distance

The imperial system of length is based on **feet and inches**.

12 inches = 1 foot, 3 feet = 1 yard, 22 yards = 1 chain (the length of a cricket pitch), 10 chains = 1 furlong (=220 yards), 8 furlongs = 1 mile (=1760 yards or 5280 feet).

Metric equivalents: 1 inch = 2.54 centimetres, 1 foot = 30.48 centimetres, 1 yard = 0.91 metres, 1 mile = 1.61 kilometres (1 metre = 39.34 inches).

Area

The imperial unit of area is the **acre**, though there are smaller, almost forgotten units.

4840 square yards = 1 acre, 640 acres = 1 square mile.

160 perches = 4 roods = 1acre.

Metric equivalents: 1 acre = 0.405 hectares (1 hectare = 10,000 square metres).

Capacity

The imperial system of capacity is based on the **pint**.

8 pints = 1 gallon.

For measuring dry volume, the bushel was used, which is equivalent to 8 gallons (36.4 litres). 4 pecks make 1 bushel, so 1 peck is equivalent to 2 gallons.

Metric equivalents: 1 pint = 568 millilitres, 1 gallon = 4.55 litres.

Forty Years in the Wilderness

1. A Brighton Childhood

I was born in Brighton, Sussex, England, in the year 1838. My parents were God-fearing people. They were both brought up in the Church of England. My father was the youngest son of a small farmer in Sussex, and my mother was a gardener's daughter in Kent. In the providence of God they were in service together with a gentleman's family in Brighton, who removed his establishment to Edinburgh in Scotland.

There were no railways in those days, so they travelled partly by coach and partly by private vehicles. One night they stopped at an old castle, which had been deserted many years. The country people were afraid to go near as they said it was haunted. But as there was no shelter anywhere and a storm coming, they had to stop there. Now my father had the gentleman's plate¹ in his charge, and as there were highwaymen about, he felt very anxious to put the chest containing the plate in one of the towers. Having fastened all up safely as he thought, the storm came on in the night, and he could hear a great bumping at the tower where his treasure was. He was the only male in the place, so he took a sword belonging to his master (who was a Waterloo officer²) and a lantern and went to face the robbers, as he thought. Just as he reached the tower there was a great gust of wind, and something fell against him and knocked the lantern to pieces, his sword out of his hand, and scared him so that he ran back to where the women were in double-quick time, leaving the treasure to take care of itself.

As soon as daylight came, he ventured around to find his sword. He found his treasure safe, and the large door of the tower open. The lock, which was very old, had rusted and would not catch. When the wind blew it got loose and swung to and fro, and it was this door that had knocked his lantern to pieces. He was very thankful to find all safe.

¹ Dishes, plates, cups or other utensils made of precious metal (or plated with it), usually silver, but could also be gold.

² Presumably one who had fought against Napoleon's French army in the Battle of Waterloo, 1815.

Forty Years in the Wilderness

They arrived at Edinburgh after a very cold and tedious journey. My father and mother were married in Edinburgh New Town.³ The master, who was a half-pay officer,⁴ was very mean and nearly starved his servants. When my eldest sister was born, he gave my father a hint that he would have to clear out. This caused him a lot of trouble, being in a strange land and far away from friends.

It was at this time he was brought to see his lost state. As he was crossing a bridge in the city, a fearful darkness came over his mind, and he felt that he was a lost sinner. He went about reforming himself, but he could get no relief. He now resolved to go back to Brighton.

He could not afford to go back the way he came, so he took passage in a small boat called a lugger⁵ which was going to London. There were no steamers in those days; this was in 1836. It being winter, they had a fearful voyage round the coast. He said he felt like a Jonah, but the Lord in mercy spared him and his wife and child, and all got safe to Brighton. He got work with a Mr. James Tyler as a canvasser,⁶ which was a very precarious living.

Some friends, who knew of his state of mind, persuaded him to go and hear the late Mr. Vinall.⁷ He was quite disgusted with the Church of England, as in his youthful days he had lived with a parson who kept hunting horses and used to swear at him. At that time he thought little of it, but now! how to serve a pure and holy God and do those things, he could not understand. He was delivered under Mr. Vinall's ministry and joined the church. But being soon after convinced that baptism by immersion was the scriptural way, he withdrew from Mr. Vinall's church, though he continued a Sunday school teacher there for some time.

³ This was built in the latter half of the 18th and early 19th centuries to alleviate overcrowding in the original Old Town. It is considered a masterpiece of neo-classical and Georgian architecture, and, together with the Old Town, is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The famous Princes Street forms part of it.

⁴ Officers not on active service but not retired and who could be called up if needed, received half pay.

⁵ A lugger is a sailing vessel with two or three masts and an asymmetrical, four-sided sail (lugsail) on each.

⁶ A canvasser was a travelling salesman, loosely equivalent to the modern sales representative, James Tyler apparently being a bookseller.

⁷ John Vinall (1782-1860) was pastor at Jireh Chapel, Lewes and Providence Chapel, Church Street, Brighton, both Huntingonian foundations. The Brighton chapel was demolished in 1965.

Chapter 1 – A Brighton Childhood

My father was baptised by Mr. Sedgwick⁸ at Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond Hill, Brighton, and joined that church. He always loved Mr. Vinall very much, but he had to leave for conscience sake. He lost many friends in that church by taking this step, but he wished to obey his Master (see John 12.26, Matthew 3.13–15). The loss of friends was a great trial to him, as he was very poor, and he had a very hard struggle to get the bread that perishes. My mother started a small laundry at a place called Prospect Cottage in Vine Place,⁹ and it was here that I first saw the light of day, May 22nd, 1838.

We must have lived here several years, and the first thing I can remember of any importance to myself is that in front of our house was an open field, and certain donkeys were turned out there to graze. Some boys asked me if I would like a ride—I was between three and four years old. I said, ‘Yes.’ So they set me on one of the donkeys with my face towards the donkey’s tail. This might have been my first and last ride, for the donkey ran away with me and threw me, and I was carried home insensible, but my time was not come.

When I was old enough, I was sent to a cheap school kept by an old lady named Kain. She wore a very large nightcap, and when I used to see the nightcap bobbing up and down I used to be terrified, for I knew it boded no good to us, for she ruled us with the rod. Being a very slow learner, I often had to stand on the form with the dunce’s¹⁰ cap on. I don’t think I learned much there.

The laundry was too hard for my mother, so she gave it up, and my father opened a small grocery shop in Blackman Street.¹¹ This my mother kept, but being an honest woman and not used to the ways of the world, she was imposed on and often cheated, and at last had to give it up. She had lost all her hard-earned savings and was heavy in debt, so everything was seized. My grandmother Chandler lived with us here. She was a great woman for herbal remedies. She died just before we lost everything.

⁸ Joseph Sedgwick (1797-1853) was pastor of Ebenezer Chapel (*see Figure 1*), Richmond Street, Brighton, from 1824 until his death.

⁹ At least some of these small cottages in Vine Place, behind Clifton Terrace, Brighton, are still standing.

¹⁰ A “dunce” is defined as “a person slow at learning.” At one time in schools it was common as a punishment for misbehaviour or apparent stupidity for a pupil to have to wear a pointed paper hat, often with a big “D” on it, while sitting or standing in a corner.

¹¹ This runs between Trafalgar Street and Cheapside, Brighton, near to the station.

Forty Years in the Wilderness

My father was travelling, selling books for Mr. Tyler,¹² and he could only earn fourteen shillings per week. We now had to go into a small house in a back lane, called Sussex Court. We slept in an attic which let the wind go right through, and how fearfully cold we used to be, for we could not afford much coal, and my poor mother and we three children knew what it was to go hungry. I can remember her dividing out the pieces of bread, and taking such a small piece for herself. My father was often away in the country for a fortnight at a time, and he struggled hard to pay what he owed out of his small earnings, and he eventually paid everyone all he owed them, but we had to go on very short commons.¹³

I well remember how I used to go up North Street¹⁴ and look into the confectioners' shops, and squeeze my nose against the windows and long for a piece of bread. Then I would stand over the areas¹⁵ and smell the dinners cooking below. This was all I got, for I had to go away with an empty belly. Sometimes I would pick up a piece of orange peel, which I thought quite a treat.

I was sent once for some bread; my father had just started on a fortnight's journey, leaving my mother only two shillings and sixpence to live on till he came back. I got the bread, and the baker gave me a bun to eat. I sat down on a kerbstone near to St. Peter's Church,¹⁶ and I lost my change. O what anguish I caused my poor mother! I had to go to bed in the cold without anything to eat or a rushlight¹⁷ to light me. I think my mother was too distracted to beat me. How we lived through these times I cannot tell; the Lord must have sustained us, for no one would trust us because my father had failed.

After some time my father got a rise in his wages, and we went to live in a better house in Kew Street, near the Old Church, and I was sent to the Middle Street School.¹⁸ My brother Edward was born here, and now we could get plenty to eat, and none can know what this means but those

¹² This would be James Tyler, a member of Mr. Grace's church in West Street, who emigrated with the Chandlers a few years later.

¹³ Insufficient amounts of food.

¹⁴ This is still an important shopping street very close to the Royal Pavilion in Brighton.

¹⁵ A sunken enclosure at the front of a building, giving access to the basement.

¹⁶ St. Peter's Church is situated in York Place on the main A23 road to London. It was built in 1824-27 and became Brighton's Parish Church in 1873.

¹⁷ A type of candle formed by soaking the dried pith of a rush stalk in fat or grease; these were widely used by poor people.

¹⁸ Kew Street runs north from Church Street, Brighton, opposite the then Parish Church of St. Nicholas (the Old Church). Middle Street is only a short walk away where there is still a primary school, though its buildings are clearly much more recent.

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who have had to go short. I got all the learning that I ever had at this school. My dear wife also went to this school, but I did not know her then. My father got another rise in his wages, and we went to live in a larger house belonging to my uncle, called Lone Cottage. Here we had much happier times, for we had fields all around us, and O! how we did enjoy a roll in the meadows of a bright spring morning, and in the winter to make a great snowball higher than our heads.

I can never forget with what joy and enthusiasm we walked through the fields of a bright Sunday morning to our chapel in Richmond Hill. The air was full of the music of the bells, and two regiments of soldiers with their bands playing were going to church. I was lost in the pleasure of the surroundings. Then we would meet Mr. and Mrs. Wood and Mr. and Mrs. Juniper and their families, Mr. J. Turner and his pupils,¹⁹ and a crowd of others, all going up to the House of God together. O, it was delightful! O what privileges hath God bestowed upon us!

I was sent to a Sunday school for boys only. It was in the Lanes,²⁰ and was connected with Mr. Savoury's²¹ church in Bond Street. Mr. Thatcher was superintendent. I had a very kind teacher, Mr. Hammond. Many things that he told us have abided with me all through my chequered career, for I have always been afraid to mention the name of God, except with fear and reverence. And many things that he said have often come to my mind, and have kept me back from gross outward sin. I desire to encourage my brethren, the teachers in Sunday schools, "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecclesiastes 11.1). The seed may be sown in the mind of the child, and you may see nothing of it, as my teacher did not of mine, but it came to me when I was in the wilds of Australia and amongst the worst of characters, and I bless the days I went to Sunday school.

¹⁹ It appears that John Turner was Master at a Brighton boarding school, the Royal British School, said to have been in 'Upper' Edward Street.

²⁰ An area of narrow lanes, largely built in the late 18th century, where the original fishing settlement of Brighthelmstone was. It is very popular today with numerous small shops and restaurants.

²¹ William Savoury from Knowl Hill, near Maidenhead, where he had been pastor for 8 years, was pastor at Salem Chapel, Brighton, from 1830-1853. The letter from the church inviting him to the pastorate, which was written by William Vine, the miller, after whom Vine Place was named (*see Note 9 above*), still exists. Mr. Sedgwick, of the Richmond Street church, took part in his induction services. Bond Street runs between North Street and Church Street.

Forty Years in the Wilderness

We used to have a treat once a year, and all marched out of town with our banners and flags to a gentleman's park at Preston.²² Some object to this, but it never made me any worse than I was, and I look back to those days with pleasure. I sometimes went to Mr. J. Grace's²³ chapel in West Street, and I well remember his solemn and earnest face. I have read many of his sermons since, and think that he was rightly named Grace, for he was a gracious man. Mr. Tyler, my father's master, was a member there. I am sure, by my own experience, that it is good to bring our children under the sound of the pure Gospel as often as we can; it helps to keep their minds free from errors of the day which abound.

At Mr. Savoury's chapel they had a regular band—violins, clarinets, flutes, bass violins, etc. Of course, I was charmed with it, for I was very fond of music. When I was quite a child I have heard the band play some plaintive piece out on the Old Chain Pier,²⁴ and have sat down and wept, and could not help it. My aunt, Hannah Watts, lived with us. She always sang the evening hymn when she went to bed, and the words, "That I may dread the grave as little as my bed"²⁵ always affected me, and I often thought of that great and terrible Judgment Day, and would resolve to be a good boy. My grandmother on my mother's side also always lived with us here till we came away to Australia.

In the year of the great famine in Ireland,²⁶ 1848, there was a great stir amongst the Chartists,²⁷ and much excitement in Brighton. Wagner, the Vicar of Brighton, was pressing for the church rates, and the Nonconformists would not pay, so he stopped the clock at St. Peter's Church, which many of the town people depended on for their time.²⁸ All

²² Preston was a village just over a mile north of Brighton, now part of the city. The park was then owned by the Bennett-Stanford family, and was purchased by Brighton Corporation in 1883. Preston, the suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, was named after this village.

²³ John Grace (1800-1865) was pastor at the Tabernacle Strict Baptist Chapel in West Street from 1847 until his death. The church here relocated to a new building in Montpelier Place, Hove, around 1965, the old building being demolished. It is understood that this has recently closed.

²⁴ The Royal Suspension Chain Pier was built in 1823, roughly opposite the New Steine, Brighton, primarily as a landing stage for packet boats to Dieppe. It was completely destroyed by a storm on December 4th, 1896.

²⁵ From the hymn "All praise to Thee, my God, this night," by Bishop Thomas Ken (1637-1711).

²⁶ The Irish Potato Famine, 1845-52, in which about 1 million people died, and which led to mass emigration from Ireland to many parts of the world.

²⁷ Chartism was a working class movement for political and social reform, taking its name from the *People's Charter* of 1838. It culminated in the mass rally on Kennington Common, 10th April 1848.

²⁸ Henry Wagner was Vicar of Brighton from 1824-1870. He was a wealthy man and had six

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the boys took up the cry whenever they saw him of, ‘Who stopped the clock?’ We all knew him by the grey pony that he rode. When we saw him coming we would look out for some place to escape into where he could not ride, and then shout out with all our might and run, for he had a whip like the huntsmen have. He was so annoyed at every turn that he set the clock going again. The boys were too much for him, for it was real fun for them.

Provisions got very dear at this time, and many people were talking about emigrating. Many were leaving for America—there was gold discovered in California.²⁹ Two of my uncles with their families went to America; this was in 1848. Some of the members of the Ebenezer Church met together, and after much talk and many prayers they resolved to emigrate. They were therefore formed into a church by Mr. Sedgwick, with Mr. John Turner as minister and Messrs. Juniper and Wood as deacons. Male members were Tyler, Chandler, Foreman and Vincent, and female members Juniper, Wood, Turner and Foreman.

They proposed taking up a large tract of country and equally dividing it into farms, and to keep themselves a separate community. It was not to be confined to the members of the Church, but to include those who approved of our doctrines. Mr. Turner was secretary, and he was authorised to write to the Sydney Government for a grant of land—this was before the colonies were separated; all were under the Sydney Government. They received a favourable answer that they could have a tract of land at Port Phillip or Moreton Bay,³⁰ and resolved, after many meetings, to emigrate to Port Phillip and take up the land near Lake Colac,³¹ which the Sydney Government had promised them.

Everything being settled, my father sold off his furniture and bought many things, such as tools and many kinds of seeds, a gun, ammunition, etc. My

churches built in Brighton to enable the poor to attend services. His son Arthur, also a clergyman, caused much controversy in Brighton as a follower of the Oxford Movement. Church rates were a compulsory levy on property and landowners toward the expenses of the Established Church, and were much resented by Nonconformists until their abolition in 1868. The clock episode is well-documented, as Henry Wagner was fined £2 for beating a boy with his riding crop who shouted ‘Who stopped the clock?’ at him in the street. The name survives in the Wagner Hall, the Church Hall of St. Paul’s, which is built on the site of the old Strict Baptist Tabernacle in West Street.

²⁹ The Californian gold-rush began on January 24th, 1848, when gold was discovered near Coloma.

³⁰ Moreton Bay – on the east coast of Australia about 12 miles from Brisbane;
Port Phillip – the large harbour on the south coast of Australia with Melbourne at its northern extremity.

³¹ A large, shallow freshwater lake about 80 miles south-west of Melbourne.

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two cousins, F. and W. Newnham from the country, came to see us, and rather astonished us townies with their rough hats and smock frocks. They were to go with us and have a share in the land.

After visiting aunts, uncles and friends all round to say goodbye, we started for London, and went aboard the ship *Harpley*, but as she did not sail for a week, we had a good opportunity of seeing some of the sights of London. My uncle, who lived in London, took us to see the Tower, with the ancient armoury and the Crown Jewels, etc. Another day we went to St. Paul's Cathedral and the whispering gallery, and then to the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, and to Westminster Abbey. I lay my head on the same block that they used to cut Charles I's head off. The marks of the axe are still on it; the axe was very old-fashioned. The monuments were very grand. We went to Gravesend and saw the Regatta,³² also to Vauxhall.³³

I and another boy (W. Juniper), who was a playmate with me in Brighton, and for whom I entertained a great respect because he gave a boy that lived next door to us a thrashing (he was much bigger than either of us and used to bully us), started by ourselves to see the British Museum. How we found our way there and back I never knew. We passed the blue-coated boys who never wear their hats,³⁴ and got back to the Monument,³⁵ which was our landmark, safe.

I must here record the watchful care of the Lord over those He has determined to save, while in their unregenerate state. I was playing with some boys and climbing over the side of the ship, when I was accidentally pushed overboard. Twice I sank, but a Spaniard on another ship saw me in the water, and he jumped into a boat from his own ship just as I was sinking a third time, and caught me by the hair of my head, and lifted me into the boat by it. My father and mother were away at Gravesend, but Mrs. Juniper (who is Mrs. Field now), changed my clothes, put me to bed and gave me some medicine, and next morning I was as well as ever. And all

³² The first official Gravesend Regatta was held in August 1846, and still continues annually.

³³ Presumably the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens on the south bank of the Thames in Kennington.

³⁴ Pupils of Christ's Hospital, otherwise known as the City of London "Bluecoat" School in Newgate Street (so-called after its distinctive uniform, and now relocated to Horsham, Surrey), who, in a tradition possibly dating to the time of Elizabeth I, carried, but did not wear their hats. The very fine original buildings were demolished in the early 20th century. Along Newgate Street and High Holborn would have been the natural route to the British Museum

³⁵ The "Monument to the Great Fire of London" of 1666 (commonly known simply as "The Monument") was completed in 1677. It stands near the north end of London Bridge.

Chapter 1 – A Brighton Childhood

the effect it had on me was that I thought I was very lucky that I was not drowned.

In fact, I seemed more reckless, for as I was running along close to the edge of the wharf as hard as I could run, one of the men on the wharf asked me if I was not the boy who fell overboard a day or two ago. I said I was. Pointing to the water as I stood close to the edge of the wharf, he said, 'Are you not afraid of falling in again?' I gave him some indifferent answer, and away I went. O the mercy of God who watches over us in our unregenerate state!



Figure 1 – Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond Street, Brighton

Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond Street, Brighton

In the 19th century there were a surprising number of Calvinistic churches in Brighton, some Baptist and some practising infant sprinkling. The Mr. [John] Vinall referred to by John Chandler, ministered both at Jireh Chapel, Lewes, and Providence Chapel, Church Street, Brighton. These both, being Huntingtonian foundations, practised infant baptism, which was why Chandler's father found it necessary, for conscience sake, to leave Mr. Vinall's ministry. Salem Chapel in Bond Street, where J. Chandler was sent to a boys-only Sunday school (*see p.13*), was built in 1787 and enlarged in 1825 to seat 800. It was replaced by a new building in 1861, which was itself finally demolished in 1974, being replaced by Edge House.

The picture above shows Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond Street (Chandler always calls it Richmond Hill), Brighton, which, as can be seen, was built in 1825. A small group had amicably separated from the Salem church, which had a rapidly increasing membership, in 1822, and in 1824 a new church was constituted which called Mr. Joseph Sedgwick from London to be its pastor. The chapel was demolished in 1966, and the site where it stood, and indeed the lower part of Richmond Street (said to be the steepest street in Brighton) itself, can now only be identified with difficulty, the area having been built over with tower blocks. It was with this chapel that most of the emigrants to Australia were associated.

The present day Gospel Standard Strict Baptist Chapel in Brighton, Galeed, in Gloucester Road, was founded by a group of seven men who separated from yet another church, the Tabernacle in West Street, where John Grace was the minister, in 1866. The full history of this Chapel can be read in *A Further History of the Gospel Standard Baptists (Volume 5, Some Sussex Churches)*, by S.F. Paul.

[Photograph courtesy of The Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove.]

Love of Native Land

John Chandler writes in the next chapter about his continuing love for the land of his birth, even though he had left England when only 11 years old, the best part of 50 years before. However, it is interesting to note how, after a generation or two, similar feelings arise in the hearts of the children and grandchildren of the immigrants for the new country, a land very different to and harsher in character than the land of their fathers. This is exemplified in a poem written by Dorothy MacKellar, the grand-daughter of an immigrant to Australia, describing her homesickness for her native land (Australia) while on a visit to London around 1906. The first verse refers to England, and the second verse is said to be among the best known pieces of Australian poetry.

My Country

The love of field and coppice, of green and shaded lanes,
Of ordered woods and gardens is running in your veins.
Strong love of grey-blue distance, brown streams and soft, dim skies –
I know but cannot share it, my love is otherwise.

I love a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons, I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror – the wide brown land for me!

The stark white ring-barked forests, all tragic to the moon,
The sapphire-misted mountains, the hot gold hush of noon,
Green tangle of the brushes where lithe lianas coil,
And orchids deck the tree-tops, and ferns the warm dark soil.

Core of my heart, my country! Her pitiless blue sky,
When, sick at heart, around us we see the cattle die –
But then the grey clouds gather, and we can bless again
The drumming of an army, the steady soaking rain.

Core of my heart, my country! Land of the rainbow gold,
For flood and fire and famine she pays us back threefold.
Over the thirsty paddocks, watch, after many days,
The filmy veil of greenness that thickens as we gaze.

An opal-hearted country, a wilful, lavish land –
All you who have not loved her, you will not understand –
Though earth holds many splendours, wherever I may die,
I know to what brown country my homing thoughts will fly.

2. Voyage to Australia

The *Harpley* having got all her cargo aboard and most of her passengers, we started from St. Katherine's Dock³⁶ on the ninth of September 1849, and were towed down to Gravesend. The sails were set, and we were soon fairly out to sea. The ship began to roll and many faces were very pale, first from fear and then from sickness, and there was a scene which those only know who have come out in a sailing ship with two hundred passengers. Our ship was not a very large one, being only eight hundred tons burden.³⁷

We had a very rough passage down the English Channel. Three days and nights we were beating about Beachy Head. Some of the passengers wished they were ashore. Everything was new to me, and as soon as I got over my sickness I enjoyed it. To see the waves come tumbling aboard was my delight, as I was too young to see any danger. Two men died of cholera. This frightened many on board, for it would have been a fearful thing to be shut in a little ship affected with this dreadful disease. Their bodies were sent ashore at Deal, and their families and luggage were landed. We had a head wind nearly all down the Channel, and the sea was very rough. It was constantly about the ship, night and day.

We were all on deck looking at the great waves rolling; the sailors were putting the ship about³⁸ and the wind was blowing very strong. As the sails went over a rope caught my mother in the waist and carried her right to the top of the bulwarks. My father rushed and caught her by her dress—in one second she would have been in the raging sea. No small boat could have lived in it three minutes. O the mercy and goodness that spared us five small children our mother!

We arrived at Plymouth after eleven days beating down the Channel. Some of the passengers went ashore, and I think there were one or two who lost their passage rather than go any further with us, for to tell the truth, the ship had to be pumped a good deal during the rough weather.

³⁶ This was immediately east of Tower Bridge and the Tower of London.

³⁷ Tons burden (or burthen) is a measure of a ship's carrying capacity, and is different (probably rather less) from its actual weight, or displacement, the measure commonly used now.

³⁸ That is, changing tack.

Chapter 2 – Voyage to Australia

We stayed at Plymouth three days, and taking a few more passengers, we resumed our voyage.

It is now forty-seven years since I saw the dear cliffs of England. My heart has always loved her. Yes! England, with all thy faults, I love thee still! I am an Englishman to the backbone.

Old England forever,
No power shall sever
My heart from the land of my birth.
Be it ever so free,
I'll ne'er forsake thee;
Thou art the happiest land upon earth.³⁹

Millions of the bones of God's dear saints lay resting on thy breast. Thousands have sealed their faith and love with their blood, and they shall rise in that dear land like a mighty army at the last Great Day, when the trumpet shall sound and they shall ascend to meet their Lord in the air.

... Shall I among them stand?

Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at thy right hand?⁴⁰

'O Lord, arise in Thy power and protect the land of many of Thy saints from the inroads of the man of sin. Stir up Thy people, O Lord, to more diligence and prayer. Open the eyes of the nation that they may see the cunning craft of the enemy who is sapping all that remains of the truth once delivered to the saints. Our eyes are up to Thee, for Thou alone canst help us. Lord, in mercy remember England! Amen.'

When we got to the Bay of Biscay we had a short, chopping sea, which made many sick again. I was sick myself. My dear mother was very ill for two months. Indeed, we were very much afraid she would die, but the Lord had mercy on us and raised her up again. O for a grateful heart to praise the Lord for all His mercies! Mr. Juniper was very ill, and all thought he would die, but the Lord in mercy spared him to his family. He was a deacon of Ebenezer Church, Richmond Hill.

As we proceeded on our voyage our provisions began to run out; our ship was very badly provisioned. First, potatoes were all done, and then other things ran short. The biscuits were very bad, and nothing but downright

³⁹ This seems to be a stanza from a poem entitled "On leaving England," written by Elizabeth Lambert, who emigrated to North America with her husband and family in 1834.

⁴⁰ Gadsby's Hymns, 938, v.1 (from Lady Huntingdon's Collection, 1774).

Forty Years in the Wilderness

starvation made us eat them. Our water ran short, and they had to boil our plum duff in salt water which spoilt it. O how hungry we poor children used to go! All day the doctor used to drink, and drank all the medical comforts himself. They would not allow a ship to leave port now so badly provided as the *Harpley* was.

Crossing the line⁴¹ it was very hot, so that the pitch melted out of the seams of the deck. We were becalmed for four days. The captain would not allow the shaving, so the sailors had an extra tot of rum, and they had music and dancing. In the evening they sent off a tar barrel on fire, which we could see for hours.

During the day many of the passengers and sailors swam round the ship. They all went over the bows, most of them diving from the bowsprit. One passenger, who could not swim, put a lifebelt on and went into the water. As the ship was drifting astern, it was fast leaving him, and he began to get alarmed. A young man belonging to our company, named Thomas Harvey, jumped overboard and swam round him and pushed him to the side of the ship, where he was taken on board about twenty minutes after this incident. I saw several large sharks swim round the vessel.

It was so hot that the passengers were lying about the decks everywhere. All night I lay on the table with a strap around me fastened to one of the uprights to keep me from rolling off. After near a week's baking, we were very glad to find the wind freshen, and it soon became quite a storm. Our second mate, who was in charge of the ship that night, laid her over on her beams end,⁴² but she righted again. The passengers were very much alarmed. One poor fellow we called Jim, the sail-maker, lost his life in this storm. He was blown off the yardarm in the night while they were reefing⁴³ the topsails. The wind still kept increasing till it blew a hurricane. We were off the Cape of Good Hope and had seen no land since we saw the Isles of Trinidad⁴⁴ (*see Figure 9, p.129 – map and further information on the course sailed*). We had been over two months on the voyage.

⁴¹ That is, the Equator, crossing which was traditionally associated with various strange ceremonies which sometimes got out of hand. These involved the appearance of men dressed as “King” Neptune and his wife (Neptune being the Roman god of the sea), and perhaps the daubing of the faces of those who had not crossed the Equator before with unpleasant mixtures and a pretence at shaving them with a large knife. Weather wise, this area is known as the Doldrums with light and variable winds, and ships were often becalmed here for days on end.

⁴² That is, on her side.

⁴³ Reefing is rolling up some of a sail to make it smaller in strong winds. This involved the sailors climbing aloft and out along the yards, a very dangerous undertaking in a rough sea.

⁴⁴ Usually called Trindade, off the Brazilian coast. Not to be confused with Trinidad in the

Chapter 2 – Voyage to Australia

The waves were higher than the top of the mast—they looked like two great mountains, one in front and one behind. All hatches were battened down, and we had to run before the gale under bare poles. Nobody could believe it unless they saw the mountains of water; it seemed as if we must be swallowed up. Truly, “They that go down to the sea in ships ... see ... his wonders in the deep” (Psalm 107.23,24). Our pumps had to be kept going; the men had to be lashed to them, and the wheel had to have two men lashed to it. This was the most fearful storm that could possibly be for a little ship like ours to live in. It was appalling. I had no fear, but rather gloried in it, with not one thought of my never-dying soul. O how hard we are by nature! The weather grew finer after three days, but we had run a long way out of our course. The swell of the sea was very heavy.

There was one man on board who was a great bully; his name was Johnston. He was a big man. He insulted some of the young men passengers. One of them threw some soup and bully⁴⁵ in his face. He vowed vengeance on them when he caught them on deck. Next morning he caught one of them, a much smaller man than himself, and knocked him against the side on to some spare spars. Another young man coming up (I think he was going to the galley for some hot water), whose name was Thomas Harvey, was only nineteen years-old, whereas the other was nearer forty. Johnston at once attacked Tom, but he soon found out he had made a mistake, as Tom knew a little of the science of self-defence. He could not get a blow at Tom, but was floored every time he came near him, and he soon went down to his cabin crying with his face bleeding. Tom never got a scratch.

All the passengers and sailors were very glad to see this man taken down, especially by a smaller man than himself. There are some men who will respect others when they show them that they cannot bounce them. I have seen a great deal of this while on the diggings, where every man is a law unto himself and where might was right. Of course, Tom became the hero of the ship, and all the would-be fighters had a great respect for him after that. And we were very glad, for he was one of our party and his youngest sister is my wife now!

One of my cousins nearly met with a serious accident. He was climbing the rigging when he took hold of a loose rope, and down he came, and right down the hatchway, but he was not hurt much. The Lord's tender mercies were over him, and He has since called him into His marvellous

West Indies. (*see Figure 9, p.129*).

⁴⁵ Corned or brine-cured beef.

Forty Years in the Wilderness

light; but I think at that time he did not acknowledge His presence. The time was mostly spent by the passengers in singing songs and dancing, sometimes varied by catching sharks or albatrosses, shooting porpoises, etc.

There were two distinct parties on board—those who feared the Lord, and the others who cared for none of those things excepting when there was any danger. The church-on-board always met regularly for worship. As our party had all the after part of the ship, we were not much disturbed by the others. The other party used to hold a service, a mixture, Wesleyan and Church of England. There were some very good singers among our people; they were led by Mr. Wood.

The captain often asked them to come on the poop⁴⁶ to sing. I used to love to sit and hear them sing. I used to think it was more like heaven than anything I could think of. I was always passionately fond of music, and would leave anything to go and hear them sing. These were the first Particular Baptist Church in Victoria, or Port Phillip⁴⁷ as it was then called. I am sure there were many good and gracious men and women among them, and I believe the Lord was leading them. There were many came to hear, attracted no doubt by the singing. There were a great many in our party that made no profession, but the Lord has called some of these since, and they remain to this present day, and belong to the church at this time. Yes, the *Harpley* had precious seed, and it may be found that “this and that man was born [there]” (Psalm 87.5).

Although in my unregenerate state and only a poor ignorant boy, I can well remember the anxious, fervent prayers that went up from between these decks, for we were going to a new and strange country, men and women from every comfort of a civilised life to a wild bush that they knew nothing about. There were no gold-diggings attracting them; they were going to make a home for their young families. These were the pioneers of Australia, and I know they were not seeking riches, but were trusting in the God of Jacob for guidance. All these are now safe landed (save one, Mrs. Field,⁴⁸ and she is ninety years-old) where “everlasting spring abides,

⁴⁶ The poop deck is the aftermost deck (meaning closest to the back or stern) on a sailing ship, typically forming the roof over the stern cabin.

⁴⁷ Port Phillip (Bay) is really a large natural harbour. The city of Melbourne, which was declared the administrative capital of the Port Phillip District in 1837, and named after the then British Prime Minister, the 2nd Viscount Melbourne, is at its northern extremity.

⁴⁸ Mrs. Field was Mrs. Sarah Juniper. John Juniper died in 1871, and in 1877 his widow married Thomas Field. She lived until 1902. There may be some doubt as to her date of birth, but she undoubtedly lived into her nineties, though was probably still in her eighties when Chandler was writing.

Chapter 2 – Voyage to Australia

and never-withering flowers,”⁴⁹ and the Lord has in mercy and wisdom called some of their children, who continue in the faith of their fathers. Bless His dear and holy Name, He has not left Himself without a witness.

My dear mother was now restored to health, and was able to get on deck. O how glad I was to lay down on the deck and feel that my mother was there to look at the beautiful sea as we bowled along at the rate of ten or twelve knots.⁵⁰ We had now got into the trade winds, which were fast carrying us to our destination.

At length we heard the welcome cry, ‘Land ho!’ What a rush there was for the upper deck. The rigging was soon full of men and boys, and all the women along the bulwarks. Every eye was strained to catch the first glimpse of welcome land. Just think, dear friends, it was over three months and nothing but the wide, open sea. Not a sight of land since we saw the Isles of Trinidad, and four months since we left old England. Poor mother had been ill three months. It was beautiful weather, and now she was better. The next day we were alongside Kangaroo Island.⁵¹ O! how we did feast our eyes as we sailed gently along and saw some huts and some sheep, and the beautiful trees.

We anchored off Adelaide, December 23rd 1850. Some of the passengers were to land there. A small sailing vessel came alongside and took these and their luggage off. The next day was Christmas, and we had fresh meat and vegetables, and plum-pudding boiled in fresh water. O how we did enjoy it! The next day we started on our voyage to Port Phillip, going through the Backstairs Passage, that is, between the mainland and Kangaroo Island. The passengers caught a great many barracoots.⁵² They were caught with a piece of red rag on a hook; they were very nice eating. We enjoyed the scenery very much along the Australian coast. We had a very fair passage down, and arrived in Hobson’s Bay⁵³ on January 6th 1850, one hundred and eleven days since we left Plymouth, and one hundred and twenty-two days on the water. I had never touched land all that time.

⁴⁹ Gadsby’s Hymns, 1022, v.2 (I. Watts).

⁵⁰ Knots is an abbreviation for **nautical miles per hour**. A nautical mile is now defined as 1852 metres, so is a bit longer than an ordinary mile, though historically may have differed slightly.

⁵¹ Australia’s 3rd largest island at 1701 square miles, it is situated 70 miles south-west of Adelaide.

⁵² This probably refers to barracouta, a large food fish widely caught off southern Australia.

⁵³ At the north end of Port Phillip Bay, immediately adjacent to Melbourne, Hobson’s Bay is now an administrative district of the city.



Figure 2 – A Barque similar to the *Harpley*

The Barque *Harpley*

The *Harpley* was a three-masted sailing ship of the type known as a barque, and would have looked very similar to the ship pictured above (no pictures of the *Harpley* herself are known to exist). Documentary evidence suggests that she was somewhat smaller than John Chandler states, being only 547 tons, 122.4 feet (47.3 metres) long, with a beam of 26.3 feet (8.0 metres).

She was built as a migrant ship on the Tamar river, in what is now Tasmania (then Van Dieman's Land), from "swamp gum" timber, and launched in early 1847. After her first voyage to England there was some doubt as to the durability of this type of wood, and her hull was sheathed in "yellow-metal," a form of brass. Thus protected, the *Harpley* made a further five voyages to Australia carrying migrants, as well as others to India, the West Indies and Hong Kong. In 1862 she foundered off Tenerife in the Canary Islands while carrying cargo bound for India.

The voyage on which John Chandler and the other Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond Street, Brighton migrants travelled to Australia was the *Harpley's* second such trip.

See Appendix 1 for a report about the *Harpley* which appeared in the *Plymouth Advertiser*, 20 September 1849.

[Photograph of the barque *Aldebaran* courtesy of the Brodie Collection, La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria.]

Passengers on the Barque *Harpley*

So, who was on the *Harpley*? Passenger lists do exist, though do not always agree. However, research enabled a list of the Brighton Strict Baptists and those associated with them to be drawn up, probably with a high degree of accuracy. As John Chandler's account makes clear, there were many on board apart from his party with whom we are not concerned. The following appear to have been with John Chandler on the ship:

John Turner (**Pastor**, age 32), his wife Lucy* (34), children John (10), George (9), Louisa Lucy (5) and James (1).

John Juniper (**Deacon**, age 48), his wife Sarah* (39), children John (14), William (11), Mary (4) and Ellen (3).

Edward Wood (**Deacon**, age 45), his wife Mary* (45), children Mary (19), Edward (16), George Charles (2) and Emily Fanny (1).

(It would seem that Mr. Wood and Mr. Juniper were partners in an ironmongery business.)

Stephen Chandler* (33), his wife Ann (42), children Mary Ann (13), John (11), Phebe (*sic*) (8), Edward (3) and Naomi (1).

John Foreman* (25), his wife Jane*, children John (3) and Jane (2).

James Tyler* (44), his wife Elizabeth (43), children Mary (17), Richard (7), Sarah (3) and Lydia (1).

William John Vincent* (28) and his wife Mary (31).

These were also on board who had some connection with the above, but were not from Ebenezer Chapel, Brighton:

Stephen Charlwood (his father Arthur, mother and eight siblings arrived in the colony on board the *Success* in 1851). Stephen was cousin to John Foreman and nephew to Elizabeth Tyler.

Thomas Harvey (20). He later sent for his orphaned brothers and sisters, one of whom, Ruth, became John Chandler's wife.

Robert Dadswell (30) and his wife Naomi (33). Naomi was sister to John Juniper.

Frederick (21) and William (19) Newnham. sons of Stephen Chandler's sister, Catherine.

*Church members.

[Ages given are approximate ages on arrival in the colony.]

3. A New Country

The next day a little steamer, called the *Diamond*, came alongside of our ship that was anchored in the bay (for there were no wharves for large vessels), and took our luggage and ourselves. I must say that I had got so attached to the ship that I would willingly have gone back home in her. We were landed at the Queen's Wharf.⁵⁴ There were three small wharves; the Queen's, Raleigh's, and Cole's, which was a little basin for small vessels. There was a hot wind blowing, and I was left to mind the luggage of Mr. Foreman, while he went into the town and took a house. There were some bullock drays⁵⁵ unloading wool at some stores in Flinders Street.

Everything was very strange to me, and I felt very lonely just coming off a ship and all friends gone after being so close to them for so long, and being in a strange land. The dust was blowing so that I could not see across the street, which was about three hundred yards wide at that time. My father had taken a house the day before, so they got a dray that took them right away. After waiting about four hours, I began to think they had forgotten me, or lost themselves in this new country. I was very hot, hungry and thirsty and smothered in dust, and had several good cries. Mr. Foreman came with a man, horse and dray, and then, for the first time, I went into Melbourne.

There were no roads made, stumps and logs of trees lay about in Collins Street. Elizabeth Street was the main street. Spencer Street was not known; Batman's Hill⁵⁶ it was called. His hut was still there and the graves

⁵⁴ Queen's Wharf was on the north bank of the Yarra, opposite the Old Customs House (now the Immigration Museum). As vessels became larger, wharves and docks moved downstream, and the construction of the Spencer Street Bridge in 1930 effectively closed the wharf to all but the smallest vessels.

⁵⁵ A dray is a sideless cart.

⁵⁶ John Batman (1801-1839), grazier and explorer, was born in the Sydney area and moved to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) in 1821, where he acquired large land-holdings. He had a controversial career there owing to his role in rounding up and at times killing aboriginal natives. He is best known for his role in the founding of the settlement which became the city of Melbourne. He settled with his wife and family at what became known as Batman's Hill at the western end of Collins Street in 1835. This 18 metre-high hill was removed in the 1860s to make way for railway-freight sheds. Batman's health deteriorated quickly and he died only 4 years later.

Chapter 3 – A New Country

of two white men that were speared by the aboriginal natives. Latrobe Street was the boundary of the town on one side, and Spring Street on the other. There were very few two-storey houses; Elizabeth Street was mostly one-storied shops with canvas verandas. The footpaths were all gravel and no kerbing and the roads were very rough. The Flagstaff Hill⁵⁷ was where they signalled the vessels as they came into the bay.

My first impression of Melbourne as a boy was anything but delightful. It seemed to me a hot, dusty, thirsty place, with nothing but a lot of long bullock teams which kicked up the dust so that you could not see a yard in front when you passed them. My father had taken a house in Little Lonsdale Street—two rooms and only one door, so if we wanted to go to the back, we had to come out of the front door and go round.

The first Sunday we met for worship was at Mr. Mouritz's⁵⁸ house in Newtown (it is called Fitzroy and Collingwood now).⁵⁹ Mr. Turner preached. The next Sunday he preached in the Collins Street Baptist Chapel.⁶⁰ The church then took a room in the Mechanics' Institute,⁶¹ and they met there for worship for some time.

My father got work at Mr. Mouritz's farm at Kinlochewe,⁶² harvesting. He became acquainted with Mr. Allen⁶³ here. I went into the bush (which is now called the Carlton Gardens) and dragged in wood for my mother. I have heard my father say that Mr. Turner was responsible for breaking up

⁵⁷ Flagstaff Hill is to the north of La Trobe Street, now called Flagstaff Gardens. A flagpole was erected here in 1840 as part of a signalling system between the town and ships entering the port of Melbourne. The following year this was replaced by a higher one, 15 metres tall.

⁵⁸ Joseph Mouritz (1794-1868) came from Dundalk, Co. Louth in Ireland. He was a Baptist who emigrated to Australia on the ship *Conrad*, arriving in Sydney in January 1841 with his wife Elizabeth and three children. Coming to Melbourne in July 1841 he commenced farming, and built Rehoboth Chapel, Princes Street, Fitzroy in the grounds of his own home.

⁵⁹ This is about 1½ miles north-east of the city centre.

⁶⁰ The first Baptist service in Melbourne was held in a tent opposite the site of the present Collins Street Chapel. The first chapel on the present site (and the first Baptist chapel in Victoria) was built in 1845. A new and larger building was opened in 1862 and continues in use to this day, the church being a member of the Baptist Union of Victoria.

⁶¹ The Melbourne Mechanics Institution and School of Arts was built in Collins Street in 1842, a library being one of its main features. The Melbourne City Council met in the building until 1852. In 1873 the name was changed to the Melbourne Athenaeum, and the front of the building was rebuilt in 1885-86. It is now on the Register of Historic Buildings.

⁶² Mr. Mouritz's farm was approximately 20 miles to the north on the Merri Creek, a tributary of the Yarra river. Kinlochewe was a pioneer settlement of about 400 people which was destroyed in the "Black Thursday" bushfires of 1851 and never rebuilt. The area is now called Kalkallo.

⁶³ Daniel Allen (1824-1891) – there is more about him later in the book.

Forty Years in the Wilderness

their arrangements for taking up land and farming with a community of their own, as they had decided to do before they left England. The Sydney Government was still willing that they should have the land; they could have had some of the best land in the colony. But I rather think that during the voyage they had been in such close neighbourhood that some had seen quite enough of one another. This has been my judgment since I have been able to think, from what I heard from one and the other. My father was bitterly disappointed, for he had laid out most of what he had for tools, seed, etc.

This I know. Mr. Turner bought a house in Condell Street, Newtown, where he lived for forty-six years; he was the oldest Baptist minister in Australia when he died. Mr. Wood and Mr. Tyler bought small farms at Preston,⁶⁴ which was called Irishtown at that time. My father engaged with Mr. Mouritz at his farm as overseer, my mother as dairywoman, and I had to herd the cows.

Before we left Melbourne there were two members added to the church—Mr. W. Wade of Bulleen⁶⁵ and another. They were baptised by Mr. Turner in the Yarra, at the falls, where the Queen's Bridge is now.⁶⁶ A small tent was erected on the bank of the river for them to change in. This was the first baptising of Strict Baptists in Victoria. The river was a beautiful, clear stream at that time. This was the first time I saw Mr. D. Allen; he was standing on the bank of the river with the others, and I could not help remarking the earnestness with which he sang the hymns. We used Watt's Hymns and Rippon's Selection⁶⁷. At that time there were several added to the church after we left Melbourne; Mr. Elder Adams⁶⁸ of Newham,⁶⁹ and others.

We started to go to the farm, which was about twenty miles from Melbourne. Most of our luggage was put on a bullock dray with some stores; the remainder was put on a horse dray on which we were to ride.

⁶⁴ Preston is now part of Melbourne, about 6½ miles north of the city centre.

⁶⁵ Bulleen is about 8 miles north-east of Melbourne.

⁶⁶ The Yarra is Melbourne's main river, flowing approximately 150 miles westward before emptying into Hobson's Bay. The falls were a natural rocky barrier in the river bed where the Queen's Bridge now stands, rather than a proper waterfall, and marked the transition from salt to fresh water. The falls were dynamited away in the 1880s when the bridge was built. Many of the creeks mentioned in this book are tributaries of the Yarra.

⁶⁷ Isaac Watts (1674–1749) published his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1707–09. John Rippon (1751–1836) published *A Selection of Hymns from the Best Authors, Intended to Be an Appendix to Dr. Watts' Psalms and Hymns* in 1787.

⁶⁸ This should probably be Messrs. Elder and Adams.

⁶⁹ Newham is about 40 miles north-west of Melbourne.

Chapter 3 – A New Country

The Irish landlady of the house in which we lived came down and made a great row, and frightened my poor mother. She had never been used to such language; but this is the way with this class of people, and Irish people owned almost all the little shanties⁷⁰ called houses.

When they were loaded and we were about to get into the dray, the silly bullock driver took the winkers⁷¹ off the horse's head to put the bit into his mouth, and of course the horse bolted and scattered my poor mother's furniture and things all about Stephen⁷² and Lonsdale Streets. Eventually he was stopped by some men. The horse and cart were not damaged, but many things were broken and lost. It was near sundown when we started; my parents were both tired, weary and discouraged. Through the Lord's care none of us were on the dray. Had the winkers been removed one minute later, we should have been on the dray. I am sure "my life's minutest circumstance is subject to His eye."⁷³ In these, my later days, I often thank the Lord for having had praying parents.

As it was not deemed safe for us to ride on the horse dray, as the horse was very excited, we all got on the bullock dray and made a start. The bullocks were slow, and of course there were no roads, only a bush track. We had many exciting scenes, for it was very dark, and the thick forest made it much darker. We ran into some trees and very nearly capsized, and then, in crossing a creek, the bullocks would not or could not hold the dray back, so they ran down the steep bank into the water where they stopped, drays, bullocks and all mixed up in a lump. There was very much confusion, for it was very dark, and we did not know whether we should all be drowned. Then there was a tremendous lot of hollering and swearing, for bullock drivers, as a rule, use very foul language, and when they are excited, as they were then, it rolls out in such a way as to make one shudder. They used to tell me that you could not drive bullocks without swearing at them. My experience has taught me that there is great temptation to do so. After some time (and very nearly capsizing us into the creek) they got the team right, and we started again, the drivers being very wet and bad-tempered, for they had been up to their waist in water.

We had many narrow escapes, for it was very dark in the forest, but we arrived safe at our destination just as day was breaking. We were very

⁷⁰ A shanty is defined as "a crude, ramshackle hut or dwelling;" hence the term "shanty town." It probably derives from the French *chantier*, meaning a construction site. In Australia the expression came to be used of a public house, especially an unlicensed one.

⁷¹ This probably means what are usually called "blinkers."

⁷² Stephen Street is now called Exhibition Street.

⁷³ Gadsby's Hymns, 70, v.4 (C. Wesley).

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tired and half-dead with the fright we had during the night, and were very glad to turn into an old slab hut,⁷⁴ with the ground for a floor and a few sheets of bark for a roof. We were all soon asleep. When we awoke the sun was high, and everything looked most beautiful. The magpies were warbling, the laughing jackasses⁷⁵ were laughing, the cattle were out grazing, and everything looked so cheerful.

We had a nice piece of beefsteak, and good homemade bread, and a pannican⁷⁶ of tea as black as soot, but plenty of milk; we soon regained our spirits. We had our breakfast on a table made of split slabs, fastened on to some saplings with wooden pegs and tied together with some strips of bullock hide to keep it from falling. Our chairs were round, short logs stood on end. They were firm enough on the floor where it was level, but where there were holes worn in the floor you had to look out and balance yourself, but we soon got used to it. My poor mother was sadly put about at first, having been used to good furniture at home.

My father soon found that he had to turn his hand to anything. He went to driving bullocks. My mother did the dairying work, such as skimming, churning, feeding the calves and pigs, etc. It was too hard for her; she had not been used to anything of this sort since she was a young girl. There were about forty cows milking; they were very wild. There were three men to milk, fence, brand calves and do the work about the place.

Every man in those days went by some nickname or other. One was called Flash Jack, another Long Jack, and the other, Tommy. Those men were what we called “t’other-siders,” that is, “ticket-of-leave” men from Van Dieman’s Land,⁷⁷ but I never wish to be with better-hearted men. I have heard some very strange yarns from them when seated on a log around the fire on a winter’s night. They would all be smoking, every now and then picking up a hot cinder with their fingers and putting it on their pipes; but I generally found that the man telling the yarn was the hero himself.

I had to mind the cows in the bush, as there was very little fencing. I had some very narrow escapes from being lost in the bush. The forest was very thick where I had to go, but I soon got used to it. I was now allowed a

⁷⁴ A building made from planks or slabs of wood.

⁷⁵ “Laughing jackass” is an alternative name for the kookaburra, famed for its harsh, laughing call.

⁷⁶ A small pan or cup, probably the same as a pannikin.

⁷⁷ Van Dieman’s Land was the original name for Tasmania, then a penal colony. For good behaviour, convicts could obtain a “ticket-of-leave,” similar to modern day parole. Many crossed to Victoria and settled there.

Chapter 3 – A New Country

horse to ride, and I soon became a most fearless rider. I could clear a log or fence, or turn a wild beast with anyone, and I had some very narrow escapes. O! the mercy and goodness of God that watches over us in our wild and unregenerate state. Truly I can say, 'He determined to save me, for He watched over my path when I was Satan's blind slave and sported with death.'⁷⁸

As one of the hands left, I was promoted to driving bullocks, with a slight increase of wages. I was not big enough to yoke up the cattle, but I had to drive eight big bullocks and plough all day, and O! how fearfully tired I was at night. Bullocks are lazy animals and want continually whipping and punching. Walking over the clods and stones all day, I was so knocked up sometimes that I could hardly move. Sometimes a beast would get lost, and then I would have to get a horse and go and find it. As I knew the country and was a better bushman than most of them, this was a recreation for me. I must say, I was very glad when there was one missing!

We had to go into the bush to get some silver wattle⁷⁹ to make a fence for a garden (see Figure 23, p.142). There were two teams, my father driving one and Tommy the other. I was supernumerary. We loaded and started for home. It came on very dark and there was no track, nothing but the dark forest which was very thick, and we kept running against trees and finally lost our way. One dray got jammed between two trees, and we had to cut them down to extricate ourselves. When we got clear we thought we heard a bullock-bell, and presently we espied a light, so we made for it. When we reached it (which was not without much winding and twisting about), we found it was two bullock drays camped on a track, going to Kilmore⁸⁰ with stores. They made us welcome as all bushmen did in those days. They gave us a drink of tea and some mutton and damper.⁸¹ We had to keep the teams in yoke all night, for if we had not done so, they would have made for home when we let them loose. We lay down by the fire to pass the night as best we could.

Hospitality was one great feature of the early colonist. Wherever you went there was always a pannican of tea, meat and damper, or bread if they had it. Indeed, the billy⁸² was kept by the fire in most huts all day long, and

⁷⁸ Clearly a reference to Gadsby's Hymns, 232, v.4 (J. Newton).

⁷⁹ Silver wattle is an evergreen tree of the acacia family (*acacia dealbata*) also known as mimosa, native to south-eastern Australia, which has spectacular yellow flowers in winter (see Figure 23, p.142).

⁸⁰ Kilmore is reputedly Victoria's oldest inland settlement, about 40 miles north of Melbourne.

⁸¹ Damper is Australian soda bread, traditionally baked in the ashes of a campfire by travellers in the bush.

⁸² Short for billycan, a lightweight metal pot used for boiling water or other cooking. The term

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everyone was welcome to what they had. One of the drivers with whom we stopped that night had his wife with him, and a rough life it was for a woman.

We started for home soon after daylight, which was just the reverse way to which we had been going. After travelling for several hours, my father thought we were going wrong and he would insist upon going another way. I had been over the ground many times before and so had Tommy, and I was sure we were going right, but he was the eldest and of course knew best. Tommy declared he would keep on the way we were going. Now I was in a dilemma, whether to go with my father when I knew he was going wrong, or to go home. I was hungry and tired, so I resolved to go home with Tommy. I thought I would get a horse and come back and find him and show him the road. We reached home in about two hours.

Mother was in a great state of mind, so Tommy and I got two horses and were going out when we heard the crack of a whip, and along came father. He said after he left us, he began to think he had made a mistake, and he met one of "Tulip" Wright's⁸³ stockmen and asked him the way. The stockman told him he was going to the Devil. My father said he had been going that way most of his life, and he was anxious to go another way. So he had to turn quite round and come back again. So he returned, and after finding our track arrived home about three hours after us.

The early colonists were always free, and would help one another. The ticket-of-leave men were not so bad as they were painted; some of them knew what great hardships were. Forty years after this I met the same bullock driver at Mr. Wickham's restaurant in Fitzroy. I heard Mr. Wickham call this man Mr. Lovey. The name struck me at once that I had heard it, and the circumstance came before my mind, for I had heard his wife call him Lovey in the morning when I left. I had a talk with him and he

derives from the cans used for transporting *bouilli* or bully beef on board ship or on expeditions.

⁸³ William "Tulip" Wright (c.1794-1856). He was known as "Tulip" because of his colourful style of dress. He was born in Lincolnshire, England, and transported in 1829 to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) for theft, having been a gamekeeper and a Staff Sergeant in the Royal South Lincoln Militia. His conduct there was exemplary, and by 1832 he had become a Police Constable. In 1838 he obtained the post of Chief Constable of Melbourne, which he held for several years before retiring to Bulla, 18 miles north-west of Melbourne on Deep Creek, where he built the Bridge Inn in 1844. He continued to run this and some other local establishments as well as being the area "pound-keeper" (with responsibility for dealing with stray animals, keeping them in the local "pound") until his sudden death in 1856.

Chapter 3 – A New Country

remembered the circumstance perfectly. He told me his wife had been dead many years, and he was now living at Northcote.⁸⁴

O! what changes have taken place since that time both to the country and to the people, some think for the better, but I think all for the worse. People are much more selfish now.

⁸⁴ Northcote is now a suburb of Melbourne, 4½ miles north of the city centre, beyond Fitzroy.



Figure 3 – Central Melbourne Showing the Hoddle Grid

Central Melbourne Showing the Hoddle Grid

This is a modern map of central Melbourne. The area was laid out in 1837 by Robert Hoddle (1794-1881), and thus was known as the Hoddle Grid. He had been trained as a surveyor by the military and spent years surveying in Queensland and New South Wales before coming to Port Phillip. Most of the streets mentioned by Chandler are readily identifiable, including Flinders Street, which is nearest to the river. This is one mile long, and the Grid is half-a-mile wide. All the blocks are of equal size at 10 acres, and all the major streets are 1½ chains (approximately 30 metres) wide.

Mr. Mouritz’s house was situated in what is now the Fitzroy, Carlton and Collingwood district, at the top-right of the map.

[Map by Roke used under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike License.]

4. Error and Division

Being very light and a good rider, I had much stock-riding to do. I had many narrow escapes, both by horses falling with me and wild cattle rushing me, but I was quite at home in the saddle. The run I was on was very thickly timbered, which made it more dangerous riding after wild cattle. Several that I knew were killed on this run, but through God's mercy I was spared. When I look back and think of my reckless life—many better than me were taken and yet I was left. O the long-suffering and goodness of our God! I would bow my head and say, "Why me, why me ... why such a wretch as [I]?"⁸⁵

It was quite a promotion from bullock-driving to stock-riding. I remember I would not think of walking anywhere. I have been nearly half-a-day catching a horse to ride a little more than a mile. But of course, I thought it would lower my dignity to walk like a poor bullock-puncher,⁸⁶ and therefore I walked seven or eight miles to catch a horse to ride a little more than one, but stock-riders miles depended a good deal on the speed of their horses. My master's son⁸⁷ bought a lot of cattle; some of them were very wild. This made a lot of extra work. They all had to be branded, and they would stray, which caused me a lot of riding which I was not averse to.

They sent several loads of corn to Melbourne, and could only realise tenpence⁸⁸ a bushel for oats. This caused my master to fail. A man came one morning to the door and all at once made a dart for my mother's bedroom. She rose in indignation and demanded what he wanted. Some of the men were for bundling him out neck and crop, but he said he was a bailiff and he would touch nothing but what belonged to the place. He had several outside to help him.

In a few days everything on the farm was sold off. It was a sad sight to see all our cattle and horses (to which I was much attached) and everything

⁸⁵ An obvious reference Gadsby's Hymns, 680, v.4 (D.Herbert).

⁸⁶ A bullock-team driver.

⁸⁷ That would be Mr. Mouritz's son.

⁸⁸ That is 10 old pennies, just over 4 of today's pence. With the pre-decimal currency, it was usual to write numbers of pennies as one word, so threepence, sixpence, etc., the exception being one penny.

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on the place sold, leaving us quite bare. They did not touch anything belonging to my parents or to the men. When they came to the Bible, which Mr. Mouritz kept there (for he always held a service when he came up), the auctioneer would not put it up, but made it a present to my mother. My brother has the Bible now, forty-six years since my mother received it.

After things were cleared up, we started again for Melbourne, being glad to get away as the place looked so desolate. My father had got work with Mr. D. Allen. He kept three drays, carting stones etc. My father was to drive one. It was winter and the track was very bad; roads there were none. We got stuck fast several times, and had to dig out. We arrived in Melbourne about twelve o'clock at night. We got stuck fast in Elizabeth Street, the mud being right up to the axle. O it was a fearful night! Rain came down in torrents, and we were up to our knees in mud and everything soaked through, while mother and the little ones were crying with the wet and cold.

We were near a public house called the City Arms. Mother begged the woman to let us stand inside out of the rain, while my father went to get help, but she refused, and slammed the door in poor mother's face. Mother and us five children stood shivering there for more than an hour. The monster looked out of the window at us, but never relented. May the Lord not lay it to her charge. My father got Mr. D. Allen to come and help us. He got up out of his warm bed and put his horse in a dray, and came all in the mud and rain, took off half the load and put us on his dray, and safely took us to a house my father had taken. He made a fire and soon got us something warm. O he was a kind, warm-hearted friend indeed! It was near morning before we got to rest.

My father got only £1 per week; out of that he had to pay seven shillings for rent. My mother opened a little school for small children. Our house was in a lane, which is now called Romeo Lane.⁸⁹ The people all round us were Catholics, and they soon found out we were Protestants, and so they would not send their children, so that was a failure. The Catholics and Orangemen were very bitter against one another at this time, and often attacked each other. The one built St. Patrick's Hall, where our first Parliament met, and the other built the Protestant Hall.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ This is in the block bounded by Spring, Lonsdale, Exhibition & Bourke Streets, and is now called Crossley Street.

⁹⁰ The Protestant Hall in Exhibition Street was built in 1848, and was initially used for Presbyterian services conducted by the Scotsman, Andrew Ramsay, and no doubt many of his congregation would have been Orangemen, whether of Irish or Scottish extraction. The

Chapter 4 – Error and Division

We removed into a little hut in Little Lonsdale Street. It was built of slabs with a shingle roof,⁹¹ and contained two rooms and only one door, but it was a cheaper rent. I got a situation as an errand boy at a grocer's named Board in Collins Street. Mr. John Benn⁹² bought the business from him afterwards, and became a well-known merchant in Melbourne. I was not strong enough to carry the heavy loads out, for there were very few had horses and carts in those days, so I had to leave.

I then went to a Jew in Swanston Street, where I was nearly starved. It was nothing but garlic with everything you eat. Everything I ate or drank smelt of garlic, and I hated the very smell of it, and they were very dirty people. So what with starvation and overwork, I had to go home. I was so weak that it was a burden for me to walk about. This never should be so in a healthy lad like I was. The young people do not understand this nowadays, working from five in the morning till nine or ten at night every day in the week, and I am thankful that they don't, for it was slavery.

My mother now began to take in washing, for my father's wages hardly kept us. I went out into the streets where there were logs and stumps, and chopped wood enough to keep the fire going, and used to fetch the clothes and take them home. Mother washed for a boarding-school—forty dozen clothes for £1, only sixpence a dozen. Things were very low indeed.

O poor mother! My heart bleeds when I think how she used to work (and sometimes so ill) all day, and oftentimes all night. I do thank my dear Lord she is now at rest. Yes, there is rest for the weary beyond this hard, unfeeling, selfish world. She is now beholding the face of Jesus, and shall go no more out, for the dear Lord has wiped all her tears away; and we are left to mourn below for a little while.

Provisions were very cheap—meat, one penny per pound; bread, twopence-halfpenny per loaf; tea, one shilling; sugar, twopence (we had the very dark sugar in those days). Wood was seven shillings and sixpence a load; water, one shilling and sixpence per load. They used to have

antipathy between these and the Roman Catholics clearly lasted many years, as when in 1867 Queen Victoria's second son, Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, visited Melbourne, decorations on the Protestant Hall showing William of Orange smiting the Catholic armies of King James II lead to sectarian violence and a free public banquet had to be abandoned. (*For St. Patrick's Hall, see Note 210.*)

⁹¹ Roofed with shingles or wooden "tiles."

⁹² John Benn (1821-1895) was a very prominent Melbourne businessman. He came from Bootle, England, and emigrated to Australia in 1849, joining with Charles Heep in his grocery business. He was involved with many important businesses, and was noted for his integrity and tact. From 1875 until his death he was chairman of the Melbourne Metropolitan Gas Co. and a leading advocate of efficient street lighting.

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pumps on the Yarra above the bridge, and fetch it to the houses in water carts. Every householder had to have a barrel. There were no waterworks in Melbourne, only some pumps along the Yarra bank where the carts were filled, every one pumping his own.

Prince's Bridge was not then opened, but there was a little wooden bridge⁹³ just above it. There was a toll-gate on it, and they charged threepence for a horse and dray to cross. There was a lagoon just above where we watered our horses; it was a great place for eels. We used to burn cow dung when catching them to keep the mosquitoes from biting. There was a ferry opposite Elizabeth Street. A rope was stretched across the river and they pulled the ferry across by this. There was a young girl that managed it. This ferry sank one day and drowned four people; it was overloaded. They did away with it after that.

When Prince's Bridge was opened we had a holiday. Mr. La Trobe, the Superintendent,⁹⁴ opened it. Captain Sturt⁹⁵ was there with his troopers. They were Aborigines, and their big white eyes, black faces and long swords were enough to frighten anyone! The bridge had been delayed from being opened earlier owing to the heavy flood in November 1849, which washed all the framework from under the arch.

Just before we left Mr. Mouritz's farm, the Merri Merri tribe of Aborigines came down. There were about sixty of them, men, women and children. They were a great nuisance. They would roam round the hut begging for tobacco, rum, tea, flour, sugar etc., and were very persistent, and you could not get rid of them very easily, and any unconsidered trifles lying about would vanish like smoke. We children soon learned to jabber like them, and could well understand them. The men make the women do all the work. Sometimes my father would promise them some tobacco if they would cut some wood. They would send their women to cut the wood and then come themselves for the tobacco, and then as soon as they were

⁹³ The original bridge was built in 1840 opposite Swanston Street, and replaced in 1850 by a stone bridge, said by some to have been at that time the longest and flattest single arch stone bridge in the world. The present bridge, named after Edward, Prince of Wales, and constructed with three cast iron arches on bluestone piers, was opened in 1888. In its official name, the apostrophe has now been dropped.

⁹⁴ Charles Joseph La Trobe (1801-1875) was born in London to a Huguenot family. He was sent to the Port Phillip District of New South Wales in 1839 as Superintendent, and then, when Victoria separated from New South Wales in 1851, he became the first Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, which post he held until succeeded by Sir Charles Hotham in 1854, when he returned to England. La Trobe University in Melbourne is named after him.

⁹⁵ Evelyn Sturt (1816-1885) was Superintendent of the Melbourne Police, and, from 1853, a long-serving magistrate. He was brother to Charles Sturt, the famous explorer of Australia and colonial administrator.

Chapter 4 – Error and Division

gone the women would come for some, for they smoke as much as the men, so he had to pay double. When they left us, the men marched off with their spears, waddies⁹⁶ and boomerangs, leaving the women to carry their blankets, children and other things. We were glad they were gone, for there was nothing safe while they were about.

Poor creatures, there is not one now left of this tribe; they have all died out. Alas, for the white man's rum, etc; it has done its evil work.⁹⁷

After this digression, I now go on with my own affairs. I got a situation on the Saltwater river.⁹⁸ I had to mind and feed about six hundred pigs at Raleigh's boiling-down place.⁹⁹ They were fed upon the refuse of the boiling-down. It was a very dirty job. They used to sell legs of mutton at sixpence each. I was also picking peas here for the overseer for some time. I saw a diamond snake¹⁰⁰ killed, nine feet long—they are very venomous. I was glad to get away from this place, as they were a very bad lot of men. I used to shudder when I heard them take the name of God in vain so often, and utter such fearful oaths, although I was quite ignorant of my own state before Him.

While I was there, the separation of Port Phillip from Sydney took place.¹⁰¹ There was a grand procession, and very large bonfires around Melbourne. One very large one was where Government House¹⁰² now stands, and another where the Parliament House¹⁰³ stands.

I afterwards went to live at a lawyer's in Little Collins Street. I had to look after his horse, and clean the office and mind it while he was away. Mr. Burnley¹⁰⁴ used to stable his horse with us. He had property there and at

⁹⁶ A short, thick club used by Aborigines as a weapon.

⁹⁷ These were the Wurundjeri people who used to assemble in the Merri Creek area ("merri merri" means "very rocky"). Just one family line did survive and there are traceable descendants today.

⁹⁸ Now the Maribymong River, which flows south for about 31 miles, right through Melbourne, joining the Yarra quite close to its mouth in the city centre.

⁹⁹ A plant for processing sheep and other carcasses. We would probably call it a rendering plant.

¹⁰⁰ It is unclear what snake Chandler is referring to here. The diamond python is non-venomous. There are about twelve snakes in Australia with potentially fatal bites, though not all would grow this large.

¹⁰¹ The colony of Victoria gained administrative independence from New South Wales in 1851.

¹⁰² This is within the Botanic Gardens.

¹⁰³ The Victorian Parliament building is in Spring Street.

¹⁰⁴ William Burnley (1813–1860) was a pioneer land purchaser, merchant, local councillor and parliamentarian. Born in Yorkshire, England, he arrived in Van Dieman's Land in 1832 and finally came to Melbourne in 1840. Burnley, to the east of the city centre, is now part of

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Richmond. Burnley is named after him. It was while I was here that the fearful day called “Black Thursday”¹⁰⁵ took place. It could not be forgotten by those who were in it. All business was suspended, shops could not be opened, and everything seemed one mass of glaring fire and smoke. Ashes were falling everywhere, the wind was like the blast from a furnace, and candles had to be burned in the houses to see. Some people thought the Judgment Day had come. I know I felt very solemn, for I knew I was not fit to stand before His awful presence.

I started to take my horses to water at the river. I could not see one yard before me, but had to guess my way. Directly I reached the river, the horse that I was on laid down and rolled with me on his back and half-drowned me, but I managed to disengage myself. The dust, smoke and ashes were going across the water in one thick cloud, so I could see nothing. I jumped on his back and shut my eyes (for I could not keep them opened) and galloped home. Such was the intense heat that I was dry in ten minutes. I lay down in the stable for some hours, quite exhausted. If I put my head outside I could not bear the heat; I felt that I should be smothered, so I had to stop inside and let things take care of themselves.

The desolation and distress that was all over the colony is a matter of history. All the bush between Melbourne and St. Kilda¹⁰⁶ was burned, and all the ti-tree scrub¹⁰⁷ along the banks of the Yarra, and all the farms around Melbourne for miles were burned. Many people were coming into town for days after who had lost everything, cattle, horses and all, and who felt thankful that they had escaped with their lives. Men and women with families, with nothing but what they had on them, and some of that was singed with the fire. There were some lost their lives, and some had to stand in water up to their necks. O the distress was pitiful! None can know it but those who witnessed it.¹⁰⁸

Richmond.

¹⁰⁵ February 6th, 1851.

¹⁰⁶ St. Kilda is on the shore of Port Phillip, 4 miles south of Melbourne city centre.

¹⁰⁷ Or tea tree, referring to a number of related trees and shrubs of the genus *Leptospermum*, native to that part of Australia. The other common name is manuka. Manuka honey, is, of course, very expensive and believed by some to have health benefits. It is said that the name arose because Captain Cook used the leaves to make a “tea” drink.

¹⁰⁸ The “Black Thursday” bush fires are considered the largest Australian bush fires in a populous region in recorded history. They followed persistently very hot and exceptionally dry weather, with the temperature on that day claimed to have reached 47.2 degrees Centigrade (though this measurement was not made under standard conditions). It has been estimated that 5 million hectares of land were burned, and twelve lives were lost along with one million sheep and thousands of cattle.

Chapter 4 – Error and Division

I must now turn to church affairs, as I heard my father speak of them, for I always felt interested in them. I held a grudge against Mr. Turner for breaking up the arrangements in regard to the land at Colac, for I thought we should have been much better off if we had a farm.

Some time after we arrived in Melbourne, Mr. Turner wrote to the Sydney Government asking them for a piece of land to build a church on. All the other denominations had free grants. The Sydney Government gave them a nice block at the corner of Lonsdale and Stephen Streets, about a quarter of an acre. Mr. Elder and Mr. Adams were appointed trustees. The church had been meeting in the Mechanics' Institute, and the congregation had increased, and it was deemed desirable to build. There were many willing hands but not much money. They soon had the building up, principally by the labours of the members. Mr. D. Allen did most of the carting free, and many others gave their labour. The chapel was opened with a tea-meeting, which I think was the first tea-meeting of the Particular Baptists in Victoria. The building has been enlarged once since, and foundations made for a larger chapel, but it has never been required. The present building was intended for the vestry.

Soon after this, Mr. Turner began to introduce his doctrine—that the Holy Spirit should not be addressed in prayer, as He was the inditer of all true prayer. He brought forward much Scripture to support his views. This doctrine had been kept back till he had got a large section of the church to see with him. He was a man that always liked to be wiser than his brethren. This soon made a great commotion in the church, and it eventually ended in the majority of the old members withdrawing. Mr. D. Allen was the principal spokesman in opposing this new doctrine.

The building had been full to overflowing. There were many country people that came in, some in horse drays, and some in bullock drays. I well remember Mr. W. Wade's two fine bullocks coming into the yard with a lot of women and children from Bulleen. It did seem so nice to see the great yard half-full of drays on a bright, sunny morning. After this, most of the old members were scattered. A few went to Mr. Mouritz's, and some met at Mr. Wood's at Preston where he read a sermon and held service in his house.



Figure 4 – Zion Particular Baptist Chapel, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

Zion Particular Baptist Chapel, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

As detailed by John Chandler, the chapel was built quite soon after the group arrived in Melbourne, the opening tea-meeting being held on October 20th 1850. Originally it was probably plainer than seen in the photograph, as it was extended at the back in 1859 with a brick vestry, and a new, ornate front added. Other sources give the size of the plot granted by the Sydney Government as half an acre, rather the quarter mentioned by Chandler. This larger size probably fits better with what is seen in the picture.

According to J. M. Freeland, in *Melbourne Churches, 1836-1851, An Architectural Record*, this chapel was of a very unusual, and possibly unique design, as far as Melbourne was concerned, though the designer is unknown. Within a very few years it came to be situated in a notoriously crime-ridden area of the city, which pertained for many years.

The building was demolished in the mid-1930s, the site initially being used for a factory and petrol filling-station, and is now occupied by the exclusive Rockman's Regency Hotel.

[Picture courtesy of the Picture Collection, State Library of Victoria.]

John Turner

John Turner was born in Surrey, England, in 1817. He was probably the eldest of his family, his father, also John, being described as a caretaker. He married Lucy Barnes in London in 1838, and by 1848 the family was living in Brighton and John and Lucy were in membership at Ebenezer Chapel, Richmond Hill. As detailed earlier, John was a schoolmaster. In 1849 he was appointed as pastor to the church which was formed from the Ebenezer people to emigrate to Australia, and early events after their arrival there are described by John Chandler in the text.

According to an account in the *Australian Particular Baptist Magazine*, around this time (1851-52) members of the church protested against Turner's treatment of the 2 deacons (Mr. Wood and Mr. Juniper) and about his erroneous doctrine. At a church meeting, there were 10 votes for the pastor (including Turner and his wife) and 10 against. John Turner then, as pastor being chairman of the meeting, gave a casting vote in favour of himself, thus winning the day by voting twice for himself. He immediately excommunicated the objectors, who deemed it wise to leave and in due course formed a new church.

The Turner family lived in Fitzroy. Lucy died in 1870, having given birth to 13 children. The following year John remarried, to Alicia de la Porte, with whom he had a further 7 children. He died in 1894, 8 of his children having pre-deceased him. Alicia lived on until 1921.

John Turner was succeeded as pastor by Charles Walter Hartshorn, who, in 1910, married Mary Ann, John's widowed daughter.

History records him as having been a man of "fine powers and strong character." An obituary in *The Argus* spoke of him as "always taking an active part in all public affairs for 30 years ... in the improvement of the city of Fitzroy." His eldest son, another John (1839-1916), was prominent in business and public life for many years.

John Turner is mentioned a couple of times in the *Gospel Standard* magazine. A sermon of his was reviewed at length and not very favourably in 1873, and in August 1874, another sermon received somewhat more positive treatment, the reviewer closing with the remark, "we wish every town in Australia had such a preacher."

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

John Turner's particular doctrinal error, which caused so much trouble as John Chandler has described, centred around this subject, as he vehemently rejected the idea that prayer could or should be addressed to the third Person of the Trinity, contrasting with the orthodox view, briefly stated as follows:

The usual order in prayer is **to** the Father, **through** the Son, **by** the Holy Spirit. "Through him we ... have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2.18). But this in no way precludes prayer to the Son or to the Holy Spirit. – B. A. Ramsbottom.

Turner's objections to the invocation of the Holy Spirit even extended to hymns such as "Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove ..." (Gadsby's Hymns, 25).

Interestingly, William Huntington briefly takes up this point right at the end of his *Contemplations on the God of Israel*. Writing of the three Persons of the Trinity he says:

Nor suffer the devil to confound thee, by suggesting that you will displease the one by addressing the other. Whatsoever is truly and properly God, is the object of divine worship. And that Jesus Christ the Son of God, and the Holy Ghost the Spirit of God, are truly, really, and properly God, is as clearly revealed in the Scriptures as that the Father is so.