



SAVING  
WONDERS:

BEING

INCIDENTS IN THE MANCHESTER MISSION

*BY WALTER SACKETT.*



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"GRACE HAS MADE A MAN OF HIM WHO ONCE DRANK WAGES AND WITS AWAY."—p. 15.

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BY

WALTER SACKETT.

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WITH INTRODUCTION BY

REV. HENRY J. POPE.

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## P R E F A C E .

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ON returning from the Indian Mission-field, where the Kingdom of Christ comes less rapidly than in England, though not less surely, I was amazed to find a spiritual work so continuously and permanently successful as that which is in progress at the Manchester Wesleyan Methodist Mission.

It seemed a pity that the miracles of grace effected in individual hearts and lives should be unknown by the wider circles of Christian people ; and, one by one, as I was able, I jotted down incidents of interest, with the result now before the reader.

I can vouch for the exactness of the narratives related ; but, for obvious reasons, the names have been changed. The Rev. H. J. Pope has kindly introduced the matter more fully. To my father, and to the Rev. S. F. Collier, I am indebted for information and assistance.

Should these "true tales" quicken the zeal and strengthen the faith of other Christian labourers, they will answer their highest purpose.

WALTER SACKETT.

YE neighbours and friends Of Jesus, draw near :  
His love condescends By titles so dear  
To call and invite you His triumph to prove,  
And freely delight you In Jesus's love.

The Shepherd Who died His sheep to redeem,  
On every side Are gathered to Him  
The weary and burdened, The reprobate race ;  
And wait to be pardoned Through Jesus's grace.

The blind are restored Through Jesus's Name,  
They see their dear Lord, And follow the Lamb :  
The halt they are walking, And running their race ;  
The dumb they are talking Of Jesus's grace.

The deaf hear His voice And comforting word,  
It bids them rejoice In Jesus their Lord,  
" Thy sins are forgiven, Accepted thou art : "  
They listen, and heaven Springs up in their heart.

The lepers from all Their spots are made clean,  
The dead by His call Are raised from their sin :  
In Jesu's compassion The sick find a cure,  
And Gospel salvation Is preached to the poor.

To us and to them Is published the Word ;  
Then let us proclaim Our life-giving Lord,  
Who now is reviving His work in our days,  
And mightily striving To save us by grace.

O Jesus ! ride on Till all are subdued,  
Thy mercy make known, And sprinkle Thy blood ;  
Display Thy salvation, And teach the new song  
To every nation, And people, and tongue.

CHARLES WESLEY.





## INTRODUCTION.

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THE writer of these sketches has had exceptional opportunities of hearing from time to time authentic facts concerning the converts of the Manchester Mission.

Related in this form the stories are of sufficient interest to the Christian public to warrant their publication : they are new and present-day proofs of the old and abiding power of the Gospel. To Methodists, who have founded and fostered the Mission, they have a special interest : we still expect wonders of saving grace—the preaching of the Word attested by the immediate salvation of the worst and the most unlikely—the display of a superhuman influence in the rescue of such as are ready to perish.

It must be understood that these facts by no means give any adequate idea of the extent of the work carried on at the Central Hall and its branches, nor of the success that has followed that work. Amongst a thousand people—chiefly belonging to the working classes—who, during the last four years, have been gathered into Church membership as the result of the Mission, there are very many cases of equal, and some

of even greater, interest. These have been recorded as the writer casually met with or heard of them, and they may be taken as illustrations of the blessing God has given to the painstaking and persevering labour by which His servants have endeavoured to gather in the lost "one by one."

It will be noticed that there is a large proportion of men in the cases mentioned. It is a feature of the Mission that, to a great extent, its successes have been amongst working men. In not a few instances whole families have been saved—the husband and father being the first convert, and then have followed the other members of the family. Those engaged in the work have no doubt as to the possibility of reaching the working masses, if only suitable means be used to bring them under the influence of the preached Gospel, and of an active, living Christianity.

It will be noted that, amongst the methods employed to first attract and then retain the non-worshipping multitude, the brass-band march and the Saturday evening concert have been especially fruitful. The opportunities thus obtained have been followed up by earnest and affectionate individual effort. Self-denying work in the streets has been the means of introducing men and women to the orderly, devout, and impressive public services of the Church, and these have led on to the gatherings for prayer, and then to Christian fellowship.

Other points of interest in the Mission, illustrated here, are the ingenuous and fervent testimonies of the converts themselves to the work of grace within them; their subsequent devotion to the Saviour and to His

work; and the abiding character of the results in individual lives, in homes and in workshops. Amongst many other unmistakable fruits of the Spirit there is the beautiful exhibition of love for others who are perishing, a gentle pitifulness, and a generous readiness to help in the salvation both of the bodies and souls of sin-stricken neighbours and comrades. Indeed, the fruits of love, joy, and peace, which ought to characterize the Christian life, have, in a conspicuous degree, been manifest in this young and vigorous Church "called out of nothing by His Word." In a comparatively short time the Mission has issued in the raising up of a large, new, and intelligent Church in the centre of a vast city; in the addition to its agencies for good of a powerful and fervent evangelistic force; and in the provision of a temple of mercy into which distressed and burdened ones daily enter to find sympathy, counsel, and help.

HENRY J. POPE.



## CHAPTER I.

FROM ALE BENCH TO FAMILY ALTAR—BAD LUCK : GOOD  
LUCK—THE WORD IS SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED  
SWORD—WHERE ARE THE TREASURES?—ALONE IN  
MANCHESTER—THE MAN WITH THE CAMERA—WHAT AN  
INVITATION SLIP CAN DO.

Ye neighbours and friends Of Jesus, draw near :  
His love condescends By titles so dear  
To call and invite you His triumph to prove,  
And freely delight you In Jesus's love.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FROM ALE BENCH TO FAMILY ALTAR.

THOSE initiated into the mysteries of the iron foundry know that "core-making" is one of the most difficult of operations, and requires skill, steadiness, and strength in the workmen engaged in it.

William Freeman was a "core-maker." From a reliable source we have gained about him a most remarkable and suitable collocation of epithets. He was "the best little workman in Manchester," "a hot little man," and yet "a regular reprobate." If to this be added his own confession that, before his conversion, he was "a walking rag and bone shop," we have a perfect picture of a British workman of fiery spirit and of rare skill, but who, for some reason, had prostituted his nobler qualities with the result of extreme wretchedness.

Drink was the curse of his life. Drink, and drink alone, was the cause of his degradation. He drank his weekly wage of thirty-six shillings. He drank himself into disrepute and disgrace until no employer in Manchester would engage him. Yet amid his drunkenness and dishonour he had one of the bravest of wives to check and to support him.

When William was driven to leave Manchester for

London this heroine of a wife followed him with her two children. She, with her charge of childhood, wandered through the Metropolis weary, lonely, and sad. At last she found her husband drinking in "The Woodman's Hut."

When, on his return from London, he again fell into his dissolute ways, though herself unconverted, she would follow him into his haunts of evil, and on no account leave him.

Sometimes, to draw him out into the street, away from the vicious atmosphere of the ale-house, she would open the door halfway and persist in shouting, "Sweet William!" "Sweet William!" until, exasperated, he would follow. Once in the cooler air he was safe.

Sometimes, again, she would enter the public-house, and when he had had as much beer as she thought good for him would not permit him to drink a gill more, nor would she allow the too-willing landlord to draw it. There she sat—a Prohibitionist applying the direct veto. There came a happy turn, however, to the cares of that noble woman and to the carelessness of her husband.

After two weeks of more than usually hard drinking, during which he and his boon companions had had one "all-night sitting" with two gallons of beer and four bottles of rum for diversion, and had had one fight which resulted in a sprained ankle for Freeman, he suddenly resolved to take no more drink.

Wandering about on the Saturday night, for some place of resort instead of the "vaults," he was attracted to the penny concert at the Central Hall.

He came again and again, and at last was induced to attend the Hall on the Sunday evening.

Mr. Collier was preaching, and at the close of the



service an after-meeting was held ; when the congregation was asked to sing a jubilee hymn,—

“ I yield, I yield, I yield, I yield—  
I can hold out no longer, Lord.”

Mr. Freeman felt that this was what of all things it was most urgent he should do, and, without hesitation, he rose from his seat, and passed on to the inquiry room, to which penitents had been invited.

That was two years and a half ago. The service is still vivid in his mind—the hall so bright and busy, the singers so intensely earnest and hearty, the preacher so full of the zeal of the Lord ; but that which is most distinct as a memory, and most potent as an influence, was that moment of unconditional yielding to God.

Grace has made a man of him. He and his wife now weep for joy at the thought of God's redeeming love. The home is as happy as it can be. They are the possessors of an American organ. He who once drank wages and wits away now kneels with his devoted wife and children at the throne of mercy ; and at work, and in the world, they are as cities set upon a hill that cannot be hid.

#### BAD LUCK: GOOD LUCK.

There is in the life of the average working men of England both monotony and variety. It would appear that days and weeks creep along, to such bringing but little diversity ; yet, in fact, there is comedy and tragedy, and—what is unusual in the representation of life, but frequent in its realization—comedy and tragedy in strange connection and confusion.

Take the life of Dick Drummond. Its outline is as follows :—A collier by trade, spending his days in the

darkness of the pit ; the keeper of a portable rifle-range at intervals of ease ; a waiter at a public-house when other sources of income failed him ; a gambler, a drunkard, a penitent, a saint.

What glory accrues to the Name of Jesus and to the Gospel of the grace of God, that they can take a life like Dick's, reconcile its elements, heighten its aims, and bring the whole to an admirable perfectness !

Let us talk with him.

"Dick, you were a collier ; is the collier's life a wicked one ?"

"It need not be wicked. Look at Daniels ; he is a holy man, yet he is a collier. Yet as a rule 'Colliers is wickeder 'n donkeys.' 'Donkeys knows no difference.'"

"And I suppose you found that a man that would be wicked in the pit would be wicked anywhere else ?"

"Yes, indeed. I was as bad in the beerhouse as in the pit, and as bad at the rifle-range as either. It makes no difference. If the devil's in the heart he'll turn any place to a hell."

"Well, but tell me why you didn't go to —— Chapel while you were living this life. It was near enough, wasn't it ?"

"Ay, it was near enough ; but what taste had I for the house of God ? My water of life then was a jug o' fourpenny, and my Bible was the *Sunday Chronicle*."

"Didn't you feel uneasy, spending your Sabbaths thus ?"

"No ! not uneasy at spending Sabbaths like that, but I was very unhappy, nevertheless. I'm sure God was working in my life and heart even then. Three years ago, in the holidays, I had been to Leicester Races ; I backed a horse, and it had lost ; I backed

another, and it lost, and I spent all my money and had no luck. I often thank God I didn't win, or I should have been in hell before now. A year after, just before the holidays, I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus, and He has been winning for me ever since."

"Ay, go on! Tell me about your conversion; that's better than talking about the sin."

"Well, it was two years ago, and a happy time it was. I went to St. James's Theatre one Sunday night, and God laid hold of my soul, and I was properly turned round and saved through Jesus Christ."

"It was sudden, then?"

"Ay, it was sudden, but it was sure. I kept on my work at the beerhouse for some time, but the drink was no temptation. I had lots of fellows at me, tempting me to have a drink; but Jesus was near me, and I gained a complete victory."

"Then you think there's a good hope of getting to the far end?"

"I do. I've set out for the end. My soul is full of glory. 'Only Jesus' is my motto. I'm weak; but God will help me."

Such conversations as these leave in the minds of workers the impression that a new phenomenon in science leaves upon the student—the impression of the necessity of comparison and corroboration.

Dick's life will stand it. He loves the Lord. The Lord loves him. His wife and he are happy, "'twixt the mount and multitude, doing and receiving good."

The God who graciously made him loser at the Leicester Races makes him winner and victor, priest and king, in a higher contest and a nobler service. May he win at last the crown of righteousness, which is the crown of glory.

THE WORD IS SHARPER THAN ANY TWO-EDGED  
SWORD.

Who has not noticed the stray sheep who gather into the House of God late on the Sunday evening? Such a one wandered at seven o'clock one winter's Sabbath night into the Central Hall, and, finding herself unable to gain admission to the larger service, was content to remain in the "Morning Chapel" overflow meeting. Her case was desperate. Her mother and grandmother had been pious Wesleyans. Yet she was sinning against that light which had surrounded her from the cradle. The text that night was, "And the door was shut." The impression left upon Miss Clegg's mind was one of deep conviction. In an illness which ensued upon that service, partly by reason of physical weakness and partly as the result of mental anxiety, she sent for the Missionary at the Hall who had conducted the meeting on the Sunday night.

He went, and found her in a state of terror and remorse. The partner of her crime, a married man from Oldham, was expected in at an appointed time.

She begged the Missionary to intervene, to prevent their meeting, and thus to cut off from her the easily besetting temptation.

He did. Standing upon the steps of the house he informed the man of some rudimentary ethical rules that he had forgotten, and bade him be gone.

Since then she has kept herself from that particular evil. She expressed herself as wishful to enter a penitentiary, that she might for a while be out of the reach of her sin. Strangely enough, when left alone, she was tempted to take an old course to drown her remorse, the opium drug.

Intoxicated by it, she was arrested in the street, and was sent for three years to the penitentiary to which she actually had wished to go.

She is there to-day, clothed and in her right mind. When the visitor saw her she traced her joy and peace to her entrance into the Hall that night. Truly, for her the door was not shut, but was open, and she has entered in, though she stumbled on the threshold.

### WHERE ARE THE TREASURES ?

The treasures of early days, souvenirs, relics, heir-looms—where are they? There seems to be a strange magnetism for such in the pawnbroker's shop.

We commend an afternoon with the pawnbrokers' parcels, shelves, and windows to victims of *ennui*, and to lovers of the romantic and tragic in human life.

Note how "drab" is the appearance, and find how "drab" is the existence, of the majority of the pawnbrokers' customers. Note the drink-cursed homes to which poor women hasten with the money received for much-needed articles; or worse, mark the alehouse close by, to which there is too straight and easy a path. Yea, and when the homes are not drink-cursed, and the *habitués* are not drunkards, yet see how sadness, poverty, and distress are graven on their brows.

Surely at a pawnshop door there are themes for an author, pictures for an artist, inspirations and motives for a minister of Christ.

Some of Mr. Crawford's treasures got there; but, bless God! they have been restored to him.

This was the way of it.

He was not a drunkard, nor given to social dissipations. He was a grocer in a north country town.

What was to him the large sum of seventy pounds was owing him by certain creditors. He was unable to secure payment, and became a bankrupt. Then there came a period of abject poverty and misery. He became, in the course of time, a chapel-keeper and a grocer's assistant. No sooner did he seem to have regained his footing in the city of Liverpool than new reverses swept the ground from under him, and he was again among the wreckage of the cities.

He came to Manchester.

How often it happens to such that a man is "as a hiding-place from the wind . . . and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land!" He found advice and some help from a man whom he met in the street, and whose wayside nobleness and "weekday holiness" will never be forgotten.

This man recommended him to the services at the Central Hall.

He came, and found in Jesu's Name, and among Jesu's followers, new hope.

That new hope which he found in his destitution was the beginning of a new life to him.

He made up his mind to seek his wife, and for this purpose, in noble silence of his determination, he walked to Chesterfield, a distance of fifty miles. It was also his aim to get from the old box at home his best clothes, in which to worship God on the Sabbath among his new-made Manchester Christian friends. He found his wife, but was distressed to find that his clothes were deposited in a pawnshop six or seven miles from home.

He returned without them, and was "rigged up" for the time with clothes lent to him.

Again, he walked halfway to Chesterfield to see his

wife, this time bringing her and his clothes with him to Manchester.

One day, soon after her return with him, and as they were settling down to a new prosperity and peace, in a good situation, with a rapidly increasing circle of friends, the following conversation took place in the home of one deeply interested in him,—

“I am afraid of Crawford.”

“Why?”

“He appears to have a firm hold of Christ, but he isn't wise and economic. I saw him to-day with a massive Albert chain and a gold watch. I am sure he wanted other things before that. It shows a lack of common sense and appreciation of the lessons of his misfortunes.”

So it passed; but on the following day the conversation was renewed from the other side,—

“Have you spoken to Crawford about his watch and chain?”

“Yes; I had an opportunity yesterday. I touched the chain, and asked if he was doing wisely in buying it; but he told me it was a presentation watch given him by a Liverpool Sunday School Bible Class, and he has been all along anxious to redeem it from the pawnshop as soon as possible. He got it out last week.”

The moment's suspicion passed away in thankfulness that a man with such a record, who had earned such love, should have been converted and restored.

Mr. Crawford is now again a teacher of others. He has quite regained his position, and is grateful beyond measure for the love of Christ which he found two years ago in the brotherly right hand of workers and worshippers at the Central Hall.

## ALONE IN MANCHESTER.

We have prison-gate missions, and missions for emigrants, but the great crowd of strangers who daily enter our cities by road, by rail, or by tram, enter without friendly recognition or Christian sympathy.

From the great sea of life they come into the harbour of the city, and the myriad faces are to them only as the faces of foreigners.

Nelly Jones, a bright country girl of about eighteen, a farmer's daughter, thus entered the city of Manchester about two years ago. She had resented the unkindness of a guardian, the wife of a farmer, who had struck her with a poker while making cheese in the dairy, and had escaped by rail to the north.

She soon found herself in need of a friend and guide. Among the multitudes that thronged the stations and the streets was there one in whom she could trust? To her last day she will have to thank God that there was.

A policeman, a true Missionary in uniform, saw her distress, and at once directed her to the Central Hall.

She was glad to come. Out of her ten brothers and sisters one had been a Methodist minister, and had died in a suburb of Manchester. It was, therefore, pleasing to her to be directed to Methodist friends.

She found the Church of Jesus to be her "Father's home on earth," and soon began to love her new-made Christian friends.

In forty-eight hours she found a capital situation, three or four miles from the centre of the city. There she stayed, making the children she cared for her own affectionate care, and regarding the interests of others as hers.



In Manchester, too, she learned to rejoice in the Name of Jesus, and to regard His service as her supreme pleasure.

After two years Nelly returned to the country town from which she had run away, and she has passed out of the sight of the Mission-workers.

Was it not an infinite mercy that she found in the policeman a friend, and in the Church a refuge, in the drear day when she was "alone in Manchester" ?

### THE MAN WITH THE CAMERA.

One wintry day in 1887 a young man came into the Central Hall with a troubled heart and in grievous need. To meet his need, his only valuable possession, a photographic camera, was received in pawn by the Missionary for the sum of thirty shillings. He had unfolded a story of sin and sorrow. He had been brought up under Roman Catholic influences, and was woefully ignorant of the precepts and duties of the Christian religion. Early in life he had become attached to a young girl whom he afterwards married. They had for three years kept open their house for the vilest purposes, until in fear of the wrath of God, and in sheer horror of the wickedness amid which they lived, they left it. This speaks volumes.

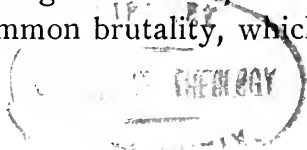
They thought "the world" "exceeding fair:" they found her—

"Loathsome and foul with hideous leprosy

\* \* \* \* \*

With pushing horns and clawed and clutching hands."

For two years after leaving that house, however, he treated his wife with uncommon brutality, which ended in a term of imprisonment.



Even after this he walked on in the ways of wickedness, until, living away from his wife, and with nothing but the camera to live upon, he came to the Hall in his trouble. The kindness he there received attracted him. He began to think of God. On the Sunday the Spirit of God led him into the inquiry room, where he found the "surprise of joy." In his own words, "God's Spirit was stealing amongst the congregation, and arrested me; and I came to Jesus and found rest to my sin-burdened soul."

In the morning *he telegraphed for his wife from Liverpool*. She came, not knowing anything of the change that had taken place in him. They met at the Hall, in one of the vestries. At first she was resolute against reconciliation and re-union, but soon found how true a change had been effected within him by the power of the Holy Ghost: and then, in fact, though not literally—it was with her as with the unbelieving Corinthian—she "fell down on her face and worshipped God, declaring that God is among you indeed."

That morning she was reconciled to her husband, and she began a new life. He found pleasant employment in the advertising business, and in the pursuit of his occupation had to travel by cart through the towns and villages of the north, nailing up notices of "Sunlight Soap."

Wherever he went he witnessed for Jesus, and advertised His grace. On the Sabbaths, after apostolic example, he entered into various of the churches and carried with him the fire and zeal of the Lord.

At the present time they are both working earnestly in a Lancashire town not far from Manchester. Their piety is observed by all. With two of his own testimonies this sketch may well be closed:—

“I am proud as the proudest, and this is my boast—Jesus is my Saviour.”

“I changed Masters for ever, and my new Master has given me a new heart, and a feeling of hatred to all evil things. I love my home, my wife, and my Saviour. I have a mission now; and it is—to do all I can to further the work of the Lord wherever I go.”

#### WHAT AN INVITATION SLIP CAN DO.

There is a popular engraving which represents the visit of a royal party to the first English printing-press. We believe that if the angels, the children of heaven's royalty, have any intimate and intelligent interest in the details of life on earth, they too were there gazing with eyes, not only curious, but glad.

It is true that the devil has cause to rejoice over the abuse of the Press. But its main use has been to spread knowledge, truth, and the words of God throughout the world.

It was just a little printed slip, four inches by three, that was used of God in the conversion of Mr. Price. He had been a fast fellow. He appeared to have nothing but wild oat-seeds in his scrip, and he flung them abroad with zest through many years.

His harvest was a quick one. He reaped it in Cardiff Hospital, and in reaping it almost forfeited life.

From Cardiff he set out, a wanderer, to the northern city whither so many others had gone before him, and into which as the writer writes, and as the reader will be reading, there come those who are “ready to perish.”

When the Sunday night came he was attracted by the band of music which patrols the streets previous to Divine Service in the Oldham Street Hall.

A scout of the King's army noticed him, gave him the little invitation slip, and earnestly invited him to come to the Mission Service.

What happened there? Mr. Wesley, who knew how to use his members to the advantage of their brethren, was accustomed to ask such as had notorious incident to relate to write it for him. So shall Mr. Price tell in his own words what happened at that Gospel Service two years ago:—

“I was once crossing from Antwerp to Newcastle; a heavy gale was blowing, and the ship was tossed with boisterous waves. I was in the cabin, and a tiny sparrow flew in at the port-hole, which was open. The terrified creature was out on the troubled ocean, and accepted the invitation given to find rest on board. It nestled peacefully, unmolested, in a sheltered nook near the window until the storm was over. It was just so with me in the day when I found Jesus. There never was a sinner nearer despair than I. I was storm-tossed upon the sea of sin. In the darkness of the storm I saw my place of refuge. It must have been by a Divine light that I saw it, and a Divine impulse that guided me. I came to Mercy's open window, and was allowed to enter, and I found sweet and welcome rest.

‘I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary, and worn, and sad;  
I found in Him a resting-place,  
And He has made me glad.’

The storm of woe in my soul has been calmed, and now I am happy in the possession of an abiding shelter and—

‘Lo! from sin, and grief, and shame,  
I hide me, Jesus, in Thy Name.’”

This is what happened that Sunday night. St. Paul might not have reached Rome and might never have written his Epistles, if his young Jerusalem nephew had not done his part at the time of the conspiracy. He might never even have witnessed at Jerusalem for Jesus, had there not been the basket and ropes at Damascus. Mr. Price might never have given this testimony had there been no small invitation slip, and no kind hand to offer it.



## CHAPTER II.

“AND THE DUMB SPAKE”—DOUBLY BLIND—SNATCHED FROM  
RUIN—WANTED : A SERMON TO MELT THE ICY HEART !—  
THE OPENING OF THE PRISON TO THEM THAT ARE  
BOUND—AFTER TEN YEARS OF BACKSLIDING.



"PAPA! YOU WILL NEVER GO TO HEAVEN."—p. 39.





## CHAPTER II.

The blind are restored Through Jesus's Name,  
They see their dear Lord, And follow the Lamb ;  
The halt they are walking, And running their race ;  
The dumb they are talking Of Jesus's grace.

### “AND THE DUMB SPAKE.”

VISITORS to the Manchester Mission will almost invariably be impressed by the saintly bearing and affectionate interest of a middle-sized man of broad shoulders, who distributes papers, collects, prays, and is generally in the truest sense a “deacon” of the Church.

His utterance is thick and imperfect. The teeth seem to have no duty, and the lips but little, in the matter of his speech. Yet the tongue, the roof of the mouth and the throat do double service, and when he loses nervousness his flow of words is rapid, and, to those who know him, fairly intelligible.

Mr. Daniels would soon unconsciously reveal himself to any person with whom he held conversation. There is a peculiar atmosphere of power and piety surrounding this man, and pervading his words. There is power without unctuousness. There is the most watchful self-restraint without taciturnity. There is a most

chaste and heavenly mind as of one who moved among angels, yet there is no apparent consciousness of it.

In every way he seems akin with the saintliest of Methodists of Wesley's days.

Daniels's habit is, when the exciting services are being held, to leave unnoticed and find his way into an upper room where, alone, with fists shut and heart open, he pours out his delighted and enraptured soul on behalf of his minister, who below is heralding Jesus.

Descending, he is clothed with power, and it is little wonder that as he speaks with one and another who have heard the more public preaching, mountains of difficulty move, and a way is made straight for Jehovah of Israel.

"Lord, Lord," he has been heard to say, "Lord, Lord, hear us! If Thou don't answer us we shall ask again, we shall keep asking till Thou hearest us. To the door where it says, 'Knock, and it shall be opened,' we have come to enter in; we have often passed Thy door, but to-night—LET US GO IN."

The present character of Daniels stands in striking contrast to his past character and life. He was snatched from a strangely sad and wicked life. Its details might fill the whole of this book, and be found of surprising interest.

He is a coal-miner. For many years he lived a life of drunkenness and dishonest gambling. At four years old he was taught to fight. At eight or nine he walked from Manchester to Wigan, escaping from the cruelty of his father; but at Wigan, hearing a barrel-organ playing "Home, Sweet Home," he retraced his steps. At twelve, hungry and shivering, he found refuge in Mr. Alsop's Manchester home, and waking up in the morning thought he was in heaven. At thirteen he

took work in a Yorkshire coal-mine, met with Christian friends, loved them, rejected them, was hardened, and became in course of time a confirmed "rough" of the prize-fighting type.

This manner of life he followed until three years ago.

Then, as he was going to spend a Saturday evening at the Pomona Palace, he was met by a fellow-pitman who had been to the Central Hall, and had been converted a short time before. This man was the Andrew bringing him into the presence of Jesus. On Sunday he signed the pledge, and went home thinking of the text of that afternoon: "The Lord God will be with thee continually." He thought of his past life, of his mother's prayers, of good influence resisted.

"My heart burned within me; I was real sorry; I had a heavy load on my heart; I resolved to be a Christian: Satan came to me and said, 'You be a Christian! Impossible in a coal-mine!' But the text came to my relief, 'The Lord God will be with thee continually.' Then the tempter said, 'It is no use; put it off;' and he tried to block my way and darken my path, but the Spirit of the Lord helped me."

On the Sunday night he sought and found salvation through the precious blood of Jesus.

He became immediately a "witness of those things." The tearful eyes betrayed him to his wife; the silent awe soon impressed his workmates, one of whom, though himself unconverted, encouraged him; the Holy Spirit seemed to have a "man after His own heart" in him, and forthwith power went from him, and through his instrumentality a Yorkshire pitmate was brought to God.

If of this stammering miner the Lord can make so useful and good a man, surely the words were not vain which told us we should see "greater things than these." Now does the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness waters break out, and streams in the desert.

#### DOUBLY BLIND.\*

In St. George's Chapel, Windsor, there is a chaste and beautiful memorial tablet to the blind King of Hanover, beneath which is the appropriate motto, "In Thy light we shall see light."

Mr. Frank Hartley was doubly blind, but has now entered into the sphere of light in which he sees light.

He and his wife kept a "toffee-shop" in Hulme, and Sabbath trading had drawn them both from Christ and a "pure conscience." They had become confirmed in godlessness and sin when a severe affliction laid him low and gave him time to think.

A tumour in the head resulted in blindness and partial paralysis.

No one could be more miserable. He was physically blind, spiritually dead, and mentally all but ruined.

His grief was so great, that one day in his blindness he groped for the rope which usually hung across the kitchen, in order to put an end to his life. Mercifully the rope was not there.

#### A DECEMBER OPEN-AIR SERVICE

was the means of his true conviction. He heard the

\* This, and the last incident related in the book, happened in connection with the Manchester and Salford Wesleyan Mission, before the erection of the Central Hall:

happy songs of the Christians in the open air, and their echo troubled him. They were to his hearing what the "Mene, Mene," was to Belshazzar. He trembled upon his bed. The Missioner was sent for, who advised him to close his shop, repent, and believe the Gospel.

That night he and his wife determined to print a notice :—



That night they both found peace, conscious peace with God. Their sense of acceptance never left them. His mother who kept a similar shop close by ridiculed him for this step towards godliness. One Monday morning she came in and said, "Frank! I took a lot of money yesterday; you missed all that by this stupidity!" "How much did you take on Saturday?" he asked. "— shillings," was the reply. "Well then, mother, see how God blessed me, I took more on Saturday than you did in the two days." Prosperity of this and of other kinds was so providentially his, that a song of thanksgiving was always on his lips; and a truer heart of praise never beat.

He became a great favourite with the local Christians. In the intervals of his periods of pain he was able to go to Divine Service in a bath-chair, which was bought for him by a number of young men who were attracted by his genuine character.

After some time of blindness and pain, during which he was bed-ridden, he passed home to glory. He preached many a sermon from his bed to those who sat near him or around the room, but none was so powerful as this to the one who had been the chief means of bringing him to Jesus.

“O what a difference! When I was first ill, death was near and hell opened its mouth to receive me. Now—now—death has no terrors. Heaven is begun. I have a pardon sealed in blood. My heart bounds with joy in memory of that ninth of December. O happy day! You said, ‘Give all for Christ, and He will do all things for you.’ Ah, hasn’t He? My children have got a good father and mother. He has saved me, and I can think of death without fear. Jesus sustains me now. . . . The evil one tempts me still and says, ‘Frank, how dark and thorny is the way!’ but I sing—

‘Jesus protects; my fears, be gone!  
What can the Rock of Ages move?’

‘Yes, but see how He leaves you to suffer alone!’ No, not alone! I reply. I have His abiding presence! I am in the King’s way. I am waiting for the Doctor to say, ‘It is all over,’ and I shall then fly away home for evermore.”

At last the time of release came. From a street in Hulme, and a bed of languishing, he rose to triumph and glory, and now is “with the Lord.”

The writer hopes that the numbers who gathered round his grave, and will remember vividly those closing days, may at last witness his glory and join with him in the sights and songs of the upper Zion.

## SNATCHED FROM RUIN.

Away from a south country farmstead, Jenny Wilson had gone to the great city which is so remorseless a devourer of men and women, a happy bride. She was early left a widow and entered service in the same great London. By some accident of circumstance, of which the present writer is unable to ascertain more than the bare outline, she left her situation for one that appeared more suitable in a well-known Manchester inn.

She soon found that the house she had voluntarily entered was the resort of evil men and the home of vice. Perhaps the thought of the downs on which she played as a girl, perhaps the memory of a brief but happy life in London—certainly some such influences were used by the Supreme Spirit to lead her to take a decisive step, and to leave the house to which she had come. She found herself homeless in a strange town.

Soon she found a temporary home at one of the more respectable lodging-houses, and while there, just at the critical moment of time, the loving-kindness of the Lord was exercised on her behalf.

It was Sunday evening. She heard the band of music which calls in stragglers to the large Mission Hall in Oldham Street, and, following it, found a seat, and heard the Word of God preached.

At the close of the service a woman quite unknown to her, observing her worn features and sad bearing, said to her, "Don't do nothing wrong. Come with me into the vestry, and some one will speak to you." She went. She found the Saviour.

In a few days a situation in the country was found

for her, and she continues there industriously and worthily working her way into the affection and regard of her mistress.

She told one who has become to her a true Christian friend that on the memorable night of her conversion *she had come to her last penny*. On the morrow what would she have done?—whither gone?

The Shepherd knows the track of His wandering ones; He knows where the path will end in sudden depth, or close on the lair of the wolf. At the right moment His right hand and arm saves them.

#### WANTED: A SERMON TO MELT THE ICY HEART!

It is very often that such a sermon is needed, but it is seldom that the want is expressed. Yet the subject of this story both needed it and said he needed it. Bless God! he heard one to suit him, and to-day he is rejoicing in the “pleasing joys of penitence.”

At the age of twenty-one he became the possessor of a handsome fortune. He was not a drunkard nor licentious, but he went in for “a merry life, long or short.” This merry life meant money, and in a very short time Mr. Richardson had run through his patrimony. He was enabled to pay his debts with his young wife’s money, and was persuaded by her to leave the old surroundings and to come to Manchester.

He came and found a good situation which he filled for a number of years, leading a steady and comfortable life with his family surrounding him. But he was not happy. He fell into none of the grosser sins, yet his life seemed a long wandering from God. At this time he writes of himself: “I always kept a good store of the devil’s writings in hand, such as novels, sentimental



and irreligious periodicals for Sunday reading. Satan had led me to squander a fortune, to lose a good name, waste my life, and for years to spend my Sabbaths in direct opposition to my early teaching. I had fairly played into his hands, and I was his deluded victim."

His daughter was the instrument under God in arresting him in this course of indifference. One Sunday afternoon he was reading a novel as usual, when she came into the room, and saw the character of the book he was reading. She reproved him gently for his waste of time, and sin against God, and said, "Papa! you will never go to heaven." He looked up astonished, and she continued, "Oh! do go to some place of worship; you would make us so happy."

He replied, "My daughter, I always pray for you, and ma, and the rest, every day."

"But," she said, "your prayer is cancelled in heaven this day, for you are not keeping the Sabbath."

Those words were like words of God, "living and active." In a moment they reached their way down to his inmost heart. They were not "things of little cost." Neither were they things "quickly lost." He threw down the book, never more to indulge in such literature. He promised to seek a change of heart, and to keep the Sabbath. It was at that time that he said, "*I don't want to go to Church to hear penny-a-line sermons; I want to hear a sermon that will melt the icy heart.*"

"Go to the Central Hall," his daughter replied. "My uncle says Mr. Collier preaches good sermons."

He came, and at the door he was met by the old enemy. "I had a very peculiar feeling," he said; "a sort of a pull-me-back feeling. I said, 'What shall I say to my child if I don't go in?' I will say I had

no hymn book." He walked away, but returned and entered.

His daughter was only the instrument. God's Spirit was at work within him. He was agreeably surprised to find a hymn paper put into his hands. He received a warm and cordial welcome, was very pleased with the music, and enjoyed the service. His heart was frozen with sin. He felt that he was known by everybody. The subject of the address that night was the parable of the two sons, and he felt that a more appropriate address could not have been selected. *He* had been sent into the vineyard. *He* had refused to go. He felt there was something giving way. The icy heart had begun to melt. Tears flowed freely, and, as he bowed in silent prayer, a gentle touch and a kindly voice suggested decision for Christ's service.

"It was as if I had received an electric shock. That touch of a friendly hand quite startled me." "Are you safe in Christ?" the voice whispered. "No," was the answer. "Safe? No!"

He was persuaded to go into the inquiry room, and as they prayed together God hearkened and heard. The chain that had bound him for years was snapped and broken, and he who was bound hand and foot went forth in blood-bought liberty. His journey home and reception there shall be told by himself:—

"I knocked at the door, and my daughter let me in, remarking, 'How late you are, papa! Where have you been?' I said, 'I have been where they are doing a good work.' 'Why, have you been crying?' she asked. I said, 'Nelly, can you guess?' She said, 'They have converted you. Glory be to God, they have.'"

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Thus did another cry from the depths, and thus was another answered. Mr. Richardson never sits in any other but the seat where first he sat. There on the Sabbath he worships, hearing the Word which is able to make wise unto salvation.

THE OPENING OF THE PRISON TO THEM THAT ARE  
BOUND.

It was not surprising that so great a crowd of needy followed the journeyings of Jesus. "His fame," the fame of His love and power, went abroad into all that country round about. Similarly, when a Christian Church manifests its Master's mercy, it becomes the refuge of the distressed and the sad.

The fame of the Church, like the fame of Jesus, goes into all that country.

So, from a town in Yorkshire, there came a request to the leaders of the Wesleyan Mission in Manchester that they would visit and seek to save a man who was soon to be released from prison.

Two workers at once set off to the prison. In the morning, one of them, the Rev. D. L. Pawson, found Mr. Matthews about to leave and took him with him to the Central Hall.

Here his old clothes were exchanged for new ones sent from Yorkshire, and then with the minister Mr. Matthews went to his home. Of the two *the children didn't know which was their father.*

From time to time he found comfort, help, and inspiration to a better life from his new friends. He was utterly miserable on coming from gaol, and the surprise of discovering generous Christians, all eager to bless him, touched him to the heart.

In a short time he found Jesus Christ to be his

Saviour and his Lord. One day he came very humbly and sought admission into membership with the living Church.

Never did Augustine or Ambrose receive a penitent or a catechumen into the Church with greater delight than did the class-leader welcome him.

He is now a member, and is consistent. His daughters, too, meet in Class.

Overjoyed at this good result of the letter sent from the Yorkshire town, the father of Mr. Matthews, by no means wealthy, sent a thank-offering of a sovereign to the funds of the Church.

Surely it is "HE" in Whom all the families of the earth are blessed. Here are three generations rejoiced by a single Christian effort. Here is the beginning of new circles of holy influence. Here, yet again, Christ sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied.

#### AFTER TEN YEARS OF BACKSLIDING.

FOOTE.

THE ROCK OF AGES.

WHERE IS THE DEVIL?

THE WORLD WITHOUT GOD.

A yellow bill containing the above prominent lines was on the wall opposite the shop of Mr. Joe Brown, when we talked together one afternoon. I remarked upon it.

"There's no need to fear from that sort o' thing, sir," was his reply. "Them sort o' bills and meetin's does us more good 'n harm."

"You've been to some, haven't you?"

"Ay; I've been to many on 'em when I attended no chapel, just to while away the time. I saw a Dr. — properly set down at one on 'em. He was talking about chance, an' th' world comin' by chance. It was a discussion, an' a minister was debatin' with him. All at once he turns round for a drink o' water, an' th' bottle wasn't there. Then, after a bit, he was turnin' round again an' he saw t' bottle on t' table, an' said, 'Hallo! how did this come 'ere?' T' minister said, 'It came by chance.' I tell you, sir, it were a proper uproarious meeting after that."

"Did you know any of the Manchester Secularists?"

"Well; I knew a man as was a great sceptic. I don't know if he were a Secularist; but they're all the same to me. After I were converted I went to see him when he were ill. Why, he couldna bear to be alone. He mun allas have two or three o' his pals round him buzzin' something or other in his ears. I says to 'im, 'Sithee! it's different than this wi' us. You're fair frahtened to be left alone; but a Christian man can face death alone.' There were another 'un living close by 'ere, an' one day his wife comes to ask me if I knew anybody as could go to see him, for he were very bad. I went, but he were a better learned man than me, an' I couldn't answer him. And before Mr. B——, as I went for, could get theer he died. But I tell you this, sir—*they all die cowards*. They all die cowards."

"How long have you been in Manchester?"

"Twenty years. I came here from Newcastle."

"You were converted at the Mission Services in Lever Street, weren't you?"

"Well, I were really converted, I believe, at Newcastle first. But I got off t' lines before I left there, an' were ten years in Manchester without goin' to any church or chapel. Then I were invited to a service by Will K——, an' Ah'm glad I went."

"You'll remember that night, then?"

"Ay! Ah've cause to remember it. I tell you, I hadn't been to a place o' worship for ten years for all that Ah'd been a Class member before that. An' when I went in Mr. Collier were preachin' about t' Prodigal Son. It seemed to be just fitted for me, an' when Will came out he says, 'What's t' matter with ye?' I says, 'Let me alone. Don't speak to me;' just like that. But I tell you I were there t' next night. I thought it were a preachin' service, but it were a Class. And at close Collier says to me, 'There's D——, lives up Shude-hill yonder. He's not been to Class to-night. Just look him up, will you?' Well, I did look him up, an' Ah've been going in for it earnestly ever sin'."

"That's about four or five years ago, isn't it?"

"Ay, it's about that time."

"It was a wonderful mercy that you didn't sink down into despair and ruin after ten years of ungodliness."

"Ay, it was; but I had no proper peace all that time. A man can't be satisfied wi' sin, without God, though to tell truth there's a kind of excitement that keeps you up in drinkin', gamblin', an' bookmakin'."

"Then you gambled as well as drank during those ten years, did you?"

"Ay, did I. I lived in it. But it's awful wearyin', wearin' work. If anything it's worse than drinkin'."

“But you were the son of Wesleyan parents and were brought up a teetotaler how did you get into these ways?”

“Well, as to t' drinking, I began when my mother died an' left me some money; an' as to t' gambling, I used to be employed to weigh jockeys on t' turf, an' I used to get an idea as to t' winner, an' give t' policeman odds against all t' field in favour of one that I was sure 'ood win. They were only shilling bets, but they began me on the betting line, an' sin' that I've been as deep in as fifty or sixty pounds on horses.”

“Have you been tempted to betting since your connection with the Mission?”

“Not exactly tempted, but I used to get good 'tips' by post from some o' my friends, an' I used often to say to my wife, 'I wish they wouldn't send these things.' No; the only thing that puzzles me is these half-an'-half Christians. I can't make 'em up. Yet they don't cast me down, for, as I say to my friend Will, that gets more down 'n I do, 'Them ain't 'em.' *And they ain't.*”

“Well, you're wise. They're not worth troubling about. It's much better to look at the real, earnest men you do know.”

“Ay, sir; an' there's another thing as I often think about. Why aren't our places open all t' nights in t' week? We've got our Saturday Concerts, but what must men do on t'other nights? There's only the 'Folly' an' t' theatres an' suchlike places to go to. If I was a man o' money, I'd build a place for first-class entertainments every night in t' week.”

My conscience would not allow me to keep Mr. Brown from his work any longer, for two men were hammering away upstairs, and his wife was ill in the next room.

“Well, I’ll be off, and let you get to your work. I hope your wife will be better soon.”

“So do I, sir. If I hadn’t been a Christian man I should ’a’ been dead afore this with all my troubles at home an’ in t’ business; but I know where to take my troubles now. Good afternoon.”

I left him at his work—“rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer.”



## CHAPTER III.

HER HEAVEN ON EARTH BEGUN—HEAVEN IN THE HOME  
—A GAMBLER'S HEAVEN—HEAVEN FOR A WANDERER—  
HEAVEN FOR THE CHILDREN.



"I TOOK OFF MY COAT, AND SAYS TO 'EM, 'SEE YE!'"—p. 54.



### CHAPTER III.

The deaf hear His voice    And comforting word,  
It bids them rejoice    In Jesus their Lord,  
“Thy sins are forgiven,    Accepted thou art :”  
They listen, and heaven    Springs up in their heart.

#### HER HEAVEN ON EARTH BEGUN.

**A** LIVING poet has said that ‘God makes to each spirit its peculiar heaven,’ and in describing it still further he says—

“It is the being good ; the knowing God ;  
The consciousness of happiness and power.”

Then to Miss Turner heaven is not future ; it is present. About three years ago she was walking one Sunday evening in the city of Manchester, and heard the Rev. A. B. Sackett preaching in the open air. An invitation was given, to all who were in the range of the speaker’s voice, to attend the Divine Service to be held in the Manchester Central Hall. She went, and was impressed. She went again six weeks after, and heard the Rev. G. E. Cutting tell a story of a girl who at a Revival Service had decided to let the Saviour into her heart by opening the door of it, who went away from the service, but who returned in anxiety to get

the door locked lest the Saviour should leave. This further impressed her, and she decided that same day that she, too, would seek a secure salvation.

Up to that time she had lived a life of worldliness and thoughtless gaiety ; but now, so far as she could, she relinquished it, and she sought complete deliverance from sin. She gave her heart to Jesus, but she could not feel that it had been accepted. For a whole week she walked as in "cloudland." There was no peace, no joy, no assurance. Yet she had faith and devotion to Christ.

In a week's time she had climbed through the clouds, and had reached a cloudless height, where since that she has been rejoicing.

Miss Turner just finds her heaven where Bailey says it is to be found—in goodness, knowledge, and in usefulness.

She has little help in her home : some of her nearest relatives, who love her but do not love her new religious ways, only increase the difficulty of her Christian life. Yet "ever sorrowful, she is rejoicing evermore."

The supreme pleasures of the Christian pilgrimage are heightened in her case by the call of the Church to a position of responsibility and usefulness.

"To souls, I said, of such transcendent strain  
Heaven seems an easy prize to win and to retain ;  
'Tis but to live as ye were wont below ;  
Add but reward to worth ; say for 'I trust,' 'I know.'"

#### HEAVEN IN THE HOME.

I. *Her Story*.—"Ay, sir ; I couldn't tell you half our story. He's so different now. He talks sometimes o' getting some slides made to show how different he is, but

I tell 'im it 'ud break my heart to see 'im as he was, even on t' canvas. You know, I was so staggered after we were married to find him a drunken man. I didn't understand it like. For a man to spend his nights in t' beerhouse instead of at home ! And then I couldn't stand it. End of it was that we broke up our home, within twelve months of our gettin' married. An' then we started again, an' then we parted again. I couldn't stand it. Seven times in twelve years we broke up our home like that. An' very often all t' furniture didn't go for more than seven or eight shillings. Children ? Yes, t' ' children had to suffer for it. They weren't fit to introduce to anybody, though I always tried to keep 'em going to t' school. Why, one of them fetched tears to his eyes last week with just a little thing he said as showed he remembered his father's bad days. But Harry, the youngest, doesn't know nothing about it. O yes, sir ; I know that—I know it. And that's what I feel. I feel as I've only just begun to live these last three years. An' I've got something to live for. Ay, things are different at our house. Before he was converted I hadn't got another room like this to bring any one to out o' th' rabble. Not that it's all smooth sailin' ; it can't be that, sir, with eight children, and all so young. But yet it's different, an' t' money as used to go to t' aleshop comes home, an' there's great improvement in every way."

The noble woman's modesty would not allow her to tell me what I had heard from others of her fidelity, industry, and Christian zeal ; but *he* was not stinting in his praise of her.

2. *His Story*.—"My wife ? Ay, I mony a time praise the Lord for my wife. If it hadna' been for her I should ha' been dead long sin'—long sin', I should. I mind

on one neet, just three weeks afore I was converted, I turned her out o' t' house at half-past nine o' t' Saturday neet, an' she 'ad to borrow ninepence from t' neighbours to tak' her to her mother's for t' neet. Ay, but I've treated her shameful—shameful I have. Same wi' t' neighbours. I've heerd um mony a time bolt t' doors as I came down t' street. I were so rough when I were in drink. Ay, but God has been merciful to me. He has so.

“No, that's been t' worst of it. My father was a brute of a man; I'm sorry to say it, but he were. He were one o' these pouchers. One o' t' first things as I can remember is my mother dyin', and then t' next thing I remember is my fayther comin' 'ome and shavin' off his long beard. He had been out pouchin', and this were to blahnd th' gamekeepers. I remember one day we had some 'ares an' rabbits i' t' house, an I showed them to some other lads. Well, my fayther broke t' brush-tail across my back for telling on 'em.

“That were my training. From five years owd, when my mother died, till I were turned fifteen I don't think I heerd t' Name of Jesus. No; I'm perfectly sure I didn't.

“Dead? Ay, he died just a while afore I were converted. T' last time as I saw him I gave him two or three gills o' stout an' a bit of bacca. I thowt then it was t' best thing as I could do for 'im; an' he died on th' Wednesday following.

“Well, I'll tell you wheer I got my bad. It were at whoam first. An' then I went to a coalpit. Theer's no one knows what it is to be in a pit but them as 'as been in. They think no more o' knocking a lad down wi' a pick-shaft than you would o' puttin' your hand on his head an' blessin' him.

“Noughtiness were fair droven into me theer. They made me fight. I didn’t want to, but they fair made me. I’ve had as many as four or five fights i’ t’ mine, an’ then had to start again at t’ top.

“An’ then when Ah got a bit owder, Ah went in for wrosslin’. Theer was three or four more on us as came from Choo Moor to a wrosslin’ match wi’ a hundred pounds in us pockets, an’ we went home without a penny.

“An’ me an’ these fellows, theer was never a week passed o’er our heads without fightin’—never a week. An’ bein married didn’t stop me, though my wife was as good a lass as you’ll find. I only got worse an’ worse. We used to go round pullin’ o’er t’ raintubs, an’ liftin’ t’ doorsteps, an’ all thoos sort o’ mischief.

“Why did I do it? Ay, I canna tell you. I must ’a’ been mad. It were t’ same o’ t’ Sundays. We were out pigeon-flyin’ an’ dog-racin’. Ah’ve had to pay six shillings for my dog worryin’ hens many a time. An’ drink—I fair swum in it. I were always drinkin’, especially t’ last year afore my conversion, for I were in a brewery then, an’ ’ad four quarts a day allowed, besides what we got outside ’n that.

“Why! Ah’d ’ad five pints for my Sunday dinner t’ very day I were converted.

“It were Richard Johnson as fotched me. He were on’t drink question in t’ Sunday afternoon meetin’. I thowt he’d never tak’ his eyes off me. He described me just as if he knew me. Ah’ve cause to thank ’im to all eternity for that service. I didn’t come forward, but I went home, and went to t’ Ragged School at neet, an’ when t’ time came for prayer Ah just gave in. I went home, an’ I were on my knees that neet about two hours, not prayin’, but just cryin’ like a baby.

“Ay, but it were a grand day that day were! It's made a difference with me. I can't tell you.

“It were not easy either to keep reet. When Ah went to t' brewery on t' next day I teemed my ale down t' sough; an' Ah did for two or three weeks, till it were stopped.

“An' then t' chaps about our house were on to me. I 'ad ale shots at all t' beerhouses round our house, an' I had to pay 'em off. I remember one neet comin' home, an' some fellows called to me to go in to one o' thoos houses at t' corner. They asked me to have a drink. So I took off my coat, and says to 'em, ‘See ye! When I used to come 'ere I was always dirty and I always had a ragged shirt. Ah've got clean now, an' a shirt fit to see, an' a good coat i' t' bargain. When I used to come 'ere I owed the landlord about fifteen bob; ask him if it wereno' so. But Ah'm out o' debt now. That's what bein' a Christian done for me, an' more beside.’ But t' landlord stops me an' says, ‘All right, my man, we'll send for you when we want you.’

“It didn't pay the landlord to ask me theer.

“It's only t' Bible and prayer as keeps me right now. Ah like to think on about Saint Paul—what a grand man he was. I reckon he puts many on us to shame; but Ah'm goin to have a try if Ah can't be better than I 'ave been.

“When I think on about t' love of Jesus it fair o'er-comes me. It's wonderful when you think about Him keepin' on lovin' us when we rebelled against Him. Well, there were a publican converted at t' Hall last week, an' Ah'm goin' to see him. I'll be seeing you again.”

He said nothing of labours abundant, and love made



manifest ; nothing of new and affectionate loyalty to his wife and children. For that we should need the children's story, and the grocer's and butcher's and clothier's stories, the stories of converted companions and reclaimed neighbours.

Perhaps we shall hear these latter in the Great Day. If we do, we may expect one thing confidently, that he will—

“ Lay his trophies down,  
All down at Jesu's feet.”

### A GAMBLER'S HEAVEN.

The roulette gambling-tables give a fair illustration of the gambling system as a whole. Who that has once seen a “table” can ever forget the coloured divisions, the sovereigns, half-sovereigns, florins, francs, dollars, or rupees, tossed down by excited gamblers ; the whirl of the wheel, the excitement when at last it stood still, the zeal, too strained for words, with which winners clutched their gain, or handed out new stakes ?

So there is a tremendous wheel, whose centre seems nowhere, yet whose circumference reaches everywhere, and upon which boys and men—yes, and women too—lay hard-earned coins, gold and silver. Its gyrations are by multitudes deemed of infinitely more moment than health of body and mind, or salvation of the soul. When, for one brief moment, it stops—stops to be turned again—it is watched with eyes burning with excitement and weary with sin.

Can Divine grace save a confirmed gambler ?

Dick Fallow's story answers Yes.

He was a gambler from his youth. He laid betting money down for his mother. While quite a lad he won £127 at one “Meeting.” In his boyhood it was easier

to bet than now. Gambling houses were not proscribed. Behind Messrs. J. & N. Philips' warehouse was a well-known yard of such resorts. Thither for one of his superiors he would go with gold, and learned skilfully to apportion it on the different "favourites." Along with his master's money some of his own "went down." He was as well acquainted with the different races as a merchant is with the markets. He knew how to trick his masters, by sending word that he was ill, and posting off to the York or Doncaster "Meeting."

That selfishness which is at the very heart of the betting system possessed him so thoroughly that he was willing to use his reputation as a 'cute betting-man for his own aggrandisement to the loss of others. He would farm the bets of other and less wide-awake men to his own purposes, losing for them, but gaining with their money great incomes for himself.

"I was in the Queen's Arms once," he said, "and won fifteen shillings from a Spaniard by snuff-taking alone. You mayn't know what that is, but I'll tell you. You bet a man five shillings or so he won't sneeze for a minute, or two minutes, after he's taken a pinch of snuff. Then it's your business to chaff him, and keep him talking and all that, just till the time's up. Well; I won fifteen shillings on that alone. Somebody once said, 'Why, that fellow would bet on the death of a man!' I tell you I'd bet on anything."

Dick did not always win. He had his losses, as all gamblers have. He lost £7 at one York Races, and had to have another sick day "off" to make it up at another race. He lost so much at one Manchester Meeting that he had to pawn his overcoat for money "to be going on with," and then when asked where his overcoat was he said it wasn't cold enough to wear it.

Gradually the drink had mastery over the betting passion, and mocked his once resolute will.

He was becoming a wreck fast, when a circumstance occurred that turned his course. He went home one Thursday night, and found his wife very ill. He said, "I'm killing this poor lass; I'll drop off the drink."

He had just sixpence in his pocket. He was thoroughly intoxicated, and with the resolve in his mind went out to seek the Temperance Hall. He met a drinking companion with whom he had four glasses of beer. This left him one penny. With that last penny he went to a second Temperance Hall, found it open, signed the pledge, paid for the pledge-card, and returned home. On the Sunday he went to the Ancoats Wesleyan Chapel, where also he went for two or three successive Sundays.

One night, while an earnest Christian young man was praying there, he resolved to "try to live a righteous life for three months," and afterwards to publicly join the Church. Then, somehow, but he cannot say how, he found himself on Christmas Day, 1888, in the Central Hall at the great Annual Lovefeast. He was astounded at the joyfulness and power of the service.

He went home and said, "Alice, I've been to the Central Hall, and I've made up my mind that 'this people shall be my people, and their God my God.'"

That resolve he has never revoked. On January 3rd, 1889, at a prayer-meeting he publicly avowed his faith in Jesus, and found new peace and gladness. He has since had chances of the best possible "tips," but he has found his joy in something surer and of better report, and refuses to be tempted.

"I am not so deep in things as some are," was his

confession ; “ but I know this—that I’m saved by the blood of Jesus, and that makes me happy.”

It used to be the case that the latest comic song was his delight. Now he and the lad that he works with enliven dull hours in the warehouse with sacred hymns and songs. It is truly marvellous to see how the strangely intemperate, passionate, selfish man has become the spiritually-minded, sober Christian who has life and peace.

He now speaks, and works, and lives for Jesus. One of his own remarks may suffice to close his story :—

“ It is not surprising that I am happy ; but it would be very surprising if I were not happy ! ”

#### HEAVEN FOR A WANDERER.

Maggie Gee is one of the most hopeful of the girls that engage the attention and tax the patience of the Manchester Mission workers.

It was on a Sunday night in July that they found her lingering behind at the close of the service. Kind words opened her heart to Christian influence, if not just then to Christ Himself. She was living at a public-house in Tib Street. She left this by the advice of her new-made friends, and soon found a situation as general servant in the house of one of the Manchester Wesleyan Ministers.

The poor girl had had a life so intensely sad and sinful that it was hardly any wonder that she slid into telling a lie to defend herself in some action of which her mistress disapproved.

In remorse that so good a mistress had been grieved, and so fair a new beginning had been marred, she went into the kitchen and drank freely from a bottle labelled

“poison.” It was turpentine; and the result of her attempt to put an end to her life proved more amusing than tragic.

Maggie was greatly ashamed of her folly and wrongdoing.

A new place was found for her. From this it was that she wrote one night as follows:—

“DEAR MISS RENSHAW,—I feel quite sure you will hate me when you read this, but I must tell you; I cannot bear it myself any longer; and it is only honest and just that you should know what a wretch you have done so much for. Oh, if only I could forget a very little. But I can’t. I am sure it will drive me mad soon. It was not only the lie I told that made me attempt to take my life. No, it was the memory of the past. I wish it had been deadly poison sometimes. This week I think I have lived closer to God than ever in my life, but, oh, the devil is closer even than God. He had a good servant in me, and he will not leave me. I am writing this in my room. I have not been upstairs over five minutes, but it is almost 12 and time I was in bed. I have been working very hard all day so that I may come to-morrow night, for unless a work of grace is deepened in my heart, the devil will get the victory, as he ever has. I will now tell you what is troubling me as far as I can think. I know I have run away from home not less than 20 or even 30 times. I commenced before I was eight.

‘ I was a wayward child, I would not be controlled;  
I did not love my Shepherd’s voice, I would not be controlled.  
I did not love my father’s voice, I did not love my home.

The least cross word would drive me away. I was a terror to all. . . . Just before I was ten I got a whipping from mother for something or other. My spirit rebelled, and before five the next morning I set out to find another

home. It does seem only yesterday I walked to Manchester. I walked about looking at the pretty things till all was in darkness and almost all in bed. I had neither shelter nor food for two days and nights, but I was too hard to fear. A kind policeman found me asleep on the pavement. I told him I was an orphan named Lizzie Walker, that I had no home. He gave me some bread and meat, and did it not taste good! His landlady took me for a help till I got a place. It was in a public-house in Ancoats Lane. I had been there about 3 weeks. She sent me for a candle—gave me a 2 shilling piece to bring it. Instead of going back I went to Angel St., where I was treated kindly. I found a lot of drunken men and women. They would not let me go before I had paid for whiskey for them. I daren't go back for fear of getting thrashed. So I had to walk about again. I met with some fallen girls in Salford at 2 o'clock in the morning. They took me about with them night after night, and I kept watch for them and gave the alarm if I heard a slop; . . . but I never joined them in their work. I shared their money. Things went on in this way until one day I went to Shude-hill, and came face to face with my mistress. She would have no mercy. She took me to the police station. They locked me up, but when the trial came I was so young for a prison life, there was a good lady there like you, angels of mercy I call them, she asked for me to go with her to a home, where if I was a good girl for two years they would get me a place. . . .”

The document runs on to three times the length of this extract. It is innocent of punctuation, but is written in a firm clear hand. It tells of her wanderings up to the present. It breathes with penitent and almost despairing emotion.

When she met Miss Renshaw she was overwhelmed with joy to think she did not “hate” her. On the

contrary she found love and sympathy awaiting her, and sweet assurances of the unfailing compassion of Jesus. That love has conquered. That gentleness has made her great.

One day in the Hall she was asked to write a short account of her life for *Our Greeting*, the organ of the Mission. It is too long for these pages. It is one long romance of sinful wanderings, and of providential leadings. We have spoken of her girlhood. She is yet but a maiden. Listen to the triumph and the gladness of her concluding sentences—

“Only 18, yet a complete wreck, yes, and ruin if not for the Central Hall. I shrank from Tib St., but it led to you, then to God. I found that grace there was my every debt to pay, blood to wash my every sin away, thank God, power to keep me spotless day by day. For me. I often think of the words of that hymn. I’m a wonder unto many. I don’t know about that, but I know I’m a wonder unto myself. I was beginning to despair. . . . Thank God! not only is my sin cancelled, but the power is broken. Thank God! Heaven’s light is just dawning on my soul, and I pray—Lead, kindly light . . . Gladly will I follow. I have learnt that where there is perfect love there is perfect truth. I thank Him because in troubles of every kind I find a little talk with Jesus puts it right. . . . Please pray for me that my faith fail not. Ever will I thank God for the Central Hall.”

After ten years of sinfulness, and through much tribulation, Maggie Gee has pressed into the kingdom of heaven. It is her delight now to ponder those sacred truths which are the joy and the study of God’s choicest saints. She has found rest at last, and in rest is her heaven.

## HEAVEN FOR THE CHILDREN.

"These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea."

Jim Peel's heart was worse than the desert. It was the Dead Sea. It absorbed all that was sweet and pure, and made it corrupt and abominable. It was murderous to all beautiful life. It seemed almost a mistake that he had been born.

For ten long years he only entered a place of worship twice—once to a sister's wedding, and once to the funeral service of a workmate.

His whole life had been a protest against spiritual restraint, and a deliberate rebellion against God. Drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, gambling, and cruelty, were the concomitants of such a course.

He was, however, led by the Holy Spirit to the Central Hall one Sunday evening.

The large Hall was full, and Mr. Alcock, one of the Missionaries, was preaching to an overflow audience in the small chapel below.

Thither Jim went. The Word was with power. He became thoroughly converted to God.

Immediately he discontinued his evil ways, and for more than two years he has followed in the footsteps of Jesus with great gladness.

His altered character has told upon friends and companions, but nowhere has it had a more happy effect than in his own home.

A sack of flour in the kitchen, enough coal for the winter in the cellar, full cupboards and a well-spread table, are some of the blessings which the Gospel has brought them. But they are not all.

"You would be surprised how the children notice



the change," said his wife. "My little boy said as we went to the concert the other week, 'Mamma, aren't these nice Saturdays now?' 'What do you mean?' I said. 'Well, Dada doesn't come home drunk now, and kick the table over, and make us all cry as he used to do. I always pray to Jesus to send us nice Saturdays.'"

Blessed be God!—the religion which was established by Him Who blessed the children still retains the spirit of its Founder. Wherever Jesus goes He takes the children to His arms.

It is significant that while Atheism and the spirit of this world would deprive little children of a Sabbath, Jesus Christ gives them Sabbaths and "nice Saturdays" too.

In Jim Peel's home the children have joy and peace.

That is one sure proof that he has been with Jesus. The healing and life-giving waters have not only reached the sea, they have become within him a "well of water springing up unto everlasting life;" yes, and from him "flow rivers of living water."



## CHAPTER IV.

FROM NOTTINGHAM TO MANCHESTER ON FOOT—A CHURCH  
AT A COFFEE STALL—"I AM POOR AND NEEDY"—  
"DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS"—"SICK, AND  
HELPLESS, AND READY TO 'DIE'"—SAFE WITHIN THE  
FOLD—EARLY FRUIT.



“WHO ARE THOSE IN THE CORNER? THE SHELTERLESS ONES FROM THE STREETS.”—p. 70.



## CHAPTER IV.

The lepers from all Their spots are made clean,  
The dead by His call Are raised from their sin :  
In Jesu's compassion The sick find a cure,  
And Gospel salvation Is preached to the poor.

### FROM NOTTINGHAM TO MANCHESTER ON FOOT.

POLLY BUXTON, a wayward, but in many ways a winsome, girl of sixteen came one day to the Central Hall for help and advice.

"Where did you come from?"

"From Nottingham, sir."

"How did you get here?"

"I walked."

"You *walked* all the way?"

"Yes, sir. My own mother is dead; my aunt told me she had walked to Manchester when she was a girl, and she gave me sixpence and advised me to do the same. So I came. I've been very poorly, sir, in the Infirmary, and now I want some work to do."

"What made you poorly?"

"Well, sir, I got wet and had to sleep in my wet clothes on the way. It took me six days to come, and it was raining nearly all the time. I came through Mansfield, and Chesterfield, and Sheffield, and Glossop.

Then I went over what they call 'The Snake,' and through Ashton and Stalybridge, and then I walked into Ancoats at two o'clock in the morning, and I spoke to a policeman, and he took me to the prison, and then I was poorly, and had to go to the hospital."

"What would you like to do?"

"Any work, sir; I am a good weaver."

Her name was taken, and upon inquiry from the Rev. D. A. de Mouilpied, in Nottingham, her story was found substantially true. A good lady-worker went, and found her obliged to sleep with a drunken woman in a common lodging-house in the city. The whole story moved the compassionate energies of the labourers in the Mission, and when it transpired that she had taken the course she had, rather than "go upon the streets," everybody felt that there was a great deal of latent nobleness within her.

A situation was found for her. Day by day she came to the religious services at the Hall. She was wholly ignorant of how to manage for herself, and the lady who is spoken of in this book in the story, "Her Heaven on Earth Begun," found her a suitable home, and trained her to keep a careful account of her expenditure from week to week.

She soon began to lay aside her old clothes, and to lose her woebegone appearance, and in new garments and with many friends she looked bright and happy.

She was extremely grateful, grateful even to tears, for the kindness shown to her, but she continually averred that she was not a Christian.

One day the writer was speaking to her of the necessity of constant prayer if she would be a true follower of Christ, when she interrupted him by saying, "Oh, sir! I'm not good yet; I swear."

She was honest, generous, and affectionate; but she had the good sense to see and acknowledge that while she was addicted to this one evil habit, she could not lay claim to the noblest of names, and that highest experience, conscious acceptance with God.

After a few months had passed she left her situation suddenly, and though day by day the workers, who loved her much, waited for her to return, it was not for three or four months that she did so, this time to tell an amazing story of self-management and endeavour.

“Please, Miss S——,” she said, “will you forgive me?”

Of course she was forgiven, and once again welcomed to the catechumen class for girls.

There, in a class for instruction, she remains to-day.

Every phase of her heart history is of interest. She has been saved from bad companions and godlessness. She has been saved into submissiveness, gentleness, and abiding penitence. She has heard the testimonies, and shared the affections and joys of Christian girls and Christian homes.

What if, as yet, she cannot testify to the full pardon and perfect renewal which she needs and craves? He which hath begun a good work in her will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. That great Sower Who has gone forth weeping, bearing precious seed, will doubtless come again with rejoicing bringing this sheaf with Him.

#### A CHURCH AT A COFFEE STALL.

“Jessica’s First Prayer” has made thousands of English people conversant with the strange life of old Mr. Daniel, the coffee-seller.

Were there room, and had we the ability, a story of equally thrilling interest with that might be written of the life and doings of good Mr. Atkins, the Manchester coffee-seller.

It seems "a shame even to speak" of his life a few years ago. It shall be dismissed in a sentence or two. Drink and godlessness made his home worse than the streets. He and his wife and seven or eight children had no furniture in the house, and none but straw beds upon the floor.

That is all past. He and the family have come under the renewing influence of the Spirit of Jesus, and "*HE* doeth all things well."

Do you want to find him now? Come at earliest daybreak, when the city is quiet but for the occasional tread of policemen's feet. Down past the warehouses and shops, at a street corner, you will see the tiny portable kitchen in which Mr. Atkins spends the many hours of his night. There are the cups and saucers and very appetizing buns! There is the warm urn!

Hush! He doesn't see us. Who are those in the corner? They are the shelterless ones from the streets whom he has gathered in one by one to feed them, and to tell them how he found Jesus the mighty to save.

His back is turned to us: what is he reading? It is the Bible, and in this way one night he taught thirteen wayfarers the short method of salvation.

Let us leave him. It would be too bad to disturb them, and to disconcert him. But have you never read, "And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar"?

You want to find his house? We can't go there now, but I will tell you what is to be seen later in



the day. No straw, no signs of poverty and distress. The straw has made way for carpets and beds. On the mantel-shelf is a handsome pier-glass. Ornaments decorate the house. The wife is converted. The daughters are as fair and bonny and good as your own or your sisters. They are sitting round the fire, and one little lass is singing like a lark :—

“There is beauty all around—  
For there’s love at home.”

*"I AM POOR AND NEEDY."*

The motto above chosen fits a great many of the cases which come to hand in the ordinary working of the Christian Church.

Never were the words more applicable than in the case of Mr. Dixon, who, cut adrift from his vessel like some severed, oarless, wavebeaten companion boat, was found by the good ship “Manchester Mission,” hauled on deck, refitted, repaired, renewed, and put once again into good service.

He had been in a good position, and had lost all. Something of the grit of the Englishman was left in him, and he had for some time while residing in a common lodging-house regularly washed, starched, and ironed his one shirt, knit his own stockings, and had tried to preserve his self-respect amid the most debasing environment.

He came under the influence of Christ at the Manchester Mission. He was led to seek the Lord. Finding Him, a true sense of the value of life dawned upon him, and he became a humble and affectionate servant to the Church.

The most pessimistic must find in men occasionally

such sparks of a celestial fire, such noble and potent principle, as will enhearten them and give songs for sighing.

Mr. Dixon had such admirable qualities.

He was extremely grateful for two shirts, collars, a waistcoat, and a pair of good trousers, taking them with a sensible gratitude and a silence of appreciation which augured well for his future use of them, and of his new opportunities.

He found work at a wage of seven or eight shillings a week. When he found a man who had worse clothes than his "weekdays," and who was prevented by them from attending service at the sanctuary, he sent his spare suit for the week-end. He had learned of Jesus true brotherliness.

Similarly, when a man who lodged with him fell ill he rose at four in the morning, and walked some miles to do the hard day's paint-cleaning work which the sick man had promised to do.

Quietly and usefully this man lived on in Manchester for two years, until employment in a neighbouring town removed him from the special oversight of the Mission. It was Mr. Norton, spoken of in another chapter in this book, who brought this man to the knowledge of the truth, and to association with the people of God.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

#### "DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS."

At least in this one particular Dick Floyd was like the men of Ephesus—he was "dead in trespasses and sins." His was not death in the first stage, which

found its illustration in Jairus's daughter, nor the second, in which the Master found the young man of Nain; his moral death seemed hopeless, and like Lazarus in the last stage of death he was "corrupt." He is an ex-soldier, and has spent much time in Egypt and in India. While in the service he drifted down into carelessness and sin, and on reaching England began a course of "cart-ropes" iniquity, until New Year's Day of 1888 found him a confirmed drunkard, with a record of great cruelty to his wife and children, without clothes fit for any respectable work, and without character.

A friend, on hearing him say that he had been to Moultan, said, "They say that most people lose their senses there." "Ay," he said, "an' I did, and I never got 'em again until January 25th, 1888."

"If madness wrought the sin, the sin wrought madness  
And made a round of ruin."

But that wonderful January 25th came. He was like a bit of flotsam thrown into city life, as many another soldier is, by the completion of his term of military service. He came into the Manchester Central Hall Penny Concert *drunk*. He signed the pledge. The day after he found the Saviour, to the joy of his heart. He was rigged out with clothes. He found work. To-day, after a test of two years and a half, he is a bright and earnest Christian.

"Then you're happy now?" I said to him one day.

"Rather," he said, "just ask the chickens at whoam."

The "chickens at whoam" have realized that out of his corruptness the Lord called him, and that he came forth. The neighbours around know it, too; so that they come not for Jesu's sake only, but that they may see Floyd also, whom He hath raised from the dead.

“SICK, AND HELPLESS, AND READY TO DIE.”

It is natural, perhaps, that saints and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ should glory in the conversion of the vigorous Paul more than in that of the less active and energetic members of the Church. Viewing converts in the light of their intrinsic worth to the Church, those seem most desirable who are strong of limb, young of heart, and eager in all aggressive endeavour. Yet the Lord Jesus takes into His service the weak and feeble. Perhaps He sees in their quiet restfulness of faith and “sweet content” something more precious than the lustier loyalty of his “Ironsides.”

Mr. Harrison is one of the feeblest of men, and is in consumption. He had been in a good position, had had money, had spent it. In his sorrow he came to the Mission Service, and found a Friend in Jesus.

Rowland Hill said Christ takes the devil's castaways. So does He take the world's bankrupts.

Men may sneer at “mere digesting machines.” Scientists and socialists may claim that the weakest should go the wall. Jesus of Nazareth lays hold of the weakest and sets him on a throne.

So poor Harrison found. With the wreck of a life, with the ominous cough, the strengthless arm, and the hopeless life, he came to the Lord of life and glory, and has found the firstfruits, the earnest of a blessed inheritance of strength.

He spends his days in doing such small things as his strength will allow. He appears to be just hanging on to life. He knows his state of body will never permit him to be in the front ranks of life.

Yet his witness is, that in Jesus Christ he has,

within the last two years, found a new hope—a hope of glory, which leads him to rejoice in his creation and preservation and all the blessings of this life.

Just as he was “ready to die” he has begun to live; and it is surely to the triumph of the Meek and Lowly One that even he has prospects of unfailing renewal of strength and unbounded opportunities of usefulness beyond the grave.

#### SAFE WITHIN THE FOLD.

Three years ago, at the beginning of the Mission work at the Central Hall, a visitor called at a house in her district, and was met by a woman “of a sad countenance.” There were seven children with her. Her husband was an invalid, an unbeliever, exceedingly rough in his behaviour to his wife and children. *He had gone to no place of worship for forty years.* They were not a poor family, they had made money.

The visitor was only allowed to leave a tract at the door, and to speak a kind word to the person who took it from her hands. Her visits were repeated, and she was persistent in her efforts to reach the sick man. She at length gained her end, and was met by a gruff “Come in,” as, ascending the stairs, she gently knocked at the door. The sick-room bore the marks of high respectability, but the man was sullen and would not speak to her. She ventured to give a few simple words of counsel, offered up a short prayer, and retired. Several visits were made before he began to yield to those strong and gracious influences which, in answer to prayer, were at work upon his heart. It was many weeks before he was led to rejoice in Christ, and this was brought about by *two visions*. In the first, Jesus

stood by his bed, and, as he said, "talked with me for an hour. He took me by the hand and lifted me up, and I felt the grip of that warm hand of love some time after the vision went." This made a deep impression upon his mind, and endeared the Saviour to him.

The next time the visitor called he said with exultant joy, "I have seen Him again, and heard the music of heaven. There was a large assembly gathered upon a grassy mound, and Jesus was the centre of attraction."

By means of these visions, and the instructions of the visitor, he now found the first joys of salvation; but he had much to learn. He lived in a new world. He was greatly altered in his conduct towards the dear ones surrounding him. The Spirit of God shed increasing light upon his mind. He learned to pray.

The dawn of the idea of asking God for what he wanted was very interesting. He had read prayers from a book forty or more years before; but, he said, "I want to know more about this prayer. I am not much up to it;" and when he was told that in a wish of the heart or a tear of penitence he could present petitions to God, he was astonished and thought it impossible.

Yet *he ventured to speak to God*, and began to delight in it. He said one day that he had been "talking to his Superior."

The next step forward was the gathering of his family for devotional services, and it became as a Sabbath service to them.

\* \* \* \* \*

He lingered two years, during which time he was able to go into the country for a change. The people who knew him in the times of his ignorance saw the change that had taken place, and from near and far

they came and joined in worship with him, and heard him testify of the grace of God in his conversion.

When he returned he seemed chastened in spirit, and bright in the assurance of hope.

In September, 1889, the visitor called and found him dying. Once more they gathered around the mercy seat. He wished them all to sing—

“God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform.”

With a wave of the hand as a token of his triumphant joy, he bade all his family to follow him into the heaven above, and, commending them to the God of providence and salvation, he passed away.

Thus was one more sheaf harvested. Thus was one more soul saved.

#### EARLY FRUIT.

Something had gone wrong in the “Crown” on the evening of the first concert in the large Central Hall. Jack Ingram, who usually made a long stay there, came out after “two glasses,” and instead of entering another house he passed in with the crowd of people who were thronging into the Hall.

It was a slight matter to his friends, who were unconscious of the workings of Divine Providence. It was a great matter to him, and to his family, and to the angels.

He signed the pledge that night. On the following day, Sunday, he sought the Lord with true penitence, and with unusually sincere and serious vows.

He was one of the first to find salvation. He was the seal which God set upon the vast scheme to which the Church had committed itself. He was an answer

to the prevailing prayers of the handful of workers who had sought God's blessing on the enterprise.

Mr. Ingram and his son have been devoted workers from that day onward. He was at the time of his conversion in sore financial straits. Judiciously and kindly the workers helped him, and that kindness in the house of God knit his heart to Christ's Church with a very close bond.

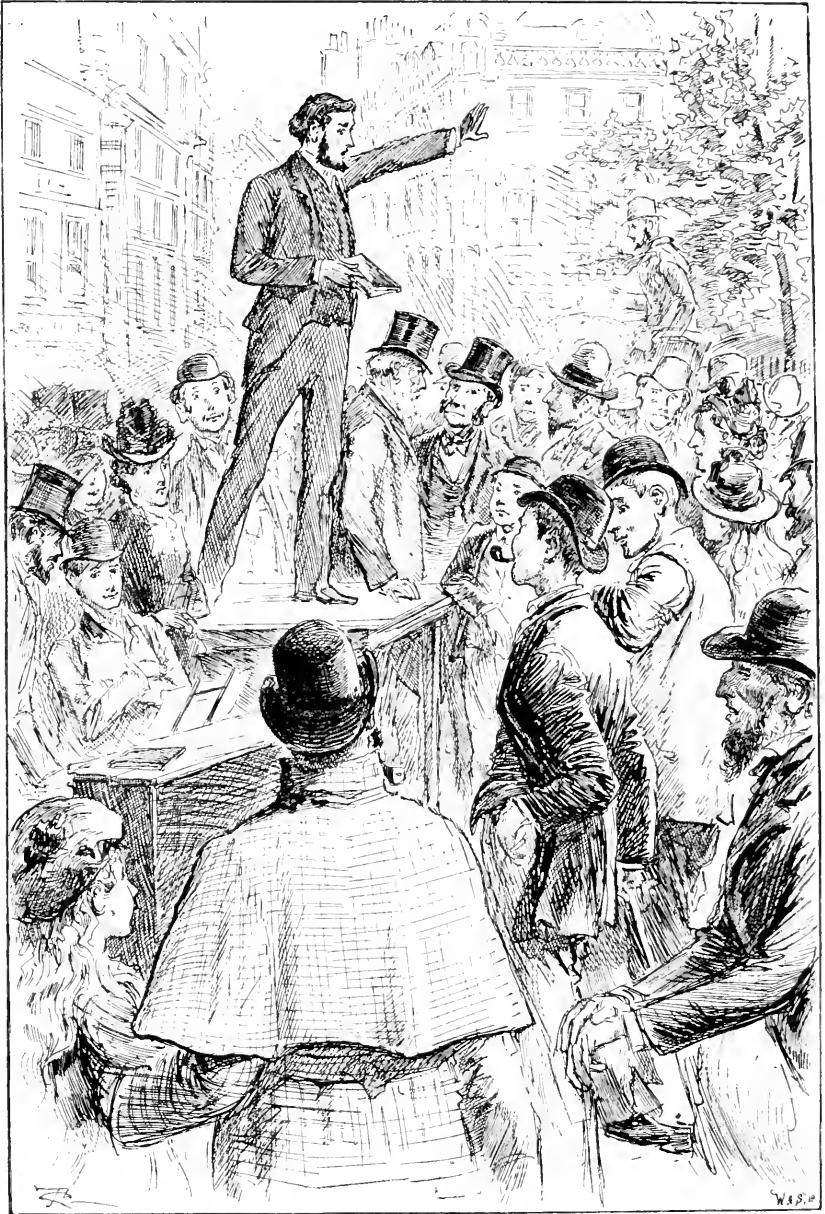
If a doctor may be congratulated on his first successful cure, or a lawyer on the triumph of his first case, the servants of God who worked by His might and preached His truth that first October Sunday may be comforted by the continued piety and zeal of the firstfruits of their service.

It was early fruit. It is fruit unto holiness. We trust that he in his turn will be fruitful in every good work.



## CHAPTER V.

THE LORD STRIVING WITH A FREETHINKER—THE LORD  
STRIVING IN AMERICA—THE LORD STRIVING EFFEC-  
TUALY—THE LORD STRIVING IN THE NIGHT.



"ON THE TABLE STANDS A SHORT, SPARE MAN."—p. 81.



## CHAPTER V.

To us and to them Is published the Word ;  
Then let us proclaim Our life-giving Lord,  
Who now is reviving His work in our days,  
And mightily striving To save us by grace.

O Jesus ! ride on Till all are subdued,  
Thy mercy make known, And sprinkle Thy blood ;  
Display Thy salvation, And teach the new song  
To every nation, And people, and tongue.

### THE LORD STRIVING WITH A FREETHINKER.

IN one of the large squares of Manchester might be seen a crowd of people gathered round a harmonium and a table. At the harmonium sits a Christian worker. On the table stands a short, spare man, with clear eyes and sallow face, who looks very decided about the matter he has in hand. If we draw near, we shall hear him speak.

“My dear friends, I stand here to-night a monument of the saving grace of God. From nineteen years of age until three years ago last August I was a Freethinker. I devoured the books of the Secularists, and attended their meetings continually. Payne’s ‘Age of Reason’ was my Bible. If any

minister ever came to my house I used to pull out the 'Age of Reason' when he pulled out his Bible. I have a very good memory so that I remember the exact words that I read, and I could use the book I mentioned as he could his Scriptures. Other books of a similar kind were my constant companions: Mrs. Besant's 'My Plea for Atheism,' Mirabeau's 'System of Nature,' Volney's 'Ruins of Empires.' I took a special delight in vilifying ministers and Christian Churches. I was a great drinker too, and though I strove to break off that habit, it kept its power over me.

"Bless God, I'm different now! At that time my dear children used to come from school singing Christian hymns, and I told them never to let me hear them. There's no singing about Atheism. But now the little ones come to me to sing and to pray.

"Let me tell you how it came about.

"I remember at one time that I was very much moved at the deathbed of a friend of mine—not that I feared death, but my friend's illness was a lingering one, and I felt the need of some better consolation than I, who was a Freethinker, could give. But I cast off those thoughts and became a fiercer enemy of Christianity.

"One day I and some friends of mine went to a Salvation Army meeting. At this meeting an Atheist got up, and denied the sayings of the captain. My friend said, 'Go on, Jack; you take the Christian side;' and as I was always ready for a bit of an argument, and knew by heart all the stock arguments of the parsons, I did take the Christian side. I showed how it was impossible for that which is dead matter to have been evolved from nothing but dead matter,

and that it was impossible for mind to be inferior to matter.

“It was all done for a lark. Yet now I know that the God of Heaven directed me, and that day I went home with this thought burned into my mind, ‘There was a great Mind ordering the creation of this world.’ This made me uncomfortable. But there was something that made me more uncomfortable still. There were two men, Wesleyans, one from the Central Hall, who worked with me. I was struck with their sobriety and calmness. Nothing seemed to disturb their peace. One of those men is the drummer in the band of which I have now the honour of being a Christian bandsman.

“I thought that they had something that the ‘Age of Reason’ had not given me. It made me miserable. Now the Social Democrats had had meetings in Old Trafford, and at one of their meetings an old Christian man had bothered me, and I had promised him that if ever I had any serious notions about accepting Christianity I would come to see him at his home in a cellar which I very well knew.

“On Saturday, August 13th, 1887, I had been at a meeting with my two workmates, and about half-past four I came over perfectly wretched. I know now what it was. I didn’t know then. But I could bear it no longer, and I went straight off to my old friend in the cellar.

“He knew what I had come for. He seemed to expect me. I cast myself on my knees in that cellar, and poured out my soul in prayer to God. My prayer was like a flood that had been kept in a long time and now came bursting out.

“My friends, I don’t know what I prayed for that

day, but I know this, that God heard me, and received His prodigal child.

“If there is any one here that is unhappy and unsaved, dear friend, do as I did—pray, pray, and God will answer.

“May God bless these few words that I have spoken to you.”

“That is a wonderful story,” I said to Mr. Thompson. “And have you been kept ever since that Saturday afternoon?”

“Kept? Yes, kept by the power of God, but not without falls. I wouldn’t say that. I was dreadfully ignorant. I had lots of queer ideas. It has been hard work to get rid of them; and then the drink had hold of me.”

“But you gave up the drink?”

“Oh, ay! I gave it up altogether and straight away, and God has wonderfully helped me. I was nearly gone once, too. I was in Ashton, and I felt I must have a drink, and I went into a house and ordered it. It was there on the counter, but I rushed out without drinking it, and didn’t stop till I got into our house. It was a mercy I was saved from it then. And then I had difficulties with the Secularist committee, for though I was never enrolled, I was as earnest as any of them; but they don’t write me now, as they did. You know, I used to think there was nobody like these Secularists. They’re good writers, and they’re wonderfully clever talkers and debaters; but now I can see flaws that I was blinded to before. I have seen their librarian once or twice since, but I always say, ‘Look here, E——! This kind of thing may satisfy thee, but it didn’t satisfy me. I’ve found a better joy now in Jesus Christ.’ That’s how I tackle them.”

“You don’t believe much in arguing with them, then?”

“No; it’s experience and testimony that convinces them.”

“And that same testimony is a help to the Christian!”

“Yes, that’s just it. It’s a wonderful help. When I was first converted I thought, ‘There’s no telling which of all these Churches of God is *the* Church of God; I’ll be a Christian in my own way, and won’t bother with them!’ But I soon was compelled to bother with them. I dropped into a Salvation Army meeting one Sunday morning, thinking no one would know me, but one of my mates was there, and I thought it would be cowardly to keep quiet; so I testified there and then. That was the beginning. Then the Central Hall people made me welcome, and gave me plenty of work, and that’s how I got into harness. I’m going down to Crewe on Sunday. It’s the place where I learnt all my folly, and I’m going on Saturday night to ask them if I may testify for Jesus in the chapel. I hope they’ll let me.”

Whether they allowed him to do so or not I cannot say; but if they did not, it would not matter much. His reverence in the house of God, his voice of praise, his silent influence, would testify. In this way he is a permanent witness of the graciousness and power of the Divine Spirit.

#### THE LORD STRIVING IN AMERICA.

What is the Atlantic to Him “Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and meted out heaven with the span”? Though English wanderers from God

“take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,” even there His hand leads them. So Mr. Duncan found, whose life will here be sketched.

*In his youth the Lord was “mightily striving to save him by grace.”*

He was the only unconverted member of a godly Methodist family in the Midlands, a lad “full of a nature nothing could tame.” He left home, with many prayers, to take a situation with a pious grocer, who prayed for him at the “family altar” on the night of his arrival. The evil spirit gained the day over prayers and good influences. He “sowed to the flesh.” He was “without hope in the world.” He “neglected” the great salvation. He became the “companion of fools.” The Bible which his mother gave him was unused, but it spoke to him often as the look of Jesus spoke to Peter. . . . He left that situation and went to a large town, where all the temptations of the city life combined to work havoc in his young life. Home letters unanswered! Nights and days spent in frivolity and vanity! The brake off! The life in process of ruination! The heart angry with its own remorse! . . . He was driven by sheer anguish of heart to modify his course, and to attend a Bible Class in a town chapel. While he was a member of this young men’s class a circumstance occurred which opens to us a door into that “chamber of horrors”—the conscience of chapel-going people who yet know not the Lord; and which reminds us of the peculiar solemnity of the Sabbath evening Divine Service.

He and three others went to hear the Rev. W. L. Watkinson preach, and were all deeply convinced of sin. They did not decide to serve God; but “quenched



the Spirit." On the next Sunday, driven by the memory of the conviction, and the fear to have it aroused, instead of going near the house of God they went for a row upon the river Trent. The boat capsized; one of the four was drowned, two others narrowly escaped. Duncan was a good swimmer, and reached the river's bank with ease, with *his mother's Bible in his pocket, saturated with the river's water*. That Bible he has now, and prizes it more than silver or gold.

Though this occurrence checked him, he did not yield to be saved by grace.

Stay a moment, and count the voices of the Lord urging him to salvation,—(1) The strivings at home, (2) the prayers of his parents, (3) the godly master, (4) the unused Bible, (5) the remorse, (6) the Bible Class teaching, (7) the sermon of the minister, (8) the escape from drowning. Yet he did not obey.

*In his young manhood the Lord was still mightily striving to save him by grace.*

He went home on Christmas Day, and the father expostulated and entreated him in vain: he would not hear. In a few weeks he attended his father's funeral. "I left him angry, because he had pleaded with me to become a Christian, and when I next looked upon his face it was cold in death." The night after the funeral the son was at the theatre. Soon after, leaving wife and child, he went to America. Whilst in America he still pursued the hard way of transgressors. This time the Lord taught him very vividly the probable end of his downward course. One of the companions of the Trent disaster surprised him by coming into his shop. He was a confirmed drunkard, and was found dead in bed soon after with the whisky bottle in

his grasp. He learned that the other companion was, and still is, in a lunatic asylum.

Awed and horrified at the full-grown sin bringing forth death, he quitted America, but still a prodigal. On ship-board, reflection on the facts of a purposeless life, of confirmed habits of sin, of neglect of the Holy Ghost, and of despite to much true human love, drove him almost to suicide.

Count again the methods of the Lord's working,— (1) the loneliness in America, (2) the visit of the old companion, (3) the tragic end of the same, (4) the stillness of the voyage home, (5) the conflict of the conscience, (6) the memory of rejected blessings.

*At last the Lord's strivings triumphed.*

Landing at Liverpool he started for Manchester, hoping to get work there. He was arrested by the sound of music from the Central Hall brass band, and was touched by the welcome of Christian sympathy given him with a slip of invitation to attend the Sabbath evening service at the St. James's Theatre. He went, and said in his heart, "Lo! God is here." The message of grace suited him. He became a weeping penitent at mercy's open door. Hands of grace drew him in, where was the banqueting-house, and the "banner over him was love."

The Gospel rang the bells of joy to him; "piped unto him" and "he danced." "His chains fell off: his heart was free." The converted grocer could subscribe his name to the words of the German theologian: "Grace works into the natural life of man a new supernatural life, which differs from the former as essentially as the future world of glory from the present world of birth and decay."

Brother Duncan is now rejoicing in a spiritual life,

which finds "its root in the miraculous soil of that first love." His home is happy. His mother sings with thankfulness her *Nunc Dimittis*.

He is compelled to sing,—

“ O the infinite cares,  
And temptations, and snares,  
Thy hand hath conducted me through !  
O the blessings bestowed  
By a bountiful God,  
And the mercies eternally new ! ”

He rejoices to sing—

“ In a rapture of joy  
My life I employ,  
The God of my life to proclaim ;  
'Tis worth living for this,  
To administer bliss  
And salvation in Jesus's Name.”

#### THE LORD STRIVING EFFECTUALLY.

Mr. Norton, whose autobiography is here given, is now a bright Christian, has recently married a devoted worker, and has one of the happiest of homes. His story speaks for itself, and should be an encouragement to all wandering sinners, and all prayerful though heart-broken parents.

“ On Sunday, April 15th, 1888, my evil life received a check, and I thank God that nothing worse befell me. After living a deceitful life to business, society, and friends, and, more than all, to God, my just reward would have been banishment, even imprisonment.”

*How his wanderings began.*—“ 'Twas a trivial thing that led me into the path of deceit, falsehood, and dishonesty. When only thirteen years of age I picked up a threepenny-piece a child had lost, and kept it.

My evil practices were under the guise of religion, and were it not for the kindness of a near friend, I might have been to-day in a prison or a grave.

“I had a companion in whose behalf I was lavish with money, gotten dishonestly, and a time came when my accounts were placed under audit, and I was found out, and exposure and shame drove me from home. . . . At my father’s suggestion a soldier’s life was open before me, but upon application I did not pass the standard.

“That unhappy Sabbath, when I dared not take my accustomed place in the house of God, is fresh upon my memory. Found out at last! What can I do? Where can I go?—were questions presented by my guilty conscience.”

*How Providence led him.*—“A wonderful Providence brought my life of sin to a full stop, delivered me from the hand of the law, and turned my steps into the path of religion. I sailed for Liverpool. The passage was a rough one. We were tossed about, as faithless Jonah in the fated ship. Fifty and more hours passed, and no headway was made. I was led to ask myself whether for my sake this evil had come upon the ship. Arriving in Liverpool, alone and homeless, I found lodgings with the scanty means which my godly and broken-hearted father gave me on starting from home. I was refused employment, and could not get a berth on board ship, or a position in the army. I reflected, and the thought was before me, ‘God is in this matter.’ I was preserved by His mercy from accident twice, and from self-destruction in the midst of my despair. I trudged weary miles through Fleetwood, Blackpool, Preston, Blackburn, and other towns. I came to Manchester, and at my first visit stayed one day, and

that day the Sabbath. I wandered into the Central Hall, and had the hand of sympathy and help given to me. Ashamed, sin-stricken, and penniless, when the Sabbath was past I went on to Oldham. All I had possessed of value was a watch and coat; and those I had now pledged. Cold, tired, fatigued, I found refuge in the night asylum of a workhouse—the saddest night of existence I had ever spent—as degrading as hell itself. The associate of thieves, blackguards, liars, impostors, the scum of mankind, who talked and gloated over their respective vocations! It was a sorry place for a Sunday School lad, and a child of godly parents. The conversations of that eventful night will never be forgotten. Daylight came as a blessed relief to me. Footsore, I crawled to Huddersfield, and the next day to Leeds, where I was compelled to live with hawkers and beggars. No work, no rest, no home! I spent the last twopence I had for coffee and buns at Huddersfield, and then came the final pinch of want. From Tuesday night till Thursday afternoon I trudged my weary, hungry, friendless way to Manchester.”

*How he came to God at last.*—“My first resting-place was the Central Hall, and the kindness of Mr. Collier and Mr. Sackett and others was great towards me. I have cause to thank God for their fatherly advice, and to them I owe all that I now possess of Jesus Christ, of friends, and of worldly position. In my wanderings I had often prayed to my father’s and my mother’s God, and promised to amend my life by His gracious help, and I now found deliverance from my sins through Jesus Christ. . . . Truly God brought me forth from a ‘horrible pit, and set my feet upon the Rock,’ and put a new song in my mouth.”

“ I rejoice and give thanks for a new heart and a new life, new desires and new hope. My goal of life now is heaven.

“ After my conversion I found employment. God has graciously helped me to regain my former respectability, and I am endeavouring to repay those whom I have wronged. My life is a beacon of warnings to youths and young men just starting in life. Worldliness, pride, and transgression provide a hard way, and the remorse in the afterwards is keen and sad. Lest any in the sad remorse should despair, think of the great deliverance which I have found.”

If one word be required to attest the above, it can only be a word of witness to Mr. Norton's childlike Christian character. His joys are those of the “ number and congregation of Christ's flock,” and we trust he will remain “ Christ's faithful soldier to his life's end.”

#### THE LORD STRIVING IN THE NIGHT.

There would seem to be a connection between dreams, visions, possessions, ecstasies, and the like, and the more aggressive movements within the Kingdom of Christ.

When our Lord was upon earth what remarkable activity evinced itself in the world of evil spirits ! As Dr. Pressensé says : “ It seemed as if the barrier between that world and ours was broken down.”

When the great revival in England under the Wesleys and Whitefield was at its height, such phenomena were most unusually frequent. The stories of the marvellous and the apparently supernatural which make Mr. Wesley's writings so deeply interesting seem to

point to peculiar and mysterious activities and counter-activities in the world of mind and spirit.

The story of the conversion of Mr. Jackson is one of many with which revival preachers are acquainted, which would indicate that, even now, extraordinary spiritual activity acts upon the unexplored realm of the mental and the spiritual, as a pebble agitates and moves a lake.

There had been a season of refreshing prayer at the Ebenezer Mission Chapel, and all the workers were hoping for the ingathering of many souls to the Church of Jesus.

Sam Jackson was invited by one of his workmates to attend the services, and one Saturday-night tea-meeting in particular.

He had resisted many such appeals, but this time he yielded. The tea-meeting was the commencement of a pleasant evening spent in prayer and praise.

The hymn was sung,—

“ Who'll be the next to follow Jesus ? ”

He felt a power working within him that was new and mysterious. He thought, “ This is a very happy lot of people, and I should like to follow Jesus, too.”

He did not, however, decide for God that night. On the following Sabbath he heard the Gospel preached in the chapel, and again thought, “ How happy these people look ! I wish I were happy, too ! ”

He listened most attentively, tried to understand the way of salvation, and even sought to do nothing that would grieve the Spirit of Jesus ; yet he was not in the Ark of Rest.

One Wednesday morning he was working as usual,

very mechanically, at the large anvil in the iron-foundry yard, when he was surprised to find the tears rolling down his cheeks. The fact of the tears impressed upon him the other fact that he had been longing inwardly for full salvation from sin. He was astonished at himself, and looked up, and thought he saw the Lord Jesus lifted up beside him, as being crucified, and with arms outstretched to welcome him. The eyes of the Saviour met his reproachfully, and the vision passed.

He called to his Christian workmate, "Tom! I've seen Jesus."

Tom cried, "Hallelujah!"

This made a deep impression upon the mind of Mr. Jackson, but he felt no peace, and no assurance of a new nature.

Sunday night came again, and with it Divine Service. After service, and still without peace, he retired to rest, leaving a little flicker of light in the lamp. He dreamed, and thought that the Man Christ Jesus was pushing His hands down through his flesh to take out the old heart. It was painful and long, and in great agony he called out, "Lord! have mercy upon me! Lord! have mercy upon me!" Still the Saviour tried to reach the heart, until at last He succeeded, and "took it clean away."

This brought a very settled peace to him, and he was enjoying the deep and settled comfort, when he awoke, and found the room full of brightness, and all his mental and spiritual burden gone.

*That peace has never left him.* For some time after this the presence of Jesus with him was a most real experience, until he dreamed again that the Saviour ascended.



Yet this ascension of Jesus did not pain him. "The peace that passeth all understanding" kept him.

"Do you know," he said, "I think all that was to strengthen me?"

So do we think so.

That all happened some time ago, and he has rejoiced unceasingly in the love of God, witnessing by earnestness and affection to the grace that is in him. He does all he can to win others to this "new creation."

Perhaps Mr. Champness will think that it is not the least sign of grace that he and his little son dispose of five-dozen copies of *Joyful News* weekly, giving away, with a prayerful heart, what are not sold.

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