

sion had taken place from the parish church, on account of "Puseyite" practices, and a request presented that a Methodist preacher might be sent to them. A delicate post, indeed, for one with so little ministerial capital to fill, and here he began his pastoral work. The biographer says:—

"To the delight of preaching was now added the interest of pastoral work. He gave his afternoons to visiting, and found that a minister has other means of usefulness to the souls of his people than those belonging to the pulpit. And what was good for them was no less serviceable for him. No man needs the discipline of pastoral work more than the popular preacher. Tendencies to the unreal, the artificial, the high-flying, are best checked and qualified by intercourse with the sick and sorrowful, by experience of practical ministering amid the varied conditions of actual every day life. The months spent at Marden were happy and useful ones. His preaching attracted large congregations. By some of his 'parishoners,' as he called them, he was strongly urged to seek orders in the Church of England, with the assurance that a church should be built for him. But neither then nor at any later period did he falter for a moment in his allegiance to Methodism. It cost him no effort to refuse the kind proposal. He set himself rather, as he had playfully said, "to make some Methodists." A society was organized, a chapel built, and when the time came for him to leave the Kentish village where he had served his short apprenticeship to the ministry, a probation before the probation which had its formal beginning at the Conference of 1845, he could look back with thankfulness on good work done, and useful lessons learnt."

"In the minutes of the Conference of 1845, the name of W. M. Punshon occurs for the first time. It stands under the head of 'Preachers now received on trial,' together with the names of Thomas McCullagh, George Mather, and Ebenezer Jenkins, almost the only survivors of the men of that year. Although his exceptional pulpit popularity was now becoming widely known, he was not appointed to one of the more important or exacting circuits. There is, indeed, something amounting almost to a tradition in Methodism, that distinguished men spend the earlier years of their ministry in obscure places. After a while the great centres claim their services, and afford them more adequate sphere for their powers; but scores of instances might be adduced to show that 'country circuits' have been the training-ground of the men who have afterwards risen to honour and authority."

He started from the lowest round of the ladder, on one of the worst circuits in all Methodism, and among the roughest elements, he began that career which excited so profound, and extended, and prolonged a sensation in the public mind. Full of fervour and enthusiasm, this plain, unassuming young man girded himself for his work, and laboured with all his heart among the country people, and his eloquence evinced itself as the flame and impetus of a mighty genius. The author quotes